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Maine: Overview

Everything in the main manual and the skill guides applies in Maine 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 Maine go deeper on laws, local resources, and the data behind the risks named here.

The Ice Storm of 1998: identified as Maine's worst natural disaster

Between January 5 and 9, 1998, waves of freezing rain coated Maine in up to 3 inches of ice, knocking out power to roughly 900,000 residents at some point during the days-long storm and damaging an estimated 17 million acres of forest. A later study identified it as the worst natural disaster in Maine's history, and all 16 of the state's counties were declared federal disaster areas. See the Risks page for the full data.

The January 2024 coastal storms: a new all-time record, twice in one week

On January 10 and again on January 13, 2024, two severe coastal storms struck Maine back to back, driving wind gusts of 60-80 mph and aligning storm surge with the month's highest astronomical tide. The Portland tide gauge, with continuous records dating back to 1912, recorded a water level of 14.57 feet on January 13, breaking the previous all-time record of 14.17 feet set during the Blizzard of 1978. Historic structures on the waterfront, including 200-year-old fishing shacks at Fisherman's Point, were destroyed. See the Risks page for the full data.

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 Maine: this manual's extended-power-outage guidance carries real weight given the 1998 ice storm's scale, and coastal households should treat "record" flood levels as something that can be broken again soon, not a fixed ceiling, given that Maine set a new all-time coastal water-level record in January 2024, just 46 years after the previous record was set.

Sources

- Ice Storm of 1998 data: WGME; Center Square

- January 2024 Maine coastal storm data: WGME; Bangor Daily News

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Maine: Laws & Legal Considerations

Rainwater harvesting: no state law either way

Maine is unusual among the states covered on this site in having no state-level law specifically addressing rainwater harvesting at all, neither permitting it explicitly nor restricting it.

Rule	Maine
Source water	Rooftop or other catchment
State-level permit or restriction	None; the practice falls outside any specific state statute
What still applies	General water rights and health codes, plus any local county or municipal ordinances that may separately address it

Where to find it: check with your local municipality, since Maine’s silence at the state level means local rules, where they exist, control.

Water rights: riparian reasonable-use

Maine’s early water law follows riparian doctrine: landowners along a water body may make reasonable use of its natural flow, though they don’t own the water itself.

Concept	How it works in Maine
Basic rule	Riparian owners have a right to the reasonable use of a stream's natural flow, without substantially interfering with other users' rights
Ownership	Riparian owners don't own the water itself, only the right to reasonable use of it

Where to find it: the Maine Legislature’s water law materials and the Department of Environmental Protection.

Permitless carry from age 21, with a pending bill to lower it

Maine has allowed permitless concealed carry since 2015.

Requirement	Detail
Standard	Permitless carry, concealed, for anyone 21+ legally eligible to possess a firearm
Military exception	18+ active-duty, National Guard, or honorably discharged veterans may carry concealed without a permit
Under 21, non-military	May still carry concealed with a Maine Permit to Carry Concealed Handguns, or a recognized out-of-state permit
Optional permit (21+)	Remains available, shall-issue, mainly for reciprocity while traveling

A pending bill, not current law

LD 424, introduced by state Rep. Alicia Collins, would lower Maine’s general permitless-carry age from 21 to 18 to match the state’s legal adult age for voting and military enlistment. As of early 2026 this has not been enacted; confirm current status if reading this later.

Sources

- Maine’s lack of state-level rainwater harvesting regulation: Survival Sullivan; Rain Harvest Pro
- Maine riparian water law: Texas Real Food
- Maine permitless carry, military exception, and pending LD 424: Alien Gear Holsters; Maine State Police

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Maine: Local Resources

Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

MEMA, part of the Department of Defense, Veterans, and Emergency Management, provides training in partnership with FEMA for government officials, emergency services personnel, business representatives, and community volunteers.

Where to find it: maine.gov/mema.

UMaine Extension: Master Gardener Volunteer Program

University of Maine Cooperative Extension runs the same category of program as every other state covered on this site, with a fully online structure.

- **UMaine Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program:** an 18-week online course (late October through late March) requiring 4-5 hours per week, followed by a 40-hour hands-on volunteer internship. Certified volunteers then contribute at least 20 hours annually. The course costs \$400, with sliding-scale options at \$200 and \$100.

Where to find it: extension.umaine.edu/gardening/master-gardeners.

CERT: statewide base training plus specialty academies

Maine's CERT program trains teams in basic disaster response skills, fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations, then offers periodic CERT Academy weekend sessions for specialty training beyond the basics, a structure not every state covered on this site offers.

Where to find it: maine.gov/mema/community-preparedness/cert.

Sources

- MEMA structure and training programs: Maine Emergency Management Agency

- UMaine Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program requirements: University of Maine Cooperative Extension
- Maine CERT program and specialty academies: Maine Emergency Management Agency

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Maine: 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 Ice Storm of 1998

Metric	Figure
Dates	January 5-9, 1998
Ice accumulation	Up to 3 in
Deaths	5-8 (sources vary)
Peak power outages	~900,000 Mainers affected at some point during the storm
Forest acreage damaged	~17 million acres
State cost	\$320 million
Natural resource losses (separate estimate)	\$1 billion+
Federal disaster declaration	All 16 Maine counties
Historical ranking	Identified by a later study as the worst natural disaster in Maine's history

Why the death count varies

Sources report Maine deaths from this storm anywhere from 5 to 8, largely because the causes were indirect and varied: carbon monoxide poisoning from improperly used generators, hypothermia in an unheated home, a fall on a dark staircase, and a structural collapse under ice weight. These aren't always counted the same way across different official tallies, which is why the range is presented rather than one number.

The January 2024 coastal storms

Metric	Figure
Dates	January 10 and January 13, 2024 (two separate storms)
Wind gusts	60-80 mph
Portland record water level, Jan 13	14.57 ft, a new all-time record
Previous record	14.17 ft, set during the Blizzard of 1978
Portland gauge record history	Continuous since 1912
Notable losses	Historic fishing shacks at Fisherman's Point, some with 200-year-old timbers, destroyed at Willard Beach

A record broken after 46 years, not a century

The previous Portland record stood since 1978, 46 years before it was broken. That’s a meaningfully shorter interval than “once in a lifetime” framing usually implies, and it’s a useful data point for any coastal Maine household treating past record floods as a fixed ceiling rather than a number that can be exceeded again within a single adult’s lifetime.

Sources

- Ice Storm of 1998 data: WGME; Center Square
- January 2024 Maine coastal storm data: WGME; Bangor Daily News