



Hurricane Preparedness Guide: Commercial Property

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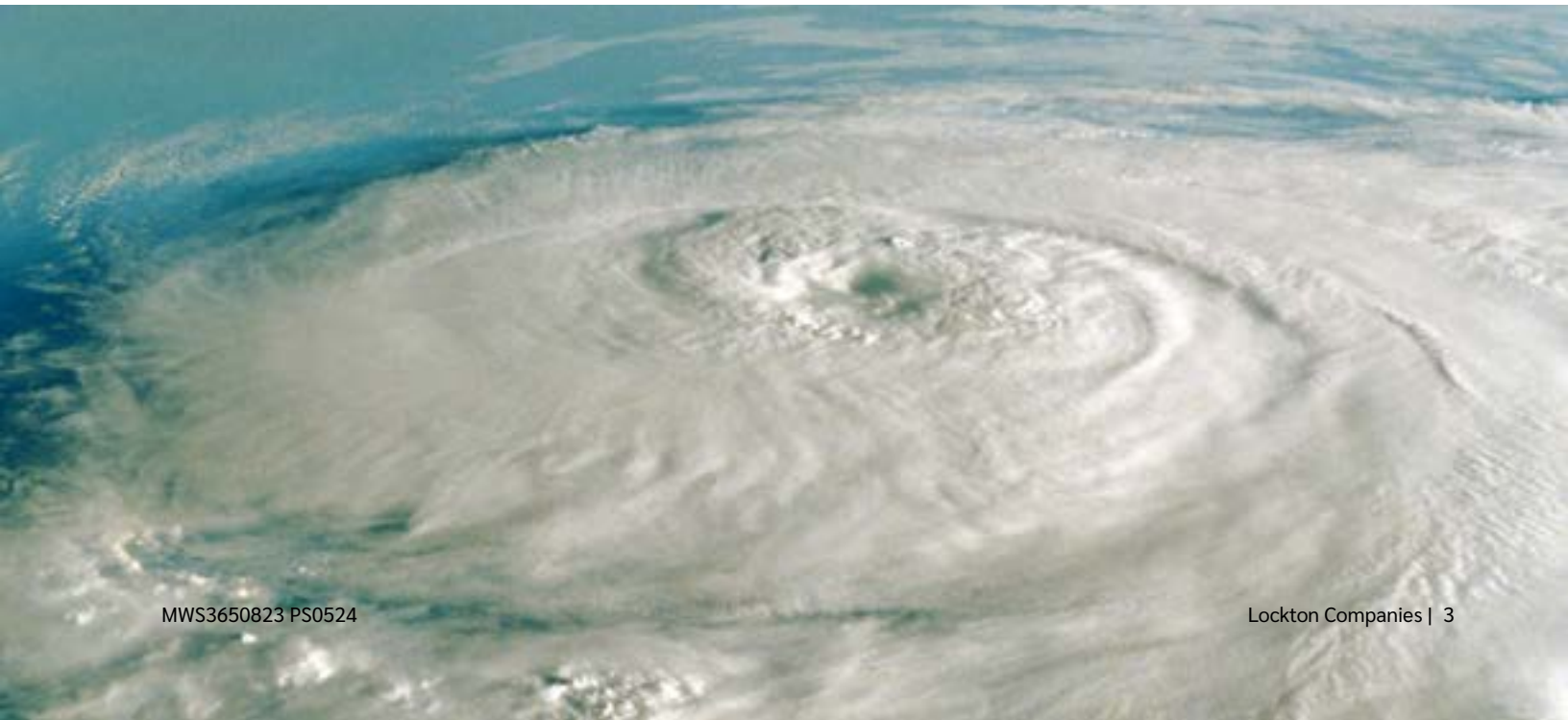
Section 1: Hurricane hazard overview

Introduction

Hurricane season begins mid-May and can bring intense rain and windstorm events to the Atlantic, Central Pacific and Pacific through the end of November. The rain and windstorm events can result in severe damages to property and business interruption. Therefore, it's critical to have a workable hurricane preparedness plan that both provides steps to mitigate the impact of storms and to get back into business as quickly as possible once the storm passes.

The key to effectively managing an emergency is to create a plan that includes actions to take before, during and after a storm. All plans should include the following sections:

- Command and control
- Roles and responsibilities
- Storm mitigation and response efforts
- Communication protocols
- Key vendors and partners
- Training and drilling
- Annual updates and changes



Section 2: Emergency contacts

Company	Name	Phone number
Building owners		
Electrical utility		
Electrician		
Emergency team contacts		
Fire sprinkler contractor		
Gas utility		
HVAC contractor		
Insurance agent/broker contracts		
Local police and fire department contacts		
Plumber		
Roofing contractor		
Water restoration vendor		

Section 3: Pre-hurricane preparedness planning

Preparedness is critical to any successful emergency response effort. Any and all steps that can be taken in advance of storm landfall will allow you to take an orderly and focused approach to getting your property ready and minimize impact from delivering on day-to-day commitments.

