

FIA-FINS Storm Update #2—October 31, 2012

FIA and FINS have prepared the following storm update for the FIA Board and the members of your respective communities. Once again, please be advised that the situation on the Island is evolving, and the information we provide is always subject to change.

Access to the Island: We would like to once again emphasize the importance of advising your residents that conditions on the Island are not safe for homeowners to return. There is no power throughout the entire island, and availability of water is also compromised in many areas. There are electric wires down, and transformers on the ground. Every street is covered in 2' to 4' of sand and piles of debris. There is standing water that may be contaminated with sewage, and also very dangerous 'sink holes' filled with water. There are no emergency services if someone should get hurt out there, or need medical attention of any kind.

To review the access restrictions:

- Strictly controlled by County and State officials. There are check points on the bridge limiting access to Field #5 for authorized individuals only (including those with expertise and skill sets required for clean-up: heavy machine operation, tree removal, LIPA personnel, Suffolk County Water, etc).
- All three ferry companies will not run until (1) they get their terminals and equipment back in working order, and (2) they receive the OK from the County to transport passengers.
- It is also not safe for private boats to come to the Island until further notice.

We understand that it is frustrating for residents to be prevented from coming out to check their property, but they would be endangering themselves and others by trying to get to their house at this time. So please encourage your homeowners to be patient and allow the assessment teams to make sure the conditions are safe enough for 're-population' of the Island.

In the meantime, most communities have developed informal but very effective communication networks to get details of local conditions by way of pictures and verbal reports from community-spirited individuals who are currently out on the Island.

Please be assured that as soon as we have specific information about general public access, we will circulate it immediately!

Damage Assessment and Priorities:

Four main objectives were established as priorities today by the Incident Command team:

1. Clearing walks for vehicle access: It is absolutely essential that our communities have the benefit of fire and EMS protection as the recovery effort goes forward. To that end, efforts began today to remove sand from primary and secondary emergency vehicle routes. Fallen trees are also being cut away, debris cleared, and sink holes identified and filled.
2. Re-establishing the water systems is critically important for fire fighting. Our volunteers are working with Suffolk Co Water to check wells and pumps, make sure that intra-community connections are functioning, dig out fire hydrants, and maintain adequate fuels supplies for the generators that are running the well pumps.
3. Power supply: LIPA has begun the task of assessing the damage to the electric grid, a challenge that requires checking all utility poles, overhead and underground cables, and transformers. Preliminary indications are that the overhead wires may have fared better than the underground ones.
4. Health and Safety: The local Fire Departments have been charged with assessing general infrastructure damage in each community. Their job is to assure that conditions in their districts are safe enough to allow their residents to return.

IMPORTANT: Despite rumors that your residents make have heard, the Park Service (FINS) is NOT planning to condemn any damaged property, nor are there any plans to raze or remove any damaged structures.

Voting: Fire Island polling locations will obviously not be available on Election Day. Suffolk County Board of Elections advises that they will have information available tomorrow on when and where and how Fire Island voters will be able to cast their ballots. Please feel free to call them directly after 2:00pm at 631-852-4500. When they answer, press 1 then wait for the next message to begin and press 6 to be transferred to an operator.

Giving Thanks: On this, the second day after the storm, we join all Fire Islanders in offering our appreciation and gratitude for the dedication, expertise and commitment of our local first responders, Park Rangers, Suffolk County Police, and OEM officials from the State, County and Towns who evacuated many residents who stayed on the Island during the storm, and who now are leading the effort to help the Island get back up and running. The restoration process will be a long and challenging one, but our sense of the attitude prevalent on the Island today is summed up in Mario Possilico's message to Saltaire residents: "This was a blow, but not a knock-out punch!"

Regards,

Suzy Goldhirsch, President, FIA
Chris Soller, Superintendent, FINS