

FIA-FINS Storm Update #5—November 8, 2012 (@11 pm)

FIA and FINS have prepared the following storm update for the FIA Board and the members of your respective communities. Information contained here has also been approved by the Town of Islip and the Fire Island Command Post (located at the Kismet Fire House, under the leadership of Dom Bertucci and Jay Lippert). For Village of Ocean Beach and Village of Saltaire updates, please be sure to check official Village communications and websites.

Once again, please be advised that the situation on the Island is evolving and changing on a day-to-day basis, and the information we provide here is always subject to change.

Nor'easter Impact

The over-all impact of the Nor'easter was minimal, and did not significantly set-back the hurricane recovery process on the Island. There was flooding at high tides on the bay side in many communities. On the ocean, water came up thru the Kismet cut and flooded the Burma Road at high tides. There was also ocean flooding from Robbins Rest into Atlantique.

Recovery Update

1. The key objectives established for this phase of the recovery remain the same:
 - a) Clearing access on walks and roads for emergency and repair vehicles.
 - b) Re-establishing the water systems for fire protection.
 - c) Assessing the damage to the electric grid in order to allow a safe and orderly return of electric power to the island as soon as possible.
 - d) Assessing general infrastructure damage in each community.
2. Now that the Nor'easter has passed, the Fire Island Command Post has refocused their efforts on achieving these key recovery goals.

Progress reported today by the Fire Island Command Post (Thursday 11.8):

- a. Completed emergency preparedness test of sirens and pagers of all Fire Island Fire Departments
- b. Received replacement 45KW Generator for the Fire Island Area Command Post. This was requested in case the existing generator stops running before power is restored.
- c. Assessments of the fire districts were e-mailed to all fire chiefs.

- d. All fire departments were contacted to advise them that drinking water and MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) are available if needed.
 - e. Communication section personnel authorized by Suffolk County Fire Rescue were extended for another week's rotation with the Fire Island Command Post. It should be noted authorization includes a mobile communications van.
3. Recovery objectives that continue to pose a challenge include:
- a) Dependable water supply for fire protection is not yet established Island-wide.
 - b) Although the situation is significantly improved, debris and downed trees along the access routes are still hampering vehicle travel.
 - c) LIPA personnel are energizing some of their power stations, but they will not energize the communities until all houses have been checked for fire hazard.
 - d) Return of electric power is a high priority because the Island wells are still currently running on generators. Water pressure for fire protection increases dramatically if electric power is supplied to the wells.

Access to the Island:

1. Returning all Fire Islanders back to their safe and secured communities remains the number one priority of all those currently managing the recovery and restoration efforts on the Island. We are keenly aware that with each passing day, there is mounting frustration that residents are being prevented from getting out to check on the condition of their homes.
2. However, the mandatory evacuation orders issued by Suffolk County and Islip and Brookhaven Towns are still in effect. Town and County officials, as well as those emergency service personnel involved in the clean-up on the beach, advise that while conditions on the Island have improved dramatically, they are still not safe enough for homeowners to return.
3. Access continues to be strictly controlled by County and State and local officials.
 - There are check points on the bridge to ensure that only authorized individuals drive over to the Island.
 - The Suffolk County Police Marine Bureau and the Bay Constables of both Towns have been directed to deter private boats from coming to the Island until further notice. Authorized essential service providers and contractors may use their private boats to return to the West and East End communities using identification placards issued by the Towns of Brookhaven and Islip.

- All three ferry companies will not run until they receive the OK to transport passengers.

Plans for increasing access to the Island:

As we have reported in previous updates, access to the Island is being staged in a prioritized and orderly manner as follows:

1. **Essential Service Providers:** On Monday (11.5), authorized essential service personnel were permitted to return to the beach for the day by vehicle through the West End check points. These individuals (carters, plumbers, electricians, and propane service providers) are hauling away storm debris, and helping to conduct door-to-door surveys in each community to turn off power and water and secure propane tanks.
2. **Contractors:** As of Tuesday (11.6), authorized contractors (i.e. those with FINS driving permits) were also given permission to return to the Island on a daily basis on the West End. For the East End essential service providers and authorized contractors, a marine access system (using private boats) was put in place.
Note: Because of storm conditions that developed on Wednesday, all providers were asked to leave the Island by 1pm. On Thursday, the bridge was closed to all providers because of treacherous driving conditions on the bridge and pending assessment of storm damage. Access for these two categories of providers will be resumed on Friday (11.9)
3. **Year-round residents** will come back on the Island to collect personal possessions, medication, clothing and other important items when transportation by boat is available.
4. **Seasonal Residents:** Establishing a timetable to allow the earliest possible access for seasonal residents to return briefly to check their homes is a key priority, but is still under consideration. [**Note: Because of the logistical, administrative and geographical differences between the West and East Ends of the Island, the timetable for access to the Island for seasonal residents in the Islip and Brookhaven communities may vary slightly.**]

As of this writing (11 pm on Thursday 11.8), the following information is correct.

Islip Town Communities: Planning to implement access for seasonal residents is underway, but no definite date has been established.

Brookhaven Town Communities: There is a **tentative** plan to allow Sayville Ferry to run boats on Saturday (11.10) for homeowners to return to the Pines, Cherry Grove and Davis Park. If this plan is approved by the Brookhaven Town Supervisor, the boats would leave at 10 am and return at 3pm on Saturday. There will be strictly enforced guidelines for the visit, and residents would need to offer proof of ownership to board a ferry (tax or utility

bill).

IMPORTANT: As of this writing, the plan to allow ferry access to the East End communities has not yet been approved by the Brookhaven Town Supervisor)

5. **Insurance Adjustors**: The time frame for site visits by insurance adjusters is also under review.

In closing, we repeat our appreciation, gratitude and respect for the professionalism, dedication, expertise and determination of our local first responders, Park Rangers, Suffolk County Police, and OEM officials from the State, County and Towns who are working so diligently out there to help restore the Island we all love.

Regards,

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