



Dear Industry Partner:

Lee County is fortunate to have a very strong hospitality industry. We must all take a moment to insure that we as an industry are prepared to deal with a major storm or other emergencies that may interrupt our ability to do business.

The Visitor and Convention Bureau has put together this booklet so that you can use it as a guide to develop your own disaster preparedness plan. This guide will enable your organization to get back to what we do best, providing a safe, relaxing environment for our guests.

Special thanks to the States of Alabama and South Carolina as well as to the University of Florida, the Red Cross and Lee County Office of Emergency Management, who assisted in providing information that was used in preparing this manual.

In closing, please review the enclosed material and use it to prepare for any emergency situation that we may face. If you have any questions, concerns or need any specialized assistance with this information, please contact the Visitor and Convention Bureau at (239) 338-3500.

Sincerely,

Tamara Pigott  
Executive Director



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*Credit should also be given to:*  
*The American Red Cross*  
*NOAA*  
*Federal Emergency Management Agency*  
*The University of Florida*  
*Lee County Emergency Operations Center*

# HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY PLANNING GUIDE

## I. Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to assist owners and operators in developing in-house plans and procedures to protect guests, employees and property before and during hurricane conditions. The guide will also cover procedures for establishments that might serve as host facilities for guest evacuating from risk facilities. Also covered will be primary recovery issues to consider in the hurricane's aftermath.

## II. Plan Development-Risk Facilities

- A. Include a general information section about hurricanes in the plan. This could include the length of the hurricane season, a description of the hurricane's effects (storm surge, high winds, tornadoes, etc.), storm terminology used in hurricane preparedness, the Saffir Simpson Hurricane Scale, and a description of the specific risk of your facility to the hurricane. This section serves as a briefing tool for staff not familiar with the storm and a basis for defining the facilities' risk.
- B. Establish an emergency organization that will be responsible for decision making during the hurricane crisis. One of two structures is recommended: either an Executive Committee made up of senior management personnel or an Emergency Coordinator. Whatever your choice, make sure it has a working staff to support its decisions. Whoever makes up the emergency organization should be present for duty during hurricane warnings and should expect to stay on duty until the facility is evacuated or the emergency no longer exists.
- C. Establish a means of communications. This includes a means of notifying your staff, guests, and the communication to be used when you activate your plan (operations). Verbal as well as electronic communications should be considered in the event you lose telephone service. A suggested equipment list for communications is contained in **Reference A** of this guide.
- D. Establish a command center in a suitable location to serve as the central point for carrying out your hurricane plan. This could be the general manager's office or some other location, but it should be under the supervision of the head of the emergency organization. The command center should operate on a 24-hour basis until the threat is over or if it has to be evacuated. Suggested equipment for the command center is contained in **Reference B** of this guide.

- E. Establish an action checklist to be implemented once the command center is activated. This will guide operations once they commence. This checklist could be as specific or general as you wish. However, a rule of thumb to follow in developing the checklist is that the less you use it, the more detailed it should be. Don't rely on your memory to get you through an emergency, especially one that doesn't happen everyday like a hurricane. Remember, under stress, your ability to remember little used factors becomes more difficult. A suggested action checklist is contained in **Reference C**.
- F. Establish responsibilities for management personnel and your staff to carry out when the hurricane threatens our community. Responsibilities should also be organized into discrete phases of response, such as what will be done during a Hurricane Watch and a Hurricane Warning or some other emergency scheme. Management responsibilities should focus on making sure the plan is up to date, necessary equipment and supplies are ordered, factors to consider in carrying out the plan, briefing personnel on procedures to be followed, and directing the implementation of hurricane evacuation measures. Staff responsibilities should focus on the specific actions to be taken to carry out a hurricane evacuation should it be needed. The various departments making up the facilities organized structure could break this up. **Reference D** contains suggested management responsibilities and **Reference E** lists staff responsibilities by department or section.
- G. Maintain a log of actions taken during the emergency. This log can be simple or complex but its importance lies in that it documents what you did. Include important requests, decisions made and instructions to staff. It will also serve as a basis for evaluating how well you did during the emergency and a stepping stone for plan improvement.
- H. Establish procedures for evacuating your guests. This should include how you will notify your guests. Evacuation procedures should also be broken down for guests who have transportation and guests who do not. Suggested factors to consider are shown in **Reference F**.

### **III. Plan Development-Host Facilities**

- A. Accommodation facilities not at risk to hurricanes or certain categories of hurricane strength can serve an important role in providing a safe place for those evacuating from facilities at risk. A plan for handling evacuees should be developed similar to the one suggested for risk facilities. This includes establishing an emergency organization, a command center, and assigning responsibilities to management and staff. The actions contained in the section are recommended for host facilities to add to their plan.

- B. Host facility actions:
1. Review your plan and inventory your supplies.
  2. Alert your staff that they may be required to assist if an evacuation is ordered.
  3. Secure outside equipment.
  4. Relocate emergency supplies where they can be controlled.
  5. When evacuation is imminent, activate the command center.
  6. Contact the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau. Advise them that you are available for business and how many rooms you have unoccupied. Call the Bureau when you have reached capacity. The Bureau will contact the Lee County Emergency Operations Center and keep them abreast of hosting facility space availability.
  7. Check with the nearest medical facility to determine what emergency services are available. You may have guests who are injured check in, and certainly they will be under stress.

#### IV. Recovery Issues to Consider

- A. The re-entry policy for Lee County into evacuated areas consists of the following four general phases:
1. **Search and Rescue** – Teams of emergency response, utility and public works personnel will enter damaged areas to search for those who stayed behind. They will also be assessing utility damages and developing initial emergency access to evacuated areas.
  2. **Damage Assessment** – Teams of people will enter the damaged area to determine the extent and magnitude of damages to homes, businesses, and public facilities. They will also be determining how safe it is to return to evacuated areas and what will be done to make dangerous areas safe for those living or working there.
  3. **Limited Re-entry** – Those people living or having business in damaged areas will be allowed to return once health and safety concerns are addressed. It is at this point that you can go back and determine the extent of your facilities' damage. Efforts to repair or rebuild damaged facilities will also commence at this time.
  4. **Full Re-entry** – Once the damage has been repaired, those who do not live or work in the damaged area will be allowed to re-enter. This would include tourists and seasonal visitors.
- B. Assume that working conditions will be primitive. Electricity and telephone service may be out for a while and you may also lose water, sewer and road access.
- C. Establish procedures for notifying your staff on when you want them to return to work.
- D. If necessary, establish a policy on layoffs in case your facility is damaged extensively and may be out of operation for an extended period of time.

- E. Establish who will conduct a damage assessment of your facility. **Reference G** suggests factors to account for in your assessment. Who will do it and how many it will take are factors to consider.
- F. Identify who will handle insurance claims. This includes notification of insurance companies.
- G. Establish procedures for repairing damaged facilities. Remember, **selecting contractors for repair or restoration is your responsibility-not the insurance company.** An accurate damage assessment and the use of local contractors will help speed up the restoration of your facility.
- H. Establish backup procedures for purchasing equipment and supplies needed to recover from the hurricane. If you use a computer for record keeping, think about a backup system if the electricity is out. Count on delays in procuring local equipment and building supplies.
- I. Establish a criteria to determine when your facility can be reopened. Work closely with the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau so that they can advertise your availability to outside markets.

## V. Conclusion

The accommodation industry is one of Lee County's most important resources. How well it handles the disruptive nature of a hurricane should it strike our area depends on preplanning. We hope this document becomes a useful tool to this industry in developing or updating plans that deal with this hazard. Since this is a new document, any changes or comments you may have on how to make it better would be welcomed.

## **REFERENCE A SUGGESTED COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT**

1. Portable radio, with charger and extra battery.
2. Weather radio tuned to NOAA radio frequency (162.475 MHz).
3. Television to monitor local stations and the Weather Channel.
4. Cellular Telephone(s).
5. Battery operated AM/FM radio to tune into the local Emergency Broadcast System stations.
6. Bullhorn for announcing emergency information to guests.
7. Beepers with chargers and extra batteries.
8. CB radio(s).
9. Radio receiver/VHR Marine Radio if you have guests who use local boats.
10. Facsimile Machine.
11. Arrangements to assist non-English speaking and physically challenged guests.
12. E-mail.

Sources: Alabama Emergency Management Agency; Alabama Hotel/Motel Planning Guide, September 1989.  
Lee County Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management.

## **REFERENCE B SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES FOR COMMAND POST OPERATIONS**

1. Hurricane evacuation plan and supporting procedures.
2. Hurricane tracking map.
3. Flip charts with markers.
4. Portable generator(s).
5. First aid Kit(s)
6. Oxygen supplies.
7. Portable emergency lights.
8. Cyamid light sticks (in case outside lighting is lost and light is needed to guide guests from the parking lot to the road).
9. Extra flashlights with spare batteries.
10. Sufficient supply of tape.
11. Sufficient supply of rope.
12. Coffee maker with coffee supplies.
13. Non-perishable food items.
14. Soft drinks (include diet and decaffeinated).
15. Bottled water.
16. Tables and chairs.
17. Building plans for the facility.
18. Spare fire extinguishers.

Sources: Alabama Emergency Management Agency; Alabama Hotel/Motel Planning Guide, September 1989.  
Lee County Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management.

## **Reference C**

### **Suggested Command Center Action Checklist**

- I. Establish criteria for activating the Command Center by the General Manager. Suggested criteria include once the Hurricane Watch has been issued by the National Hurricane Center, local authority advice, or at any time the General Manager deems it necessary.
- II. Establish notification procedures to inform Executive Committee members (or Emergency Coordinator) and support staff to report to the command center.
- III. Command Center Actions.
  - A. 72-48 Hours before forecasted hurricane landfall.**
    1. Initiate tracking the hurricane on the tracking map.
    2. Review hurricane plan.
    3. Department managers review individual responsibilities.
    4. Review department staff responsibilities.
    5. Check supplies and equipment (see **References A & B**).
  - B. 48-24 Hours before forecasted hurricane landfall depending on strength of storm.**
    1. Activate Command Center if local authorities are considering evacuation or a Hurricane Watch is issued by the National Hurricane Center.
    2. Call in Executive Committee members (or Emergency Coordinator) and managers once the Command Center is activated.
    3. Initiate log of actions taken to implement hurricane plan.
    4. Schedule for possible guest evacuation.
    5. Schedule necessary evacuation transportation.
    6. Issue information flyers to all guests; remember if you have non-English speaking or physically challenged guests please plan accordingly.
    7. Prepare rooms, outside areas windows and guest facilities to minimize possible injury and/or damage.
    8. Notify incoming groups of potential hurricane situation.
    9. Select liaison personnel to handle departure of guests if evacuation is ordered.
    10. Prepare vital records and equipment for evacuation.
    11. Implement guest evacuation plan if ordered to evacuate by local elected officials, the Governor of the State of Florida or the Executive Committee (Emergency Coordinator).
    12. Request prearranged transportation if evacuation order is issued.
    13. Establish record system to monitor guest departures.

**C. 24 Hours before forecasted hurricane landfall, a Hurricane Warning is issued by the National Hurricane Center or evacuation is recommended or ordered by the Governor or local elected Officials.**

1. Review all actions taken to identify any shortfalls.
2. Insure that all guests are aware of the situation.
3. Review responsibilities to insure all preparations have been made.
4. Secure excess baggage and equipment to higher floors of facility.
5. Implement guest evacuation plan.
6. Secure facility.

**D. Tropical Storm Considerations.**

1. If a tropical storm is forecasted to affect the area and no evacuation recommendation or order is given and the Executive Committee (Emergency Coordinator) elects not to evacuate, continue to operate interior restaurants and lounges.
2. Warn guests not to go outside, onto balconies and advise them to stay away from windows.
3. Consider organizing some recreational activity for those guests who stay so that they will not become distraught or wander outside the facility.

Sources: Alabama Emergency Management Agency; Alabama Hotel/Motel Planning Guide, September 1989.  
Lee County Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management.

## REFERENCE D

### SUGGESTED MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- I. Identify resources needed to evacuate and protect facility.
- II. Arrange for transportation of guests and staff.
- III. Establish a decision making mechanism to protect the guests, employees and property that considers the following factors:
  - A. Severity of storm.
  - B. Danger imposed (how much time it will take to make actions, wind speeds, etc.).
  - C. Date/time of greatest danger (for example, if the storm is expected during nightfall, then more time may be needed for preparation).
  - D. Number of guests in facility.
  - E. Condition of facility and equipment.
  - F. Transportation available.
  - G. Staff available and on call.
  - H. Financial considerations (for example, securing cash for guest check requests, payroll).
  - I. Legal considerations.
  - J. Emergency support available (police, fire, emergency medical).
  - K. When to establish the Command Center.
  - L. Assignment of responsibilities for management and staff.
  - M. Notification of guests.
  - N. Notification to Visitor & Convention Bureau.
  - O. Storage and receiving of food, supplies and equipment for emergency use.
  - P. Preparation of hotel grounds and buildings.
  - Q. Designated areas to be used if the decision is made to stay at the facility.
  - R. Staff scheduling for 24-hour emergency operations.
  - S. Operation of emergency generator(s).
  - T. Obtaining supplies, fuel, batteries, etc.
  - U. Plan for post storm cleanup program.
  - V. Plan for storing food and feeding the cleanup crews.
  - W. Security concerns after the storm cleanup.
  - X. Determining what equipment will be needed and where it will be stored for post storm cleanup.
  - Y. Providing information about situation at facility.
  - Z. Providing information to cleanup crews about snakes and animals who may have sought shelter on the premises during the storm.

Sources: Alabama Emergency Management Agency; Alabama Hotel/Motel Planning Guide, September 1989.  
Lee County Department of Public Safety, division of Emergency Management.

