

It's Hurricane Season Again in Eastern North Carolina!

SEA HARBOUR YACHT CLUB STORM INSTRUCTIONS

Although September and October are the prime months for tropical storms in this area, we have experienced “named storms” as early as July.

Sea Harbour Yacht Club (SHYC) policy clearly states that it is the **BOAT OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY** to prepare their boat for storm conditions. All the moorage agreements also make it clear that **it is the slip-holders responsibility to prepare their boat** for any severe storm or hurricane.

The SHYC staff is responsible for preparing the grounds and facilities. This preparation plus preparing our homes takes about three to four days, so we have to start early. A day before the projected arrival of storm conditions we will prepare to pull all the boats on “C” and “D” docks that are moored wharf style off the piers into the creek, and you may only be able to reach them with a dinghy. **If your boat is in a wharf slip, you or your representative will need to be here to help with this project.** This is to protect the boats and the piers during the storm.

There is normally a group of boat owners who come and man the storm watch at the club. These folks perform an extraordinary service for you. They walk the docks in truly wretched conditions trying to give your pride and joy the best possible chance to survive the storm with little damage. Unprepared boats create unnecessary workload and exposure to injury for the volunteers. Unfortunately, **the SHYC staff is unable to prepare your boat for a storm.**

FIRST AND FOREMOST INFORM THE STAFF BY EMAIL OR TELEPHONE OF YOUR PLAN TO PREPARE YOUR BOAT. INCLUDING THE DATE AND TIME YOU OR YOUR REPRESENTATIVE WILL ARRIVE TO PREP YOUR BOAT.

Insure primary dock lines and spring lines are in good shape and of adequate size and length.

For storm conditions you need at least ½ inch three strand nylon for primary dock lines for small boats, and 5/8 or ¾ inch for larger boats. Remember, chafe resistance is as important as breaking strength, so have appropriate chaffing gear on all lines.

Make sure that the cleats or other attachment points on the boat are of sufficient size for the lines.

You will be rigging extra lines as part of storm preparation and will need secure places to tie them on the boat.

Have a full compliment of lines in place.

Spring lines fore and aft should be used to hold the boat in position in the slip.

Bow and stern lines should be used to position the boat side to side in the slip. They need to be as long as possible to allow for the greatest rise and fall of water.

The maximum rise and fall of the water level outside of storm season is about 3 feet. In 1999, Dennis 1 & 2 reached 6.5 to 7 feet above normal in Pierce Creek. However, the 100 year flood level in Pamlico County is 8.5 feet above normal water level. This is about 2' above the handrails on C and D docks. During Hurricane Irene, we had water at the clubhouse deck – 10+ feet above normal!

When we are on the east and southeast sides of a storm, the water will be blown out of the creek, and it normally goes out very fast when pushed by 80 mph winds. Your lines have to account for low water as well as high water. The good thing is that it can only go about 6 feet below normal in any case. Then the boat is in the mud.

Keep the adjustable (bitter) end of your lines on the pier.

Once the water level goes up it is hard and dangerous to climb up on the boats, and this will not be done. Please insure that any adjustment length you have on your lines is on the piers so we can tend your boat without leaving the pier. Leave only enough extra line on the pier to handle the rise in water. Place the rest of the line on board and secure it. When adjusting lines in high water it is very difficult to work with long lines. **DO NOT, REPEATEDLY WRAP THE LINE AROUND THE DOCK CLEAT!!!** Single wrap and tie it off. When using a cleat to secure a line, make a single wrap around the piling, tie it off with a single weather cleat knot and coil any excess line on the pier.

Double up lines for extra protection.

Adding lines to double the spring, bow and stern lines is a good idea. Remember line strength is not the only thing to consider. Line chafe is equally important. Two lines give you twice the chafe resistance. Please don't double a line by taking the free end and running it out to the piling. You need two completely different lines to get the full benefit.

Secure any items on deck whenever you leave the boat.

Sea Harbour strongly recommends and may require that all sails, dodgers, and biminis be removed. The boom end can then be lowered and secured to reduce both windage and movement. Dodger and bimini frames should be collapsed and wrapped when you leave the boat during the storm season.

Finally, please take your water hose and power cord on board when preparing for storms. During Dennis and Isabel some of the most difficult problems encountered were the numerous water hoses floating in the water. Items such as air conditioners and outboards should also be stowed below. You should not leave anything on the dock at any time but especially during storm season.

What to take home from Sea Harbour Yacht Club

The following items should be taken home or stowed below on your boat prior to a Hurricane:

GARDEN HOSES AND POWER CORDS
DINGHYS, OARS, DINGHY SEATS AND GEAR
OUTBOARD MOTORS
GAS CANS, DIESEL CANS, ETC
KAYAKS
ANYTHING IN YOUR DOCK BOX THAT WATER WOULD HARM
BETTER YET, TAKE YOUR DOCK BOX HOME IF YOU CAN

It is easier to spend an additional few minutes as you leave each time than to make a special trip when the storm shows up. Perhaps if we all stay prepared, the storms will go somewhere else just to spite us. If we all plan our storm preparation and carry it out well in advance we can continue the excellent record for weathering these storms at Sea Harbour. Our rules don't require that boats be removed when hurricanes approach but they do require good seamanship from the boat owners. These preparations are the kind of things sailors have done to protect their vessels from storms for thousands of years and if we continue the tradition, they will keep ours safe also. Don't wait to the last minute; it is better to waste some time on a near miss than to get caught by a storm which speeds up.

These instructions are approved and authorized by the SHYC Board of Directors.

Harbour Management LLC,
Lisa, Laurie & Steve