

# Hurricane Season Update

## *Preparedness*

Preparing for hurricanes can make the difference between incurring minor damage or catastrophic loss. Proper preparation of the site, building, business, equipment, personnel, utilities, restoration, recovery, etc., for before, during and after the event will all serve to limit the amount of disruption to your ministry. The following can be used to guide your preparation:

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### Before the storm.

- Review/update business continuity/disaster recovery plan.
- Review procedures with your internal emergency response team to ensure all positions are filled and all members are properly trained.
- Maintain a relationship with your roofing and/or contractor. Experience shows that these professionals are in high demand after a hurricane. Having an existing relationship can help facilitate a prompt response.
- Verify that you have rated storm shutters for all openings: doors, windows and skylights. French, sliding-glass and garage doors are particularly vulnerable to high winds due to their large size. Special attention should be given to protect them:
  - Replace standard windows with impact-resistant window systems or shutters.
  - French doors should have at least three hinges per door and be reinforced with fastening bolts locking them together. Ideally, doors should open "out" to increase resistance against strong winds. Unless impact rated, they should be protected with shutters.
  - Replace sliding-glass doors with impact-resistant doors or protect with shutters.
  - Replace/reinforce garage doors with structural ribs and heavy-duty systems.
- Before you buy any protective system, make sure it will be easy to install quickly. Know where everything is so you can quickly get to it.
- Storm shutters and anchor bolts should be professionally inspected annually so that they perform as designed.
- Check caulking around windows and doors to ensure no deterioration has occurred.
- Prune weak branches and trees around the property and remove limbs that overhang or are too close to the structure. Use mulch instead of pebbles (pebbles can become "missiles").
- Have a professional roofer make all repairs to your roof so that they can verify structure and decking are appropriately attached to the framing members of your building in accordance with the latest codes.
- Install a back-up generator to power air conditioning (to expedite the drying process) as well as critical electrical equipment and electronics. Perform annual maintenance and test under load to ensure proper operation.
- Make sure drains on terraces and balconies are not clogged.
- Take photographs or record video of the structure and all items of value and interest within the structure for future use in documentation of inventory.
- Everyone should know where the water, gas and electric shutoffs are to turn them off before a hurricane.

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### Impending storm.

- Install storm shutters and secure doors/windows with a plan to have them completed no later than 24 hours prior to landfall.

# Hurricane Season Update

## *Preparedness, 2*

- When installing shutters, consider a quick-exit plan in case you need to evacuate for a fire, etc. You don't want to have to fight your way OUT of a completely shuttered building where all doors and windows are blocked.
- Secure your property. Close all interior doors—secure and brace external doors.
- A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" plywood. Please note that tape does not prevent windows from breaking. It just helps to hold together the flying shattered glass pieces if the window does break.
- Move important/valuable items to the center of the property, away from windows/doors. Elevate them as much as possible.
- Remove window treatments. In the event draperies cannot be removed, elevate or wrap/seal in plastic.
- Roll up area rugs and move them to the center of the room. Elevate if possible.
- Place towels at the base of doors and windows.
- Bring all outdoor furniture, trash cans, potted plants, and lawn ornaments indoors.
- Fill the fuel supply for your generator. Test the generator under load to ensure it is functioning properly.
- Place important documents (insurance policies, bank account and credit card information, important contact numbers) in a sealed water-tight plastic container.
- Stay indoors! Go to the safe areas inside your facilities: interior rooms without windows, closets and basements. Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm. Winds will pick up again.
- Prepare a personal hurricane survival kit for each person who is regularly in the church, in case you and your staff must wait out the storm. Each kit should contain:
  - Enough non-perishable food and bottled water for three days. Fill large containers with water as well.
  - Important papers (insurance, identification, financial)
  - Flashlights and batteries
  - NOAA Weather Radio
  - First-aid kit and toiletries
- Evacuate under the following conditions:
  - If you are directed by local authorities to evacuate.
  - If you feel you are in danger.
  - If you are on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an inland waterway.

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### After the storm.

- If you discover water inside the building, contact a restoration company immediately to begin the water extraction process.
- Run the air conditioner to dehumidify the property.
- Remove any wet items and store them somewhere where they can dry safely if possible.
- Take photographs of damaged items and structure damage to support any submitted claim and restoration process.
- Call your insurance agent to report any damage.

For more information visit: <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>