Connecticut: Overview

Everything in the main manual and the skill guides applies in Connecticut exactly as written. What's different here is the specific hazard profile and the state, local, and legal context around it. This page is the starting point; the other three pages under Connecticut go deeper on laws, local resources, and the data behind the risks named here.

The 1938 Hurricane: catastrophic, and almost entirely unforecast

Before modern hurricane forecasting existed, a major hurricane struck southern New England on September 21, 1938, with almost no advance warning. It killed an estimated 564-682 people across the region, and the Connecticut River crested at 35.4 feet in Hartford, nearly 20 feet above flood stage. Property losses reached $306 million in 1938 dollars, roughly $4.7 billion today. See the Risks page for the full data.

Tropical Storm Isaias: the modern grid vulnerability

More than 80 years later, a far weaker storm exposed a different kind of vulnerability. Tropical Storm Isaias struck Connecticut on August 4, 2020, with winds around 70 mph, nowhere near hurricane strength, but still knocked out power to more than 757,700 customers at its peak, one of the largest outage events in the state's modern history. The comparison matters: Connecticut's power grid can be brought to its knees by a storm far weaker than the one that devastated the region in 1938.

What this means for how you use the rest of this manual

The manual's Tier structure and the skill guides apply without modification. What's different in Connecticut: households need real hurricane and coastal flood planning for the kind of storm the region can clearly still experience, and this manual's backup power guidance carries extra weight here specifically, Connecticut's grid has proven vulnerable to storms considerably weaker than a hurricane.

Sources

- 1938 Hurricane deaths, Connecticut River crest, and damage: Connecticut History (CTHumanities); NOAA Climate.gov
- Tropical Storm Isaias Connecticut outages and death: CT Public; NBC Connecticut

Connecticut: Laws & Legal Considerations

Rainwater harvesting: legal for outdoor and indoor non-potable use

Connecticut permits rainwater collection for both outdoor and indoor non-potable applications, with simple systems falling outside the building code entirely.

Rule	Connecticut
Source water	Rooftop or other catchment
Simple outdoor systems	A basic downspout-to-rain-barrel or cistern setup for outdoor use isn't covered by the Connecticut Building Code at all
Indoor non-potable use	Governed by Section 1303, Nonpotable Rainwater Collection and Distribution Systems
Permitted uses	Outdoor use and indoor non-potable use (not drinking)

Where to find it: Connecticut's official watershed and stormwater management plan incorporates rainwater harvesting without requiring a separate water rights permit for typical systems.

Water rights: riparian and littoral doctrine combined

Connecticut recognizes both riparian rights (for landowners along rivers and streams) and littoral rights (for landowners along the coast), both grounded in reasonable use.

Concept	How it works in Connecticut
Riparian rights	Landowners along a river or stream may make reasonable use of the water touching their property
Littoral rights	Landowners along coastal waters have reasonable access rights specific to that coastal frontage
Larger alterations	No alteration of a watercourse or wetland is allowed without a DEEP permit

Where to find it: the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) administers water rights and watercourse alteration permits.

Concealed carry: technically may-issue, functioning closer to shall-issue since 2022

Connecticut's pistol permit system remains legally "may-issue," but its practical operation changed meaningfully after the Supreme Court's 2022 Bruen decision.

Requirement	Detail
Standard	Technically may-issue, but courts have required issuing authorities to apply objective, documented criteria rather than open-ended discretion since Bruen, functioning closer to shall-issue in practice
Minimum age	21
Process	A local permit from your town's police department or first selectman first, then a State Permit to Carry Pistols and Revolvers; roughly 8 weeks
Training required	A course meeting or exceeding the NRA Basic Pistol Course standard, including live-fire instruction (some basic NRA safety-only courses don't qualify)
Cost	$70 for the state permit
Reciprocity	Connecticut does not recognize concealed carry permits issued by any other state

Where this sits relative to other states covered so far

Connecticut's non-recognition of any other state's permit matches New Jersey's position, the most restrictive on that specific point covered on this site. Combined with the two-step local-then-state permit process and mandatory live-fire training, Connecticut's overall system remains among the most demanding covered here, even though it no longer operates as a purely discretionary "proper cause" system the way it did before 2022.

