

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

(Parts taken from St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company Publication)

Pre-hurricane checklist:

- Make sure that property is properly anchored and in good repair.
- Verify that signs and equipment are properly anchored and in good repair.
- Repair or replace any weak or damaged door hinges and latches. Secure doors and brace from the inside.
- Verify that auxiliary lighting is in working order
- Establish a system to protect all windows and openings on the building.
- Establish an emergency response team and assemble the following supplies and equipment at a central, secure location:
 - Portable pumps and hose
 - Emergency lighting.
 - Lumber and nails
 - Sandbags
 - Mops and squeegees
 - Tarpaulins/plastic sheeting
 - Power and manual tools
 - Shovels and axes
 - Ropes/fasteners

As a hurricane approaches, secure the location:

- Shutter or board up windows to protect them from flying debris.
- Remove hanging signs. Bring inside or secure any objects that might become airborne.
- Place sandbags in spaces where water could enter.
- Anchor structures so they will not be moved by high winds. Move yard storage inside where practical.
- Move drums and portable containers of flammables to a secure area indoors.
- Fill emergency generator.
- Inspect all fire protection equipment to be sure it is in service.
- Move important records to a secure area that is protected from wind, debris and rain.
- Duplicate critical records and move them offsite to a location that is not susceptible to the hurricane.
- Shut off all flammable liquid, combustible liquid and gas lines at their source to prevent an accidental release caused by broken piping.
- Shut off electrical power before the hurricane strikes.
- Evacuate all employees except the emergency response team.

After the hurricane:

- Immediate damage assessment should be completed and action plans developed to address priorities:
 - Look for safety hazards such as downed power lines, exposed electrical wires, leaking gas, etc.
 - Appraise buildings for structural damage or undermining of building foundations.
 - Assess impaired fire protection equipment and alarms.
 - Complete temporary repairs and minimize hazards to ensure personnel can safely access the building.
 - Require strict precautionary measures for any cutting/welding that will occur or around the buildings.
 - Eliminate any unnecessary ignition sources including the enforcement of “No Smoking” regulations.
 - Establish a procedure for removing debris brought by the storm and as a result of any repair efforts.
 - Any holes or other penetrations in the building walls should be temporarily repaired.
 - Assess and prioritize building contents that have been damaged and can be salvaged.
 - Photograph and/or videotape any damage.
 - Do not energize electrical circuits until an electrician has checked all systems.
 - Care should be exercised around damaged power cables. The electrician should notify the utility company of all necessary repairs.
 - Electric motors, switch gear and cables should be thoroughly inspected, cleaned and dried as needed before energizing. Even if it has not been immersed, electrical equipment can absorb sufficient moisture to reduce its insulation resistance to a dangerously low level. While electrical leakage may be too small to blow fuses or trip the circuit breakers, it may be sufficient to cause heating and fires.
 - Perform a continual fire watch until normal operations are resumed.
 - Provide portable radios or cellular phones so “guards” can immediately contact emergency response units.