



STORM PREPAREDNESS

*Your Guide to Storm Season Prep
During COVID-19 Pandemic*

*Protect your organization with
the help of our safety checklists.*



One lesson we
have learned
from the current
COVID-19 crisis is
that we can never
be too prepared
to deal with a
catastrophic event.





This year's storm season will pose a few unique challenges. Some models point to an overlap of the COVID-19 pandemic and the beginning of an active hurricane season. On the heels of a pandemic, some businesses may be faced with lingering residual impacts. Be prepared to deal with the following conditions:

- + Small/local contractors may face outsized economic challenges, resulting in a shortage in the availability of qualified labor and usual suppliers.
- + Some critical parts may be in short supply due to disruption of supply chain caused by the pandemic, particularly if globally sourced.
- + Key personnel who are responsible for executing the Emergency Plan may be quarantined at the time of testing and/or in the event of a natural catastrophe.
- + Social distancing measures, or simply the fear of contracting the disease, may prevent execution of certain tasks involving multiple people.

Forecasters are anticipating a weak El Niño, and thus an increase in Atlantic hurricane activity in 2020. Can you imagine if New York faced another Hurricane Sandy while a hotspot for COVID-19? We may be faced with a natural catastrophe prior to the June 1st start of hurricane season, and several regions may still be experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks at that time. Considering these overlapping, multiplicative risk factors, extra prudence is needed in crafting a sound risk management strategy.

This checklist from GuideOne National can serve as an advisory guideline when preparing for a hurricane, tornado, or tropical storm. Although tornadoes usually provide little advance warning, locations subject to tornadoes may apply much of the following checklist prior to tornado season. This checklist should be tailored to the operations, wind protection features, and windstorm exposures at specific insured locations. A test run may be required prior to the beginning of the hurricane season to determine the time it takes to complete each item on the checklist to allow proper planning.

ADVANCE PLANNING PRIOR TO STORM SEASON

1. If one does not exist already, create and identify a Hurricane Emergency Response Team as a part of the organization's Emergency Plan.
2. Prepare and maintain a scaled plan or diagram of the facility which clearly shows the location of all fire protection and other emergency equipment.
3. Your usual service providers may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic – they may not be in business or may have reduced capacity to support your needs during an emergency. Pre-qualify and pre-commit as many certified repair and service contractors that have survived the economic impact of the virus as possible, including both local and national firms.
4. Identify multiple suppliers that are still operating for critical building components, equipment, and stock necessary to resume business operations.
5. Create a list of up-to-date home telephone numbers of executives of all committed contracting firms, utilities and other services critical to resumption of operations.
6. Reach out to local police and fire departments to establish and maintain good relationships and to discuss emergency plan.
7. Make arrangements for backup utilities and fuel sources where possible. Anticipate loss of electrical power and other utilities, and consider emergency generators, alternative fuels, and the like.
8. Have a list of fuel vendors in a different part of the state not likely to be affected by the windstorm or power outages. Local vendors may not have the trucks to transport fuel or electrical power to supply fuel to the transport trucks.
9. Establish relationships with lease and rental companies, and identify alternative means of transportation and alternative routes for all critical personnel, services, suppliers, contractors, etc.
10. Maintain a phone directory for critical suppliers, contractors, services, etc.
11. Plan for facility security after a storm.





EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

1. Run tests on all Emergency Equipment to make sure they are operational and in good condition. Perform maintenance services to confirm their reliability during the emergency.
2. Consider using self-contained equipment that is not dependent on electricity or other fixed piping utilities.
3. Make arrangements for several forms of emergency communications, including cellular phones, two-way radios, ham radio operators, etc.
4. Have plywood available to secure windows from flying debris, and tarp to protect buildings and equipment from weather after the storm passes.

FIRE PROTECTION

1. Perform all required tests as outlined in NFPA guidelines to ensure that all fire protection equipment is tested, serviced and operational.
2. Fire water storage tanks should be inspected for a functional water level indicator and for the tank's structural integrity.
3. All outdoor exposed fire protection equipment should be adequately secured.



BUILDINGS & OTHER STRUCTURES

1. Review the structural integrity of each building and mobile structure on site, including rotted wood, rusted metal, physical damage, loose/missing fasteners, etc. Replace or repair all damaged, missing, or compromised components.
2. Review and evaluate the wind resistance of each structure and implement improvements to satisfy the applicable building codes and the Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ's) for the location.
3. Check the integrity of tie-downs for mobile structures.
4. Inspect roof coverings, perimeter flashings, gutters, drains, ventilators, and other roof-mounted equipment.
5. Inspect exterior wall coverings for attachment, damage, and weather tightness.
6. Check for weak doors, window latches and hardware. Inspect shutters and dampers. Repair any broken windowpanes and frames.
7. Inspect street signs, exhaust stacks, chimneys, conveyors and other outdoor equipment to make sure they are secure.
8. Identify and consider trimming down any large trees near buildings or removing equipment that could potentially fall and damage the buildings or structures.



IN THE EVENT OF A STORM

1. Coordinate a meeting at a safe location with your Hurricane Response Team.
2. Assemble all emergency supplies and equipment for deployment to impacted location(s).
3. Ensure that the Hurricane Response Team has all the necessary tools such as food, water, first aid supplies, lighting and two-way communication equipment, etc.
4. Monitor the storm path and weather conditions using the NOAA website and news media.
5. Secure or move all important equipment and stock to a secure place to protect from wind and flooding.
6. Shut off all flammable and combustible liquid piping and gas lines at the source or entry into the buildings.
7. Turn off all non-essential lighting and electrical equipment.
8. Board up windows and exterior glass to protect from flying debris.
9. Remove all electronic data storage devices and place them in a safe location.
10. Send all non-essential staff home or to a secure location.
11. The Emergency Response Team should remain at the impacted facility if safe to assess the damages and to manage the recovery process immediately.



POST STORM RECOVERY

1. An Onsite Command Center should be immediately set up to start the recovery process and to secure the site.
2. Survey for safety hazards such as downed electrical wires, leaking gas or flammable liquids, poisonous gasses, damage to foundations or underground piping, etc. Use care around downed power lines and leaking fuel lines and consider providing barriers or watches. Notify the appropriate utilities as soon as possible if damage has occurred.
3. Inspect all electrical equipment including exposed insulators, bus bars, and conductors before reenergizing electrical distribution systems and equipment.
4. Inspect all fire protection equipment and contact your service contractor to repair any out-of-service equipment. Repair and return to service as soon as possible all fire protection, including sprinklers, water supplies, fire pumps, special extinguishing systems, alarms and supervisory service, etc.
5. Report any fire protection impairments to your insurance carriers.
6. Notification of fire protection impairments be sent to the local fire department and/or police departments, as appropriate.
7. Report any impairments and damages to the insurance company as soon as possible.
8. Clean roof drains, storm drains, retention ponds, etc. and remove any debris.
9. Designated key personnel and emergency contractors should be called to coordinate and start repairs and salvage.
10. Ensure that all contractors are familiar with Company Policy Programs and share responsibility for fire safe conditions at all times.
11. Ensure that all Company Policies, such as Hot Work (cutting and welding) and Smoking etc. are properly supervised and enforced during salvage and repair operations.
12. If the impacted site is too large and/or there is flooding, use a drone to survey the site for recovery planning.
13. Ensure there is 24/7 security in place to protect the valuable equipment and inventory from potential vandalism or theft.
14. If no perimeter fence is installed, consider installing a chain link or another temporary fence to secure the premises.

Beware of animals and reptiles taking refuge from flooding on higher grounds. Some of those could be poisonous.





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