Sources

- Connecticut rainwater harvesting rules: WTNH
- Connecticut riparian and littoral water rights: American Whitewater
- Connecticut pistol permit process and post-Bruen status: CT DESPP; Connecticut Gun Laws

Connecticut: Local Resources

DEMHS and CT Prepares

The Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security runs the CT Prepares app, providing emergency alerts and preparedness information directly to residents.

Where to find it: portal.ct.gov/demhs.

UConn Extension: Connecticut's version of the other states' land-grant Extension programs

The University of Connecticut's Extension runs the same category of program as every other state covered on this site, with one of the more demanding training requirements seen so far.

A heavier classroom-hour commitment than most states

UConn's Master Gardener core training requires 96 hours of classroom instruction, second only to Washington's 120-hour program among the states covered on this site, followed by 60 hours of supervised volunteer service.

Where to find it: mastergardener.uconn.edu lists county Extension centers.

CERT: coordinated through DEMHS, with ongoing team education

Connecticut runs roughly 100 active Citizen Corps teams statewide (CERT, Medical Reserve Corps, and Fire Corps combined), representing about 4,250 active members, coordinated through DEMHS.

Ongoing training beyond the basic course

DEMHS runs “Connecticut CERT Connect” (CT3), a bi-monthly webinar series that gives already-certified CERT members continuing education on evolving preparedness topics, a form of ongoing team development not mentioned on every other state’s page.

Where to find it: portal.ct.gov/demhs; search “[your town] CERT” for a specific local team, such as Bethel’s.

Sources

- DEMHS and CT Prepares app: CT.gov DEMHS
- UConn Extension Master Gardener Program hours: UConn Extension
- Connecticut CERT program scale and CT3 webinar series: CT.gov DEMHS Citizen Corps

Connecticut: Risks & Trends

Same standard as every other page on this site: every figure below is independently sourced, and figures that vary across sources, or measure genuinely different things, are flagged as such rather than collapsed into one number that looks more precise than the underlying data actually supports.

The 1938 Hurricane: nearly unforecast, catastrophic

Metric	Figure
Southern New England deaths	564-682 (estimates vary by source; some accounts range as high as 800)
Injuries	1,700+
Homes/buildings destroyed	8,900
Homes/buildings damaged	15,000+ (more than 57,000 homes damaged or destroyed across the broader region)
Boats destroyed	2,600+
Connecticut River crest at Hartford	35.4 ft (19.4 ft above flood stage)
Power/telephone line miles downed	20,000
Damage (1938 dollars / 2024-adjusted)	$306 million / ~$4.7 billion

Why the death toll varies so much across sources

Because this storm predates modern hurricane forecasting and a coordinated national reporting system, contemporary and historical death-toll estimates vary meaningfully, from the low 500s to as high as 800 across the wider Southern New England region depending on the source and what geographic area is counted.

Tropical Storm Isaias (2020): a weak storm, a major grid failure

Metric	Figure
Landfall date	August 4, 2020
Peak winds	~70 mph
Peak power outages	757,700 customers
Connecticut deaths	1 (struck by a falling tree)
National ranking (informal)	One of the largest power outage events in Connecticut's modern history, alongside the October 2011 snowstorm, Hurricane Sandy, and Tropical Storm Irene

What these two have in common

The 1938 Hurricane and Tropical Storm Isaias, 82 years apart, demonstrate a consistent vulnerability: Connecticut’s infrastructure, first its coastal defenses and inland flood control, more recently its electrical grid, has repeatedly proven less resilient than storm severity alone would predict. A storm well short of hurricane strength still produced one of the state’s largest modern outage events, a useful data point for anyone assuming only a “real” hurricane poses genuine risk here.

Sources

- 1938 Hurricane deaths, damage, and Connecticut River crest: Connecticut History (CTHumanities); WeatherWorks
- Tropical Storm Isaias Connecticut outage and death data: CT Public; NBC Connecticut