

Hurricane Earl Could Hit Atlantic Seaboard; I.I.I. Provides Preparation Tips

September 1, 2010

SHARE THIS

- EN ESPAÑOL
- DOWNLOAD TO PDF

SPONSORED BY

INSURANCE INFORMATION INSTITUTE

New York Press Office: (212) 346-5500; media@iii.org

NEW YORK, September 1, 2010 – While the path of Hurricane Earl remains uncertain, residents and businesses situated along the Atlantic seaboard from North Carolina to Maine should take steps now to protect lives and property, according to the Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.).

– The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Weather Service has issued hurricane watches as of this morning for numerous coastal counties in North Carolina while the state of Virginia’s Department of Emergency Management has activated its Evacuation Coordination Team. Meanwhile, all of the East Coast states to the north of Virginia and bordering the Atlantic Ocean have taken comparable steps.

– “Most people don’t think hurricanes occur in the Northeast. But Atlantic seaboard states as far north as New England have a history of being hit by hurricanes, even though they make landfall less frequently,” said Loretta Worters, vice president with the I.I.I.

– For instance, the “Long Island Express” hurricane of 1938 caused severe damage through much of the Northeast resulting in 600 deaths and \$308 million in damage. A storm with the same intensity today would result in about \$33 billion in property damage, according to Boston-based modeler AIR Worldwide.

In 1821 a major hurricane made a direct hit on Manhattan, causing sea levels to rise as fast as 13 feet in a single hour near what is now Battery Park City. “The East River met the Hudson River along present Canal Street. For three hours Manhattan was two islands,” said Nicholas K. Coch, a coastal geologist and professor, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Queens College. “The storm struck at low tide, which is what saved the city.”

– “Those who plan ahead will find themselves in the best position to weather the storm and get their lives back on track after the disaster,” said Worters.

The I.I.I. suggests four important steps homeowners can take to protect themselves and their property:

–

1. Review Your Insurance Coverage

The time to review your insurance policy is *before* you have to file a claim. Make sure that you have both the right amount and type of insurance:

–

- Amount of insurance. You should have enough insurance to rebuild your home or business and replace all of its contents. If you have made a major alternation or improvement to your home or

business, get in touch with your agent or company representative to update your policy. Homeowners should find out how much coverage is available for Additional Living Expenses (ALE). These expenses could include the cost of a temporary rental home or hotel room, restaurant, meals and any other expenses incurred in the event your home is uninhabitable while it is being repaired or rebuilt. Some policies provide coverage for 20 percent of the amount of insurance you have on your house. Others may specify a time period. Additional coverage is generally available for an additional cost.

- **Type of insurance.** Ninety percent of all natural disasters involve some form of flooding. Flood damage is **not** covered by standard home insurance policies, but is available from the National Flood Insurance Program and from some private insurance companies. Excess flood insurance is also available from some private insurance companies if you need more coverage than the NFIP offers. For more information on flood insurance, see FloodSmart.gov but keep in mind that there is a 30-day waiting period between the time an application is accepted and a flood policy goes into effect. The I.I.I. produced a video on what is and what is not covered under flood and homeowners insurance policies when it comes to water damage.

^

2. Create a Home Inventory

A home inventory is a list of all of your personal or business possessions and their estimated value. An up-to-date inventory will help you:

- Purchase the right amount of insurance.
- Speed up the claims process by substantiating losses.
- Provide documentation for tax purposes or disaster assistance.

In order to make the process of creating and updating an inventory, the I.I.I. has developed the Web-based *Know Your Stuff* software for homes. For more information on the process of creating an inventory, see the I.I.I.'s

home inventory video podcast and brochure.

^

3. Protect Your Property

Hurricane proof your home by keeping wind and water out. Invest in storm shutters. Secure roof shingles and seal any openings, cracks and holes. For more information about protecting your home, go to the video, *Making Your Home More Hurricane Resistant: Five Steps*. The Institute for Business & Home Safety has additional tips to protect your home against wind and other disasters.

^

4. Have an Evacuation Plan

When a hurricane is approaching, advanced planning is essential. Decide ahead of time where you will go and how you will get there, and have more than one option. If you have pets, contact your veterinarian for a list of preferred boarding kennels and facilities or ask your local animal shelter if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets. Also identify hotels or motels outside of your immediate area that accept pets. For more information see *Protecting Your Pet During a Disaster*.

^

The I.I.I. also recommends practicing your evacuation plan by doing a test run: giving yourself just 10 minutes to pack up your family, pets and important items and get out—possibly for an extended period of time. For a video on the subject, see *Ten Minute Challenge*.

^

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT INSURANCE:

www.iii.org

Â

THE I.I.I. IS A NONPROFIT, COMMUNICATIONS ORGANIZATION SUPPORTED BY THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY.

Insurance Information Institute, 110 William Street, New York, NY 10038, (212) 346-5500

[Back to top](#)