

Windstorm Preparedness amidst COVID-19



The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season starts on June 1st, and the forecast is a higher than average probability of a major hurricane impacting the Caribbean region, Gulf of Mexico, and the US eastern coastline. COVID-19 presents an additional challenge, as hurricane preparedness tasks may conflict with quarantine and contagion prevention requirements.

To help prepare for hurricane season in the midst of uncertainty, this guide offers useful advices and reminders to deal with the current challenging times also considering that your property will resume operations after being idle for a while.

Windstorm Preparedness – What you can do Now!

- Closely monitor the weather forecasts to quickly anticipate next actions to take.
- Review and adapt all your Emergency and Natural Hazards Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Plans for the current pandemic conditions.
- Update the contact information of your employees, vendors, and contractors involved in Hurricane preparedness and recovery tasks.
- Contact and confirm availability of essential employees and contractors needed for the key actions and tasks of the Hurricane preparedness plan.
- Review your inventory of materials and equipment needed for Hurricane preparedness and recovery tasks, such as storm shutters, plywood, etc., and order materials now because shortages in supplies are expected.
- Confirm availability and needs for fuel and other resources needed for your operations; be cautious of storing these additional resources or fuel on site as they potentially create protection challenges



The 2020 Atlantic Hurricane season is forecasting a higher than average activity for major hurricanes

Preparedness Considerations in Pandemic Times

- Closely follow the directives from local authorities to determine when you can restart operations and what restrictions applies to your site and employees.
- Consider conducting a re-layout of the work stations and common areas at your workplace to maintain safe distancing.
- Consider that mass transportation means for your employees will be limited.
- Personnel, materials, and resources for preparedness tasks will be limited.
- Consider increasing your stock of cleaning materials and personal protection equipment such as mouth masks, gowning, hair and shoe covers, and gloves.
- Increase cleaning and sanitizing frequencies of surfaces at your workplace.
- Alcohol-based cleaning and sanitizing fluids should be stored in a separate and protected, non-combustible space or UL listed flammable liquids cabinet.
- Provide contact barriers such as glazing or transparent plastic panels in areas where there is frequent contact with the public.



The COVID-19 pandemic crisis is limiting the resources to prepare for severe windstorms and hurricanes.

The following is a summary of the preparedness, response, and recovery plans and guides developed by Swiss Re Corporate Solutions that should be revised and adapted for this challenging COVID-19 times. These plans and guides are available and can be downloaded in our portal at corporatesolutions.swissre.com/insights/knowledge

Hurricane Preparedness Plan

Review, update and adapt the main sections of your plan:

Pre-season Preparation

- Inspect roof cover, flashing and drains
- Inspection and protection of external walls, openings, windows and doors.
- Inspect and test backup power supply and connected equipment
- Check/replenish preparedness, recovery, and cleaning supplies
- Review business continuity plan

In-season Preparedness

- Monitor the weather and storm forecasts
- Monitor the stock of consumables
- Reduce the stock of in-transit materials/products

Storm approaching

- Re-test backup power supply equipment
- Test dewatering and sump pumps
- Remove debris around the facility
- Secure roof-mounted and outdoor equipment
- Protect your data backups
- Reduce stock level as much as possible and elevate materials and products above floor level

After the storm

- Anticipate and plan for accessibility challenges
- Assess the impact and document damages
- Immediately initiate recovery plan

Idle and Vacant Properties

If your property has been idle please adapt the main sections of this guide:

Keep Fire Protection Systems Active

- Maintain sprinkler systems active
- 24/7 alarm monitoring
- Inspect, test, and maintain equipment
- Lock control valves

Unnecessary Combustible Loading

- Eliminate or reduce combustible materials stored indoors and outdoors

Ignition Sources

- Restrict hot work and smoking
- Isolate all non-essential utilities such as electricity and gas

Contractor Management

- Close supervision of contractors

Security

- Secure the perimeter and points of access
- Increase security measures

Burglar Alarms & Watch Service

- Provide intrusion detection sensors
- Monitor alarms remotely

Inspections

- Conduct regular inspections of the building and perimeter

Access Control

- Log access and escort visitors

Local Authorities

- Inform local police and fire department when the property becomes unoccupied.

Heat

- Be mindful of potential freezing temperatures during the latter part of the hurricane season

Detection and Alarm

- Provide detection systems in areas not provided with automatic sprinklers

Restarting Operations Guide

Planning to resume operations after been idle, adapt the main sections of this guide:

Changes since previous operation

- Identify changes and reassess the risks

Staff and Resources

- Check personnel availability

Supply Chain readiness

- Check key suppliers are available and aware of your requirement

Machinery

- Check inspection/maintenance routines to OEM guidelines, consider what is needed prior to re-start

Ignition Sources

- Enforce hot work policy
- Ensure electrical system and equipment are in good condition

Fire Protection

- Ensure fire protection systems and special protection systems are in service

Emergency Response

- Check pre-fire and emergency response plans are still accurate

Housekeeping

- Ensure all areas are tidy and clear of excess combustibles

Access and Security

- Ensure adequate security arrangements are in place

Swiss Re CatNet® Windstorm and Flood Online Modeling Tool

Hurricane, Flood and other natural hazards exposure profiles for any location worldwide are available through Swiss Re CatNet® online natural perils tool.

Use the following link to register: swissre.com/CatNet

Useful Links & Resources

North America

National Hurricane Center: nhc.noaa.gov

FEMA, Federal Emergency Management Agency: [Fema.gov](https://fema.gov) [Ready.gov/hurricanes](https://ready.gov/hurricanes)

[Ready.gov/floods](https://ready.gov/floods) [Fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program-flood-hazard-mapping](https://fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program-flood-hazard-mapping)

Latin America and Caribbean

Puerto Rico: NOAA National Weather Service Radar, [Weather.gov/radar-pr](https://weather.gov/radar-pr)

Costa Rica: Instituto Meteorológico de Costa Rica: [Imn.ac.cr](https://imn.ac.cr)

México: [Smn.conagua.gob.mx/es](https://smn.conagua.gob.mx/es) [Proteccioncivil.cdmx.gob.mx](https://proteccioncivil.cdmx.gob.mx)

This checklist is intended as a guide to property loss prevention and to aid in preparing for a windstorm, hurricane or cyclone event. This document should not be regarded as a standard and should not be referenced as supporting material in the event of a loss. Please do not distribute without permission from Swiss Re Corporate Solutions Ltd and its subsidiaries and affiliates. Under no circumstances shall Swiss Re or its Group companies be liable for any loss or damage resulting from use of this document.



Contact your Swiss Re Corporate Solutions Risk Engineer, Account Engineer or representative for additional information or assistance with developing your Hurricane Preparedness and Response Plan.