



Are You Prepared for Hurricane Season?

It's that time of year in Florida, where Hurricane Season is starting and every church needs to be prepared. All hurricane preparations should be completed by May every year. Each parish should contact the Diocese for further information or a checklist.

Listed below is our guidance list to remind churches of what actions should be taken.

- Approved hurricane shutters or protection should be secured on all windows, doors and openings to protect the building and contents.
- Verify rooftop equipment is secure and that connections and fasteners holding equipment in place are not corroded. Consider adding strapping or bracing to reinforce rooftop equipment.
- The prevention of water intrusion is imperative. The facility should be inspected to identify and correct potential points of intrusion.
- Review emergency power systems in case of loss of power. The fuel supply for the emergency power system should be sufficient to support the system for the anticipated duration of normal power interruption.
- Back up critical computer data. The data should be backed up to a location that will not be affected by the hurricane.
- Electronic equipment should be located at least 4 inches above the floor to reduce the exposure to water damage. Plastic sheeting should cover computers and electronic equipment.
- Verify that the location of utility disconnects and shutoffs are located and identified with suitable marking. This specifically includes electric and fuel gas utilities.
- Identify vital business records (e.g., technical drawings, electronic files, paper files). Make plans to protect or relocate them to a safe location.
- Verify that there is a contact list for all facility personnel. Develop a communication system to notify staff when to return. Do not rely on cell phones and land lines that may not be working.
- Clean up yards of all loose debris and potential flying objects. Trees must be trimmed and cut back to reduce obstruction from wind force.
- Anchor portable buildings or trailers to the ground.
- Initiate an order shutdown of production equipment and systems that rely upon normal power. Turn off fuel gas services and non-essential electrical systems.
- Verify all fire protection systems are in service (e.g., water supplies, fire pumps, sprinklers, fire alarms and special extinguishing systems).
- Have an approved listed of vendors for post-storm recovery. Contact these vendors to ensure they will be ready to assist you after the storm.
- Have enough supplies to be able to make temporary repairs after the storm to prevent further damage (e.g., plywood, tarpaulins, plastic sheeting, roofing materials, wet vacuums).
- The inside and outside facilities should be video-recorded or photographed and inventoried to ensure contents are properly recorded for claims purposes.
- A post-storm hurricane plan highlighting proper procedures for use of volunteers should be developed, including who is to coordinate such activities.
- A post-storm emergency kit should be assembled to assist in recovery and damage assessment. At a minimum, contact information and what to do in case of water damage procedures should be included along with camera and claims forms.
- The safety of your employees and volunteers is paramount. Please do a thorough assessment of the safety and security of your facility and activities before allowing the assistance of volunteers.

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