HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Hurricanes are one of nature's most powerful and destructive forces. The following basic steps to hurricane preparation overview and checklist will help your hospital prepare before, during and after the storm. If you would like more information about disaster preparedness for your hospital, contact Agility Recovery Solutions.

✓	OVERVIEW: TEN STEPS TO PREPAREDNESS
	1. Assemble your team. • Designate a disaster team and back up team. • Ensure the team includes a diverse and representative group of employees. • Ensure the leadership team is empowered to make decisions to meet unanticipated demands. • Make sure you have a plan for an incident command center. The incident command center must have power and connectivity after the storm. • Ensure all team members are regularly updated on the plan and their role.
	2. Develop the plan. • List each function within the hospital, determine critical functions and prioritize. • Determine time frame in which each critical function must be restored. • Determine resources and funding you need to restore the critical functions and/or a plan to replicate critical functions in another location. Discuss each threat separately and determine how much downtime each function could withstand. • Assess your hazards. Are you in a flood plain? Are you at risk from storm surge? Ensure the plan mitigates any additional hurricane related risks. • Ensure you have a secure, online place in which to store, share and access your plan. • Develop procedures to communicate plan internally and externally, to all key stakeholders.
	3. Don't forget your people. Ensure you have procedures to locate, communicate with, organize and care for employees. If your staff needs are not met, they are in no place to care for patients. • Make sure employee records are backed up and stored in an offsite location. This helps employees maintain care for patients evacuated to another location. This will also help displaced employees get credentialed so they can keep working if your facility is closed. • Create a plan for employee living quarters. If you recover in place, employees may have lost their homes and will need a safe place to relocate. • Ensure you have a plan to restore payroll operations soon after the disaster. • Make sure you think through all staff needs following a disaster; including childcare, pet care, transportation, emotional support, etc.
	4. Have a thorough facilities recovery plan. This includes everything from having an alternative location for patient care to relocating hospital administrative staff to establishing a location for a command center in the event of a large disaster. The recovery facilities must have access to reliable power, computers, servers, Internet and telephones so the hospital can continue functioning. • Make sure you have a backup power source, such as a generator. It should have adequate capacity to run medical equipment and Air Conditioning units. • Generator failure is common. Set up redundant systems, stock repair parts and plan to have 7-10 days of fuel for generators. • Ensure you have back up inventory management plan in place should systems go down. • Establish a plan to manage waste if waste collection services are interrupted. • Evaluate insurance policies. Ensure you have proper coverage and understand documentation requirements. • Pull together "go" bags, or emergency supply kits that include supplies you need to function during a disaster. This includes insurance policies, emergency phone numbers, security keys and key codes, a complete list of all key stakeholders, basic supplies and small transportable field equipment, batteries, extra prepaid cell phones or satellite phones, food and water, for 7-10 days, and self-powered portable lights.

	5. Prepare a patient evacuation plan. • Coordinate with community partners to ensure proper triage and placement during an event. • Determine criteria and triggers for patient evacuation. • Ensure legal implications of patient evacuation and transport are addressed. • Ensure you have a backup patient tracking system in place and a plan to relocate special needs patients, such as oxygen dependent, dialysis, pregnant patients, and the seriously ill.
	6. Prepare for patient overflow. The hospital will become a community center during a major disaster, prepare for this in advance. Even hospitals hundreds of miles from the event may experience patient overflow following a major event. • Establish relationships with schools, medical centers and community organizations to set up shelters to help provide emergency water and food during the storm. • Establish mutual-aid relationships with other hospitals. • Establish criteria for allowing people to take shelter far in advance of the storm and create a plan to enforce during the event. Create plan to communicate to community.
	7. Ensure the hospital is able to connect with the outside world. During a regional disaster, phone systems may become inoperable. Internet may be down. Cell phones may be unreliable. The hospital will need to communicate with vendors, the community and the media, access patient medical records and payroll and billing systems in order to conduct daily administrative functions and patient care. Make sure to include a plan to restore connectivity and phone lines following a disaster. Make sure plans are not reliant on local infrastructure.
	8. Back up your patient, employee and vendor data off site and at a reasonable distance. Redundancy will keep your vital information safe and available to you at a moment's notice should your primary data location go down. • Make sure to back up data a reasonable distance from your facility so that your back up facility is not impacted by the same storm. • Make sure you can access patient and employee records in the event of a storm.
	9. Develop critical partnerships that you can rely on during a disaster. Trusted relationships are critical to surviving a major storm. These relationships include: • Disaster recovery specialists that can provide the assets and resources you need to recover during a disaster • Mutual aid agreements with other hospitals that can take patients should your hospital close or provide additional staffing resources should you need them • State and federal agencies, including emergency management and law enforcement agencies • Community organizations and medical clinics • Disaster recovery clean up and remediation services • Back up suppliers and vendors Make sure you have a plan to communicate with those partners before, during and after the disaster, if standard lines of communication are not available.
	10. Test the plan. Fix issues. Test again. Test your communications, facilities, patient transport plans regularly. Find points of failure. Fix these issues. Repeat regularly.

