

Hurricane Preparation



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Knowing in advance what to do in the event of severe weather or hurricane is imperative. We hope that these procedures are not needed; however during the summer storm season in Florida (or anywhere along the southeast) they are utilized all too often. Please use the steps below to keep your employees and facility as safe as possible during these times. Remember hurricane season does NOT officially end until November 1st.

BE INFORMED

Do not wait until severe weather is present. If you live in an area prone to hurricanes, get a current hurricane guide that is published for your area and have it on file in your rental office. Be sure that you and your employees know if you are in a flood zone. Plan ahead the time needed for your personal needs as well as the needs of the facility. Have your evacuation plan ready and be sure that you and your fellow employees know the plan, including evacuation routes, if necessary. Check your communications list for updated phone numbers, addresses, etc. Your employees must be able to contact you for emergencies. And after the storm you will need to know if your employees are safe, and when they will be returning to the facility if they had to leave.

BE PREPARED

Are you going to weather the storm? Be sure you have these items, and follow the procedures below.

Basic items to keep on hand:

- o 2 double insulated coolers
- o 2 halogen or drop stand lights
- o 2 large plastic tubs for holding your hurricane supplies
- o 1 roll of duct tape
- o 1 standard, inexpensive corded telephone
- o 2 flashlights
- o 1 weather radio
- o Batteries (enough for a week to power the radio and flashlights)
- o Large trash bags

Do you have a generator? You will need:

- o 2 extension cords (100 ft & 12 gauge)
- o 2 splitter adapter (12 gauge)
- o 2 full 5 gallon gas cans
- o 2 containers of 4 cycle generator oil
- o 2 funnels

A week's worth of supplies needed:

- non perishable food
- bottled drinking water
- enough ice to completely fill your two coolers
- medications
- paper products
- hand sanitizer
- blankets

Close Lightning

- Open the gate
- Take down flags and signage that may be damaged by heavy wind.
- Do a back-up and appropriately shut down your computer and unplug it from the power source.
- Unplug the printer.
- In the heat of a storm, let the answering machine answer the phone.

After Close Lightning

- As soon as storm has reasonably passed, reboot your office computer and printer system to resume normal daily procedures
- Close gate
- Return any phone calls that have been left on the answering machine
- Put flags and outside signage back up (if any)
- Assess and document any damage with a picture.
- Report any damage to management company or owners immediately.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

1. If you have a cellular phone, charge it.
2. Be sure that you fill ALL of your vehicles' gas tanks.
3. Monitor severe weather via weather radio or weather channels, whichever is appropriate for the facility at the time.
4. Remove any flags, signs, banners, etc, that can become hazards during high winds. This includes benches and chairs as they cannot withstand high winds.
5. If you have a golf cart, secure it in a storage unit. Do not plug it in to the battery charger.
6. Open the gate, unless you have a vertical lift gate. If your gate is vertical, **KEEP IT CLOSED** for the duration of the storm. Some facilities may want to consider chaining it closed.
7. Secure all windows using tape, plywood, or shutters.
8. Do a back-up and appropriately shut down your computer and unplug it and all accessories.
9. If there is an eminent threat of flooding, turn off the electricity at main breaker, move all electrical equipment to counter tops, shelves, etc.
10. After all of these procedures are completed, it is time to decide if you staying or evacuating.

EVACUATION

1. Know where you are going. Planning this early will save you valuable time. Have directions handy to get to the 2 CLOSEST shelters. It is always a good idea to have a "Plan B"
2. Put the items below in a SMALL waterproof container or Ziploc bags and take them with you.
 - a. Paid to Date Report
 - b. Tenant/Unit # Cross Reference
 - c. Cash and Deposits
 - d. Computer Backup Disc
 - e. Most current "Daily Maintenance Inspection" (DMI)
 - f. Binder with All Monthly Closings for the Past Year
 - g. Binder containing your Daily Receipts Log
3. Create an answering machine message letting your customers know that the facility has been evacuated and will be closed for the duration of the storm.
4. Take your emergency supplies, food, water, clothing, as you may need them at the shelter. Remember shelters do become overcrowded, and as seen in the past they are not always prepared for the aftermath of the storm.
5. Be sure to have all personal papers on hand including driver's license, passports, birth certificates, and insurance papers.

AFTER THE STORM

1. As soon as storm has reasonably passed, reboot your office computer and printer system to resume normal office procedures.
2. Close gate or if your gate is locked, unlock it.
3. Return any phone calls that have been left on the answering machine.
4. Replace outdoor items.
5. Assess and document any damage with a picture.
6. Report any damage to facility management company or owners.

IF YOU EVACUATED

Contact your management company or owners, making them aware of your status. At this time a decision will be made to either return to the property or wait. Upon return, be cautious when entering the property as there may be power lines down. Once you have assessed that it is safe to enter, start the cleanup. If you have power, plug in all equipment and start your computer. Get your digital camera and a notepad. Inspect the entire facility, note and photograph any damage. Check customer's locks to be sure that their items are still secure. Contact your home office of property status. You will then be directed on what to do next.

Following these simple procedures can save owners thousands of dollars and in some instances save lives.