**2023 MEMA Hurricane Season Messaging & Social Media Toolkit**

**HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT:**The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has developed this toolkit to help you share important hurricane preparedness messages in your community. The toolkit includes key messages, which can be tailored to write local press releases or blog posts, and sample social media posts and graphics that can be used or adapted for your community.

**KEY MESSAGING POINTS:**

**Before a Hurricane**

* [Know Your Zone](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/hurricane-evacuation-zones) - Learn if you live in a hurricane evacuation zone.
* Find out whether your property is in a flood-prone or high-risk area by viewing the [Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) flood maps.](https://msc.fema.gov/portal)
* Create and review your [family emergency plan](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/make-a-family-emergency-plan).
	+ If you live or work in a flood zone, [hurricane evacuation zone](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/hurricane-evacuation-zones), or an area that is prone to flooding, you should be prepared to [evacuate](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safety-tips-for-evacuations).
	+ If you receive medical treatment or home health care services, work with your medical provider to determine how to maintain care and service if you are unable to leave your home or have to evacuate.
* Build an [emergency kit](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/build-an-emergency-kit) for disasters that contains items that will sustain you & your family's specific needs if you are not able to leave your home.
* [Prepare your home](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/prepare-your-home-for-emergencies):
	+ Elevating your furnace, water heater, and electric panel to higher floors if they may be at risk during a flood.
	+ Ensure your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working and have fresh batteries.
	+ If you live in a coastal community, review the [Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Coastal Hazards](https://www.mass.gov/doc/homeowners-handbook-to-prepare-for-coastal-hazards/download).
* **Coastal and inland flooding are significant hazards during a tropical storm or hurricane. Flood losses are not typically covered under renter and homeowner’s insurance policies.** Consider purchasing flood insurance through the [National Flood Insurance Plan (NFIP).](https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program)
	+ Flood insurance is available in most communities whether or not your building is in a flood-prone area, but there is a 30-day waiting period before it goes into effect.

**When a Hurricane or Topical Storm Is Approaching**

* Listen to local news stations and public officials for the latest information and updates.
* Follow instructions from public safety officials. If told to evacuate, do so immediately. If you must evacuate your home, take only essential items, including your emergency kit, and bring your pets.
* If you are not asked to evacuate and planning on riding out the storm at home, gather adequate supplies in case you lose power and water for several days and you are unable to leave.
* Prepare for [power outages](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips) by charging cell phones and electronics and setting your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings. If you use electricity to get well water, fill your bathtub with water to use for flushing toilets.
* [Prepare your home](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/prepare-your-home-for-emergencies):
	+ Secure or bring in outdoor objects (patio furniture, children's toys, trash cans, etc.) that could be swept away or damaged during strong winds or flooding.
	+ If damaging winds are expected, cover all of your windows. If you don’t have storm shutters, board up windows with 5/8” exterior-grade or marine plywood.
	+ Prepare for [flooding](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/flood-safety-tips) by elevating items in your basement, checking your sump pump, unplugging sensitive electronic equipment, clearing nearby catch basins, and parking vehicles in areas not prone to flooding.
* If you or someone you care for has a disability, consider the following:
	+ Keep a list of names and numbers of doctors, pharmacists, and family members and others who support you on hand. Write down and keep the web address and passwords for any health portals you need to use to communicate with healthcare providers.
	+ Keep a list and adequate supply of medications and copies of prescriptions on hand.
	+ Keep a list of vaccination records, allergies, and special equipment you might need, such as oxygen and hearing aids. If possible, have special equipment from your list ready to take with you if you need to evacuate.
	+ If you use an augmentative or alternative communications device or other assistive technologies, plan how you will evacuate with the devices and accessories (e.g. extra hearing aid batteries) or how you will replace equipment if it is lost or destroyed. Keep model information and note where the equipment came from (Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance, etc.).
	+ Plan how you will communicate with others if your equipment is not working, including pen and paper, laminated cards with phrases and/or pictograms.
* Commonwealth residents and visitors who have limited English proficiency should be encouraged to contact 2-1-1 for information before, during, and after a storm. Language lines are available.