**REFERENCE E**  
**SUGGESTED STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**  
**BY DEPARTMENT OR SECTION**

**I. Housekeeping**

Pull drapes in all guest rooms, place patio furniture in the guest rooms, place pool furniture in the pool, move lobby furniture to second floor ( if feasible), fill bathtubs with water, assemble in one area all post storm cleanup equipment, assemble blankets and pillows for guest comfort if needed.

**II. Front Desk**

Staff switchboard until evacuation, run back-up computer reports, turn on guest room message lights, remove computer terminals and files that could sustain water damage to higher floors or wrap with double plastic and tape for dry storage, keep an accurate count of guests staying or leaving the facility. Back-up all computer files.

**III. Restaurant and Lounge**

Remove all cash registers to office or upper floors, secure all liquor, tape windows in restaurant/lounge, remove restaurant furniture to an interior room or to a higher floor.

**IV. Recreation**

Take boats, equipment and chairs on beach to the most secure part of beach and tie or anchor in the most sheltered area, develop games for guests if the decision is made not to evacuate, move electronic games to upper floors (if feasible), evacuate gift shop or sales items to an upper floor, assist housekeeping in securing outside equipment.

**V. Security**

Post security at exits until guests leave.

**VI. Kitchen**

Place all perishable food items in the cooler/freezer unit. Plan menu for command center and post storm cleanup crew, obtain vehicle for food storage and transportation if necessary to move in evacuation.

**VII. Engineering**

Secure facility; turn off water, gas and electricity as necessary; obtain additional fuel for portable generator(s); start and check portable generator(s) and electrical service at pre-determined time.

**VIII. Accounting**

Print hard copies and back up all records and secure them, remove records to a secure upper floor or evacuate them to a secure safe location. Secure all cash and maintain a record of cash received, double wrap records in plastic if dry storage is not available.

**IX. Catering**

Secure all silver, bring in props from outside, secure records, assemble post storm cleanup equipment, pull drapes, and remove audiovisual equipment to an upper floor.

**X. Personnel Department**

Secure employee personnel and guest files and either remove them to a secure upper floor or evacuate to a safe location.

Sources: Alabama Emergency Management Agency; Alabama Hotel/Motel Planning Guide, September 1989.  
Lee County Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management.

## **REFERENCE F**

### **SUGGESTED GUEST EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

#### **I. Notification**

- A. Notify all guests as soon as possible once the decision has been made to evacuate the facility.
- B. Notify all guests, either via a flyer placed under each room door, announcements through the telephone, or refer them to the Fort Myers Telephone Directory Community Reference Pages for information on hurricane preparation.
- C. Notify guests in the lounge, dining areas, pool and beach area.
- D. Request guests notify the front desk prior to leaving the facility.
- E. Request guests notify their families on their evacuation (i.e. where are they going, what are they going to do).
- F. Have evacuation information available (maps showing evacuation routes) at convenient location(s).
- G. Notify incoming guests by telephone not to come.
- H. **Prepare your notifications in different languages for international guests.**

#### **II. Evacuation**

##### **A. Guests with Transportation**

1. Urge guests having vehicles to leave the facility with their baggage as soon as possible.
2. Have facility personnel assist in guest departure by advising those with vehicles what routes to use to leave the area or county.
3. If emergency shelter is requested by departing guests, make sure they are given proper directions to opened shelters.  
(LISTEN FOR THE NAMES OF SHELTERS TO BE OPEN WHEN THE EVACUATION ORDER IS ISSUED-WHICH ONES TO BE OPENED WILL DEPEND UPON THE STRENGTH OF THE STORM).

##### **B. Guests without Transportation**

1. Determine the number of guests that require transportation.
2. Arrange for enough vehicles to evacuate guests.
3. If necessary, secure all excess baggage in pre-determined locations and give guests a receipt for their baggage left behind, and take luggage to an upper floor.
4. Arrange for facility personnel to assist guests out of the hotel and onto the arranged transportation.
5. Notify the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau where you are taking the guests (i.e. a shelter, another facility, the airport, etc.).

\*\*The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau assumes no responsibility for contacting friends or families of evacuated guests. \*\*

## REFERENCE G DAMAGE ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

1. Establish a team of employees to conduct the assessment.
2. Have building plans or diagrams and personnel data available.
3. Prepare a kit with clipboards, paper, markers and a tape measure(s).
4. Develop a complete list of building and contents damaged at the facility.
5. Determine if:
  - a. The facility is damaged, but still operable; or
  - b. The facility is inoperable, but would only require minor repairs to become operable again; or
  - c. The facility is inoperable, and would require major repairs for the facility to resume; or
  - d. The facility is inoperable and cannot be repaired (destroyed); or
  - e. The facility is inaccessible because of water or blocked roads.
  - f. The facility has no utilities and cannot operate.
6. If possible and without endangering team members, estimate the water depth over the first floor.  
Look for water lines on the walls and use the tape measure to determine the depth.
7. Determine the following:
  - a. An estimate of the number of days the facility may be out of operation.
  - b. An estimate of the uninsured loss to the facility.
  - c. Total employment provided by facility.
  - d. An estimate of how many people may be unemployed due to the disaster.
  - e. An estimate of the number of days employees may be out of work.
  - f. The number of employees who will be entitled to receive unemployment insurance.

Sources: Alabama Emergency Management Agency; Alabama Hotel/Motel Planning Guide, September 1989.  
Lee County Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management.

Every year emergencies take their toll on businesses and industries, in both lives and dollars. But something can be done. Property management personnel can limit injuries and damages, and return more quickly to normal operations by planning ahead.

This section provides step-by-step advice on how to create and maintain a comprehensive emergency management program. To begin, in-depth knowledge of emergency management is not required. What is needed is the authority to create a plan and a commitment from the chief executive officer to make emergency management part of the corporate culture.

This section is organized as follows:

### **Four Steps in the Planning Process**

1. How to form a planning team.
2. How to conduct a vulnerability analysis.
3. How to develop a plan.
4. How to implement the plan.

The information can be applied to any type of emergency.

**Hurricane Preparedness Considerations** - how to build such emergency management capabilities such as life, safety, property protection, communications and community outreach.

### **What is an Emergency?**

An *emergency* is any unplanned event that can cause deaths or significant injuries to employees, customers or the public, that can shut down business, disrupt operations, cause physical or environmental damage or threaten the facility's financial standing or public image. Obviously, numerous events can be emergencies, including:

Hurricanes	Hazardous materials incidents
Fires	Communications failures
Floods or flash floods	Radiological accidents
Tornadoes	Civil disturbances
Loss of key suppliers or customers	Earthquakes
Explosions	

The term *disaster* has been left out of this section because it lends itself to a preconceived notion of a large-scale event, usually a *natural disaster*. In fact, each event must be addressed within the context of the impact it has on hotel/motel businesses and the community at large. What might constitute a nuisance to a large industrial facility could be a disaster to a small business.

### **What is Emergency Management?**

Emergency management is the process of preparing for, mitigating, responding to and recovering from an emergency. Emergency management is a dynamic process. Planning, though critical, is not the only component. Training, conducting drills, testing equipment and coordinating activities with the community are other important functions.

### **Making the Case for Emergency Management**

To be successful, emergency management requires upper management support. The chief executive sets the tone by authorizing planning to take place and directing senior management to get involved.

When presenting the case for emergency management, avoid dwelling on the negative effects of an emergency (e.g., deaths, fines or criminal prosecution) and emphasize the positive aspects of preparedness.

For example:

- It helps hotels/motels fulfill their moral responsibility to protect employees, the community and the environment.
- It facilitates compliance with regulatory requirements of Federal, State and local Agencies.
- It enhances a hotel/motel's ability to recover from financial losses, regulatory fines, loss of market share, damages to equipment or products or interruption of business.
- It reduces exposure to civil or criminal liability in the event of an incident.
- It enhances a hotel/motel's image and credibility with employees, customers, suppliers and the community.
- It may reduce insurance premiums.

# FOUR STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

## Step 1: Establish a Planning Team

There must be an individual or group in charge of developing the emergency management plan. The following is guidance for making the appointment.

### Form the Team

The size of the planning team will depend on the facility's operations, requirements and resources. Usually involving a group of people is best because:

- It encourages participation and gets more people interested in the process.
- It increases the amount of time and energy participants are able to give.
- It enhances the visibility and stature of the planning process.
- It provides a broad perspective on the issues.

Determine who can be an active member and who can serve in an advisory capacity. In most cases, one or two people will be doing the bulk of the work. At the very least, obtain input from all functional areas.

Remember:

Upper management	Public information officer
Line management	Security
Labor	Community relations
Human Resources	Sales and marketing
Engineering and maintenance	Legal
Safety, health and environmental affairs	Finance and purchasing
Food and Beverage	Recreation

Have participants appointed in writing by upper management. Their job description could also reflect this assignment.

### Establish Authority

Demonstrate management's commitment and promote an atmosphere of cooperation by *authorizing* the planning group to take the steps necessary to develop a plan. The group should be led by the general manager. Establish a clear line of authority between group members and the group leader, though not so rigid as to prevent the free flow of ideas.

## **Issue a Mission Statement**

Have the general manager issue a mission statement to demonstrate the hotel/motel's commitment to emergency management. The statement should:

- Define the plan's purpose and indicate that it will involve the entire organization
- Define the authority and structure of the planning group

## **Establish a Schedule and Budget**

Establish a work schedule and planning deadlines. Time lines can be modified as priorities become more clearly defined.

Develop an initial budget for such things as research, printing, seminars, consulting services and other expenses that may be necessary during the development process.

## **Step 2: Analyze Capabilities and Hazards**

This step entails gathering information about current capabilities and about possible hazards and emergencies, and then conducting a vulnerability analysis to determine the facilities' capabilities for handling emergencies.

### **Review Internal Plans and Policies**

Where does the hotel/motel stand right now? Documents to look for include:

Evacuation plan	Business Interruption
Fire protection plan	Employee manuals
Safety and health program	Hazardous materials plan
Environmental policies	Process safety assessment
Security procedures	Risk management plan
Insurance program	Capital improvement program
Finance and purchasing procedures	Mutual aid agreements

## **Meet with Outside Groups**

Meet with government agencies, community organizations and utilities. Ask about potential emergencies and about plans and available resources for responding to them. Sources of information include:

- Community emergency management office
- Mayor or Community Administrator's office
- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Emergency Medical Services organizations
- American Red Cross
- National Weather Service
- Public Works Department
- Planning Commission
- Telephone companies
- Electric utilities
- Neighboring businesses
- Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau

## **Identify Codes and Regulations**

Identify applicable federal, state and local regulations such as:

Occupational safety and health regulations	Transportation regulations
Environmental regulations	Zoning regulations
Fire codes	Corporate policies

## **Identify Critical Products, Services and Operations**

This information is needed to assess the impact of potential emergencies and to determine the need for backup systems. Areas to review include:

- Company products and services and the facilities and equipment needed to produce them
- Products and services provided by suppliers, especially sole-source vendors
- Lifeline services such as electrical power, water, sewer, gas telecommunications and transportation
- Operations, equipment and personnel vital to the continued functioning of the facility

## Identify Internal Resources and Capabilities

Resources and capabilities that could be needed in an emergency include:

- **Personnel** - fire brigade, hazardous materials response team, emergency medical services, security, emergency management group, evacuation team, public information officer.
- **Equipment** - fire protection and suppression equipment, communications equipment, first aid supplies, emergency supplies, warning systems, emergency power equipment, decontamination equipment.
- **Facilities** - emergency operating center, media briefing area, shelter areas, first-aid stations, sanitation facilities.
- **Organizational capabilities** - training, evacuation plan, employee support system.
- **Backup systems** - arrangements with other facilities to provide for:

Payroll

Communications

Production

Customer services

Shipping and receiving

Information systems support

Emergency power

Recovery support

*One way to increase response capabilities is to identify employee skills (medical, engineering, communications, foreign language) that might be needed in an emergency.*

## Identify External Resources

There are many external resources that could be needed in an emergency. In some cases, formal agreements may be necessary to define the facility's relationship with the following:

Local emergency management office

Fire Department

Hazardous materials response organization

Community service organizations

Utilities

Contractors

Emergency medical services

Hospitals

Local and State police

Suppliers of emergency equipment

Insurance carriers

## Do an Insurance Review

Meet with insurance carriers to review all policies (see page 54, *Recovery and Restoration*).

## Conduct a Vulnerability Analysis

The next step is to assess the vulnerability of the facility, the probability and potential impact of each emergency. Use a Vulnerability Analysis Chart to guide the process, which entails assigning probabilities, estimating impact and assessing resources using a numerical system. The lower the score the better.

**List Potential Emergencies**-In the first column of the chart list all emergencies that could affect the facility, including those identified by the local emergency management office. Consider both emergencies that could occur within the facility and in the community.

Below are some other factors to consider:

- *Historical* – What types of emergencies have occurred in the community, at this facility and at other facilities in the area?

