

BUSINESS HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST



This checklist is designed to help business prepare for storms in a clear, step-by-step manner. It provides a series of actions to take before, during, and after a storm, organized by the time frame in relation to the storm's arrival. By following these checklists, you can ensure that your safety measures are in place well in advance and that you're prepared for any emergencies that may arise. Each section includes blank lines so you can customize the checklists to meet the needs of your business.

Below you will find a comprehensive checklist divided into different timeframes:

- 5 Days Before
- 72 Hours Before
- 24-48 Hours Before
- During & Immediately After
- Recovery
- Long Term Planning & Repairs
- Off-Season (December - May)

5 Days Before

Tasks	Person Responsible
As needed, secure equipment, cabinets and fixtures vulnerable to the approaching event.	
Inspect the roof and grounds for loose debris which may become a hazard in high winds. If staff or temporary help is available, begin removal of the debris; otherwise, the removal may be done at the 72-hour interval.	
Notify employees of the potential for severe weather, and instruct them to prepare for the possible implementation of the emergency plan.	
Ensure all employees have the business' designated emergency telephone numbers, key contact information and other important documents such as an employee emergency wallet card, telephone call tree list, etc.	

72 Hours Before

Tasks	Person Responsible
Check that all roof equipment (air conditioners, fan housing, satellite dishes, antennas and signs) mounts are secure against damage during heavy winds.	
Inspect and repair roof edge flashing. Clear roof drains, gutters and downspouts of debris to prevent water backup.	
Remove or secure all loose ground items, including landscaping that may become windborne debris. Secure garbage cans, outdoor furniture, signs, awnings, flags and flagpoles, and tools.	
Clean out all debris from outdoor perimeter drains, especially in areas where water may collect such as shipping and receiving areas where the ground slopes toward the building.	
Ensure fire protection systems are in proper working order.	
Fill emergency generators with fuel and contact fuel suppliers with anticipated needs for post-storm deliveries.	
Review message templates for business' website, telephone recording, employee communications, intranet, etc.	
Advise employees to sign up for updates from NOLA Ready and monitor citywide emergency communications.	

24-48 Hours Before

Tasks	Person Responsible
Make decision on when to close the business and to excuse employees so they have sufficient time to prepare their homes and families.	
Notify key customers, suppliers and partners that the business is closing.	
For hurricanes and other high-wind events, install window protection (e.g., permanent shutters or plywood panels; tape should never be used to protect against pressures and flying debris). If window protection is unavailable, close all window blinds, and cover office equipment with plastic sheets or tarps.	

Tasks

Person Responsible

Disconnect all electrical equipment and unplug from power source.	
If building has the potential of being exposed to flooding or storm surge, seal all water entry points (i.e., utility penetrations into the building) and install flood protection.	
Raise equipment and furniture above expected flood level heights, and elevate or relocate critical records, computers and equipment to an alternate site, if possible.	
If employees are to remain on site, make sure a safe and secure area is designated in advance. If conditions permit, instruct them on how to monitor, document, and minimize leaks and water infiltration in critical areas with vital equipment.	
If expecting any deliveries, contact sender/shipper to inform them of the business closure.	
Make sure employees with "call tree" responsibilities have the most updated version of the company telephone call list and that they have it in multiple formats (hard copy, electronically, etc.).	
Update the business website and social media to reflect closure.	
Advise employees how often to check on status of re-opening.	
Place a "closed" notice on business main entrance (including instructions on how to find out more information online or by phone).	
Conduct full or partial shutdown procedures.	
Close and lock all business doors.	
Remove cash from business if possible.	

During & Immediately After

Tasks	Person Responsible
While building cannot be occupied, if alarm system loses power, arrange alternate security.	
Activate the company telephone call tree process to contact all employees regarding the status of the business.	
Update social media and business website with posts on the status of the business' operations.	

Recovery

Tasks	Person Responsible
When it is deemed safe, authorize employees with assigned start-up responsibilities to begin the documented start-up procedures.	
Take an overall inventory, including photos of all damaged property, and report damage and related expenses to your insurance company.	
Where possible or necessary, protect building, equipment and furniture from further damage.	
Instruct employees returning to the building to examine their work area, test all equipment and report findings.	
Notify key customers, suppliers and partners of business reopening and any necessary property or operational changes resulting from storm damage.	

Long Term Planning & Repairs

Tasks

Person Responsible

Hold a debrief meeting noting successes and failures, compile a log of actions to be taken, and incorporate improvements into plan.	

Off-Season (December - May)

Tasks

Person Responsible

Create emergency response teams, including a chain of command, a current list of telephone numbers and contacts for emergency plan team members, local police and fire departments, utilities, contractors, HVAC contractor, electrician, plumber, building owner, if applicable, etc.	
Create checklists for all employees, specifically for those who have assigned responsibilities. Be sure to assign primary and alternates for each action/task.	
Designate a knowledgeable person who will be responsible for monitoring the news and weather, and for disseminating weather updates.	
Assemble needed supplies for an emergency supply kit and first aid kit. If employees are to remain on site in safe conditions, ensure proper supplies such as food, bedding and life safety equipment are included. Be sure to reinspect and replenish supplies annually or after an actual emergency.	
Create emergency shutdown and start-up procedures with appropriate personnel for components such as computer systems, special equipment, refrigeration systems, etc., and for building systems such as electric systems, gas and/or other utility systems, HVAC and boilers. Review procedures annually.	
Establish a relationship in advance (thereafter, revisit relationship) with local, reliable contractors that will be available for post-storm building repairs.	
Inspect the building envelope (roof cover, flashing, windows, walls, warehouse doors) and conduct repairs.	

Tasks	Person Responsible
If located in a flood or storm surge zone, determine water entry points and document flood protection techniques.	
Inspect and conduct repairs of surrounding grounds to ensure proper site drainage, including ground drains and gutters to facilitate water runoff.	
If backup power such as a diesel generator is to be used, test the system and establish proper contracts with fuel suppliers for emergency fuel deliveries.	
Maintain fire sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers and smoke detectors. Consider a fire protection system that is monitored so the fire department is immediately notified when the sprinklers are activated.	
Inspect and replenish critical spare parts inventory.	
Consider replacement contingencies (i.e., equipment leases) for critical business equipment that can cause a bottleneck in business operations or may take extensive time to replace.	
Create a system to communicate after an emergency such as message templates for the business' website, telephone recording, social media sites, company intranet, employee communications, etc. Maintain a list of local radio and TV stations in the event the business needs to broadcast information on closings/reopenings.	
Create and disseminate a payroll policy in the event of office closings due to an emergency.	
Consider how documents, records and reports (both hard copies and electronic copies) will be safeguarded including storing in fire-rated cabinets, relocating records above ground level, bolting cabinets in earthquake areas, transferring to an off-site location, backing up at a distant location, etc.	
Create procedures on how employees are to report emergencies (fire alarm, dialing 911, calling an internal emergency number, etc.).	
Create medical emergency procedures (who can perform them and to what extent, or whether your business will rely on the fire department or ambulatory services to provide these services).	
Create shelter-in-place procedures (what actions employees should take before and while sheltering).	
Create life safety equipment maintenance procedures (AED, personal protection equipment, etc.).	