



The Lighthouse

Be prepared for hurricane season

SSH Marina Guide

“Palms are like cockroaches. They were here long before us, and they’ll be here long after us. They’re the only things standing after a hurricane.”

—Robert Irwin

The official six month hurricane season starts June 1, and runs through November 30. Keep in mind mother nature doesn’t pay attention to a calendar. We could have a hurricane in May, December, or any time in between. They are just more likely around the end of August or the first of September. Don’t wait to prepare!

Before the storm

A great website to visit is Boat/U.S.’ hurricane resource center www.boatus.com/hurricanes. This site has lots of good information including a preparation worksheet and guide, what to do after a strike and weather links.

More insurance companies are requiring you to submit a written hurricane plan to obtain named windstorm coverage. Make sure that if you submit one of these, you have the means to actually carry out your plan, and do it if needed. It is also recommend documenting through pic-



Be prepared and follow through with the South Shore Harbour Marina checklist on page 5.

tures that you have carried out your plan, in case you have a claim later. Be sure you are aware of any other actions your insurance company requires.

Even if they don’t require a plan, you should have one. The forms at the BoatU.S. site will help you with that. You should have the plan written and ready to go before June 1. Remember, hurricanes don’t pay attention to schedules —

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Get your groove on in Port Arthur

Spring Fling returns to the Pleasure Island Marina in Port Arthur, Texas over the Memorial Day weekend, May 26-29, in what has become Port Arthur’s third largest annual event. More than 130 sailboats and motor yachts and over 600 people from all over the Gulf Coast are expected to join in the festivities.

Activities include nightly live bands, catered dinners, educational

TMCA Spring Fling set for May 26-29

seminars, boating safety demonstrations, games, costume and lip sync contests and small boat races. The theme this year is Feelin’ Groovy: Peace, Love, and Boating. Participants are encouraged to dress in 1960s clothes and costumes, emphasizing the late 60s summer of love look.

Spring Fling is an annual event of the Texas Mariners Cruising Association (TMCA), the largest non-profit social boating organization on the Gulf Coast with more than 750 members. This year marks the seventh

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Spring Fling

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anniversary of Spring Fling, and the fourth year it has been held at the Pleasure Island Marina. "Spring Fling became so popular so fast that we quickly outgrew many other marinas," said Spring Fling Chair, Christopher Bown.

Bown says his committee searched all over for another place large enough to hold more than 100 large boats and he says, "we found this amazing gem of a marina on Pleasure Island." With enough space for well over 200 boats and lots of room for all the activities, Bown declares, "Pleasure Island is the ideal location." Bown says Spring Fling would not have moved to Pleasure Island, though, "without the amazing members of the Port Arthur Yacht Club whose enthusiasm and volunteerism helps make all this possible each year."

TMCA created Spring Fling in 2011 to encourage boaters to get back out on the water after the winter months.

Destinations are selected to allow sailors and power boaters to travel some distance away from their usual recreational

areas and even go offshore in the Gulf enroute. To further encourage offshore sailing, the Port Arthur Yacht Club organizes the Spring Fling Regatta from Galveston to Port Arthur on the opening day of Spring Fling.

Although TMCA and the Port Arthur Yacht Club are private organizations, Spring Fling is open to the general public. "Anyone can sail in, motor in, drive in or walk in," Bown said. Tickets at the gate for the entire weekend are \$20 per person. If you prefer go by boat, slip fees with electricity and water are \$200 for the extended weekend. Tickets and slip rentals are available online at www.TMCASpringFling.com.



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Hurricane season

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they can hit earlier than June.

Take an inventory of what is on your boat (video is good for this) and decide ahead of time what you would leave and what you would remove from the boat in case a storm approaches. Have your insurance company contact information handy in case you need it after a storm.

