



# From the Captain of the Port

## Hunkering Down – Hurricane Season is Here

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Last fall, Superstorm Sandy gave us all a pretty good warning and some of us got a pretty good beating. Almost without exception, we in the Northeast get the tail, shoulder or rump of one or two of the dozen or so hurricanes that form each summer in the Atlantic between the Caribbean. Sandy did most of its damage when it arrived at a flooding spring tide and pushed it higher and higher. Most of us live on an island or along the mainland coast...and Hurricane season has just begun. This column is about that.

### Tidal surges

As Sandy demonstrated, as bad as the winds are (more on that below), it's the tidal surges that do most of the damage. 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. Sandy generated a 10-foot tidal surge in places. Andrew, in 1992, generated a storm tide of 17 feet. Camille in 1969? 24 feet. Add to that the population growth in our area and the increase in home values, and it can spell either "an absolute disaster" or "they were prepared."

### What is it?

A hurricane is, in the words of scientists, an organized rotating weather system that develops in the tropics. Technically, it's a "tropical cyclone" and 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?

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

### Category, Winds(mph), Type of Damage Expected, Examples

1	74-95	Anything not tied down is going to be lost; don't get hit by it.	Irene, 1999, Sandy 2012
2	96-110	Trees will go down. Roofs in trouble.	Floyd, 1999 Georges, 1998
3	111-130	Many trees will go down, along with small buildings	Betsy, 1965 Alicia, 1983
4	131-155	Complete failures of some small buildings. Complete destruction of many structures	Hugo, 1989
5	156->	Catastrophe. Wrath of God.	Andrew, 1992 Katrina, 2005

### 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. The Gold Coasts, on both sides of Long Island Sound, will be flattened. But what if the glancing blow like Ivan's in 2004 or Earl, who came by earlier in 2012, came in head-on? How can you be ready?

### Before the storm arrives

1. Have a family action plan – if you're at caught at school or at work, who do you call?
2. Flashlights 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...(more on that next month!)
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 bathtub 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. Two feet of flowing water can carry your car away. Yes, only two feet of moving water. Turn around and go another way. If there is no other way, call 9-1-1 or the US Coast Guard.

Continued on page 45