

Storm Week Checklist

Docks, seawalls and boat lifts on Florida's Gulf Coast. Start as soon as a storm is in the forecast. It takes an afternoon.



STORM WEEK

Before the storm arrives

- ☐ **Get the boat off the lift and out of the water if you can.** Trailer it inland. If you cannot, arrange inland storage before the season. Never ride out a storm aboard.
- ☐ **Cut power to the lift at the disconnect.** Know where the disconnect is before you need it. Flooded waterfront electrical is a job for a licensed electrician. Not for you and not for us.
- ☐ **Set the lift to the storm position for your model.** Check the owner's manual or call the manufacturer before the season. The wrong position catches more wind or puts the cradle in the surge.
- ☐ **Strip the dock.** Chairs, grills, kayaks, ladders, planters, dock boxes and hoses. Every loose item is a projectile.
- ☐ **Take down canopies, covers and shade sails.** A frame that blows over can pull decking and pilings with it.
- ☐ **Double up and lengthen lines on anything that stays in the water.** Allow for water well above normal high tide.
- ☐ **Photograph everything.** Wide shots of the whole wall and dock, then closer shots of each section. Dated photos of a sound structure are your proof of what the storm did and what was already there.

Do not go out to secure anything once conditions have turned.

AFTER THE STORM

The first 72 hours

Treat every waterfront structure as unsafe until someone competent has looked at it.

- ☐ **Look from land.** New cracks. A lean that was not there before. Soil washed out behind the wall or soft ground near it. A dock out of level. Pilings that shifted or lifted. A lift out of alignment or with damaged cables.
- ☐ **Document before you clean up.** Clearing debris destroys the record of how the structure failed.
- ☐ **Stop the losses you can stop safely.** Tarping, pumping water off a deck and blocking access to an unsafe structure are fine. Structural work is not. Improvised repairs often have to be pulled out before real repairs can start.
- ☐ **Get a written assessment from a licensed marine contractor.** Your carrier and every contractor who bids will work from that scope of what failed and why.

Before you hire anyone: look up the license number yourself at the Florida DBPR licensee search. Get the scope in writing. Expect a deposit, not most of the price up front. Ask who pulls the permit.

Permit clock: Florida exempts restoration of a seawall damaged by a storm in the last year from state environmental resource permitting when the new wall sits no more than 18 inches waterward (Fla. Admin. Code R. 62-330.051(12)(b)). County and city permits still apply.