

SAFETY ALERT

Hurricane Preparation Amidst a Pandemic

Protecting Your Employees



Storm Preparation / Safety Tips

Just as you prepare your home and family for an impending storm or hurricane, it's important to prepare your workplace and jobsites. Planning ahead now can make a big difference in how well workplaces and jobsites fair during a storm. Employers should prepare a "Storm Preparedness Plan" for each workplace, job site or project in advance. Employees should be trained to monitor weather conditions and understand their company's plan and policies related to weather events at their workplace and while performing field work.

Fixed Workplace Employees

Preparing for a storm or weather event:

- Follow the weather in all worksite locations.
- Know, understand, and communicate company policy related to weather events to field employees, they may contact you for direction (especially new employees.)
- Know safe locations within your building to gather during weather events.
- Check batteries in emergency lighting and exits.
- Check/replenish flashlights, emergency kits, and safety equipment and materials.
- Prepare a complete workplace material supply for several days and store it off-site to allow for emergency use if needed.
- Store important documents in a high safe place where neither water nor wind can damage them.
- Gather and distribute all phone numbers of key personnel including state and local emergency agencies.
- Do not attempt to travel to or from your workplace during weather events.



Remote Employees

Helpful hints for job site protection include:

- Follow your company guidelines as they relate to working during weather events and do not attempt to work through them.
- When sufficient notice is provided, secure all company property and materials as instructed and follow company policy.
- When working outside, monitor weather daily and come prepared for the weather and temperatures you will be exposed to. Various free weather apps are available on your phones, many offer weather alerts to inform you of quickly changing or severe weather in your area.
- Clean all exterior areas of the workplace to remove potential for flying debris.

Fixed and Remote Workplace Employees

Consider these factors when developing your plan

The pandemic is already putting a tremendous strain on the typical response systems—disaster relief, healthcare, and government. Some hospitals are, again, at or near capacity. The CDC's "COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season", includes significant enhancements designed to protect relief workers from the disease (providing hand sanitizer, masks and other forms of PPE, guidelines for physical distancing and sanitizing facilities). However, their plan does not provide evacuees with these safeguards - those who are forced to evacuate to mass shelters will be required to supply their own PPE and sanitizer. At the very least, the pandemic will likely change the way that cities approach mass sheltering; residents outside the storm surge zone may be asked to shelter at home.

- Ensure that employees have an adequate supply of masks and hand sanitizer. Order supplies early, before the demand exceeds supply.
- Include a "shelter-in-place" provision in your plan.
- Designate a storm coordinator to communicate updates and guidance.
- Determine who is at risk by knowing the actual locations of all remote employees, do not assume that are working from their home.
- Update your emergency call list and confirm their ability to respond when needed.
- Update employee contact information.
- Prepare for the unexpected.

After The Weather Event Has Passed:

- Do not return to your workplace until cleared to return by your employer or whoever controls the location you report to (business owner, general contractor, supervisor, or management representative.)
- Follow company procedure related to evaluating potential hazards that are now present at your work site due to the weather event.
- Do not enter a space that has any sign of not being structurally sound. If in doubt, stay out until it can be professionally evaluated.
- Avoid direct contact with unstable surfaces or debris piles
- Do not return to work if there are uncontrolled hazards.
- Assume all power lines are energized. Do not enter any space that still contains flood waters until you are 100% sure that the electricity is off and will remain off.
- Do not enter any space where there is a natural gas odor.
- Do not work in poorly ventilated areas which may be subject to emissions from gasoline, diesel, or propane-powered generators.
- Perform any clean-up of the work site / job site in accordance with direction provided by your supervisor.
- Have an employee contact a company manager if the employee feels it is unsafe to work at the job.

If you need additional assistance, please contact your FHM Risk Management Consultant directly or by calling 1-800-329-4340.

For additional safety information, visit www.fhmic.com and click on the 'SAFETYnet' tab for the latest addition to FHM Safety Tools. FHM Safety Tools allows our policyholders to access a vast library of safety and training materials on topics specific to your industry.