As hurricanes worsen each year, there are several important steps you can take now to keep your employees safe while minimizing damage to your business.

**Before a Hurricane**

**Protect Your Employees and Business**

- Have a communication plan with more than one way to reach your employees, vendors and customers.
- Determine the best sources in your area for the latest information and updates (local radio or TV, NOAA radio, online news).
- Contact suppliers about holding shipments until after the storm danger has passed and communicate with them before shipments resume.
- Store additional first aid supplies and water for yourself and your employees.
- Make sure your insurance policies and other important records are protected and make duplicates to store off-site in a safe area.
- Document your buildings, their contents and any inventory with digital pictures or video.
- If safe, consider moving supplies/raw materials to a higher level within your facility or another area where they may be better protected.
- Secure all doors and board up windows to protect against flying debris. Cover windows with storm shutters or invest in one-half inch marine plywood that is pre-cut to fit your doors and windows.
- Clean out roof drains, floor drains and catch basins, and make sure sump pumps are working properly.
- Anchor and fill above-ground tanks with water or product to keep them in place during the storm.
- Fill the fuel tanks on your emergency generator and fire pumps. Keep all vehicles well-fueled in case of evacuation, as power failures render gas pumps inoperable.
- Have a plan for moving vehicles and any movable machinery and equipment located in flood-prone areas to higher ground.
- Check that your fire protection equipment is working.
- Turn off utilities (if told to do so by authorities). If you shut off your gas, a professional is required to turn it back on.
- Shut off process piping carrying gas or flammable liquids in case a pipe breaks in the storm.
- Shut down production processes safely and turn off the electricity for noncritical equipment.
Hurricane Preparedness

Prepare to Evacuate Quickly
Follow all emergency mandates, including evacuation orders. Locate a local emergency shelter or other safe destination ahead of time and know your routes. Pack a safety kit with basic requirements, such as:

- Supplies of food, water, necessary medications and cash (should power outages interfere with electronic transactions).
- Extra clothing.
- Flashlights, cell phones and charging options, and portable radios and extra batteries.

During a Hurricane

- After taking the necessary steps to secure your buildings and property, make sure your offices and/or facilities are completely vacated. You may be able to periodically monitor the status of your properties if your locations are equipped with battery-powered remote cameras or sensors.
- Use flashlights in the dark if the power goes out. (Do NOT use candles in case of a gas leak.)
- Continue listening to local area radio, NOAA radio or TV stations for the latest information and updates.
- Report downed power lines and avoid contact with floodwater — it may be contaminated with sewage and chemicals or contain dangerous insects or animals.

After a Hurricane

Follow Safety Guidelines After the Storm Has Passed
Once the winds have died down, use your employee call list to make sure everyone is safe and secure. Then assemble a qualified recovery team to begin getting your business reestablished.

The recovery team should include people qualified (including third-party professionals) to repair electrical, mechanical, plumbing and fire protection systems, as well as general maintenance people for cleanup. The team leader should also assess the damage and develop an action plan that addresses priorities including:

- Safety hazards, including downed power lines, exposed electrical wires and leaking gas.
- Structural damage to buildings or damaged foundations.
- Impaired fire protection equipment and alarms.
- Critical production equipment and valuable stock required to restore production.
- Completing temporary repairs so people can access the building safely.

Returning to Business Safely

- Require strict precautionary measures for any cutting or welding that could spark a gas leak.
- Eliminate any unnecessary ignition sources and enforce “No Smoking” regulations.
- Temporarily repair any roof leaks (consult a qualified contractor if needed) or damage to building walls.
- Take pictures or video of any damage to buildings and their contents, equipment and inventory for insurance purposes.
- Assess and prioritize damaged inventory contents to see what can be salvaged.
- Develop a plan for returning essential equipment back into service. Consult manufacturer guidance for initial startup.
- Reestablish communication with your vendors and customers to better evaluate potential disruptions.
In addition, your team will need to assess and repair fire protection equipment, security alarms and sprinkler systems and notify the fire department if any of those systems will be out of service. They should be cautious during electrical restoration and make sure that an electrician has checked and thoroughly dried and tested all systems and equipment before energizing electrical circuits. Any wet insulation should be stripped and replaced. All mechanical equipment and systems should be checked for leaks and damage and cleaned and dried as needed. Also, the water supply should be checked for possible contamination.

Be sure to maintain adequate security by performing a continual fire watch until normal operations can resume.

Finally, keep your employees informed about any unsafe conditions and keep them updated on the progress of resuming operations.

**Notify NFP right away if you believe you will have a claim to file.**

*NFP cannot guarantee that all information here will be applicable to every situation. While we use reasonable efforts to ensure accuracy, your situation may require different actions and this article is not a complete list of all possible risk management strategies. We assume no responsibility or liability from any action or inaction taken as a result of this content.*