Emergency Preparedness Checklist for Hurricanes

Hurricane-force winds can destroy buildings and mobile homes. Debris, such as signs, roofing material, siding and small items, left outside become flying missiles during hurricanes. In the United States, the National Weather Service issues hurricane advisories as soon as a hurricane appears to be a threat. The hurricane season lasts from June through November.

Understanding how hurricanes are classified and the type of damage that they may produce is critical in developing and reacting to hurricane threats. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a 1 to 5 rating based on a hurricane's sustained wind speed and is the system most often used by weather-related services, such as the National Weather Service.

Category	Sustained Winds	Types of Damage Due to Hurricane Winds
1	74-95 mph (119-153 km/h)	Very dangerous winds will produce some damage: Well-constructed frame homes could have damage to roof, shingles, vinyl siding, and gutters. Large branches of trees will snap and shallowly rooted trees may be toppled. Extensive damage to power lines and poles likely will result in power outages that could last a few to several days.
2	96-110 mph (154-177 km/h)	Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage: Well-constructed frame homes could sustain major roof and siding damage. Many shallowly rooted trees will be snapped or uprooted and block numerous roads. Near-total power loss is expected with outages that could last from several days to weeks.
3 (major)	111-129 mph (178-208 km/h)	Devastating damage will occur: Well-built framed homes may incur major damage or removal of roof decking and gable ends. Many trees will be snapped or uprooted, blocking numerous roads. Electricity and water will be unavailable for several days to weeks after the storm passes.
4 (major)	130-156 mph (209-251 km/h)	Catastrophic damage will occur: Well-built framed homes can sustain severe damage with loss of most of the roof structure and/or some exterior walls. Most trees will be snapped or uprooted and power poles downed. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.
5 (major)	157 mph (252 km/h) or higher	Catastrophic damage will occur: A high percentage of framed homes will be destroyed, with total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.

Your business should have plans for preparing for hurricanes. The following are considerations when developing your plans:

Before the Storm	
☐	Monitor local radio stations or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Channel for a warning alarm tone and add a battery backup to listen for tornado watches and warnings.
☐	Develop plans for communicating with employees before and after a hurricane.
☐	Establish facility shutdown, warning, and evacuation procedures.
☐	Develop a plan to secure roof fixtures, access scuttles, and skylights.
☐	Survey the exterior of your facility and make plans to protect outside equipment and structures.

Continued

☐	Develop plans to protect windows, such as installing permanent storm shutters, which offer the best protection, or covering windows with 5/8' marine plywood.
☐	Establish plans for assisting employees who may need transportation in the event of an evacuation.
☐	Create backup systems, such as alternate power sources (e.g., generators or gasoline-powered pumps), and battery-powered emergency lighting.
☐	Stockpile damming and diking supplies, such as sand bags, to protect the property from floodwaters.
☐	Consider the need for portable and fixed sump pumps to remove floodwater.
☐	Review local community evacuation plans.
☐	Develop a records retention and backup program to ensure vital business records and computer data are not lost during a storm; including options for offsite storage.
☐	Review options to shelter employees in place, including provisions for food, water, and petty cash (for incidentals after the storm).
☐	Consider training staff who can respond to emergencies (i.e., fire, medical, etc.), when outside resources may not be available.
☐	Create a resource list of contractors, vendors, and suppliers that may be needed after a storm.
☐	Establish agreements with contractors to provide repairs as a first priority customer, during an emergency.
During the Storm	
☐	Establish a program to ensure monitoring of NOAA Weather Radio or the local news for the latest updates.
☐	Provide for a fire watch, in the event that the fixed protection is compromised during the storm.
☐	Monitor equipment processes that must remain on during a storm.
☐	Shut down electric equipment during a power interruption to reduce start-up loading.
After the Storm	
☐	Document damage to property, including taking photographs or video.
☐	Plan to provide temporary securement of the property for damage, such as broken windows.
☐	Be careful during clean-up. Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.
☐	Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water.
☐	Do not walk, swim, or drive through floodwaters.