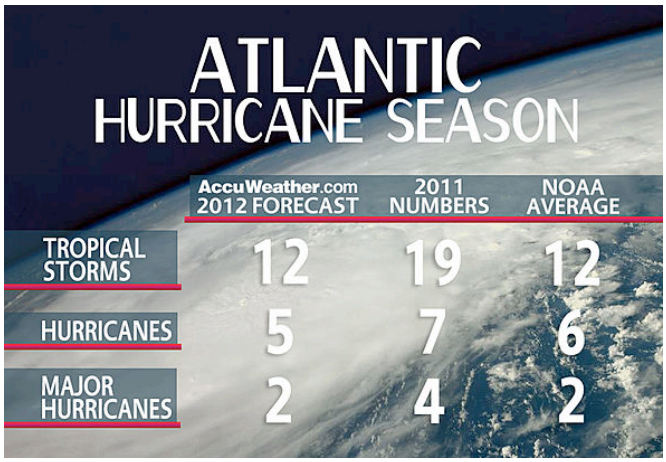
✓	BEFORE THE STORM
	Closely monitor the storm's progress via radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards receiver.
	Determine safe evacuation routes as well as alternative routes.
	Review hurricane plan, including facilities, communications, technology, power, data, safety and security, and documentation procedures. Review patient discharge, evacuation and tracking plans.
	Review mutual aid agreements. Reach out to partner hospitals and other partners as necessary.
	Ensure electronic medical records, staff records and all other data is backed up, safe and accessible.
	Activate incident command center. Start regular briefings to all key stakeholders.
	Make evacuation decisions as appropriate.
	Create staffing plan, determine who will shelter in place and work through the storm.
	Confirm plan with all staff. Conduct necessary just-in-time trainings.
	Activate communication plan: hotlines, alert notification systems and media communication systems.
	Ensure staff can implement personal disaster recovery plans. When appropriate, allow them to return home and prepare their houses, arrange care for pets, pick up clothes and medicines, etc.
	Begin review of patient discharge. As appropriate, discharge patients that can be safely discharged. As required, transfer patients that need to be transferred. Ensure patient tracking procedures are followed.
	Send non-essential staff members home.
	Get cash for post-storm needs, such as buying food and supplies, or paying employees and contractors.
	Print any necessary documents, such as contact lists, insurance plans and hurricane recovery plans.
	Check supply inventory. Make sure you have enough water (potable and non-potable), food, oxygen, linens, pharmaceuticals, blood supply and essential medical supplies (plan for 7-10 days). Make sure you cover possible community overflow due to the storm.
	Make sure supply tracking procedures are implemented.
	Take measures to ensure records and equipment are covered and protected from wind and water.
	Fill fuel tanks of generators and all hospital-owned vehicles. Make sure you have 7-10 days of fuel for generators. Check to make sure generators are in good working order and spare parts are available.
	Check battery powered equipment. Purchase batteries as needed.
	Double-check equipment. Make sure everything is in working condition and all necessary equipment is on emergency power. Make sure “go” bags are stocked and complete.
	Install windstorm shutters/plywood over windows and doors. Move items and equipment away from windows or cover if not possible.
	Check the integrity of the uninterruptible power supply (UPS).
	Take the following steps so that items outdoors will not blow away or cause damage: • Remove all loose debris • Anchor or relocate all nonessential equipment to a safe indoor location • Secure storage of flammable liquid drums, or move them to a sheltered area • Anchor all portable buildings (e.g., trailers) to the ground • Secure large cranes and other heavy equipment • Make sure outdoor signs are properly braced • If possible, strap or anchor all roof-mounted equipment
	Turn off all non-critical devices and non-essential electrical equipment.
	If possible, shut off gas to minimize fire loss.
	Ensure all expenses for the storm are being documented and all federal and state documentation requirements are being met.
	Post signage to direct employees, families, patients and staff to appropriate areas of hospital.