Don't forget that the overall condition of your vessel is important. Leaky shaft logs or I/O drives can sink you when the

power goes out. If water is leaking into your boat, get it fixed now, no matter what the source. Bilge pumps can quickly exhaust the battery charge if they're run-

Remember ...
Life always comes before property. Be safe and protect yourself. Possessions can always be replaced.

ning all the time. Your cleats, winches and chocks should be in good shape and strongly attached to the boat with proper backing plates. Be sure you have plenty of lines in good shape to double line everything. If you wait until a hurricane is in the Gulf of Mexico, you probably won't find any lines down at the marine store by the time you get there. Be sure your fuel and water tanks are topped off.

Do you have your South Shore Harbour window sticker on your vehicles? If you don't have one, you may not be allowed into the marina when you need to be. Be sure to get one from the office if you don't have one. Also, make sure you have provided the marina with an alternate contact person who can prepare your boat or assist after the storm if you're out of town.

David Pascoe has some great information on his site about preparing for hurricanes: <http://tinyurl.com/9nc46>.

While not boat specific, here is a great site for general hurricane facts and preparation information from NOAA: <http://tinyurl.com/n7b6>.

MINIMUM MOORING LINE STANDARDS

Yacht Size (Overall Length)	Primary Line Size (Diameter)	Spring Line Size (Diameter)
Up to 23 ft.	3/8"	3/8"
24 to 32 ft.	1/2"	1/2"
33 to 42 ft.	5/8"	1/2"
43 to 51 ft.	3/4"	3/4"
Over 51 ft.	1"	1"

- Use only 3 strand laid or braided nylon. No polypropylene, manila, sisal, etc.
- Chafe gear: Neoprene water hose, polyester sleeves, sewn-on leather (not tape). Old fire hose and heavy denim work well too. Secure one end tightly with the other a bit loose, to allow line to stretch. For waterproof hose, make sure to punch some holes to allow water to enter. Nylon can actually melt from chafe.
- Cut chafe gear at least 2-3 feet long. Nylon will stretch to 150% of its normal length under heavy stress.
- Tip: Wash your lines once or twice a year. Dirt and salt get into the fibers and abrade the rope from inside. You can use a little laundry detergent in a bucket of cold water, or run them through your washing machine on gentle cycle. Use fabric softener in the rinse and hang up to dry, do not use a dryer. This will help your lines stay softer and last longer.

When a hurricane is imminent

One of the best benefits of staying in South Shore Harbour is you are pretty far off the bay, and very well protected. The hotel and apartments provide a decent windbreak for most of the marina. The floating docks are nice as well, because you can tie off tightly, and not have to worry about leaving slack as you would with a fixed dock. What type of lines should you use? Most prefer double braid nylon, because it stretches less than three strand nylon. While three strand nylon makes a great anchor rode, it does so because it can stretch up to 150% of its original length, acting as a shock absorber and keeping the anchor set.

If you are tied to a floating dock, you need to keep the boat right where you tied it up, and not banging around from side to side. Be sure to move the boat away from the center dock, so it doesn't start banging up against it with high wind loads. This is especially true if you're backed into your slip

and have a swim platform. Many boats sink during hurricanes because the swim platform supports are driven through the hull. Double up on every line and use chafe protection. During storms, most lines fail because they chafe through at wear points. Read the checklist on page 5 for tips on how to prepare.

Weather information

Get your weather information from the internet, preferably from the National Hurricane Center at: www.nhc.noaa.gov. This information is as accurate as it gets, and is presented factually. A couple of other ones that are good include: www.wunderground.com/tropical and www.hurricane-track.com.

A good portable radio that picks up NOAA's weather stations is very helpful, especially when you don't have Internet access. Your marine VHF picks these up, and Radio Shack® and others have portable units as well. Everybody should have one. Television and radio can be a good resource after the storm.

