

Hurricane Prep Timeline

For docks and boat lifts: before the season, days out, and the last 48 hours.

No dock or lift is hurricane-proof. Preparation is what limits the damage, and most of it has to happen before a storm has a name. Work through the three phases in order and tick each line as you go.

Jun 1 to Nov 30	Watch	Warning	April and May
Atlantic hurricane season	conditions possible; usually issued 48 hours ahead of tropical-storm-force winds	conditions expected; usually issued 36 hours ahead	book inspections; summer schedules fill early

PHASE 1 Before the season

May to early June

BOAT LIFT

- [ ] Inspect cables for fraying, kinks or corrosion. Replace any cable with a broken strand.
- [ ] Check that pulleys turn freely, with no wobble or grinding.
- [ ] Run the lift through a full cycle with no load.
- [ ] Confirm the limit switches stop the lift at top and bottom.
- [ ] Check mounting hardware for corrosion and tightness.
- [ ] Look over the cradle, bunks and guide posts.
- [ ] Test that the GFCI protection trips.

DOCK, PILINGS AND SEAWALL

- [ ] Look for loose boards, cracked decking and soft spots.
- [ ] Check pilings for rot, borer damage and movement.
- [ ] Check the seawall for cracks or washout behind it.
- [ ] On a floating dock, confirm couplers and hinges are tight.
- [ ] Check anchor lines, stiff-arms and pile hoops.
- [ ] Replace rust-stained hardware with marine-grade stainless.

SUPPLIES AND RECORDS

- [ ] Extra heavy dock lines, chafe gear and spare fenders.
- [ ] Dated photos of the lift, dock and boat as they are now.
- [ ] Ask your insurance agent whether the dock and lift are covered.

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Call or text (239) 872-4300

PHASE 2 A storm is on the way

3 to 5 days out

DECIDE WHERE THE BOAT GOES

- [ ] Trailer it inland, or
- [ ] Move it to protected or enclosed storage (book early), or
- [ ] Haul out at a marina under a pre-storm agreement, or
- [ ] Keep it on the lift only if the forecast and your lift manufacturer's storm guidance allow it.

FLOATING DOCK

- [ ] Tighten all couplers and connection points.
- [ ] Clear the dock: furniture, planters, grills, hoses, removable ladders and lights.
- [ ] Confirm pile hoops can travel freely up and down.

BOAT LIFT

- [ ] Follow the manufacturer's storm instructions for cradle height and safety stops.
- [ ] Secure the cradle and add straps to the boat if it stays on the lift.
- [ ] Cover motor housings against wind-driven rain.
- [ ] Unplug shore power and disconnect backup batteries.

PHASE 3 Final prep

36 to 48 hours out

- [ ] Finish the boat plan you chose in Phase 2.
- [ ] Move or tie down every removable item on the dock.
- [ ] Double the dock lines and check the chafe gear.
- [ ] Shut off power to the dock and lift at the main breaker.
- [ ] Shut off water to the dock.
- [ ] Take dated photos of everything as you leave it.

After the storm

- **Wait** until officials say the waterways are safe. Downed lines in canal water can kill.
- **Keep the dock power off** until it has been checked.
- **Photograph everything** before you move debris.
- **Do not run the lift** until it has been inspected. A bent frame can fail under load.

Mistakes to avoid

- Leaving loose items on the dock. They become projectiles.
- Trusting the lift cables alone to hold a boat in place.
- Leaving the decision about the boat until a warning is issued.
- Going back to the dock before it is declared safe.

Keep going on macduffmarine.com

Full guide: Hurricane prep for boat lifts and docks

After a storm: Post-hurricane dock and lift inspection · Lift maintenance checklist

Forecasts: National Hurricane Center, nhc.noaa.gov

Pre-season check: Request a free estimate or call or text (239) 872-4300.

SCAN FOR FULL GUIDE

MacDuff Marine is an authorized Wave Armor dealer and Florida's exclusive QABL dealer. Fully insured, with installations performed by a licensed marine contractor partner. Checked November 2026. General guidance only; follow your equipment manufacturer's instructions and local emergency officials.