Hurricanes	Transportation accidents
Tornadoes	Earthquakes
Fires	Terrorism
Severe weather	Utility outage
Hazardous material spills	

- *Geographic* – What can happen as a result of the facility's location? Keep in mind proximity to:

flood plains, seismic faults and dams  
companies that produce, store, use or transport hazardous materials  
major transportation routes and airports  
nuclear power plants  
shoreline/sea level

- *Technological* – What could result from a process or system failure? Possibilities include:

Fire, explosion, hazardous materials incident  
 Safety system failure  
 Telecommunications failure  
 Computer system failure  
 Power failure  
 Heating/cooling system failure  
 Emergency notification system failure

- *Human Error* – What emergencies can be caused by employee error? Are employees trained to work safely? Do employees know what to do in an emergency? Human error is the single largest cause of workplace emergencies and can result from:

Poor training	Misconduct
Poor maintenance	Substance abuse
Carelessness	Fatigue

- *Physical* – What types of emergencies could result from the design or construction of the facility? Does the physical facility enhance safety? Consider:

The physical construction of the facility	Lighting
Hazardous processes or by-products	Evacuation routes and exits
Facilities for storing combustibles	Proximity of shelter areas
Layout of equipment	

- *Regulatory* – What emergencies or hazards is the facility regulated to deal with? Analyze each potential emergency from beginning to end. Consider what could happen as a result of:

Prohibited access to the facility	Communication lines down
Loss of electric power	Ruptured gas mains
Water damage	Explosion
Smoke damage	Building collapse
Structural damage	Trapped persons
Air or water contamination	Chemical release

**Estimate Probability** – In the Probability column, rate the likelihood of each emergency's occurrence. This is a subjective consideration, but useful nonetheless. Use a simple scale of 1 to 5 with 1 as the lowest probability and 5 as the highest.

**Assess the Potential Human Impact** – Analyze the potential human impact of each emergency – the possibility of death or injury. Assign a rating in the Human Impact column of the Vulnerability Analysis Chart. Use a 1 to 5 scale with 1 as the lowest impact and 5 as the highest.

**Assess the Potential Property Impact** – Consider the potential property for losses and damages. Again, assign a rating in the Property Impact column, 1 being the lowest impact and 5 being the highest. Consider the costs to repair, replace or temporarily replace property.

**Assess the Potential Business Impact** – Consider the potential loss of market share. Assign a rating in the Business Impact column. Again, 1 is the lowest impact and 5 the highest. Assess the impact of:

- Business interruption
- Employees unable to report to work
- Customers unable to reach facility
- Hotel/motel in violation of contractual agreements
- Imposition of fines and penalties or legal costs
- Interruption of critical supplies
- Interruption of product distribution

**Assess Internal and External Resources** – Next, assess available resources and the ability to respond. Assign a score to Internal Resources and External Resources. The lower the score the better. To help do this, consider each potential emergency from beginning to end and each resource that would be needed to respond. For each emergency ask these questions:

- Do the needed resources and capabilities to respond exist?
- Will external resources be able to respond to this emergency as quickly as needed, or will these resources have other priority areas to serve?

If the answers are yes, move on to the next assessment. If the answers are no, identify what can be done to correct the problem, such as:

- Develop additional emergency procedures
- Conduct additional training
- Acquire additional equipment
- Establish mutual aid agreements
- Establish agreements with specialized contractors

**Add the Columns** – Total the scores for each emergency. The lower the score the better. While this is a subjective rating, the comparisons will help determine planning and resource priorities – the subject of the pages to follow.

### **Step 3: Develop the Plan**

To develop an emergency management plan follow these suggested guidelines.

#### **Plan Components**

An emergency management plan should include the following basic components:

**Executive Summary** – The executive summary gives management a brief overview of the purpose of the plan, the facility’s emergency management policy, authorities and responsibilities of key personnel, the types of emergencies that could occur and where response operations will be managed.

**Emergency Management Elements** – This section of the plan briefly describes the facility’s approach to the core elements of emergency management, which are:

Direction and control	Community outreach
Communications	Recovery and restoration
Life safety	Administration and logistics
Property protection	

These elements, which are described in detail under *Hurricane Preparedness Considerations* (beginning on page 32), are the foundation for emergency procedures that protect the facility’s personnel and equipment and facilitate recovery operations.

**Emergency Response Procedures** – The procedures spell out how a facility will respond to emergencies. Whenever possible, develop them as a series of checklists that can be quickly accessed by senior management, department heads, response personnel and employees.

Section IV contains checklists of suggested hurricane response procedures for the various stages of a hurricane: watch, warning, evacuation and post-storm recovery. These checklists can be adapted to suit a facility's emergency management plan. Determine what actions would be necessary to:

- Assess the situation
- Protect employees, customers, visitors, equipment, vital records and other assets, particularly during the first three days
- Get the hotel/motel back up and running

Specific procedures might be needed for any number of situations such as bomb threats or tornadoes, and for such functions as:

- Warning employees and customers
- Communicating with personnel and community responders
- Conducting an evacuation and accounting for all persons in the facility
- Managing response activities
- Activating and operating an emergency operations center
- Fighting fires
- Shutting down operations
- Protecting vital records
- Restoring operations

**Support Documents** – Documents that could be needed in an emergency include:

- Emergency call lists – lists (wallet size if possible) of all persons on and off site who would be involved in responding to an emergency, their responsibilities and their 24-hour telephone numbers.
- Building and site maps that indicate:

*In an emergency, all personnel should know:*

1. *What's my role?*
2. *Where should I go?*

also,

Utility shutoffs  
Water hydrants  
Water main valves  
Water lines

Floor plans  
Alarms and enunciators  
Fire extinguishers  
Fire suppression systems

Gas main valves  
Gas lines  
Electrical cutoffs  
Electrical substations  
Storm drains  
Sewer lines  
Location of each building (include  
Name of building, street name and  
Number)

Exits  
Stairways  
Designated escape routes  
Restricted areas  
Hazardous materials (including  
cleaning supplies and chemicals)  
High-value items

- **Resource lists**-lists of major resources (equipment, supplies, services) that could be needed in an emergency; mutual aid agreements with other companies and government agencies.

Some facilities are required to develop:

1. Emergency escape procedures and routes
2. Procedures for employees who perform or shut down critical operations before an evacuation
3. Procedures to account for all employees, visitors and contractors after an evacuation is completed
4. Rescue and medical duties for assigned employees
5. Names of persons or departments to be contacted for information regarding the plan

## The Development Process

The following is guidance for developing the plan.

**Identify Challenges and Prioritize Activities** – Determine specific goals and milestones. Make a list of tasks to be performed, by whom and when. Determine how to address the problem areas and resource shortfalls that were identified in the vulnerability analysis.

**Write the Plan** – Assign each member of the planning group to write a section. Determine the most appropriate format for each section. Establish an aggressive timeline with specific goals. Provide enough time for completion of work, but not so much as to allow assignments to linger. Establish a schedule for:

1. First draft
2. Review
3. Second draft
4. Tabletop exercise
5. Final draft
6. Printing
7. Distribution

**Establish a Training Schedule** – Have one person or department responsible for developing a training schedule for the facility. For specific ideas about training refer to Step Four.

**Coordinate with Outside Organizations** – Meet periodically with local government agencies and community organizations. Inform appropriate government agencies that an emergency management plan is being created. While official approval may not be required, valuable insight and information may be available. Determine state and local requirements for reporting emergencies and incorporate them into the plan's procedures.

Determine protocols for turning control of a response over to outside agencies. Some details that may need to be worked out are:

- Which gate or entrance will responding units use?
- Where and to whom will responding units report?
- How will responding units be identified?
- How will facility personnel communicate with outside responders?
- Who will be in charge of response activities?

Determine what kind of identification authorities will require to allow key personnel into the facility during an emergency.

*Emergency planning priorities may be influenced by government regulation. To remain in compliance the facility may be required to address specific emergency management functions that might otherwise be a lower priority activity for that given year.*

**Maintain Contact with other Corporate Offices** – Communicate with other offices and divisions in the hotel/motel to learn and incorporate the following information into the plan's procedures.

- Their emergency notification requirements
- The conditions where mutual assistance would be necessary
- How offices will support each other in an emergency
- Names, telephone numbers and pager numbers of key personnel

**Review, Conduct Training and Revise** – Distribute the first draft to group members for review. Revise as needed. For a second review, conduct a tabletop exercise with management and personnel who have key emergency management responsibility. In a conference room setting, describe an emergency scenario and have participants discuss their responsibilities and obtain reactions to the situation. Based on this discussion, identify areas of confusion and overlap, and modify the plan accordingly.

**Seek Final Approval** – Arrange a briefing for the chief executive officer and senior management and obtain written approval.

**Distribute the Plan** – Place the final plan in three-ring binders and number all copies and pages. Each individual who receives a copy should be required to sign for it and be responsible for posting subsequent changes.

Determine which sections of the plan would be appropriate to show to government agencies (some sections may refer to corporate secrets or include private listings of names, telephone numbers or radio frequencies). Have key personnel keep a copy of the plan in their homes. Inform employees about the plan and training schedule. Distribute the final plan to:

- General managers
- Key members of the hotel/motel's emergency response organization
- Hotel/motel headquarters
- Community emergency response agencies (appropriate sections)

Consolidate emergency plans for better coordination. Stand-alone plans, such as a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) plan, fire protection plan or safety and health plan, should be incorporated into one comprehensive plan.

## **Step 4: Implement the Plan**

Implementation means more than simply exercising the plan during an emergency. It means acting on recommendations made during the vulnerability analysis, integrating the plan into hotel/motel operations, training employees and evaluating the plan.

### **Integrate the Plan into Hotel/Motel Operations**

Emergency planning must become part of the corporate culture. Look for opportunities to build awareness; to educate and train personnel; to test procedures; to involve all levels of management, all departments and the community in the planning process; and to make emergency management part of what personnel do on a day-to-day basis. Test how completely the plan has been integrated by asking:

- How well does senior management support the responsibilities outlined in the plan?
- Have emergency planning concepts been fully incorporated into the facility's accounting, personnel and financial procedures?
- How can the facilities' processes for evaluating employees and defining job classifications better address emergency management responsibilities?
- Are there opportunities for distributing emergency preparedness information through corporate newsletters, employee manuals or employee mailings?
- What kinds of safety posters or other visible reminders would be helpful?
- Do personnel know what to do in an emergency?
- How can all levels of the organization be involved in evaluating and updating the plan?

### **Conduct Training, Drills and Exercises**

Everyone who works at or visits the facility requires some form of training. This could include periodic employee discussion sessions to review procedures, technical training in equipment use for emergency responders, evacuation drills and full-scale exercises. Below are basic considerations for developing a training plan.

**Planning Considerations** – Assign responsibility for developing a training plan. Consider the training and information needs for employees, contractors, visitors, managers and those with an emergency response role identified in the plan. Determine for a 12-month period:

- Who will be trained?
- Who will do the training?
- What training activities will be used?
- When and where each session will take place?
- How the session will be evaluated and documented?

Consider how to involve community responders in training activities. Conduct reviews after each training activity. Involve both personnel and community responders in the evaluation process.

**Training Activities** – Training can take many forms:

- *Orientation and Education Sessions* – These are regularly scheduled discussion sessions to provide information, answer questions and identify needs and concerns.
- *Tabletop Exercise* – Members of the emergency management group meet in a conference room setting to discuss individual's responsibilities and how the group reacts to emergency scenarios. This is a cost-effective and efficient way to identify areas of overlap and confusion before conducting more demanding training activities.
- *Walk-through Drill* – The emergency management group and response teams actually perform the individual emergency response functions. This activity generally involves more people and is more thorough than a tabletop exercise.
- *Functional Drills* – These drills test specific functions such as medical response, emergency notifications and warning and communications procedure and equipment, though not necessarily at the same time. Personnel are asked to evaluate the systems and identify problem areas.
- *Evacuation Drill* – Personnel walk the evacuation route to a designated area where procedures for accounting for all personnel are tested. Participants are asked to make notes along the route of what might become a hazard during an emergency, e.g., stairways cluttered with debris, smoke in the hallways. Plans are modified accordingly.
- *Full-scale Exercise* – A real-life emergency situation is simulated as closely as possible. This exercise involves hotel/motel emergency response personnel, employees, management and community response organizations.

**Employee Training** – The scenarios developed during the vulnerability analysis can serve as the basis for training events. General training for all employees should address:

- Individual roles and responsibilities
- Information about threats, hazards and protective actions
- Notification, warning and communications procedures
- Means for locating family members in an emergency
- Emergency response procedures
- Evacuation, shelter and accountability procedures
- Location and use of common emergency equipment
- Emergency shutdown procedures

*OSHA training requirements are a minimum standard for many facilities that have a fire brigade, hazardous materials team, rescue team or emergency medical response team.*

**Evaluate and Modify the Plan** – Conduct a formal audit of the entire plan at least once a year. Among the issues to consider are:

- How can all levels of management be involved in evaluating and updating the plan?
- Are the problem areas and resource shortfalls identified in the vulnerability analysis being sufficiently address?
- Does the plan reflect lessons learned from drills and actual events?
- Do members of the emergency management group and emergency response team understand their respective responsibilities? Have new members been trained?
- Does the plan reflect changes in the physical layout of the facility? Does it reflect new facility processes?
- Are photographs and other records of facility assets up to date?
- Is the facility attaining its training objectives?
- Have the hazards in the facility changed?
- Are the names, titles and telephone numbers in the plan current?
- Are steps being taken to incorporate emergency management into other facility processes?
- Have community agencies and organizations been briefed on the plan? Are community agencies and organizations involved in evaluating the plan?

In addition to a yearly audit, evaluate and modify the plan at these times:

- After each training drill or exercise
- After each emergency
- When personnel or their responsibilities change
- When the layout or design of the facility changes
- When policies or procedures change
- Remember to brief personnel on changes to the plan
- Conduct a formal audit of the entire plan at least once a year

## **HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS**

This section describes the core operational consideration of hurricane preparedness. Special consideration is given to hurricanes and related emergencies such as tornadoes, floods and fires. Where appropriate, the emergency management plan can be customized.

### **Direction and Control**

Someone must be in charge in an emergency. The system for managing resources, analyzing information and making decisions in an emergency is called direction and control. The direction and control system described below assumes a facility of sufficient size. Some facilities may require a less sophisticated system, though the principles described here will still apply.

