



Disaster Preparation: Contractor Continuity of Operations (COOP)¹

Hurricanes affect more than your customers—they may affect your business, your personal residence, and the residences of any or all your employees. After a storm, you will only be able to assist customers if your business can operate. This means that it is especially important for you to take steps in preparation—the public will need your help in the aftermath. The best time to concentrate on preparation is well before a storm. Here are some (not all) steps that can be taken to be back in business after a storm:

1. Have a written preparation plan with information and a checklist. Much of the information below should be part of your written plan.
2. Make a list of all the telephone numbers (and other contact information) you may need after a storm, including employees, emergency management, equipment sales and repair (including computers), utility companies, insurance companies or agents, building departments, and any other contact you may need to make after a storm (you cannot expect to be able to find a telephone book or your files).
3. Make a list of all the important documents you will want to carry away to a safe place, including deeds, warranties, insurance policies, client files, plans, licenses, certifications, and more. You may also want to have current information on any inventory in case you need to file an insurance claim.
4. Make a list of all that needs to be done to back up all your computer files (including software). This task should include taking the back up information with you (there are many different ways this can be done—zip files, removable hard drives, CDs, DVDs, and more).
5. Make a list of all the things that need to be done before a storm, including securing all current jobsites to avoid unnecessary loss or damage; filling all work vehicles with gas; checking that all generators, chain saws, drills, and flashlights are in working order; purchasing batteries and car chargers; checking and charging all cellular telephones and radios; and stocking up on supplies likely to be needed for repairs. You may also want to have a plan for each employee to take a work vehicle home so that all vehicles are not in one place (lessens the chance of loss or damage to all).
6. Prepare a list of all current projects and plan to contact these customers with any necessary information or notification (before and after the storm). You may also want to record a message on your main telephone line informing customers that you will close at a certain time and when you plan to re-open if possible—this goes a long way for most customers.
7. Prepare a separate list of pertinent information and provide a copy for each employee. This may include an exchange of addresses and other contact information so that you can all try to locate and help each other after the storm. Your employees are more likely to quickly get

¹*DISCLAIMER – This piece is intended to give the reader only general factual information current at the time of publication. This piece is **not** a substitute for professional advice and should not be used for guidance or decisions related to a specific design or construction project. This piece is not intended to reflect the opinion of any of the entities, agencies or organizations identified in the materials and, if any opinions appear, are those of the individual author and should not be relied upon in any event. [Applicable to 2004 Florida Building Code.]*

back to work after a storm if they have help in meeting their personal needs.

8. Finally, you will be more comfortable if you have a list of the steps you want to take to secure your business before you close. This can include such things as windows that need to be boarded up, unplugging of equipment and appliances, and moving certain equipment to a safe place.

Cautions:

- In preparing for damage, you should expect the unexpected and develop alternate plans. For example, cellular telephone towers may be damaged, and this will require you to have an alternate means of communication.
- This material should be used *in addition to* other more general preparation material (such as publications that provide a checklist for stocking routine items including water and canned goods).
- You may want to keep this fact sheet with your plan or copy contact information listed below into your preparation plan—you will probably need some or all of the agencies or resources listed below if you sustain damage.

Government Agencies/Offices:

Florida Building Commission: 850-487-1824 / www.floridabuilding.org

Florida Division of Emergency Management: 850-413-9900 / www.floridadisaster.org

Federal Emergency Management Agency: 202-566-1600 / www.fema.gov

Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Construction Industry Licensing Board: 850-487-1395 / www.myflorida.com/dbpr

Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Office of Unlicensed Activity: 850-487-1395 / www.myflorida.com/dbpr

Florida Department of Financial Services, Division of Workers' Compensation: 850-413-1601 / www.fldfs.com/WC

Florida Department of Financial Services, Division of Consumer Services: 800-342-2762 / www.fldfs.com/consumers

Florida Department of Financial Services, Division of Insurance Fraud: 800-378-0445 / www.fldfs.com/fraud

Florida Attorney General: 850-414-3300 / <http://myfloridalegal.com>

Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations: 800-755-5111 / www.sunbiz.org

Other Resources:

Disaster Contractors Network: www.dcnonline.org

American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

Don't know where to go for an answer to a specific question?

Contact: Building A Safer Florida, Inc. 1-850-222-2772 or www.buildingasafeflorida.org

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