

# *Hurricane Preparedness at Oyster Bay Marina*

The following presents guidance for preparing the Oyster Bay marina and boats for a hurricane. The goals are to protect human life, prevent personal injury, minimize exposure of marina property to damage, minimize damage to property that cannot be relocated, and restore normal operations as quickly as possible. Planning in advance to act in a timely and effective manner is important to success.

It is important to prevent boats from moving about and damaging themselves, the marina, and other boats. During a direct-hit, high-category hurricane no marina is a realistic sanctuary for boats of any type. And recent experience has proven that marina docks and boats are less likely to sustain damage during a hurricane if all boats are evacuated. Wet slips are not designed to protect boats during heavy winds and/or storm surge, which tend to push and pound boats against pilings, docks, and other vessels. Remember that all boat owners are responsible for the safety of their boat and possible damage to its immediate surroundings.

The dock committee at Oyster Bay marina strongly encourages early evacuation of all boats in wet slips to a safe haven, most preferably, suitably anchored on land. It is each boat owner's responsibility to make safe haven arrangements for their boat(s).

Preparing for a hurricane successfully depends on how early and how orderly we all act. Failure to act quickly because a storm may not hit us directly is not advisable. Remember, wet slips should be evacuated early to allow residents time to evacuate the region, should that become necessary.

Boat owners should be well into preparation during any U.S. Weather Service Hurricane "WATCH" phase. All boats should be evacuated by the time a hurricane "WARNING" is issued. Obviously, your preparations must be completed prior to any Emergency Management Agency call for evacuation of the area because of a major storm.

## **When to Take Action**

By the beginning of hurricane season each boat owner should make certain that they have:

1. purchased sufficient boat insurance (Note that Oyster Bay Condominium regulations require that all boats be insured and that a copy of the Certificate of Insurance be filed annually with the management company. If you have not done so, please do so now)
2. arranged in advance for haul out in the event of a major storm, or
3. in the event that haul out is not possible, boat owners should ensure they have extra lines, chafe gear, etc. ready to install. (once a storm is approaching it will be too late to purchase these items as the shelves are likely to be bare.)

The following page contains a list of hints that may be of help to prevent damage to your boat, our marina and other nearby property.

## **ACTIONS TO TAKE ONCE A STORM IS IDENTIFIED AS POTENTIALLY IMPACTING OYSTER BAY:**

**HAUL YOUR BOAT(S) TO A SAFE LOCATION AND HAVE IT PROPERLY SECURED. ALL BOAT OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF THEIR BOAT AND POSSIBLE DAMAGE TO ITS IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS. IF YOU CANNOT HAUL YOUR BOAT(S) FOR ANY REASON, THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE IS PROVIDED:**

1. Remove anything that can blow away, such as biminis, dodgers, sails, antennas, outriggers and deck gear such as grills and inflatable boats on deck or in davits. It doesn't matter how secure the gear seems to be -- hurricane-force winds can shred sails and canvas and destroy equipment even if it remains in place. Take the extra time to remove everything possible.
2. Double all lines and add additional spring lines fore and aft and add additional breast lines.
3. Consider what will happen to the boat's dock lines if water rises far above normal levels, such as 3-4 feet higher than the dock height. If the vessel ties to a fixed dock, that pier likely may be under water during the storm. Adjust lines accordingly, making them long enough so the vessel still can move if it's floating high above the attachment points, and move the lines to points high on pilings if possible. To the extent possible, make the ends of the lines adjustable from the dock, even with the lines under a load.
4. Protect dock lines by installing chafe gear, doubling up lines in critical places in case one breaks and inspecting all potential chafe points. If a line passes over a potential chafe point on the dock or the boat, change it so that it won't rub.
5. Close all thru-hulls except for those that drain the cockpit and bilge, and seal any above the waterline vents, drains and other potential places for water to get into the boat. Consider taping around hatches and companionways, because in a hurricane, water gets everywhere.
6. Charge the batteries and make sure the bilge pump works.
7. Unplug the boat from the dock. In fact, the electricity may be turned off before a hurricane strikes, because the power supply may wind up under water.
8. Boat owners preparing a vessel in a slip for a hurricane may want to consider removing any marine electronics, especially items that are easily portable such as marine VHF radio, chart plotters, etc. If something does happen to the boat, the electronics can cost thousands to replace.
9. In addition, it's critical to look at the neighbors' boats and potentially to take action to correct deficiencies in preparation. Gear from a poorly prepared boat can damage an adjacent boat that's well-prepared for the storm. For example, if the genoa on a neighbor's sailboat unfurls during the storm, the resulting windage could cause that boat to damage docks, neighboring boats or even pilings to which other boats are tied. If the neighbor's boat has multiple pieces of loose gear on deck, that gear can become airborne and damage other vessels or injure people in the vicinity.
10. All of the above must be completed before the water level rises above the pier decking. Once water reaches this level no one should attempt to access the docks.