The configuration of each system will depend on many factors. Larger industries may have their own fire team, emergency medical technicians or hazardous materials team, while smaller organizations may need to rely on mutual aid agreements and may also be able to consolidate positions or combine responsibilities. Tenants of office buildings or industrial parks may be part of an emergency management program for the entire facility.

### **Emergency Management Group (EMG)**

The EMG is the team responsible for the big picture. It controls all incident-related activities. The Incident Commander (IC) oversees the technical aspects of the response. The EMG supports the IC by allocating resources and by interfacing with the community, the media, outside response organizations and regulatory agencies.

The EMG is headed by the Emergency Director (ED), who should be the general manager. The ED is in command and control of all aspects of the emergency. Other EMG members should be senior managers who have the authority to:

- Determine the short and long term effects of an emergency
- Order the evacuation or shutdown of the facility
- Interface with outside organizations and the media
- Issue press releases

## **Incident Command System (ICS)**

The ICS was developed specifically for the fire service, but its principles can be applied to all emergencies. The ICS provides a coordinated response and a clear chain of command and safe operations.

The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for front-line management of the incident, for tactical planning and execution, for determining whether outside assistance is needed and for relaying requests for internal resources or outside assistance through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The IC can be any employee, but a member of management with the authority to make decisions is usually the best choice. The IC must have the capability and authority to:

- Assume command
- Assess the situation
- Implement the emergency management plan
- Determine response strategies
- Activate resources
- Order and evacuation
- Oversee all incident response activities
- Declare that the incident is “over”

## **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**

The EOC serves as a centralized management center for emergency operations. Here, decisions are made by the EMG based upon information provided by the IC and other personnel. Regardless of size or process, every facility should designate an area where decision-makers can gather during an emergency.

The EOC should be located in an area of the facility not likely to be involved in an incident, perhaps the security department, the manager’s office, a conference room or the training center. An alternate EOC should be designated in the event that the primary location is not usable.

### **EOC Resources**

- **Communications equipment**
- **A copy of the emergency management plan and EOC procedures**
- **Blueprints, maps, status boards**

- **A list of EOC personnel and descriptions of their duties**
- **Technical information and data for advising responders**
- **Building security system information**
- **Information and data management capabilities**
- **Telephone directories**
- **Backup power, communications and lighting**
- **Emergency supplies**

Each facility must determine its requirements for an EOC based upon the functions to be performed and the number of people involved. Ideally, the EOC is a dedicated area equipped with communications equipment, reference materials, activity logs and all the tools necessary to respond quickly and appropriately to an emergency.

## **Planning Considerations**

To develop a direction and control system:

- Define the duties of personnel with an assigned role. Establish procedures for each position.
- Prepare checklists for all procedures.
- Define procedures and responsibilities for fire fighting, medical and health, and engineering.
- Determine lines of succession to ensure continuous leadership, authority and responsibility in key positions
- Determine equipment and supply needs for each response function.

At a minimum, assign all personnel responsibility for:

- Recognizing and reporting an emergency
- Warning other employees in the area
- Taking security and safety measures
- Evacuating safely

You must provide training for all emergency management duties.

## **Security**

Isolation of the incident scene must begin when the emergency is discovered. If possible, the discoverer should attempt to secure the scene and control access, but no one should be placed in physical danger to perform these functions. Basic security measures include:

- Closing doors or windows
- Establishing temporary barriers with furniture after people have safely evacuated
- Dropping containment materials (absorbent pads, etc.) in the path of leaking materials
- Closing file cabinets or desk drawers

Only trained personnel should be allowed to perform advanced security measures. Access to the facility, the EOC and the incident scene should be limited to persons directly involved in the response.

## Coordination of Outside Response

In some cases, laws, codes, prior agreements or the very nature of the emergency require the IC to turn operations over to an outside response organization. When this happens, the protocols established between the facility and outside response organizations are implemented. The facility's IC provides the community's IC a complete report on the situation.

The facility's IC keeps track of which organizations are on-site and how the response is being coordinated. This helps increase personnel safety and accountability, and prevents duplication of effort.

***Keep detailed logs of actions taken during an emergency. Describe what happened, decisions made and any deviations from policy. Log the time for each event.***

## Communications

Communications are essential to any business operation. A communications failure can be a disaster in itself, cutting off vital business activities.

Communications are needed to report emergencies, to warn personnel of the danger, to keep families and off-duty employees informed about what's happening at the facility, to coordinate response actions and to keep in contact with customers and suppliers.

## Contingency Planning

- Plan for all possible contingencies from a temporary or short-term disruption to a total communications failure.
- Consider the everyday functions performed by the facility and the communications, both voice and data, used to support them.
- Consider the business impact if communications were inoperable. How would these impact emergency operations?

- Prioritize all facility communications. Determine which should be restored first in an emergency.
- Establish procedures for restoring communications systems.
- Talk to communications vendors about emergency response capabilities.
- Establish procedures for restoring services.
- Determine needs for backup communications for each business function. Options include messengers, telephones, portable microwave, amateur radios, point-to-point private lines, satellite, high-frequency radio.
- Develop contracts with appropriate trades, e.g., carpenters, electricians, plumbers, air conditioning that will “kick in” when disaster strikes.

## Emergency Communications

**Communications Interaction** – Consider the functions the facility might need to perform in an emergency and the communications systems needed to support them. Consider communications between:

- Emergency responders
- Responders and the Incident Commander (IC)
- The IC and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- The IC and employees
- The EOC and outside response organizations
- The EOC and neighboring businesses
- The EOC and employees’ families
- The EOC and customers
- The EOC and media

## Methods of communication

Messenger	Portable radios and emergency
Cellular phone	Powered televisions
Two-way radio	Dial-up modems
FAX machine	Local area networks
Microwave	Hand signals
Satellite	

**Emergency Communication Directory** – Develop an emergency communication directory of all relevant emergency agencies for the area (fire department, FEMA, Red Cross, etc.). Include cell phone numbers and emergency two-way radio addresses if possible.

## Family communications

In an emergency, personnel will need to know whether families are alright. Recognize that this, not the hotel property or guests will be of primary concern to employees. *Taking care of loved ones in an emergency is always first priority.* Make plans for communicating with employees' families in an emergency. Also, encourage employees to:

- Consider how to communicate with families in case of separation from one another or injury in an emergency.
- Arrange for an out-of-town contact for all family members to call in an emergency.
- Designate a place to meet family members who cannot get home in an emergency.

## Notification

**Reporting an Emergency** – Establish procedures for employees to report an emergency. Inform employees of procedures. Train personnel assigned specific notification tasks.

**Post Contact Lists** - Post emergency telephone numbers near each telephone, on employee bulletin boards and in other prominent locations.

**Update Contact Lists** – Maintain an updated list of addresses, telephone and pager numbers of key emergency response personnel (from within and outside the facility).

**Observe Weather Warnings** – Listen for tornado, hurricane and other severe weather warnings issued by the National Weather Service. Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery backup to listen for hurricane watches and warnings.

**Government Notification Requirements** – Determine government agencies' notification requirements in advance. Notification must be made immediately to local government agencies when an emergency has the potential to affect public health and safety.

**Prepare Announcements** – Prepare announcements that could be made over public address systems.

## Warning

**Establish Warning System** – Establish a system for warning personnel and guests of an emergency. The system should:

- Be audible or within view by all people in the facility
- Have an auxiliary power supply
- Have a distinct and recognizable signal

**Prepare Evacuation Signs** – Design and print evacuation signs before the beginning of the hurricane season as a part of pre-season preparedness, one for employees and one for guests. In addition to posting evacuation signs in prominent locations, follow up with a phone call to each room. A final, physical check of each room will ensure that everyone has evacuated.

**Establish Warning Systems for the Disabled** – Make plans for warning persons with disabilities. Emergency managers face serious problems in notifying hearing impaired persons about an evacuation or other emergency information. Where sirens are available, deaf people will not hear them. **Develop warnings for non-English speaking guests.**

Emergency personnel should know a few basic phrases in American Sign Language. Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C. provides materials to police and fire departments to assist in training. Tests by the National Research Council of Canada show that deaf persons respond best when the emergency worker's symbol of authority is clearly in evidence and the worker appears confident. Emergency workers should also carry note pads and pencils; many deaf persons will not believe that a hearing person knows sign language, and may perceive signs only as wild gestures. Also, a flashing strobe light can be used to warn hearing-impaired people.

**Establish Alarm Response Procedures** – Familiarize personnel with procedures for responding when the warning system is activated. Hold staff meetings with department supervisors to be sure all departments are working together and everyone is updated.

**Establish Alternative Notification Procedures** – Establish procedures for warning customers, contractors, visitors and others who may not be familiar with the facility's warning system.

**Test the Warning System** – Test the facility's warning system at least monthly.

## Evacuation/Life Safety

Protecting the health and safety of everyone in the facility is first priority during an emergency. One common means of protection is evacuation. In a hurricane, evacuation could involve the entire community and take place over a period of days. In contrast, a tornado warning will not allow sufficient time for an evacuation. When an evacuation becomes necessary, authorities will broadcast announcements on radio and local television news as well as The Weather Channel (TWC). If the facility is in a zone that requires evacuation, it is vital to evacuate without delay.

### Evacuation Planning

One common means of protection is evacuation. To develop an evacuation policy and procedure:

**Determine Evacuation Conditions** – Determine the conditions under which an evacuation would be necessary. Each county should have a set procedure for who should or will be required by law to evacuate.

- *County Plan A – CATEGORY 1 – 2 Hurricane:* Winds will reach 74 to 110 miles per hour, and the storm surge will rise 4 to 7 feet.
- *County Plan B – CATEGORY 3 – 5 Hurricane:* Expect sustained winds of 111 to 155+ miles per hour, and a storm surge of 7 to 11 feet.

*County evacuation plan: Five levels (A – E) depending on the strength of the hurricane (1 – 5). Maps of these levels are available.*

***Evacuation recommended when: The threat is minimal or uncertain.***

***County official that orders evacuation:*** Lee County Board of Commissioners.

***Evacuation required when: The threat is likely to pose a danger to life and property.***

**Establish a Clear Chain of Command** – Identify personnel with the authority to order an evacuation. Designate evacuation wardens to assist others in an evacuation and to account for personnel.

**Establish Specific Evacuation Procedures** – A staged evacuation, say floor by floor, shift by shift or by departments, and will be more orderly than everyone trying to leave at the same time.

**Establish a System for Accounting for Guests and Personnel** – For example, the Sandestin Beach Hilton requires each department supervisor to be responsible for their staff members. The supervisors collect time cards from each staff member to be sure that each person is accounted for. Staff members must be accounted for so that no one is left behind in the evacuation.

If an employee with an assigned responsibility is unaccounted for or has left the property unexpectedly, perhaps to secure family members, the responsibility must be quickly reassigned. Therefore, it is important to assign a primary person as well as an alternate for each responsibility.

**Develop Employee ID System** – If appropriate, develop a system for the identification of all employees (e.g., I.D. cards, vehicle permits, badges, etc.).

**Develop a Fire Escape Plan** – Develop a fire escape plan for fires during high wind or flood conditions. Identify alternative fire safe buildings or sections that occupants can be relocated to during high winds and floods.

**Determine Transportation Needs of Guests and Employees** – During an evacuation, some guests will use personal vehicles, while others will require transportation to area shelters, other hotels and bus stations. Airports will probably be closed.

Keep vehicle fuel tanks full during hurricane season. Fuel will not be available during evacuation activities. Ensure that all vehicles are serviced prior to the onset of the hurricane season. The facility should have vans and cars prepared and designate personnel to transport guests to area shelters. Determine whether public transportation will be available during times of an evacuation as another means of evacuating guests. Purchase an ample supply of fix-a-flat to repair flat tires. Check spare tires.

**Establish Evacuation Procedures for the Disabled and Elderly** – Establish procedures for assisting persons with disabilities and those who do not speak English. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disabled person as anyone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself or working. Different disability groups have different problems when evacuation is required. Persons who are blind can walk to an evacuation point, either unaided or with the help of a guide. Deaf people and many that use wheelchairs can drive. This accounts for a significant part of the disabled population. But there are persons who have mobility impairments that make it impossible to operate a car. Even if a person can drive, he or she may be on the upper floor of a high rise that is without power, and must be evacuated. For a significant number of people, the problem of evacuation is often just leaving the house.

The safest and most convenient way to evacuate persons who use wheelchairs or other assisted devices is in modified vans. Social service agencies and some individuals own such vehicles. Emergency managers should make contact with area social service agencies to request that inventories of such paratransit be maintained. Private citizens can also be contacted and asked to join emergency evacuation pools.

The capacity to accomplish the evacuation of disabled and elderly persons may well be the most significant of emergency management functions. It must address:

- Good dialogue between needs and service providers
- Understanding of the magnitude of the demands
- Adequate and back-up resources and conveyances to physically accomplish the movement
- Confidence of receiving proper care on the part of those being served
- A productive means of communication and exercises to assure that public safety personnel and volunteers get the message across
- A well-designed operations plan

### **Post Evacuation Procedures for Employees and Guests in a Visible Location**

*Person responsible for posting evacuation procedures is \_\_\_\_\_*

**Designate Personnel to Supervise Critical Operations-** Designate personnel to continue or shut down critical operations while an evacuation is underway. These employees must be capable of recognizing when to abandon the operation and evacuate themselves. Coordinate plans with the local emergency management office.

