

# Hurricane Readiness Boat Tips

From Dave Whitehead, Moorings Waterways Rep

It's Hurricane season and I've noticed many new residents here in the Moorings with boats. You need to have a plan for what you are going to do with your boat in case we get a storm.

First, **DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!!!!** By then it's too late!

If you have a small boat (up to 25 foot, including kayaks) and you can put it on a trailer that is the best option. Don't leave kayaks on the dock as I've seen the water rise 6 feet into my backyard and my dock well underwater. If your lift goes high enough, raise your boat up as high as you can and tie it off on **ALL 4** corners tightly *to the pilings* so it doesn't sway. I've seen loose boats in lifts take out both the lift and the dock.

If you have large boat (25 to 40 foot) that stays in the water make sure all your bilge pumps work and that your batteries are all good. Make sure you have double lines ready for all corners of your boat as well as spring lines and anchors. I keep a hurricane box with extra lines so it's ready to go. **DON'T TIE YOUR BOAT TIGHTLY TO THE DOCK!!!** I've seen boats sunk by lines to tight. Worse, a tightly tied larger boat will actually pull the pilings out of the sand. Very bad! Picture your boat and dock floating down the canal destroying everything in its path. Remember you are responsible for any damage your boat causes. I have always tied my boat in the center of the canal with double lines to both sides of the canal as well as at least 2 anchors for a second line of defense. Get with your neighbor across from you for permission to tie off to their pilings or trees. Tie low on the piling but above the barnacles. You should wait until close to the last minute to do this to keep the canal clear as long as possible but have everything ready early. If you are lucky enough to have your pilings set up like a slip that's great for letting your boat ride out the storm.

If you have a larger boat (40+ foot) the best thing is to take it out into the Indian River and set it on 3 anchors with plenty of scope to ride out the storm. My neighbor has a 58-foot sailboat and has done this for many years without any problems. Remember, be ready early and **HAVE A PLAN**. Happy boating!

Dave is a licensed Coast Guard captain and Merchant Marine Officer.