**During a Hurricane**

* Follow instructions from public safety officials. If told to evacuate, do so immediately. If you must evacuate your home, take only essential items, including your emergency kit, and bring your pets.
* Avoid driving or going outdoors during a storm. Flooding and damaging winds can make traveling dangerous.
* During strong winds in a hurricane, take shelter in a basement or an interior room (closet, interior hallway) on the lowest level of a building away from windows, doors, and outside walls.
* If you must evacuate or are traveling during flooding, remember:
	+ Do not walk through flowing water. Most drownings occur during flash floods. Six inches of swiftly moving water can knock you off your feet.
	+ Don’t drive through flooded roads - “Turn Around, Don’t Drown!” Cars can be swept away in only two feet of moving water. If your vehicle is trapped in rapidly moving water, stay in the vehicle. If the water is rising inside the vehicle, seek refuge on the roof.
	+ Do not drive around road barriers. Roads and bridges may be washed out or structurally unsound.
* If you’re sheltering in place, listen to local news outlets for updates. Conditions may change quickly, so be prepared to evacuate if necessary.
* If you have a disability and have to evacuate your home, consider wearing a medical alert tag or bracelet to let emergency workers know about your healthcare needs, or write your needs on paper and keep it with you.
	+ If you need help securing accessible transportation, contact your local public safety officials.

**After a Hurricane**

* If you have evacuated, return home only when authorities say it is safe to do so. Check with local officials or call 2-1-1 to find shelter locations and other disaster information.
* Be a good neighbor. Check on family, friends, and neighbors, especially the elderly, those who live alone, those with medical conditions and those who may need additional assistance.
* Stay away from downed utility wires.  Always assume a downed power line is live.
* If your power is out, follow these [power outage safety tips](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips).
	+ Report power outages to your utility company.
	+ Use generators and grills outside because their fumes contain carbon monoxide. Make sure your carbon monoxide detectors are working as it is a silent, odorless, killer. See more [Generator Safety Tips](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/generator-safety).
* Don’t drive through flooded roads - “Turn Around, Don’t Drown!” Do not drive around road barriers. Roads and bridges may be washed out or structurally unsound.
* Check your home for damage:
	+ If your home or property is damaged, take photos or videos to document your damage, and contact your insurance company.
* Clean and disinfect anything that got wet. Protect yourself during cleanup by wearing appropriate protective equipment such as gloves, safety glasses, and face masks.
* People with mental health disorders may react more strongly to natural disasters and other emergencies. The stress from needing to evacuate from your home can trigger negative thoughts and feelings that can make mental disorders worse.
	+ In a crisis, call 9-1-1 or call or text SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990

**SOCIAL MEDIA DETAILS:**

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| TWITTER HANDLES TO FOLLOW | LINKS | HASHTAGS TO USE |
| @MassEMA@NWSBoston@NWSAlbany@NHC\_Atlantic@femaregion1 | Main Hurricane Safety Tips Website:[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) Evacuation Zones:<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/hurricane-evacuation-zones> Friendly URL:[www.mass.gov/knowyourzone](http://www.mass.gov/knowyourzone) Power Outage Safety Tips:<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips> Friendly URL:[www.mass.gov/mema/power-outages](http://www.mass.gov/mema/power-outages) | #HurricanePrep#KnowYourZone |

**SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS:**

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| **SAMPLE POSTS** |
| Know what #Hurricane terms mean: Hurricane Watch = hurricane conditions (sustained winds >74 MPH) possible within 48 hours - be prepared!Hurricane Warning = hurricane conditions expected within 36 hours - take action![www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| Do you know the difference between #hurricane watches & warnings, #TropicalStorm watches & warnings and #StormSurge watches & warnings? Learn the terms and how to prepare:[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| **Before a Hurricane** |
| DYK #hurricanes can affect both coastal & inland areas in Massachusetts?Learn more and how to prepare:[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) #HurricanePrep |
| DYK: Hurricanes and tropical storms can bring storm surge, high winds, heavy rainfall, inland flooding & tornadoes and can impact all areas of Massachusetts?Learn how to prepare yourself, your family, and your property: [www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes)#HurricanePrep |
| August and September are historically the peak of hurricane season in Massachusetts.#HurricanePrep: [www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes)#KnowYourZone: [www.mass.gov/knowyourzone](http://www.mass.gov/knowyourzone) |
| #Hurricanes & tropical storms can cause damage far away from the coast - W. Mass had significant damage from TS Irene with heavy rain/inland flooding and strong winds. 1) #KnowYourZone 2) Build A Kit 3) Make A Family Plan 4) Stay Informed[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes)  |
| DYK Hurricane Season continues through November 30th?Take steps now to prepare which can also be used for other hazards throughout the year.#HurricanePrep Steps 1) #KnowYourZone 2) Build A Kit 3) Make A Family Plan 4) Stay Informed: [www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| Do you live, work, or vacation in a #hurricane #evacuation zone? Find out with this interactive map: [www.mass.gov/knowyourzone](http://www.mass.gov/knowyourzone)#KnowYourZone #HurricanePrep |
| Learn if you live in a hurricane evacuation zone that may need to evacuate during a hurricane or tropical storm: [www.mass.gov/knowyourzone](http://www.mass.gov/knowyourzone) #HurricanePrep #KnowYourZone |
| If you live in an area that may #flood and may need an accessible transportation option to evacuate • Plan with family, neighbors, friends to assist.• Contact local public safety officials to make them aware of your needs.<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/emergency-preparedness-for-individuals-with-disabilities-and-access-and-functional>  |
| Prior to a #hurricane, create and review your family emergency plan.• Have a plan to go to higher ground quickly if necessary.• If you live or work in a flood zone, hurricane evacuation zone, or an area prone to flooding, be prepared to evacuate.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| Is your family ready for a #hurricane? Create a family emergency plan so you’ll know what to do: [www.mass.gov/info-details/make-a-family-emergency-plan](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/make-a-family-emergency-plan) #HurricanePrep |
| If you receive medical treatments or home health care services, work with your medical provider to determine how to maintain care and service if you are unable to leave your home during a hurricane or other emergency. [www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) #HurricanePrep |
| If your medical equipment uses electricity, talk to health care providers, utility company & your personal support network for how to use them and options during a power outage.[www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips) #HurricanePrep |
| Emergency kits should include essential items that will help sustain you & your family for 3+ days. See our checklist of items to include and customize for the needs of your family: [www.mass.gov/info-details/build-an-emergency-kit](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/build-an-emergency-kit) #ReadyMA #HurricanePrep |
| Doing renovations? Tips for properties in areas that may flood during a #hurricane:• Elevate a furnace, water heater, & electric panel to higher floors• Install a sump pump• Install check valves in sewer lines to prevent floodwater from backing up[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes)  |
| Make sure your home has working Carbon Monoxide (CO) & smoke detectors with fresh batteries:[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes)#HurricanePrep |
| Don't Be Left in the Dark!#Hurricanes often cause #PowerOutages. Find out how to prepare: [www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips)#HurricanePrep #ReadyMA |
| The Massachusetts Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Coastal Hazards has vital information on how residents can prepare for #hurricanes, #noreasters & #floods & other hazards:<https://www.mass.gov/doc/homeowners-handbook-to-prepare-for-coastal-hazards/download> #HurricanePrep |
| Whether you are inside or outside of a flood prone area & whether you are a homeowner, renter, or business owner, you can purchase a flood insurance policy from the National Flood Insurance Program.Call your insurance agent to get info<https://www.mass.gov/guides/floodplain-management> #HurricanePrep |
| Most homeowners’ and renters’ insurance does not cover flood damage. Learn more about flood insurance at <http://FloodSmart.gov> #HurricanePrep |
| 🌀🚨 Hurricane Preparedness for People with Access/Functional Needs 🚨🌀1️⃣ Create an emergency kit tailored to your needs: medications, medical supplies, mobility aids, batteries, etc. Don't forget a communication plan!2️⃣ Stay informed! Follow local authorities for updates and evacuation orders. Use accessible sources for information.3️⃣ Register with your local emergency management agency to receive assistance during evacuations and sheltering.🧵4️⃣ Plan your evacuation route in advance. Consider accessible transportation options and locations with necessary accommodations.5️⃣ Notify neighbors, friends, and family about your situation and emergency plan. Stay connected for support and updates. |

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| **When a Hurricane or Topical Storm Is Approaching** |
| Listen to local news stations and public officials for the latest information and updates.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes)#HurricanePrep |
| Follow instructions from public safety officials. If told to evacuate, do so immediately. If you must evacuate your home, take only essential items, including your emergency kit, and bring your pets.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes)#HurricanePrep |
| • Prepare for power outages by charging cell phones and electronics and setting your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings. • If you use electricity to get well water, fill your bathtub with water to use for flushing toilets.[www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips)#HurricanePrep |
| Tie down or bring in outdoor objects (patio furniture, children’s toys, trash cans, etc.) that could be swept away or damaged during strong winds or flooding.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) #HurricanePrep |
| Unplug sensitive electronic equipment before flooding occurs. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) #HurricanePrep |
| Before a #flood:• Elevate items stored in the basement and other low-lying flood prone areas to minimize damage from flooding. • If you have a sump pump, check that it is functioning properly. [www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) #HurricanePrep |
| Before a #flood:Clear street catch basins and storm drains to prevent or reduce street flooding.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) #HurricanePrep |
| If you use medical devices, augmentative or alternative communications devices or other assistive technologies, plan how you will evacuate with the devices and accessories (e.g. extra hearing aid batteries) #hurricaneprep |