The Double Tree Suites in Ft. Lauderdale has a plan that includes a **Before Team** and an **After Team**. The Before Team remains at the property from one day before until the evacuation is complete. This team, made up of personnel without children or families, helps to prepare the facility for the storm and carries out the evacuation. The Before Team will not be required to return to the facility until 1 – 2 days after the storm (unless otherwise notified). When an evacuation is ordered, the only possible reason to leave staff behind would be to protect the property from looting or flood damage. It is important to realize that the safety of anyone assigned to the property is more important than preventing property damage or losses. No one should remain at the property during the storm unless traveling would be dangerous or impossible. It is advisable to support local police in their efforts to prevent looting after the storm passes.

The After Team is made up of staff with families and is sent home 1 – 2 days before the hurricane to prepare for the storm (see Family Preparedness Section). This team returns within 6 – 24 hours after the storm to begin the cleanup and recovery.

Double check with personnel to be sure original Before/After assignments are still correct. *Be sure to identify enough personnel to remain at the facility to help prepare for the hurricane.* If a property has endured a hurricane in the past, new personnel might be paired with those experienced in preparing for or recovering from the previous storm.

## **Evacuation Routes and Exits**

Designate Primary and Secondary Evacuation Routes and Exits – Keep evacuation routes and exits clearly marked and well lit. Post signs.

Install Emergency Lighting – Install emergency lighting in case a power outage occurs during an evacuation.

**Evaluate Evacuation Routes** – Have evacuation routes evaluated by a person who is not employed by or completely familiar with the facility. Ensure that evacuation routes and emergency exits are:

- Wide enough to accommodate the number of evacuating personnel and wheelchairs
- Clear and unobstructed at all times
- Unlikely to expose evacuating personnel to additional hazards

## **Assembly Areas and Accountability**

Obtaining an accurate account of personnel after a site evacuation requires planning and practice.

**Designate Evacuation Assembly Areas** – Designate assembly areas where personnel should gather after evacuating.

*Consider how to access important personal information about employees, home phone, next-of-kin, medical information in an emergency. Storing information on computer disks or in sealed envelopes are two options.*

**Establish Non-Personnel Accounting Method** – Establish a method for accounting for non-employees such as suppliers and guests.

**Establish Expanded Evacuation Procedures** – Establish procedures for further evacuation with ease if the incident expands. This may consist of sending employees home by normal means or providing them with transportation to an off-site location.

## **Shelter**

In some emergencies, the best means of protection is to take shelter either within the facility or away from the facility in a public building.

**Consider the Conditions for Taking Shelter** – e.g., tornado warning. Identify shelter space in the facility and in the community. In some cases, the best or only means of protection is to seek shelter within the facility. Even before a hurricane makes landfall, bridges can be closed due to winds greater than 45 mph. Rising water can quickly make roads impassable. Because the hotel may be the safest place to take shelter, employees may wish to bring families and make arrangements to address pet issues.

The safest area in hotels is in the hallways where there are no windows. If the facility is near the coast, the best location to seek shelter is on the leeward side of the hotel, the opposite side from the storm. However, beach properties will usually have a mandatory evacuation.

The best protection in a tornado is usually an underground area. If an underground area is not available, consider:

- Small interior rooms on the lowest floor and without windows.
- Hallways on the lowest floor away from doors and windows
- Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or block with no windows and a heavy concrete floor or roof system overhead
- Protected areas away from doors and windows

**Note: Auditoriums, cafeterias and gymnasiums that are covered with a flat, wide-span roof are not considered safe.**

*The nearest shelter locations and inland properties are:*

SHELTER NAME	ADDRESS/PHONE

***If facility cannot evacuate, hotel shelter will be:*** \_\_\_\_\_

**The Good Samaritan Act** – Can or should hotels provide shelter in an emergency, such as during or immediately before a hurricane? The Good Samaritan Act, Florida Statute 768.13, seems to allow for rendering care in an emergency. Paragraph (2a) states, in part: “Any person who gratuitously and in good faith renders emergency care or treatment either in direct response to emergency situations relating to and arising out of a state of emergency...without objection of the injured victim...shall not be held liable for any civil damages as a result of such care or treatment...where the

person acts as an ordinary reasonable person would have acted under the same or similar circumstances.” *Be aware that this is only a brief excerpt from the page-long FS 768.13. Please reference the Statutes directly for individual interpretation, or seek legal advice.*

If individuals cannot reach a public shelter in a timely fashion and seek shelter in a hotel because it is a reasonably strong structure, it is advisable to provide them with shelter without charge. Charging for this emergency service implies a contract to provide safe and comfortable accommodations. Consequently, if someone gets injured or does not receive the amenities a guest would normally receive, the hotel could be held liable.

*The Good Samaritan Act* does not apply if a fee is collected. A hotel would also be advised not to solicit individuals to seek shelter unless it is done through an agency such as the Red Cross or FEMA. Soliciting could imply an expectation to provide safe shelter.

Generally the law has protected individuals and companies who provide aid or acts of kindness during an emergency. The test, so to speak, is whether the action taken is *reasonable* under the circumstances. For example, a doctor arriving on the scene of an automobile accident cannot be expected to provide the same level of care as he or she could in a fully equipped hospital emergency room. By the same token, during a hurricane the hotel/motel will be understaffed, without normal power or communications and vulnerable to structural damage such as broken window. Therefore, the facility cannot be expected to provide total safety, comfort or security.

### **Establish Procedures for Sending Personnel to Shelter**

**Determine Needs for Emergency Disaster Supply Kits** –Include water, food and medical supplies, flashlights, portable radios, blankets and pillows, etc. These kits should be ready to assemble. Refer to the FEMA/Red Cross publication *Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit* in the Family Preparedness section of this handbook for guidelines.

**Designate Shelter Managers** – if appropriate.

**Establish Safety Procedures for Pets** – Establish procedures for providing for the safety of pets belonging to guests or personnel. Many shelters do not allow animals.

### **Coordinate Plans with Local Authorities**

## **Training and Information**

**Train Employees Regularly** - Train employees in evacuation, shelter and other safety procedures. Conduct sessions at least annually or when:

- Employees are hired
- Evacuation wardens, shelter managers and others with special assignments are designated
- New equipment, materials or processes are introduced
- Procedures are updated or revised
- Exercises show that employee performance must be improved

**Provide Emergency Information** – Provide emergency information such as checklists and evacuation maps

### **Post Evacuation Maps in Strategic Locations**

**Keep People Informed** – Consider the information needs of guests and others that visit the facility.

## **Family Preparedness**

Consider ways to help employees prepare families for emergencies. This will increase personal safety and help the facility get back up and running. Those who are prepared at home will be better able to carry out responsibilities at work.

Page 72 in this manual covers *Family Preparedness*. Copy and distribute this section to employees to assist with home and family preparedness.

## **Property and Equipment Protection**

Protecting facilities, equipment and vital records is essential to restoring operations once an emergency has occurred.

### **Planning Considerations**

**Establish Procedures for:**

- Fighting fires
- Closing or barricading doors and windows
- Shutting down equipment
- Covering or securing equipment
- Moving equipment to a safe location

## **Identify Sources of Backup Equipment, Parts and Supplies**

**Designate Shutdown Personnel** – Designate personnel to authorize, supervise and perform a facility shutdown. Train employees to recognize when to abandon the effort.

**Stock Emergency Materials** – Obtain materials to carry out protection procedures and keep them on hand for use only in emergencies.

## **Protection Systems**

Determine needs for systems to detect abnormal situation, provide warning and protect property. Consider:

- Fire protection systems
- Lightning protection systems
- Water-level monitoring systems
- Overflow detection devices
- Automatic shutoffs
- Emergency power generation systems

**Maintain Emergency Powered Fire Fighting Equipment** – Identify and maintain emergency fire fighting equipment, pumps, etc., that can operate without normal utility power.

## **Consult the Property Insurer about Special Protective Systems**

## **Mitigation**

**Reduce the Effects of Emergencies** – Consider ways to reduce the effects of emergencies, such as moving or constructing facilities away from flood plains and fault zones. Ask the local emergency management office whether the facility is located in a floodplain. Learn the history of flooding in the area. Learn the elevation of the facility in relation to streams, rivers and dams.

**Consider Physical Retrofitting Measures** – such as:

- Upgrading facilities to withstand the shaking of an earthquake or high winds
- *Floodproofing* facilities by constructing flood walls or other flood protection devices
- Installing fire sprinkler systems
- Installing fire-resistant materials and furnishings
- Installing storm shutters for all exterior windows and doors

There are three basic ways to floodproof a facility:

1. Permanent floodproofing measures are taken before a flood occurs and require no human intervention when flood water rise. They include:
  - Filling windows, doors or other openings with water-resistant materials such as concrete blocks or bricks. This approach assumes the structure is strong enough to withstand floodwaters.
  - Installing check valves to prevent water from entering where utility and sewer lines enter the facility.
  - Reinforcing walls to resist water pressure. Sealing walls to prevent or reduce seepage.
  - Building watertight walls around equipment or work areas within the facility that are particularly susceptible to flood damage.
  - Constructing floodwalls or levees outside the facility to keep flood waters away.
  - Elevating the facility on walls, columns or compacted fill. This approach is most applicable to new construction, though many types of buildings can be elevated.
  
2. Contingent floodproofing measures are also taken before a flood but require some additional action when flooding occurs. These measures include:
  - Installing watertight barriers called flood shields to prevent the passage of water through doors, windows, ventilation shafts or other openings
  - Installing permanent watertight doors
  - Constructing movable floodwalls
  - Installing permanent pumps to remove flood waters
  
3. Emergency floodproofing measures are generally less expensive than those listed above, though they require substantial advance warning and do not satisfy the minimum requirements for watertight floodproofing as set forth by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). They include:
  - Building walls with sandbags
  - Constructing a double row of walls with boards and posts to create a crib, then filling the crib with soil
  - Constructing a single wall by stacking small beams or planks on top of each other
  - Participating in community flood control projects

**Consider Non-Structural Mitigation Measures** – There are also non-structural mitigation measures to consider, including:

- Installing fire-resistant materials and furnishings
- Securing light fixtures and other items that could fall or shake loose in an emergency

- Moving heavy or breakable objects to low shelves; attaching cabinets and files to low walls or bolting them together
- Placing Velcro strips under typewriters, tabletop computers and television monitors
- Moving work stations away from large windows
- Installing curtains or blinds that can be drawn over windows to prevent glass from shattering onto employees
- Anchoring water heaters and bolting them to wall studs
- Cleaning drains, gutters and downspouts of the buildings
- Trimming and pruning shrubs and trees of dead and weak branches and removing dead or non-wind resistant trees (branches can become missiles during high winds)

Consult a structural engineer or architect and the community's building and zoning offices for additional information.

## **Facility Shutdown**

Facility shutdown is generally a last resort but always a possibility. Improper or disorganized shutdown can result in confusion, injury and property damage. Some facilities require only simple actions such as turning off equipment, locking doors and activating alarms. Others require complex shutdown procedures.

**Work With Department Heads to Establish Shutdown Procedures** – Include information about when and how to shut off utilities. Identify:

- The conditions that could necessitate a shutdown
- Who can order a shutdown
- Who will carry out shutdown procedures
- How a partial shutdown would affect other facility operations
- The length of time required for shutdown and restarting

## **Train Personnel in Shutdown Procedures and Post Procedures**

## **Records Preservation**

Vital records may include:

- Financial and insurance information
- Engineering plans and drawings
- Product lists and specifications
- Employee, guest and supplier databases
- Formulas and trade secrets
- Personnel files

**Preserve Vital Records** – Preserving vital records is essential to the quick restoration of operations. Analyzing vital records involves:

- Classifying operations into functional categories, e.g., finance, production, sales, administration
- Determining essential functions for keeping the business up and running, such as finance, production, sales, etc.
- Identifying the minimum information that must be readily accessible to perform essential functions, e.g., maintaining customer collections may require access to account statements
- Identifying the records that contain the essential information and where they are located
- Identifying the equipment and materials needed to access and use the information

**Establish Procedures for Protecting Vital Records** – Next, establish procedures for protecting and accessing vital records. Among the many approaches to consider are:

- Labeling vital records
- Backing up computer systems
- Making copies of records
- Storing tapes and disks in insulated containers
- Storing data off-site where they would not likely be damaged by an event affecting the facility
- Increasing security of computer facilities
- Arranging for evacuation of records to backup facilities
- Backing up systems handled by service bureaus
- Arranging for backup power

## **Community Outreach**

The facility's relationship with the community will influence the ability to protect personnel and property and return to normal operations. This section describes ways to involve outside organizations in the emergency management plan.

### **Involving the Community**

**Maintain Dialogues** – Maintain a dialogue with community leaders, first responders, government agencies, community organizations and utilities, including:

- Appointed and elected leaders
- Fire, police and emergency medical services personnel
- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) members
- Emergency management director
- Public Works Department

- American Red Cross
- Hospitals
- Telephone company
- Electric utility
- Neighborhood groups
- Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau

**Schedule Regular Community Emergency** – Have regular meetings with community emergency personnel to review emergency plans and procedures. Talk about what the facility is doing to prepare for and prevent emergencies. Explain concerns for the community’s welfare.

**Identify Areas to Assist the Community** – Identify ways the facility could help the community in a community-wide emergency. Look for common interests and concerns. Identify opportunities for sharing resources and information.

**Conduct Confidence Building Activities** – Conduct confidence-building activities such as facility tours. Do a facility walk-through with community response groups.

**Involve Community Emergency Personnel** – Involve community fire, police and emergency management personnel in drills and exercises.

**Involve Neighbors** – Meet with neighbors to determine how to assist each other in an emergency.

## **Mutual Aid Agreements**

To avoid confusion and conflict in an emergency, establish mutual aid agreements with local response agencies and businesses. These agreements should:

- Define the type of assistance
- Identify the chain of command for activating the agreement
- Define communications procedures

Include these agencies in facility training exercises whenever possible.