✓	DURING THE STORM
	Patrol the property. Watch for roof leaks, pipe breakage, fire or structural damage.
	Constantly monitor any equipment that must remain on line.
	Redirect phone lines as necessary.
	Avoid burnout. Trust in your team and delegate responsibility. Make sure staff working during the storm are given adequate rest periods.

✓	AFTER THE STORM
	Listen to radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards to make sure the storm has passed.
	Assess the damage to your facility. Survey for safety hazards such as live wires, leaking gas or flammable liquids, poisonous gases, and damage to foundations or underground piping.
	Assess the state of hospital staff. Ensure you know where all staff members are located. Assist in providing for their needs following the storm (childcare, housing, payroll, transportation, leave, pets, other dependent care, mental and physical health, etc.)
	Identify which units of the hospital can return to normal operations and which cannot. Determine how to fulfill responsibilities of units that are unable to return to normal operations.
	Release staff that remained in the hospital during the storm. Notify them of check out procedures.
	Use the Alert Notification System to keep all staff posted on status and next steps.
	Communicate all status updates and necessary information to key stakeholders and media.
	Request additional resources or support from partners or government entities as needed, depending on the severity of the storm and damage to the hospital.
	Secure 24 hour security if needed.
	As needed, contact insurance company, legal representatives and state and federal agencies.
	Call in necessary personnel and notify contractors to start repairs. Make sure safety systems are fully implemented before work is allowed to begin.
	Ensure all resources and costs have been tracked and accounted for. Make sure documentation is appropriate for insurance and disaster agency requirements.
	Begin salvage as soon as possible to prevent further damage.
	Secure facility: • Restrict access points to hospital • Ensure adequate lighting in facility • Ensure high risk areas are secure (i.e. pharmacy) • Check security systems and take measures to ensure facility is secure (contract with outside vendors, law enforcement, manual methods such as chains and locks)
	Return and restock unused items. Check and return emergency equipment. Restock emergency supplies.
	When ready, demobilize hospital and return to normal operations or continue in continuity mode until hospital is fully operational.
	Hold briefing. Summarize event. Evaluate actions, share concerns, identify lessons learned, make any necessary changes to recovery and continuity plan, complete documentation, outline next steps and follow up, and communicate as necessary with staff, key stakeholders, patients, vendors, partners, media and community.

In flat areas, storm surges may rush many miles inland. Hurricanes often generate heavy rainfall, which can cause severe flooding over wide areas. Hurricanes also may spawn deadly tornadoes. Flooding and tornadoes may affect areas well inland. You should also prepare for these potential interruptions.

The National Weather Service rates hurricanes by their intensity, using a scale of one to five. The scale categorizes storms according to their sustained winds, the storm surges produced, and expected damage. Organizations located within areas of risk should have a hurricane preparedness plan. It is a critical to develop a plan of action for your hospital and your staff to be ready for this type of interruption.



Agility is your trusted advisor and partner in preparedness through these events. Please contact Agility with any imminent threat and place us on Alert. When faced with an interruption please contact Agility to quickly recover, by dialing **877.364.9393**.

Know the Terms:

Tropical Depression: An organized system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 38 MPH (33 knots) or less. Sustained winds are defined as one-minute average wind measured at about 33 ft (10 meters) above the surface.

Tropical Storm: An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39–73 MPH (34–63 knots).

Hurricane: An intense tropical weather system of strong thunderstorms with a well-defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 74 MPH (64 knots) or higher.

Storm Surge: A dome of water pushed onshore by hurricane and tropical storm winds. Storm surges can reach 25 feet high and be 50–1000 miles wide. Storm surge is by far the greatest threat to life and property along the immediate coast.

Storm Tide: A combination of a storm surge and the normal tide (i.e., a 15-foot storm surge combined with a 2-foot normal high tide over the mean sea level created a 17-foot storm tide).

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Watch: Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are possible in the specified area of the watch, usually within 48 hours. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning: Hurricane/tropical storm conditions are expected in the specified area of the warning, usually within 36 hours of the onset of tropical storm force winds. Complete storm preparations and immediately leave the threatened area if directed by local officials.

Extreme Wind Warning: Extreme sustained winds of a major hurricane (115 mph or greater), usually associated with the eyewall, are expected to begin within an hour. Take immediate shelter in the interior portion of a well-built structure.

Short Term Watches and Warnings: These warnings provide detailed information about specific hurricane threats, such as flash floods and tornadoes.