

# ALWAYS READY

## NATURAL DISASTERS

# Always Ready: Natural Disasters



## Hurricanes and Tornadoes

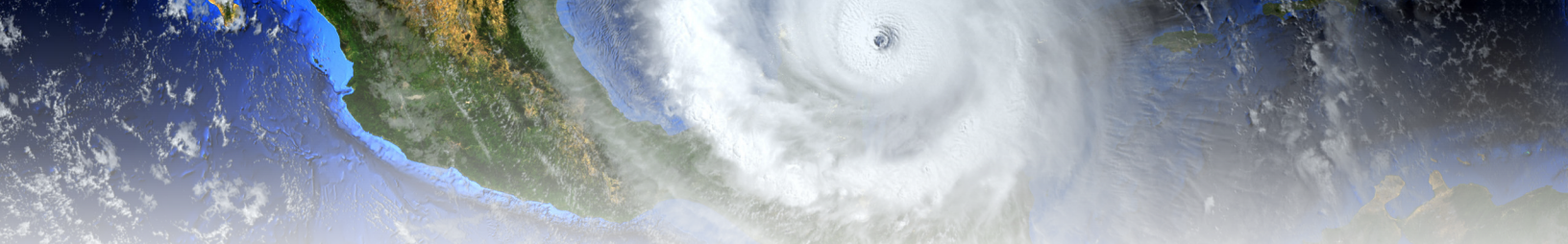
**Hurricanes can pack winds of up to 180 mph with 200 mph gusts and extend inland for hundreds of miles.** Hurricanes come ashore in three waves: the initial landing followed by a calm and then the back end of the storm pounds through, so don't be lulled by calm immediately after the initial onslaught. The size of a hurricane is often known before it hits land; warning can start four to seven days out. In the U.S., hurricane season runs from June – November.

**Tornadoes are also violent rotating storms that extend a column of air to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 mph.** Tornadoes typically develop in powerful thunderstorms with little notice (10 to 15 minute advance warning). They can occur in any state but happen more frequently in the Midwest, Southeast and Southwest. They're also most frequent during the spring and summer.

Restaurants located in hurricane- or tornado-prone areas should consider their structure's roof, rooftop equipment, and nearby trees when making their disaster preparation plan. Roofs and rooftop equipment can be professionally reinforced and strapped down with special harnessing, and a tree service can trim limbs that could cause damage in a storm.

### What to do before a hurricane or tornado

- \* **Watch/listen to the news** for storm updates and evacuation orders. A **Tornado or Hurricane Watch** means that the conditions are right for a storm to develop in a certain area. In a watch you should follow weather forecasts and prepare to take cover. A **Tornado or Hurricane Warning** means the storm is imminent and those in the area should take cover.
- \* **Charge cell phones.**
- \* Follow procedures for **shutting down** your restaurant. Start your warning and evacuation procedures. Make plans for assisting employees who need transportation.
- \* You may decide to **board up your windows**. Some seasoned storm survivors even install custom storm shutters. If covering windows with plywood, 5/8-in. marine plywood is generally considered a good option.
- \* **Secure heavy objects**, get pans down from hangers, smallwares off shelves, unplug items, tape drawers and cupboards, etc.
- \* Turn walk-in cooler and freezer thermostats down low and seal the doors. This might help save your food if the power goes out and no water gets in.
- \* **Turn off equipment**, gas and water.
- \* Gather your phones, flashlights, batteries, emergency supply kit contents.
- \* Access your floor plan, storm kit of key documents, contact lists.
- \* If you can load up your key office equipment for transport (computer, server, scanner, etc.), do it.
- \* If you can secure outdoor furniture, umbrellas, awnings and equipment, do it.



\* **Call your vendors and cleanup crews** and get your name on the list for a refrigerated truck and for cleanup services.

◆ Consider purchasing or renting the following backup systems:

- ❖ portable, gas-powered pumps to remove water
- ❖ alternate power sources such as generators (Note: generators must be set up OUTDOORS)
- ❖ battery-powered emergency lighting

## What to do during a hurricane or tornado

\* According to [FEMA](#), the best protection in a hurricane or tornado is to move to a designated shelter area.

\* If you shelter in place, go to:

- ◆ Small, windowless interior rooms on the lowest floor including a bathroom, closet, office, or maintenance room
  - ◆ Hallways on the lowest floor away from doors and windows
  - ◆ Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or cement block with no windows and a heavy concrete floor and solid roof system overhead
- \* Keep in mind that large buildings covered with flat, wide-span roofs, such as warehouses and department stores, are **generally not considered safe**.
- \* Instruct people to crouch down and protect their head and neck with their arms.
- \* For hurricanes you may be instructed to evacuate to a municipal shelter or outside any potential flood zone.
- \* According to [Ready.gov](#), safe rooms are not recommended if flooding is a threat.

## What to do after a hurricane or tornado

- \* Check yourself and others for injuries. **Provide first aid** for anyone who needs it and try to get emergency help through 911. Don't attempt to move injured people.
- \* Check news feeds for info. With a hurricane, are floods imminent?
- \* If you didn't already, **shut off power at the control box**, but only if it's safe to do.
- \* Use a flashlight to light your way. Do not use matches, lighters, or any other open flames, since gas could be trapped inside.
- \* Check for the **smell of gas**. If you smell it, leave immediately, leave the door open and report it to the authorities.
- \* Look for fire or **fire hazards**, such as sparking equipment. If you can reach the fire extinguisher and the fire is manageable, put it out. But fire is a major hazard if there's a gas leak, so if you smell gas, leave immediately.
- \* Water on the floor and live electricity are a deadly combo; keep everyone away from standing water.
- \* Stay out of badly damaged buildings.
- \* Be careful of broken glass and debris.
- \* Stay away from **downed power lines** even if power appears to be off.
- \* Be careful opening cupboards, storage area doors, closets and such—items can fall out.
- \* Try to **reset landline phones** on their receivers. Off-the-hook phones tie up the telephone network.
- \* Call your insurance agent.
- \* If safe, **take photos/videos** of the damage.