Mutual aid agreements can address any number of activities or resources that might be needed in an emergency. For example:

1. Providing for fire fighting and HAZMAT response.
2. Providing shelter space, emergency storage, emergency supplies, medical support.
3. Businesses allowing neighbors to use their property to account for personnel after an evacuation.

## Community Service

In community-wide emergencies, business and industry are often needed to assist the community with:

Personnel	Feeding facilities
Equipment	EOC facilities
Shelter	Food, clothing, building material
Training	Funding
Storage	Transportation

While there is no way to predict what demands will be placed on the hotel/motel's resources, give some thought to how the communities needs might influence the corporate responsibilities in an emergency. Also, consider the opportunities for community service before an emergency occurs.

## Public Information

When site emergencies expand beyond the facility, the community will want to know the nature of the incident, whether the public's safety or health is in danger, what is being done to resolve the problem and what was done to prevent the situation from happening.

**Determine Audiences Affected by Emergencies** - Determine the audiences that may be affected by an emergency and identify their information needs. Include:

- The public
- The media
- Employees and retirees
- Unions
- Contractors and suppliers
- Guests
- Shareholders
- Emergency response organizations
- Regulatory agencies
- Appointed and elected officials
- Special interest groups
- Neighbors

***The community wants to know:***

- What does the facility do?
- What are the hazards?
- What programs are in place to respond to emergencies?
- How could a site emergency affect the community?
- What assistance will be required from the community?

## **Media Relations: The VCB & EOC Will Coordinate Media Efforts for Our Destination**

**Develop Media Relations** – In an emergency, the media are the most important link to the public. Try to develop and maintain positive relations with media outlets in the area. Determine the media's particular needs and interests. Explain the plan for protecting personnel and preventing emergencies.

**Establish Media Communications Procedures** – Determine how to communicate important public information through the media in an emergency. Designate a trained spokesperson and an alternate spokesperson. Set up a media briefing area. Establish security procedures. Establish procedures for ensuring that information is complete, accurate and approved for public release. Determine an appropriate and useful way of communicating technical information. Prepare background information about the facility. When providing information to the media during an emergency use the following guidelines.

### **Do's**

- Give all media equal access to information.
- When appropriate, conduct press briefings and interviews. Give local and national media equal time.
- Try to observe media deadlines.
- Escort media representatives to ensure safety.
- Keep records of information released.
- Provide press releases when possible.

### **Don'ts**

- Do not speculate about the incident.
- Do not permit unauthorized personnel to release information.
- Do not cover up facts or mislead the media.
- Do not place blame for the incident.

***Press releases about facility-generated emergencies should describe who is involved in the incident and what happened, including when, where, what, why and how.***

## Recovery and Restoration

Business recovery and restoration, or business resumption goes right to a facility's bottom line, keeping people employed and the business running.

### Planning considerations

**Establish Post Recovery Procedures with Vendors** – Consider making contractual arrangements with vendors for such post-emergency services as record preservation, equipment repair, earthmoving or engineering.

**Establish Post Recovery Procedures with Insurance Carriers** –Meet with your insurance carriers to discuss your property and business resumption policies.

**Establish Procedures for Resuming Critical Operations** – Determine critical operations and make plans for bringing those systems back on-line. The process may entail:

- Repairing or replacing equipment
- Relocating operations to an alternate location
- Contracting operations on a temporary basis

**Document Facility Assets** – Take photographs or videotape the facility to document hotel/motel assets. Update these records regularly.

### Continuity of Management

Assume that not every key person will be readily available or physically at the facility after an emergency. Ensure that recovery decisions can be made without undue delay. Consult with the legal department regarding laws and corporate bylaws governing continuity of management.

#### Establish Procedures For:

- Assuring the chain of command
- Maintaining lines of succession for key personnel
- Moving to alternate headquarters

#### Include These Considerations in All Exercise Scenarios

#### Insurance

Most hotels/motels discover the facility is inadequately insured only after suffering a loss. Lack of appropriate insurance can be financially devastating.

**Determine Insurance Needs** – Discuss the following topics with the insurance advisor to determine the facilities’ needs.

- How will the property be valued?
- Does the policy cover the cost of required upgrades to code?
- How much insurance is required to avoid becoming a co-insurer?
- What perils or causes of loss does the policy cover? Does the insurance package include wind/storm coverage? Flood coverage?
- Does the insurance cover damage to contents, including vital records and office equipment?
- What are the deductibles?
- What does the policy require to be done in the event of a loss?
- What types of records and documentation will the insurance company want to see? Are records in a safe place where they can be obtained after an emergency?
- To what extent is the facility covered for loss due to interruption of power? Is coverage provided for both on and off premises power interruption?
- Is the facility covered for lost income in the event of business interruption because of a loss? Is there enough coverage? For how long is coverage provided? How long is the coverage for lost income if the hotel/motel is closed by order of a civil authority?
- To what extent is the facility covered for reduced income due to guests not all immediately coming back once the hotel/motel reopens?
- How will the emergency management program affect insurance rates?

## Employee Support

**Determine Employee Recovery Support Procedures** - Since employees who will rely on the hotel/motel for support after an emergency are the facility’s most valuable asset, consider the range of services that could be provided or arranged for, including:

Cash advances  
Salary continuation  
Flexible work hours  
Reduced work hours

Crisis counseling  
Care packages  
Day care

After a site emergency, assess the impact of the event on business neighbors and the community and take appropriate action. How this issue is handled will have long-lasting consequences.

## Resuming Operations

**Establish a Recovery Team** – If necessary, decide who will assess the property before personnel re-entry. Establish priorities for resuming operations.

**Establish Procedures for Resuming Operations** – Establish procedures for resuming operations immediately after an emergency. Include:

Personnel and guest safety	Investigation procedures
Security	Inventory of damaged property
Communications	Protection of undamaged property
Record-keeping	Salvage/repair/clean-up operations
Notification procedures	

## **Administration and Logistics**

Maintain complete and accurate records at all times to ensure a more efficient emergency response and recovery. Certain records may also be required by regulation or by insurance issues or prove invaluable in the case of legal action after an incident.

### **Administrative Actions**

#### **Administrative Actions Prior to an Emergency**

- Establish a written emergency management plan – Maintain training records
- Maintain all written communications
- Document drills and exercises and their critiques
- Involve community emergency response organizations in planning activities

#### **Administrative Actions During and After an Emergency**

- Maintain telephone logs
- Keep a detailed record of events
- Maintain a record of injuries and follow-up actions
- Account for personnel
- Coordinate notification of family members
- Issue press releases
- Maintain sampling records
- Manage finances
- Coordinate personnel services
- Document incident investigations and recovery operations

### **Logistics**

Before an Emergency, logistics may entail:

Acquiring equipment	Establishing training facilities
Stockpiling supplies	Establishing mutual aid agreements
Designing emergency facilities	Preparing a resource inventory

## Supplies:

- Maintain emergency food, water and utensils for food preparation and eating. Meals should be the type that can be easily prepared without cooking or without normal power or refrigeration.
- Maintain a special supply of batteries, flashlights, emergency lighting, propane, housekeeping and sanitary supplies. Have enough batteries fully charged and available for at least 24 hours of continuous use.
- Identify procedures for filling and protecting all tanks (oil, gasoline, kerosene and water).
- Acquire emergency repair tools and materials such as chain saw, shovels and axes, tools, jacks, glue, sealing and caulking compounds, plywood, lumber and fasteners, sandbags, heavy plastic sheeting, duct tape, tarpaulins, etc.
- Maintain a supply of cash since ATM machines cannot function without power and phone connections. After a hurricane, the local economy is often “cash only.”

## Emergency Equipment:

- Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery backup to listen for hurricane watches and warnings.
- Determine what and where priority emergency power should be dedicated (for example, communications, lighting, ventilation, sanitation and refrigeration).
- Consider the need for backup systems: portable pumps to remove flood water, alternate power sources such as generators or gasoline-powered pumps, battery powered emergency lighting, rapid battery charges, sanitation equipment to flush toilets, purify water and treat sewage.
- Provide for security and emergency lighting. Give consideration to solar powered security and parking lighting systems that are able to provide electrical power for the above emergency systems.

**Logistics During an Emergency** – During an emergency, logistics may entail the provision of:

- Providing utility maps to emergency responders
- Moving backup equipment in place
- Repairing parts
- Arranging for medical support, food and transportation
- Arranging for shelter facilities
- Providing for backup power
- Providing for backup communications

***Emergency funding can be critical immediately following an emergency. Consider the need for per-approved purchase requisitions and whether special funding authority may be necessary.***

## Food and Water

### Pools

- Never completely drain the pool. It is not necessary to lower the water level. However, if the pool's water level is to be lowered, be sure to close the skimmer valve to prevent damage to the pump when the power is turned on.
- Turn off ALL electrical power to the swimming pool, pump, motor, lighting, chlorinators, etc.
- If the filter pump is in an unsheltered area, have the motor removed and stored or wrap the motor with a waterproof membrane or plastic bag and tie it securely in place to prevent sand and driving water from entering the motor.
- Remove ALL loose items from the pool area.
- Add extra chlorine to the pool to prevent contamination. The pool provides a handy source for washing and flushing the hotel/motel if the water supply fails.

## AFTER THE STORM

### **Step 1.** *Take Care of Yourself First*

Protect yourself and your family from the stress, fatigue, and health hazards that follow a disaster.

### **Step 2.** *Give Your Home First Aid*

Once it is safe to go back in, take steps to protect your home and its contents from further damage.

### **Step 3.** *Get Organized*

Some things are not worth repairing. Other things may be too complicated or expensive to do by yourself. Make the most of your time and money – develop a recovery plan.

### **Step 4.** *Dry Out Your Home*

Floodwaters will damage your home and the things in it. They also leave mud and unknown contaminants, and they promote the growth of mildew. You need to dry out your home to reduce these hazards and the damage they cause.

**Step 5. *Restore the Utilities***

The rest of your work will be much easier if you have heat, electricity, and clean water and sewage disposal.

**Step 6. *Clean Up***

The walls, floors, closets, shelves, and the contents in every flooded part of your home should be thoroughly washed and disinfected.

**Step 7. *Check on Financial Assistance***

Insurance, government disaster programs, volunteer organizations and businesses can help you recover from a flood.

**Step 8. *Rebuild and Floodproof***

Rebuild correctly and make improvements that will protect your home from damage by the next flood.

**Step 9. *Prepare for the Next Flood***

Protect yourself from the next flood with flood insurance, a flood response plan and community flood protection programs. This step also includes sources of additional information.

This section discusses pre and post storm procedures for various forms of disaster assistance, including the National Flood Insurance Program, Disaster Assistance Centers and Small Business Administration Loans.

## **NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP)**

### **Myths and Facts**

**Myth:** Flood insurance is not available for a hotel/motel located in a high-risk area.

**Fact:** A hotel/motel can buy Federal Flood insurance no matter where they are located (except in Coastal Barrier Resources System areas) if the community belongs to the NFIP.

**Myth:** Flood insurance cannot be purchased immediately before or during a flood.

**Fact:** Flood coverage can be purchased at any time. There is a 30-day waiting period after application and payment of the premium before the policy is effective with the following exceptions: 1) If the initial purchase is related to extending or renewing a loan there is no waiting period 2) If the initial purchase of flood insurance is made during a one year period following the issuance of a revised flood map, there is a one day waiting period.

**Myth:** Flood insurance is only available for homeowners.

**Fact:** Flood insurance is available to protect homes, condominiums, apartments and non-residential buildings including commercial structures. Commercial structures can be insured to a limit of \$500,000 for the building and \$500,000 for the contents.

**Myth:** Flood insurance cannot be purchased for property that has been flooded.

**Fact:** It doesn't matter how many times the home, apartment or business has been flooded. It is still eligible to purchase flood insurance provided that the community is participating in the NFIP.

**Myth:** Only residents of high risk flood zones need to insure their property.

**Fact:** Even if the hotel/motel is in an area that is not flood-prone, it is advisable to have flood insurance. One third of the NFIP's claims come from outside high-risk flood areas.

**Myth:** The NFIP does not offer any basement coverage.

**Fact:** Yes it does. The NFIP defines a basement as any area of a building with a floor that is subgrade, or below ground level on all sides. Basement coverage under an NFIP policy includes cleanup expenses and items used to service the building such as elevators, furnaces, water heaters, washers, dryers, etc. The policy does not cover the contents of a finished basement and improvements such as finished walls, floors and ceilings.

**Myth:** Federal disaster assistance will pay for flood damage.

**Fact:** Before a community is eligible for disaster assistance it must be declared a Federal disaster area. Federal disaster assistance declarations are awarded in less than 50% of flooding incidents.

**Myth:** Federal flood insurance can only be purchased from the NFIP directly.

**Fact:** Federal flood insurance is sold and serviced directly through the NFIP or through a Write Your Own (WYO) company. WYO companies write and service policies on a non risk-bearing basis through a special arrangement with the Federal Insurance Administration.

### **How Do I Obtain Flood Insurance?**

Flood insurance is purchased through the facility's regular insurance provider. A current list of providers is included in the material for this section.

## How Do I Determine if the Facility Needs Flood Insurance?

There are a number of typical questions concerning insurance needs at a new or existing commercial facility:

- Is the facility required to have flood insurance?
- How much insurance does the facility need?
- Is the facility in a flood zone?

