

ON THE WEB

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Natural Disaster Checklist: Hurricane Preparedness

- ☐ Obtain a copy of your community hurricane plan to use as a basis for your facility plan.
- ☐ Identify where official flood zones and evacuation centers are located.
- ☐ Determine when you will close your facility (for instance, when a hurricane watch turns into a hurricane warning).
- ☐ Collect and update a list of contact numbers for surgeons, anesthesia providers and staff.
- ☐ Develop a process for collecting the schedule for the upcoming week after a hurricane watch or warning has been issued.
- ☐ Create a phone tree to ensure all relevant parties — including patients — are informed about facility closings and re-openings.
- ☐ Assess the impact the natural disaster will have on your staff:
 - ☐ Do any live in flood/evacuation zones?
 - ☐ Who has small children or pets and may have to evacuate early?
 - ☐ Who would be expected or required to help out at a nearby hospital in the event of a major emergency?
- ☐ If you're required to provide resource staff for the community, create an A team and B team: One that will be able to go to the hospital at the beginning of the storm, and one to provide relief when the roads open again.
- ☐ Assemble a severe weather kit with necessary supplies in case patients and staff are stuck at your facility during a more unexpected type of storm. It should include:
 - ☐ flashlight
 - ☐ batteries
 - ☐ rope
 - ☐ plastic coverings
 - ☐ a crank-style weather radio
 - ☐ drinking water and possibly shelf snacks.
 - ☐ Make sure your information systems, including scheduling, registration and electronic medical records, are backed up, preferably at an off-site location.
- ☐ Consider how you will protect paper documents from the elements.
- ☐ Create a plan for protecting sterile supplies in the event that your HVAC system is shut down.
- ☐ Consult your building maintenance team to determine:
 - ☐ which utilities, if any, will need to be shut off,
 - ☐ how long your generator will work, and
 - ☐ if you will be able to get additional fuel in the case of an emergency.
- ☐ Before the storm arrives, bring in outside items such as furniture and trash bins, move items away from all windows, and be sure that your generator fuel is full.
- ☐ Develop a plan for how and when you will re-open your facility after the storm.
 - ☐ Who will test all utilities and deem them functional?
 - ☐ How will you manage any structural damage that may occur? Which authorities must provide approval for you to reopen (local authorities, your building engineer?).
 - ☐ How will you notify all patients, physicians and staff that the facility is re-opening?
 - ☐ How will you reconfigure the schedule to make up for lost time and cancelled cases?
- ☐ Update your plan and re-educate staff on it at least annually, preferably before the start of hurricane season in early June.



▲ EMERGENCY KIT Stock up on flashlights, batteries, drinking water and other essentials in case you lose power during a storm.