— SOUTH SHORE HARBOUR HURRICANE CHECKLIST —

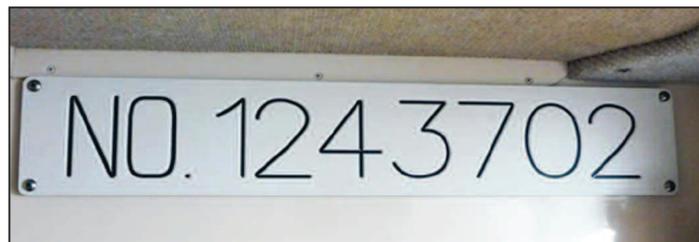
1. Install storm lines and chafe gear. Double line everything.
2. Remove roller furling headsails.
3. Lash sail covers or remove sails completely.
4. Lower bimini (lash to deck or take ashore).
5. Remove tarps from dock canopies.
6. Make sure your dock box is locked, to keep the cover closed.
7. Remove shore power cords, phone line cords and shore water hose.
8. Remove all deck gear that could blow around in the storm (stow below or take ashore).
9. Dinghies must be removed from the marina.
10. Shut off all lines to fuel, propane, alcohol tanks, etc.
11. Remove any propane tanks that are exposed outdoors.
11. Fill water tanks and close valves.
12. Close fuel tank valves and tape over vents to prevent water from blowing in.
13. Charge batteries and turn off all DC systems except automatic bilge pumps.
14. Close all seacocks except cockpit drains (make sure drain hoses are secure).
15. Secure or remove all articles inside vessel (take breakable and expensive articles including electronics ashore).
16. Remove or plug all ventilation cowls and close deck plates.
17. Plug engine exhaust ports to keep water out.
18. Secure and seal all hatches and companionway covers.
19. Duct tape all seams at windows, hatches, cowlings, etc.
19. Check to be sure all lines are tied properly and will not slip off cleats, either on the boat or the dock. Make sure chafe protection is on all wear points.
20. Secure fenders at base of stanchions, NOT on lifelines.
21. Remove all important documents from the boat, such as Federal documentation, insurance policy, state registrations, etc.
22. Ensure that your shaft logs are not leaking excessively. Remember that when the power is out for a few days, the bilge pumps may exhaust your batteries.
23. Do not stay aboard. Evacuate by a planned route.

Be wary of U.S. postal mailed renewal notices

Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatU.S.) Consumer Protection Department is advising boaters with vessels having a U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Documentation to be wary of any letter arriving by U.S. mail offering renewal. An increasing number of BoatU.S. members have complained that these letters direct them to websites that may be mistaken for the actual U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Documentation Center located in Falling Waters, West Virginia, and appear to show a significant increase in the annual fee to renew U.S. Coast Guard (U.S.C.G.) documentation.

BoatU.S. advises that while the U.S.C.G. does send official annual renewal notices by U.S. mail, other notices being received by members are not from the U.S.C.G. but rather third-party companies whose name or return addresses may appear similar to that of the official U.S.C.G. Vessel Documentation Center. Members of the half-million boat owners group report the letters look like “real” U.S.C.G. communications. Some examples members have forwarded to BoatU.S. do not have any disclaimers noting that they are not official correspondence.

While third-party companies may legitimately provide services to assist with vessel documentation renewals, the U.S.C.G.’s own renewal process is simple for most vessels and the price, \$26, is often much lower than what third-party services may charge. To renew, go to the U.S.C.G.



Official-looking vessel documentation renewal notices can lead to confusion and higher costs.

National Documentation Center website at www.uscg.mil/nvdc and click on “*instructions and forms.*”

To be documented, a vessel must measure at least 5 net tons and, with the exception of certain oil-spill response vessels, owned by a U.S. citizen. Boats about 27 feet in length or longer generally meet the weight requirement.

If boat owners wish to file a consumer complaint about this or any other boating-related advertisement or company, BoatU.S. welcomes boaters to visit <http://my.boatus.com/consumer/dispute.asp> and click on “*send us a complaint*” button.

BoatU.S. also advises boaters who may have received mail that they believe is misleading or deceptive may contact the U.S. Postal Inspection Service at 1 (877) 876-2455 or through its website <https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov>.



South Shore Harbour Marina

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—Dave Anderson

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