These and other questions can be answered by completing a Standard Flood Hazard Determination (SFHD) form. **Please check with local Emergency Officials to make sure that forms are current, prior to completing. Contact your local emergency management office for appropriate forms.**

### Other Advance Preparations

A facility that has sustained wind and flood damage needs to be cleaned and renovated in a prompt manner for economic and safety reasons. If the first story of the hotel has been flooded and is full of muddy, soaked carpet, the furniture, carpet and wall material need to be promptly removed and repaired if possible. An insurance claim to any agency will require proof of loss. Claims must sometimes be filed for property that has been removed. How does the insurance company know what the actual loss is?

Advance preparation of detailed information describing the insured property will allow cleanup operations to begin without jeopardizing the insurance claims. Make sure to keep records of purchase orders for furnishings and appliances. Also, make a video of each type of room facility on the property.

Advance record keeping is desirable because clean up can start even if the arrival of an insurance adjuster is delayed. Make sure that all insurance information is kept in a secure location. Consider keeping a duplicate copy at an inland location away from the storm surge.

### After the Storm: Flood Insurance Claims

What if the property is damaged by a flood?

- Photograph interior and exterior views of the property. Show damaged property and height of water.
- Call the insurance agent and report a loss.
- Keep records of removal costs.

- Separate damaged from undamaged property and put it in some order for examination by the adjuster.
- If appropriate, inform the adjuster that a partial or advance payment is needed when he/she visits the property.
- Good records assist the NFIP in giving advance payments.
- Use the inventory to speed the claims process.
- Properly remove and dispose of any damaged property that represents a health hazard. Make sure to maintain good records of disposed items for insurance claims.
- Keep inventory records in more than one secure location. Quicker claim processing can be possible with adequate records of actual losses.

## **DISASTER ASSISTANCE CENTERS**

Disaster Assistance Centers (DAC) are set up when an area has been declared a Federal disaster area. Over 50% of all floods are not declared a Federal disaster area. Forms will be available at the DACs. Please use the following information as a guide to limit the amount of questions.

### **DACs act as clearinghouses for assistance of all kinds:**

- Low interest loans to farmers, businesses, etc.
- Cash grants, temporary housing, tax assistance

### **DAC: What to Bring**

### **When a disaster has been declared, take the following information to the DAC:**

- Name and position with related business
- Telephone numbers at which to be contacted
- Insurance papers including proof of loss forms
- A summary of damage and repair costs
- Lender information

## **Disaster Assistance Application Form**

**This form is used for a wide variety of purposes.** Our use of the forms will relate only to business applications.

- Blocks 1-7 relate to name, social security number, address of damaged property and where the general manager can currently be reached.
- Block 8 asks for a description of damages. Check the small block in the lower right hand corner labeled “Business Only”.
- Block 9 asks if there are any disaster-related needs for food, clothing, shelter or transportation.
- Information on the source of the damage is checked in Block 10, flooding, earthquake or other.
- For non-farm business purposes, question 12 from the 11-14 block asks if the business has suffered damage and the business name.
- If “yes” was checked for question 12, the phrase in parenthesis just to the right of the block directs to mark 56 and 58. These numbers are at the bottom of this form.
- If the facility’s needs are limited to questions 11-14, mark the “yes” block for question 15.
- If “yes” is checked, stop and skip to block 38.
- Block 38 is a signature block. The form is complete.

Checking “yes” for question 12, relating to damage of business property.

Block 56 and 58 are labeled Tax Assistance and SBA Business Loan, respectively.

## **SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA) LOANS**

**The SBA has programs that are designed to help businesses recover from a disaster.**

- Business Physical Disaster Loans: loans (up to \$1,500,000) to businesses to repair/replace damaged property, including inventory.
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL): working capital loans to small businesses to help them through a recovery period. There are restrictions on this type of loan.

### **SBA loan amounts:**

- For business physical disaster loans, up to 100 percent of the uninsured, SBA verified loss up to \$1.5 million. Within this limit, the loan may be increased by up to 20% under certain circumstances.
- Total loan amount (for EIDL and Business Disaster Loans) cannot exceed \$1.5 million.
- Refinancing existing business mortgages is possible under some conditions.

## **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Dealing with a disaster of any type requires advance preparation. This preparation can help speed the recovery of the facility in the event of an emergency. Access to the facility's descriptive information and access to external sources of information are key to a speedy recovery.

### **Have the facility's insurance needs been reviewed/updated?**

- SFHD form
- Other insurance
- During storm season with certain restrictions, insurance can still be upgraded

**Has the local FEMA NFIP map been investigated?** Is the facility located on the map?

**Keep a copy of the SFHD form in the business/insurance files.** Know where to locate:

NFIP Community Number (from Community Eligibility Book)  
NFIP Map Number and effective/revise date  
LOMA's or LOMR's (check Community Status Report)

**SBA loans relate payout to existing mortgages on the property.** Is this information readily available? Put a copy in an "Emergency File."

**Make sure that a current inventory list is also available.** Is there a video of the property, inside and out?

**Loan applications ask for a rough estimate for repairing damage.** Having estimates of typical cleanup costs, drywall replacement, carpet removal/ replacement and window repair will speed this process. Pre-arrangement of these estimates from a legitimate contractor will help after the storm.

**Remember that over 50% of floods are not declared disasters** and when they are, the areas are very specific: county by county.

**FEMA'S Web site has a vast amount of background information plus current data concerning disaster status of various natural and man made emergencies.**

Internet Site

- FEMA Homepage: <http://www.fema.gov/>

**Within the FEMA web site are several locations that can provide useful current information such as local telephone numbers, disaster maps, etc.**

**If any member of the staff has a laptop computer and a cellular telephone, consider purchasing the cables and software that enable access to the Internet from the laptop/cellular phone.** Also consider acquiring an extra battery pack or external battery powered backup for the computer. This will allow access to the FEMA site even if the power is down. Valuable information can be found including whether the area has been declared a federal disaster area. All of the insurance information can be stored at another site and downloaded to assist in filling out various forms.

## REFERENCE H:

### HURRICANES...AND HOW THEY FORM

There are no other storms like hurricanes on earth. Views of hurricanes from satellites located thousands of miles above the earth show how unique these powerful, tightly coiled weather systems are.

#### What is a hurricane?

A hurricane is a type of tropical cyclone-the general term for all circulating weather systems (counter-clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere) over tropical waters.

Tropical cyclones are classified as follows:

- **Tropical Depression** – An organized system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined circulation and maximum sustained winds of 38 mph (33 knots) or less.
- **Tropical Storm** – An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph (34-63 knots).
- **Hurricane** – An intense tropical weather system with a well-defined circulation and maximum sustained winds of 74 mph (64 knots) or higher. In the western Pacific, hurricanes are called “typhoons,” and similar storms in the Indian Ocean are called “cyclones.”

Hurricanes are products of the tropical ocean and atmosphere. Powered by heat from the sea, they are steered by the easterly trade winds and the temperate westerlies as well as by their own ferocious energy. Around their core, winds grow with great velocity, generating violent seas. Moving ashore, they sweep the ocean inward while spawning tornadoes and producing torrential rains and floods. Each year on average, ten tropical storms (of which six become hurricanes) develop over the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea or Gulf of Mexico. Many of these remain over the ocean. However, about five hurricanes strike the United States coastline every 3 years. Of these five, two will be major hurricanes (category 3 or greater on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale).

#### Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale

Scale Number (Category)	Sustained Winds (M.P.H.)	Damage	Examples (States Affected)
1	74-95	Minimal	Florence 1988 (LA) Charley 1988 (NC)
2	96-110	Moderate	Kate 1985 (FL Panhandle) Bob 1991 (RI)
3	111-130	Extensive	Alicia 1983 (N TX) Emily 1993 (NC Outer Banks)
4	131-155	Extreme	Andrew 1992 (S FL) Hugo 1989 (SC)
5	>155	Catastrophic	Camille 1969 (LA/MS) Labor Day Hurricane 1935 (FL Keys)

Timely warnings have greatly diminished hurricane fatalities in the United States. In spite of this, property damage continues to mount. There is little we can do about the hurricanes themselves. However, NOAA's National Hurricane Center and National Weather Service field offices team up with other Federal, state and local agencies, rescue and relief organizations, the private sector and the news media in a huge warning and preparedness effort.

### **Breeding Grounds**

In the eastern Pacific, hurricanes begin forming by mid-May, while in the Atlantic, Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, hurricane development starts in June. For the United States, the peak hurricane threat exists from mid August to late October although the official hurricane season extends through November. Over other parts of the world, such as the western Pacific, hurricanes can occur year round.

Developing hurricanes gather heat and energy through contact with warm ocean waters. The addition of moisture by evaporation from the sea surface powers them like giant heat engines.

### **Storm Structure**

The process by which a disturbance forms and subsequently strengthens into a hurricane depends on at least three conditions. Warm waters and moisture are mentioned above. The third condition is a wind pattern near the ocean surface that spirals air inward. Bands of thunderstorms form, allowing the air to warm further and rise higher into the atmosphere. If the winds at these higher levels are relatively light, this structure can remain intact and allow for additional strengthening.

The center, or eye, of a hurricane is relatively calm. The most violent activity takes place in the area immediately around the eye, called the eyewall. At the top of the eyewall (about 50,000 feet), most of the air is propelled outward, increasing the air's upward motion. Some of the air, however, moves inward and sinks into the eye, creating a cloud-free area.

### **WHAT TO LISTEN FOR...**

NOAA Weather Radio is the best means to receive warnings from the National Weather Service. The National Weather Service continuously broadcasts updated hurricane advisories that can be received by NOAA Weather Radios sold in many stores. The average range is 40 miles, depending on topography. Your National Weather Service recommends purchasing a radio that has both a battery backup and a tone-alert feature, which automatically alerts you when a watch or warning is issued.

**TROPICAL STORM WATCH:** Tropical Storm conditions are possible in the specified area of the Watch, usually within 36 hours.

**TROPICAL STORM WARNING:** Tropical Storm conditions are expected in the specified area of the Warning, usually within 24 hours.

**HURRICANE WATCH:** Hurricane conditions are possible in the specified area of the Watch, usually within 36 hours. During a Hurricane Watch, prepare to take immediate action to protect your family and property in case a Hurricane Warning is issued.

**HURRICANE WARNING:** Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of the Warning, usually within 24 hours. Complete all storm preparations and evacuate if directed by local officials.

**SHORT TERM WATCHES AND WARNINGS:** These provide detailed information on specific hurricane threats, such as tornadoes, floods and high winds.

## **INFORMATION FOR LOCAL DECISION MAKERS**

The **PUBLIC ADVISORY** issued by the National Hurricane Center provides critical hurricane warning and forecast information.

The **TROPICAL CYCLONE FORECAST/ADVISORY** issued by the National Hurricane Center provides detailed hurricane track and wind field information.

The **TROPICAL CYCLONE DISCUSSION** issued by the National Hurricane Center outlines the meteorological reasoning behind the warnings and forecasts.

**STRIKE PROBABILITY FORECAST** provides a measure of the forecast track accuracy. The probabilities have no relation to tropical cyclone intensity.

**HURRICANE LOCAL STATEMENTS** issued by local National Weather Service offices give greater detail on how the storm will impact your area.

The **SHORT TERM FORECAST** provides updated information on what the weather will be over the next few hours in the immediate area.

*All of the above information must be used to make an informed decision on your risk and what actions should be taken. Remember to listen to your local official's recommendations and to NOAA Weather Radio for the latest hurricane information.*

## **PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS**

### **Before the Hurricane Season**

- Know the hurricane risks in your area.
- Learn safe routes inland.
- Learn location of official shelters.
- Review your insurance policy.
- Review needs and working condition of emergency equipment, such as flashlights, battery powered radios, etc.
- Ensure that enough nonperishable food and water supplies are on hand.
- Obtain and store materials such as plywood, necessary to properly secure your home.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed.
- Determine where to move your boat in an emergency.

***Individuals with special needs or others requiring more information should contact their local National Weather Service office, emergency management office, or American Red Cross chapter.***

### **During the Storm When in a Watch Area...**

- Frequently listen to radio, TV, or NOAA Weather Radio for official bulletins of the storm's progress.
- Fuel and service family vehicles.
- Inspect and secure mobile home tie downs.
- Prepare to cover all window and door openings with shutters or other shielding materials.
- Check batteries and stock up on canned food, first aid supplies, drinking water and medications.
- Prepare to bring inside lawn furniture and other loose, lightweight objects, such as garbage cans, garden tools, etc.
- Have on hand an extra supply of cash.

### **Plan to evacuate if you...**

- Live in a mobile home. They are unsafe in high winds, no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- Live on the coastline, an offshore island, or near a river or a flood plain.
- Live in a high-rise. Hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations.

### **When in a Warning Area...**

- Closely monitor radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio for official bulletins.
- Complete preparation activities, such as putting up storm shutters, storing loose objects, etc.
- Follow instructions issued by local officials. Leave immediately if told to do so!
- If evacuating, leave early (if possible, in daylight). Stay with friends or relatives, at a low-rise inland location, or go to a pre-designated public shelter outside a flood zone.
- Leave mobile homes in any case.
- Notify neighbors and a family member outside of the warned area of your evacuation plans.
- Put food and water out for a pet if you cannot take it with you. *Public health regulations do not allow pets in public shelters, nor do most hotels/motels allow them.*

**What to bring to a shelter:** first-aid kit, medicine, baby food and diapers, cards, games, books, toiletries, battery powered radio, flashlight (one per person), extra batteries, blankets or sleeping bags, identification, valuable papers (insurance) and cash.

***Reminder! If you ARE told to leave, do so immediately!***

### **If Staying in a Home...**

Only stay in a home if you have NOT been ordered to leave. Stay inside a well constructed building. In structures, such as a home, examine the building and plan in advance what you will do if winds become strong. Strong winds can produce deadly missiles and structural failure.

- Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and open only when necessary.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.

