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## Hurricane Preparedness and Loss Mitigation

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# Table of Contents

## Hurricane Preparedness and Loss Mitigation

Hurricane Preparedness and Loss Mitigation Guidelines ..... 1  
    Hurricane Preparedness ..... 1  
    Hurricane Emergency Response ..... 1

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# Hurricane Preparedness and Loss Mitigation Guidelines

Woodruff Sawyer is committed to helping our clients manage through natural disasters, and offer these suggestions for preparing for and responding to hurricanes and associated flooding.

## Hurricane Preparedness

Prior to a hurricane, we recommend you:

- Review your Shelter-in-Place and Evacuation Plans.
- Assess the capabilities of outside responders, such as the fire department, during a hurricane.
- Consider the potential for access roads being blocked by flood water and other debris.
- Develop a plan to notify company staff / corporate of the conditions. Consider contingencies in case of communications disruptions.
- Ensure that the Emergency Response Team and other vital personnel have all necessary and proper supplies and equipment (i.e. food, fresh water, medical supplies, flashlights, communication equipment with recharging devices that can work from automobiles so that cell phones and other equipment can be recharged).
- Inspect hurricane shutters / plywood used to protect openings and to ensure all components are available.
- Inspect roofs to ensure these are free from leaves and any other debris that may clog drains or become airborne.
- Inspect all roof-mounted equipment to replace any missing bolts or rain bonnets.
- Ensure an adequate supply of plastic covers is available to protect computer equipment and any other high value equipment susceptible to water damage.
- Consider other hazards, such as hazardous materials and hazardous energy, etc., and observe adequate precautions for these.
- Document locations and procedures where natural gas and utilities can be safely shut off or confirmed to be shut off.
- Develop contingency plans for disruptions of other critical utilities, such as electrical, water, sewer, phone/data, waste disposal, etc.
- Identify individuals authorized to contract for cleanup and repairs, order closure of the facility, and other emergency actions.

## Hurricane Emergency Response

The following provides recommendations for responding to hurricane warnings and advice for damage assessment and clean-up following a hurricane.

## Immediate Response:

### 1. Watch Stage: Winds of 74 mph or greater pose a potential threat within 36 hours.

- Designate a weather monitor to map the storm's progress and to keep the emergency response team updated before, during and after the storm.
- Determine checkpoints (for example, when the storm is within a certain distance of the site) to take specific actions, such as shutting down operations, or sending staff home.
- Check emergency supplies/equipment.
- Determine how long operations can be continued at the facility.
- Begin to notify Company employees / corporate of the conditions in the area and the potential for damage. Notify other vendors and service providers of the potential need for their services. Continue to monitor the conditions.
- Identify equipment, inventory, high-value/critical materials, vehicles, computers, yard storage, records, hazardous materials, etc. that might need to be moved or protected.
- Determine where these items can be moved to or otherwise protected if the need arises.
- Reserve appropriate equipment such as temperature controlled trailers, generators, pumps, dehumidifiers, etc.
- Inspect all fire protection to ensure that it is in service.
- Fill all fuel tanks for fire pumps and emergency generators and test their operation.
- Fuel all mobile equipment that might be needed following the storm.
- Check and ensure proper maintenance of any additional back-up equipment.
- Move loose outside materials and equipment to a secure location.
- Clean out drains and catch basins.
- Fill above and below ground storage tanks.
- Strap or anchor roof-mounted equipment.

### 2. Warning Stage: Hurricane conditions are expected within 24 hours.

- Secure outdoor cranes to prevent them from moving, and lower elevated booms.
- Shut down operations that depend on outside power sources.
- Close storm shutters or board up/protect windows. Brace dock doors.
- Relocate / protect the selected items. Anchor moveable outside equipment and trailers. Secure flammable liquids. Relocate portable objects, even small ones (i.e. chairs, signs, etc.) to an indoor location.
- Release employees before conditions endanger them.
- Have cash on hand.
- Divert inbound deliveries.

- Consider turning off gas, flammable liquids and electrical equipment to minimize chance of fires and injuries. Protect electric fire pumps instead of turning these off and make every effort to keep fire protection in service.
- If appropriate, increase security, notify restoration companies, etc.

### 3. Post-Event - Property Damage Assessment (to prevent further damage or injuries)

After personnel safety has been addressed, check for hazards. Focus on safety hazards and fire hazards, natural gas leaks and spills of flammable liquids or hazardous chemicals:

- Examine all fuel-fired equipment and hazardous materials for leaks.
- Shut down gas supplies as appropriate if leaks are detected. Do not enter any buildings with gas leaks unless properly trained.
- Survey the site and address flammable gas and liquid leaks and spills, fire protection impairments, electrical equipment damage, damage to foundations or underground piping.
- Assess Environmental Concerns: Sewage leakage and backing up. Storm drain overflows. Hazardous materials releases/spills. Fuel oil/lubrication oils storage.

#### 1. Salvage and Clean-up

After the emergency, begin cleanup and restoration. Of primary concern at this time is safety.

- Secure the site. Cover broken windows and torn roof coverings. Clean roof drains.
- Use proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as needed.
- Do not operate or clean any electrical device until it has been checked and approved by a qualified electrician.
- Adherence to electrical safety rules and regulations should be strictly enforced. All employees should be required to enforce “lock-out / tag-out” procedures. All electrical equipment should be kept locked out until thoroughly cleaned and checked by qualified electricians.
- Maintain as much fire protection in service as possible; shut the minimum number of valves necessary to control leaking of impaired piping. Immediately repair damaged fire protection systems and return them to service.
- Control ignition sources during repairs. Use Hot Work only after sprinkler protection is restored, and only with Hot Work permits after that.
- Survey the site and address flammable gas and liquid leaks and spills, combustibles in contact with damaged electrical gear/ignition sources, etc.
- Engage remediation crew as appropriate.
- Survey the site; examine machinery / equipment for damage, shut off as appropriate, and make necessary repairs before starting up; and develop and follow proper procedures for safe start-up of equipment.
- Dehumidify damp areas, wet insulation, building materials, etc.

- Establish a building occupancy resumption program for post-hurricane evaluation to facilitate prompt repairs and reentry to buildings.
- Keep documentation of damage and repairs.

In areas that have been flooded, consider these additional precautions:

- Areas covered with mud and silt will be slippery making it difficult to find stable footing. All personnel will be susceptible to falls, strains, and cuts and bruises.
- Also, it is likely raw sewage as well as unknown hazardous chemicals were released into the waterways. Some of these may end up deposited in, on, or around properties. Ensure protection by wearing gloves, rubber boots, and waterproof outerwear during cleanup operations.