Pre-hurricane preparation	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks/actions needed
Update emergency contact list.				
Provide back-up communication plan such as two-way radios or cell phones.				
Update roles and responsibilities of emergency team.				
Ensure a team member is designated to monitor weather conditions during all stages of the event.				
Communicate with local police and fire department to coordinate any before and after emergency actions required.				
Establish an off-site or virtual command center outside of the hurricane impacted area.				
Communicate protocols and procedures to employees/staff.				
Inspect all fire and life safety equipment including fire pumps.				
Evaluate emergency power needs and make arrangements for backup generator power if no backup power is available on-site.				
Review/update site business continuity plans annually.				
Identify, review and protect as needed: interdependency between facilities, data storage and security, critical/Vulnerable equipment, stock, yard storage and roof-mounted equipment.				
Contact key vendors and partners to update contracts as needed for supplies and repairs following the event.				
Evaluate site accessibility, flooding hazards, utility damage potential and return-to-work procedures.				
Complete roof inspections and repairs as needed (Include review of flashing, coverings, drains, gutters and edge strips).				
Remove any debris from roofs.				
Inspect and replace/secure any loose windows, doors or other openings (such as air-conditioning units).				
Inspect and ensure hurricane shutters are in good condition. Install in advance of hurricane season to double check no repairs or replacements are needed.				
Conduct regular trainings and drills.				
Ensure emergency kits such as first aid, emergency lighting, communication devices and other are present on site.				

Section 4: Actions to take for approaching hurricane and during a hurricane event

In the event, from weather monitoring through the National Hurricane Center and local authorities, a tropical storm warning or hurricane watch or warning has been issued for your area, below are some steps you can take to immediately prepare and secure your property:

Steps you can take to immediately prepare your facilities	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks/actions needed
Continue monitoring the storm progression and path				
Initiate site emergency procedure plans for hurricane preparedness				
Begin the shutdown procedures for utilities such as power, natural gas and propane				
Begin the shutdown procedures for any manufacturing lines and equipment				
Unplug computer equipment and machinery				
Install hurricane shutters on windows				
Close and secure all windows and doors				
Ensure chemicals are separated that can react with one another				
Inspect roof conditions – clear debris and repair any drains, gutters and flashing as needed				
Secure roof mounted equipment including HVAC units and vents				
Inspect and confirm all fire protection equipment is working properly including fire pumps				
Inspect all emergency generators and backup equipment to ensure they are operational				
Clear yard storage to indoor locations if possible				
Secure any loose materials, equipment, cranes, and other items in the yard area				
Activate business continuity planning including evacuation plans for employees				
If the local authorities have given an pre-evacuation or evacuation order	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks/actions needed
Follow your site hurricane preparedness plan and emergency procedures				
Essential personnel should only be present on-site if it is a safe environment				
Update company communications as needed				
Monitor any critical equipment remotely if it could not be shutdown prior to the hurricane making landfall				



Section 5: Post-hurricane procedure

Impact from a hurricane event can vary widely. Damages from strong winds, inland flooding and storm surge may be present. Only return to the property when authorities have provided an official all clear to do so. Ensure access to the site is clear and that roads are safe.

Post-event actions	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks/action needed
Conduct a property walk to identify safety hazards such as but not limited to: downed power lines, broken/leaking gas lines, flammable/combustible liquid spills, damage to building exterior and external equipment				
Identify and report to your insurer's impairment hotline any impaired fire sprinkler system and fire pumps and estimated timelines for repairs to be made to these systems				
Verify the public water supply by obtaining two-inch main drain tests for the fire sprinkler systems and conduct fire alarm and system testing as soon as possible				
Begin repairs and contacting contractors once damages have been identified				
Provide internal and external communication updates as needed regarding site conditions and when it is safe for employees to return to work on-site				
Follow established procedures for re-energizing equipment and operations at the facility				
Review business continuity plans following the event to evaluate if any changes or updates are necessary				

Section 6: Useful terms and understanding forecast information

Watch v. warning (National Hurricane Center)

A watch means possible impact and tropical-force-winds beginning within the next 48-hours. A warning means hurricane conditions are expected with tropical-force-winds beginning within 36-hours.

Forecast cone

The National Hurricane Center provides a forecast “cone” of the center of the storm. The cone should be used to understand where the center of the storm may go and how big the storm is presently. Additional maps provided by the National Hurricane Center may be used to evaluate potential wind probabilities to better prepare for a storm event.

Rapid intensification

Recent hurricane seasons including 2021 and 2022 have seen an increase in what the National Hurricane Center terms “rapid intensification” where storms rapidly strengthen in less than 24- hours. Out of 20 hurricanes in 2021 and 2022, 16 hurricanes experienced rapid intensification.



Appendix

Additional resources

- ✓ National Hurricane Center: www.nhc.noaa.gov
- ✓ FEMA: www.fema.gov
- ✓ U.S. Geological Survey: www.usgs.gov/hurricanes
- ✓ American Red Cross: www.redcross.org
- ✓ State and county websites
- ✓ Storm apps





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