

Businesses face many challenges during hurricane season. From power outages to physical damages, hurricanes can wreak havoc on companies, resulting in financial losses, reputation damage, and even closure. Businesses can avoid these consequences to ensure their operations continue during a hurricane. Here's a checklist of what your business can do before, during, and after a hurricane.

Preparation Phase:

- Develop a comprehensive emergency response plan with clear procedures and protocols for various scenarios.
- Hold an internal tabletop exercise with staff to test how your response plans perform during a realistic storm event.
- Assist staff with personal preparedness planning to ensure they can return to work following a storm.
- Identify if you will need a small team of staff to remain onsite for facilities-related emergencies and build their supply stockpile early.
- Establish communication channels to effectively reach employees, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders during a hurricane.
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify potential vulnerabilities and assess the potential impact of a hurricane on your operations, employees, and infrastructure.
- Conduct a business impact assessment to identify critical business operations and the specific impacts a hurricane will have on those operations.
- Secure your facilities and infrastructure by addressing vulnerabilities, conducting inspections, and implementing necessary safety measures.
- Regularly perform offsite backups of critical data to ensure availability and integrity during a hurricane.
- Perform tests of disaster recovery systems
- Inventory and photograph key assets, including equipment, machinery, and other resources necessary for post-event insurance claims.
- Coordinate with local emergency management agencies to identify if your business will be needed during response and recovery (especially if your business may be used as a shelter by the Red Cross or local officials)
- Review insurance coverage to ensure it adequately covers wind, freshwater flood, and storm surge-borne-damages and consider additional coverage if needed.

During the Hurricane:

- Monitor weather updates with AccuWeather For Business to stay informed about the hurricane's progress. Focus on rainfall, flooding, and wind forecasts!
- Monitor your local emergency management agency's action recommendations, especially those related to evacuations. Do not wait until the last minute!
- Activate your emergency response plan and implement necessary safety measures to protect employees and secure the premises.
- Communicate with employees and customers early and often to inform them about the situation and provide instructions.
- Make final preparations for any staff remaining onsite to assist with facility emergencies.
- Protect physical assets by shutting down critical systems, securing equipment and machinery, and implementing measures to mitigate flood damage.

After the Hurricane:

- Assess the damage to your facility by conducting a thorough inspection to identify any structural or operational issues.
- Ensure employees are safe by verifying their well-being and providing necessary support or assistance.
- Restore essential business operations by prioritizing the recovery of critical systems, infrastructure, and processes.
- Continue to use your business's communication channels to update employees and customers about the status of the business and any changes in operations.
- Review the effectiveness of your emergency plan and make improvements if needed based on the lessons learned.