

Coconut Grove Sailing Club Tropical Storm and Hurricane Policies and Procedures

We all know from experience that we are approaching the peak of hurricane season. National Hurricane Center data show that September is the month in which the most recorded hurricanes have occurred, followed by August (second) and October (third). For those owners with sailboats on a mooring, the strip or rack, this means that the next two months are critical times during which we must all watch the weather and be prepared to take appropriate actions to secure and/or move our boats in the face of a tropical storm or hurricane. A small amount of effort in this circumstance will improve the safety of your and other boats.

The CGSC leadership team has written the following procedures so that we are all clear as to what we as boat owners must do, and what the CGSC will do, if possible, to assist owners in preparing for a tropical storm or hurricane event. Your sailboat is YOUR responsibility. You may be responsible for any damage or injury caused by your sailboat if it is not properly secured in a storm or hurricane.

Procedures for a Potential Tropical Storm

Tropical storm winds have sustained winds from 39 mph to 73 mph, and can cause significant damage to boats that are improperly secured. Be aware that a Tropical Storm can quickly be upgraded to a hurricane. In the event Miami is in the predicted "cone of uncertainty" path of a tropical storm, boat owners should take the following precautions, well in advance of the storm's potential arrival

Boats on Moorings: Reduce windage by removing headsails, mainsails, sail covers, biminis, dodgers and other canvas. Check for chafe and wear on mooring pennants and replace or double lines if necessary. Insert chafing gear in chocks if chocks wear substantially on pennants. Check batteries for water and charge if necessary. Test and service engine as necessary. Bilge pumps should be on automatic. Port lights and hatches should be securely closed in watertight positions. Any flags should be lowered and stowed and halyards should be pulled away from the mast and snugged securely.

Boats on the Strip: It is preferable to take the boat home or to some location more protected from the wind and rising water. If you leave the boat at CGSC, remove boat covers and lower the mast. Strap your mast and boat to the trailer, and chock the trailer wheels.

Boats on the rack: lash down boats, masts, dollies, and remove sails.

Launch Service: Normal launch service will be maintained until CGSC management determines it is no longer safe / prudent to continue. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT – YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO GET TO YOUR BOAT TO MAKE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS.**

CGSC Actions: Should boat owners fail to undertake proper safety precautions, CGSC staff, at the direction of the Waterfront Coordinator and General Manager, and in accordance with Florida law, may, but are not required to, take steps to better secure vessels in order to protect CGSC or other property or persons from the danger they present during a tropical storm. Sailboat owners will be charged a fee for these services.

Procedures for a Potential Hurricane

In the event Miami is in the predicted "cone of uncertainty" path of a hurricane, sailboat owners should take the following precautions, well in advance of the storm's potential arrival. Keep in mind that hurricane force winds are sustained winds 74 mph and above, and can blow your sailboat far inland, destroy it on shore, sink it at the mooring, or blow it away. In addition, CGSC upland property is subject to storm surge in a hurricane event. In hurricane Andrew in 1992 the storm surge was some seven feet above the ground floor slab of the CGSC clubhouse. The docks, pilings and most mooring balls were all underwater. Boats left on moorings are not properly secured and present a danger to themselves, to other boats and property and to persons in the area. As clearly spelled out in the Moorings License Agreement, boats should not be left on CGSC moorings in a hurricane event. Each boat owner should have a primary and backup plan for a hurricane evacuation

Boats on Moorings: Boat owners should prepare their boats as for a tropical storm, and in addition, should prepare to move and secure their boat at a safer location well before winds make it unsafe to get underway.

Boats on the Strip: Remove boats and trailers and any other equipment and personal effects from CGSC property to higher and more protected ground.

Boats on the rack: Remove boats and any other equipment and personal effects off CGSC property to higher and more protected ground.

Launch Service: Normal launch service will be maintained within the mooring field until CGSC management determines it is no longer safe / prudent to continue. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT – YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO GET TO YOUR BOAT TO MAKE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS.**

Boat Owner Identification: For owners planning to move to the Gables waterway, the Coral Gables police have requested that we place the boat owner's name and contact information in a waterproof packet, somewhere readily accessible by police such as an unlocked cockpit locker or lazarette. This is to allow them to contact the boat owner if necessary, following a storm event.

CGSC Actions: If possible, CGSC will provide launch service to pick up club members at local hurricane shelters, including Gables Waterway and Marine Stadium. This launch service will be made available, if possible, well before tropical storm / hurricane force winds are predicted to arrive. Such service will be offered on a schedule, and CGSC will attempt to notify boat owners via email of the schedules for such service. However, the best way to stay informed of potential time schedules for launch service to hurricane shelters is to come by the club well in advance of the predicted arrival of the storm and check with the Waterfront Coordinator and General Manager. It is the boat owner's responsibility to stay apprised of the CGSC schedule of activities in the face of a potential hurricane.

At some point, winds will build to the point where it will no longer be safe to provide such launch service, at which time the CGSC General Manager and Waterfront Coordinator will order a halt to such service. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT – CGSC MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HELP GET YOU TO AND FROM YOUR BOAT.**

Take the time to inform yourself of proper safety procedures for tropical storm and hurricanes. Develop a plan and execute your plan well in advance of approaching danger. Your anchors, lines, and other storm safety equipment and precautions are your responsibility. Contact you local Coast Guard Auxiliary, marine equipment vendor or other specialist for advice concerning necessary equipment for your particular boat. Regardless of CGSC's desire to help boat owners by providing launch shuttle service to / from hurricane shelters, we are under no obligation to do so. We may not be able to provide such service based on consideration of our own preparations that must be undertaken to protect boats and property. You should have a plan to move your boat, and return without CGSC assistance.

If you need assistance, please ask. CGSC is a club – a “community of sailors”, and there are many who will help, should you need it. Please contact Dragan Savin our General Manager or Nick Mansbach our Waterfront Coordinator if you need such help.

If we all pay attention to the weather, make sure our boats are prepared, and commit to help each other in the event of a tropical storm/hurricane, we will successfully make it through this hurricane season.

See you at the Club and on the Bay

Alyn Pruett
Commodore