- Turn off propane tanks.
- Unplug small appliances.
- Fill bathtub and large containers with water for sanitary purposes.

### **If winds become strong...**

- Stay away from windows and doors even if they are covered. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway.
- Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors.
- If you are in a two-story house, go to an interior first-floor room, such as a bathroom or closet.
- If you are in a multiple-story building and away from the water, go to the first or second floors and take refuge in the halls or other interior rooms away from windows.
- Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.

### **Be Alert For:**

- TORNADOES which often are spawned by hurricanes.
- The calm “EYE” of the storm. After the eye passes, the winds will change direction and quickly return to hurricane force.

### **After the Storm**

- Keep listening to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio.
- Wait until an area is declared safe before entering.
- Roads may be closed for your protection. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, turn around and go another way!
- Avoid weakened bridges and washed out roads. Do not drive into flooded areas.
- Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Check gas, water and electrical lines and appliances for damage.
- Do not drink or prepare food with tap water until you are certain it is not contaminated.
- Avoid using candles and other open flames indoors. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage.
- Use the telephone to report life-threatening emergencies only.
- Be especially cautious if using a chainsaw to cut fallen trees.

## **Community Preparedness Plans**

Each community subject to a hurricane threat should develop its own hurricane safety plan. After you have developed a personal/family safety plan, you may want to find out about your community safety plan. Your local officials should have the most detailed information for your immediate area.

Please listen to and follow their recommendations before, during and after the storm.

**FAMILY DISASTER PLAN** Families should be prepared for all hazards that could affect their area. NOAA's National Weather Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the American Red Cross urge every family to develop a family disaster plan. Where will your family be when disaster strikes? They could be anywhere – at work, at school or in the car. How will you find each other? Will you know if your children are safe? Disaster may force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services – water, gas, electricity or telephones – were cut off?

## **FOLLOW THESE BASIC STEPS TO DEVELOP A FAMILY DISASTER PLAN...**

1. **Gather information about hazards.** Contact your local National Weather Service office, emergency management office and American Red Cross chapter. Find out what type of disasters could occur and how you should respond. Learn your community's warning signals and evacuation plans.
2. **Meet with your family to create a plan.** Discuss the information you have gathered. Pick two places to meet: a spot outside your home for an emergency, such as fire, and a place away from your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Choose an out-of-state friend as your "family check-in contact" for everyone to call if the family gets separated. Discuss what you would do if advised to evacuate.
3. **Implement your plan.** (1) Post emergency telephone numbers by phones; (2) Install safety features in your house, such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers; (3) Inspect your home for potential hazards (such as items that can move, fall, break or catch fire) and correct them; (4) Have your family learn basic safety measures, such as CPR and first aid; how to use a fire extinguisher and how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity in your home; (5) Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number; (6) Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days. Assemble a disaster supplies kit with items you may need in case of an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers, such as backpacks or duffel bags. Keep important family documents in a waterproof container. Keep a smaller disaster supplies kit in the trunk of your car.

### **A DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT SHOULD INCLUDE:**

A 3-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil • one change of clothing and footwear per person • one blanket or sleeping bag per person • first-aid kit, including prescription medicines • emergency tools, including a battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio and a portable radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries • an extra set of car keys and a credit card or cash • special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.

4. **Practice and maintain your plan.** Ask questions to make sure your family remembers meeting places, phone numbers, and safety rules. Conduct drills. Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries two times each year. Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions. Replace stored water and food every 6 months. Contact your local National Weather Service office, American Red Cross chapter, or local office of emergency management for a copy of "Your Family Disaster Plan" (L-191/ARC4466).

### **THUNDERSTORMS...AND THEIR OFFSPRING**

Thunderstorms affect relatively small areas when compared with hurricanes and winter storms. The typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts an average of 30 minutes. Nearly 1,800 thunderstorms are occurring at any moment around the world. That's 16 million a year!

Despite their small size, all thunderstorms are dangerous. Every thunderstorm produces lightning, which kills more people each year than tornadoes. Heavy rain from the thunderstorm can lead to flash flooding. Strong winds, hail and tornadoes are also dangers associated with some thunderstorms.

Of the estimated 100,000 thunderstorms that occur each year in the United States, only about 10 percent are classified as severe.

Your National Weather Service considers a thunderstorm severe if it produces hail at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in diameter, wind 58 mph or higher, or tornadoes. Take the time NOW to understand these dangers and learn basic safety rules!

#### **Lightning**

- Occurs with ALL thunderstorms.
- Averages 93 deaths and 300 injuries each year.
- Causes several hundred million dollars in damage to property and forests annually.

#### **Flash Floods/Floods**

- The number ONE thunderstorm killer...nearly 140 fatalities each year.
- Most flash flood deaths occur at night and when people become trapped in automobiles.

## **Straight-line Winds**

- Responsible for most thunderstorm wind damage.
- Winds can exceed 100 mph!
- One type of straight-line wind, the downburst can cause damage equivalent to a strong tornado and can be extremely dangerous to aviation.
- During the summer in the western states, thunderstorms often produce little rain but very strong wind gusts and dust storms.

## **Large Hail**

- Causes nearly \$1 billion in damage to property and crops annually.
- Costliest United States hailstorm: Denver, Colorado, July 11, 1990. Total damage was \$625 million.

## **Tornadoes**

- Nature's most violent storms.
- Winds can exceed 200 m.p.h.
- Result in an average of 80 deaths and 1,500 injuries each year.
- Most fatalities occur when people do not leave mobile homes and automobiles.

Contact your local National Weather Service office, American Red Cross chapter or local emergency management office for a copy of "Flash Floods and Floods...The Awesome Power" (NOAA PA 92050/ARC4493) and "Tornadoes...Nature's Most Violent Storms" (NOAA PA 92052/ARC 5002).

## **WHAT MAKES A THUNDERSTORM?**

### **Every Thunderstorm Needs:**

**Moisture** – to form clouds and rain.

**Unstable Air** – relatively warm air that can rise rapidly.

**Lift** – fronts, sea breezes and mountains are capable of lifting air to help form thunderstorms.

## **LIFE CYCLE OF A THUNDERSTORM**

### **Developing Stage**

- Towering cumulus cloud indicates rising air.
- Usually little if any rain during this stage.
- Lasts about 10 minutes.
- Occasional lightning during this stage.

### **Mature Stage**

- Most likely time for hail, heavy rain, frequent lightning, strong winds and tornadoes.
- Storm occasionally has a black or dark green appearance.
- Lasts an average of 10 to 20 minutes but may last much longer in some storms.

## **Dissipating Stage**

- Rainfall decreases in intensity.
- Some thunderstorms produce a burst of strong winds during this stage.
- Lightning remains a danger during this stage.

## **WHEN ARE THUNDERSTORMS MOST LIKELY?**

Thunderstorms are most likely to happen in the spring and summer months and during the afternoon and evening hours but can occur year-round and at all hours.

- Along the Gulf Coast and across the southeastern and western states, most thunderstorms occur during the afternoon.
- Thunderstorms frequently occur in the late afternoon and at night in the Plains states.
- Thunder and lightning occasionally accompany snow or freezing rain. During the blizzard of March 1993, lightning resulted in power outages near Washington, D.C.

## **WHO'S MOST AT RISK FROM THUNDERSTORMS?**

### **From Lightning:**

- People who are outdoors, especially under or near tall trees, in or on water, or on or near hilltops.

### **From Flooding:**

- People who are in automobiles when flash flooding occurs near them.

### **From Tornadoes:**

- People who are in mobile homes and automobiles.

## **THUNDERSTORM WINDS AND HAIL**

### **Down Bursts**

- A small area of rapidly descending air beneath a thunderstorm.
- Can cause damaging winds in excess of 100 mph.
- The strong winds usually approach from one direction and may be known as "straight-line" winds.
- In extreme cases, straight-line winds can reach speeds equal to a strong tornado, causing significant damage to some buildings.
- Strong winds may or may not be accompanied by rain.

### **Large Hail**

- The strong, rising currents of air within a storm, called updrafts, carry water droplets to a height where freezing occurs.
- Ice particles grow in size, finally becoming too heavy to be supported by the updraft and fall to the ground.
- Large hailstones fall at speeds faster than 100 mph.

## **LIGHTNING...NATURE'S FIREWORKS**

### **What is lightning?**

The action of rising and descending air within a thunderstorm separates positive and negative charges. Water and ice particles also affect the distribution of electrical charge.

- Lightning results from the buildup and discharge of electrical energy between positively and negatively charged areas.
- The average flash could light a 100-watt light bulb for more than 3 months.
- Most lightning occurs within the cloud or between the cloud and ground.
- Your chances of being struck by lightning are estimated to be 1 in 600,000 but could be reduced by following safety rules.
- Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors.
- Most lightning casualties occur in the summer months and during the afternoon and early evening.
- The air near a lightning strike is heated to 50,000°F – hotter than the surface of the sun! The rapid heating and cooling of the air near the lightning channel causes a shock wave that results in thunder.
- Many fires in the western United States and Alaska are started by lightning. In the past decade, over 15,000 lightning-induced fires nationwide have resulted in several hundred million dollars a year in damage and the loss of 2 million acres of forest.

### **In recent years, people have been killed by lightning while:**

- boating
- swimming
- golfing
- standing under a tree
- riding on a lawnmower
- talking on the telephone
- loading a truck
- playing soccer
- fishing in a boat
- mountain climbing

### **LIGHTNING CAN STRIKE ANYWHERE!**

In recent years, sophisticated lightning detection equipment has monitored cloud-to-ground lightning strikes. There are maps that show which areas are MOST prone to lightning during one year.

### **WHICH WAY DOES LIGHTNING TRAVEL?**

A cloud-to-ground lightning strike begins as an invisible channel of electrically charged air moving from the cloud toward the ground. When one channel nears an object on the ground, a powerful surge of electricity from the ground moves upward to the cloud and produces the visible lightning strike.

## **LIGHTNING MYTHS AND FACTS**

**MYTH:** If it is not raining, then there is no danger from lightning.

**FACT:** Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.

**MYTH:** The rubber soles of shoes or rubber tires on a car will protect you from being struck by lightning.

**FACT:** Rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide NO protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal.

Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.

**MYTH:** People struck by lightning carry an electrical charge and should not be touched.

**FACT:** Lightning-strike victims carry no electrical charge and should be attended to immediately. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter for information on CPR and first aid classes.

**MYTH:** "Heat lightning" occurs after very hot summer days and poses no threat.

**FACT:** What is referred to as "heat lightning" is actually lightning from a thunderstorm too far away for thunder to be heard. However, the storm may be moving in your direction.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CLUES**

When skies darken or thunderstorms are forecast, look AND listen for...

- Increasing wind
- Flashes of lightning
- Sound of thunder
- Static in your AM radio

## **THUNDERSTORMS AND LIGHTNING SAFETY**

### **What You Can DO?**

#### **Before the Storm...**

- Know the county or parish in which you live and the names of nearby major cities. Severe weather warnings are issued on a county or parish basis.
- Check the weather forecast before leaving for an extended period outdoors.
- Watch for signs of approaching storms.
- If a storm is approaching, keep a NOAA Weather Radio or AM/FM radio with you.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are imminent. This is your best way to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- Check on those who have trouble taking shelter if severe weather threatens.

### **When Thunderstorms Approach...**

- Remember: if you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately!
- Move to a sturdy building or car. Do not take shelter in small sheds, under isolated trees, or in convertible automobiles.
- If lightning is occurring and a sturdy shelter is not available, get inside a hard top automobile and keep windows up.
- Get out of boats and away from water.
- Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances not necessary for obtaining weather information. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances. Use phones **ONLY** in an emergency.
- Do not take a bath or shower.
- Turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressors.
- Get to higher ground if flash flooding or flooding is possible. Once flooding begins, abandon cars and climb to higher ground. Do not attempt to drive to safety.  
**Note:** Most flash flood deaths occur in automobiles.

### **If Caught Outdoors and No Shelter Is Nearby...**

- Find a low spot away from trees, fences and poles. Make sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.
- If you are in the woods, take shelter under the shorter trees.
- If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stand on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground.
- If you are boating or swimming, get to land and find shelter immediately.

**STAY INFORMED ABOUT THE STORM** by listening to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio and television for the latest severe thunderstorm WATCHES and WARNINGS.

When conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop, a severe thunderstorm WATCH is issued.

Weather Service personnel use information from weather radar, satellite, lightning detection, spotters and other sources to issue severe thunderstorm WARNINGS for areas where severe weather is imminent.

Severe thunderstorm warnings are passed to local radio and television stations and are broadcast over local NOAA Weather Radio stations serving the warned areas. These warnings are also relayed to local emergency management and public safety officials who can activate local warning systems to alert communities.

## **NOAA WEATHER RADIO IS THE BEST MEANS TO RECEIVE WARNINGS FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**

The National Weather Service continuously broadcasts updated weather warnings and forecasts that can be received by NOAA Weather Radios, which are sold in many stores. The average range is 40 miles, depending on topography. Your National Weather Service recommends purchasing a radio that has both a battery backup and a tone-alert feature that automatically alerts you when a watch or warning is issued.

### **WHAT TO LISTEN FOR...**

**SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH:** Tells you when and where severe thunderstorms are more likely to occur. Watch the sky and stay tuned to know when warnings are issued. Watches are intended to heighten public awareness and should not be confused with warnings.

**SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING:** Issued when severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property to those in the path of the storm.

Also...listen for Tornado Watch or Warning and Flash Flood Watch or Warning.

The Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information in this Planning Guide. However, the Bureau is not responsible for any errors or omissions that might occur. This Planning Guide is only suggested as a guideline for each facility to develop its own plan.