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| **During a Hurricane** |
| Follow instructions from public safety officials. If told to evacuate, do so immediately. If you must evacuate your home, take only essential items, including your emergency kit, and bring your pets.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| Avoid driving or going outdoors during a storm. Flooding and damaging winds can make traveling dangerous. [www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| During strong winds in a hurricane, take shelter in a basement or an interior room (closet, interior hallway) on the lowest level of a building away from windows, doors, and outside walls.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| Do not drive or walk into water. It only takes 6 inches of swiftly moving water to knock you off your feet![www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| Turn around, don’t drown! • Never drive into a flooded roadway. Cars can be swept away in 2 ft. of moving water. • Do not drive around road barriers. Roads and bridges may be washed out or structurally unsound.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| If you’re sheltering in place, listen to local news outlets for updates. Conditions may change quickly, so be prepared to evacuate if necessary.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| 🚨🏃‍♀️ Need Help Evacuating? Here's What to Do: 🏃‍♂️🚨Call 911 and inform them about your situation. Clearly state that you need help with evacuation.Provide your exact location and any relevant details about your access or functional needs. |
| @Mass211 provides shelter assistance in various languages. Visit their website or call 2-1-1 for language-specific guidance. |
| If you lose power and need to plug in your medical device, call 2-1-1 or your local public safety officials to find a shelter location. |

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| **After a Hurricane** |
| If you have evacuated, return home only when authorities say it is safe to do so. Check with local officials or call 2-1-1 to find shelter locations and other disaster information.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| Be a good neighbor. Check on family, friends, and neighbors, especially the elderly, those who live alone, those with medical conditions and those who may need additional assistance.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| Power Outage Safety Tips:• Avoid downed power lines & assume they are live• Call 9-1-1 to report downed lines• Call your utility company to report power outages. • Keep #generators outside & away from buildingPower outage safety tips: [www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips) |
| Using a generator because the power is out?• Keep generators outside and away from house. Carbon monoxide can kill. Make sure CO detectors are working.• Follow manufacturer’s guidelines when using a generator.• Generator safety tips: <http://bit.ly/2H1nTBn>  |
| Turn around, don’t drown! • Never drive into a flooded roadway. Cars can be swept away in 2 ft. of moving water. • Do not drive around road barriers. Roads and bridges may be washed out or structurally unsound.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes)  |
| Flooded homes can be dangerous• Stay away from electrical utility equipment after a storm or if it is wet to prevent being electrocuted.• Get a professional to check for loose wires, mold and hidden damage before re-entering.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| If your home or property experienced #flood damage, take photos or videos to document the damage and contact your insurance company. Learn more about how to recover after a disaster: <http://bit.ly/2CvEECF>  |
| Clean and disinfect anything that got wet. Protect yourself during cleanup by wearing appropriate protective equipment such as gloves, safety glasses, and face masks.[www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes](http://www.mass.gov/mema/hurricanes) |
| Stress from needing to evacuate from your home can trigger negative thoughts & feelings. In a crisis, call 9-1-1 or call or text SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 |

**Social Images:**

MEMA has developed a library of Hurricane Preparedness graphics available for download: <https://tinyurl.com/MEMA-graphics>. Find additional infographics from the [National Weather Service](https://www.weather.gov/wrn/hurricane_infographics) and [FEMA](https://www.ready.gov/collection/hurricane-preparedness-graphics).

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON REACHING UNDESERVED** **POPULATIONS**

**Language Access:** This toolkit, including messaging and graphics, is available in Spanish. MEMA has both physical and digital copies of preparedness flyers translated in seven languages, which are available here: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/emergency-preparedness-flyers-and-toolkits>.

**Access & Functional Needs**: Be sure to include alternative text for your graphics on social media, and consider that not everyone in your community uses social media. Reaching individuals with access and function needs is especially important since this population may need to take extra steps to ensure they are prepared for emergencies. Consider reaching out to or posting hurricane preparedness messaging within the following: places of worship, senior/community centers, housing authorities, public transportation (i.e. bus shelters). For Hurricane Preparedness Week July 10-14, consider sending a message out through the community alert system if your city/town has one.