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INDEPENDENT

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November 07, 2012

The Aftermath – Hurricanes on Long Island 2012

The disaster on Long Island last week is such that we can rightfully say that we haven't seen such death and destruction since '38. And, unlike '38, the Eye didn't even go over us – Sandy made a hard left turn into New Jersey, which wreaked even greater death and destruction there and on Staten Island. Small mercies . . .

We live on an island. This column repeats and expands the material printed before. If you didn't save it someplace, please do. There is always another storm in the offing.

Tidal Surges

For Islanders, as bad as the winds will be (more on that below), it is the tides and tidal surges that will do most of the damage, which is why even these tails that go by every year leave so much trouble behind. The storm tide is added to the astronomical tides. And when those waves hit something solid, they generate force dozens of times more powerful than wind of the same speed. Andrew generated a storm tide of 17 feet. Camille in 1969? 24 feet. Sandy appears to have had a 10 foot tidal surge – compounded by a full moon and high tide. It was surging on top of that tide which is, absent a storm, already the highest tide in a month.

Semper paratus is our motto in the Coast Guard. Always Ready.

What Is It?

A hurricane is, in the words of scientists, an organized rotating weather system that develops in the tropics. Technically, it is a "tropical cyclone" and it is classified as one of three states, with hurricanes being further classified into levels of destruction.

Tropical Depression: sustained winds of 38 mph (33 knots) or less

Tropical Storm: sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph (34-63 knots)

Hurricane: sustained winds of 74 mph (64 knots) or greater

Hurricanes are called typhoons in the western Pacific and cyclones in the Indian Ocean. Six of one, a half dozen of the other.

Categories of Hurricanes

We've all heard the weather reporter state that "Hurricane 'x' is now a Category 3 hurricane and headed for _____." What does that mean?

Category/Winds(mph)/Type of Damage Expected

Category 1: 74-95 Anything not tied down is going (Irene, 1999), (Sandy 2012)

Category 2 96-110 Trees will go down.(Floyd, 1999)

Category 3 111-13 Many trees will go down, (Betsy, 1965

Category 4: 131-155 Complete failures of some small (Hugo, 1989)

Category 5 ->Catastrophe. Wrath of God. (Andrew, 1992, Katrina 2005)

USCG hurricane aircraft reported Andrew and Katrina had generated winds over 200mph at various times of the storms.

Are You Ready For the Glancing Blow?

Look, if a Category-4 or -5 gets up here like in 1938, there are no levels of preparedness except evacuation. A storm surge like Camille's basically means that everything "south of the highway", as real estate agents like to classify the choicest properties on Long Island, is gone for all intents and purposes. But Sandy showed us what a Category-1 can do...

Before the Storm Arrives

1. Have a family action plan – if you're at caught at school or at work, who do you call? To grandmother's house we go?
2. flash lights working? Canned goods and water supplies? Cash? Portable radio?
3. Where ARE you going to move the boat? Don't even THINK about staying on her (we wrote about that last week.)
4. How about your prescription medicines? A first-aid kit is WHERE?

During the Storm

1. Have the radio or TV on. If power goes out and you don't have a portable radio, I'd get the kids in the car and "to grandmother's house we go!"
2. Propane tanks on your property? Shut them off, completely.

3. Turn the refrigerator up all the way and don't open the door idly.
4. Fill the bath tub with water. How about the big spaghetti pot? Anything that can hold water and keep it clean.
5. If ordered to evacuate, do so. Immediately. And tell someone where you are going.
6. When evacuating, don't drive across flowing water. 2' of flowing water can carry your car away. Yes. Only 2 inches of moving water. Turn around and go another way. There is no other way – call 911 or the US Coast Guard.

After the Storm

1. If you've been ordered to evacuate, don't go back until the area is declared safe.
2. If you see someone that needs rescuing, unless the threat of loss of life is imminent, call 9-1-1.
3. See standing water? Do you know if any power cables lie in it?
4. Never use candles and other open flames indoors. Keep the flashlight at your side.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. But please save it somewhere convenient.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the DISR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at [DSO-HR](#) and we will help you “get in this thing...”