

15 CRITICAL ACTIONS TO TAKE BEFORE THE STORM



1. DON'T PANIC AND REMAIN CALM

This will help you think clearly and critically. According to Dr. Robert Chandler's *3-Dimensional Model*® of Effective Leaders, three core traits can be found in the most effective crisis leaders:

- **Strong communication skills** - leaders should provide and solicit key information, engage in two-way communication, and interact as openly and honestly as possible.
- **Positive dispositions despite high stress** - an effective leader has the capacity to remain calm, stable and focused during the most chaotic periods.
- **Expertise and seasoned experience** - leaders should have plenty of field experience to draw upon and apply to new situations.



2. REFER TO YOUR EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

At minimum, this plan should include a list of key contacts including first responders (fire, first aid, etc.), local hospitals, insurance broker, emergency response partner and so on. This plan should also include procedures for how to handle reporting an emergency, for evacuation and exit route assignments, and a way to account for employees after evacuation.



3. COMMUNICATE YOUR EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN TO EMPLOYEES

- Reiterate team member roles, expectations and the importance of putting safety first. Be sure to communicate areas of accountability and responsibility for key personnel and identify how each can best perform their crisis-response duties safely and effectively.
- Establish a call tree and update main company voicemail message.
- Make sure key personnel have the name and contact information of your emergency restoration partner should you need immediate response.
- Distribute directions to the temporary work site and contact critical personnel to notify them of procedural changes.



4. PROTECT YOURSELF

Keep in mind that your life is worth more than property. In the chaos of worrying about the business, shutting off the water and gas, making sure your employees are safe, don't forget to allow yourself enough time to get out of harm's way.



5. CONTACT YOUR EMERGENCY PLANNING, RESTORATION AND RECONSTRUCTION PARTNER BEFORE THE STORM.

Connect with your partner BEFORE the storm to review your plan and discuss logistics, locations and available resources.



6. SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEES EXTENDS BEYOND THE OFFICE

Remind employees that they will need their own disaster plans to protect family members and personal property. Encourage employees to take precautionary measures at home to protect loved ones, pets and personal assets.



7. COMMUNICATE PLANS AND PROCEDURAL CHANGES TO SUPPLIERS, VENDORS, AND PARTNERS

Be sure to give critical contact information and provide directions to temporary work sites.



8. DEVELOP AN EMERGENCY ACCESS LETTER

- Ensure your emergency service provider has this letter to show first responders (i.e. police, FEMA, building security, etc.) that they are approved to gain access to your compromised facility to begin work as soon as possible.
 - The letter can be simple and short, but it is best to be printed on your letterhead stating something similar to: “Interstate provides emergency and restoration services following area-wide disasters throughout the United States which includes our property at [insert address]. Please allow their response team access to the affected areas when possible.”
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9. DETERMINE IF A TEMPORARY FACILITY IS NEEDED TO LIMIT BUSINESS INTERRUPTION AFTER THE STORM

Whether it's a power outage, building damage, or road closures, make sure to consider the following:

- Where will important equipment and documents be stored?
 - Will your employees be able to work from home?
 - If needed, have you secured a temporary offsite location in advance?
 - Is a temporary onsite location available? For example, a mobile office or tent out of harm's way.
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10. IDENTIFY POWER REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR BUILDING(S)

Pick up the phone immediately to call your emergency service partner if you anticipate a loss of power as generators can be scarce during area-wide catastrophes. Have on hand the following:

- Voltage requirements (480v, 208v, etc.).
 - Amperage requirements (can be found on main disconnect panel).
 - Distance (# of feet) the generators will be placed from connection.
 - Will you need fuel services?
 - Will you need an electrician to set-up the connection?
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11. PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHUTTING OFF WATER AND GAS LINES

Be sure to assign an employee to take care of this procedure in advance of the storm.



12. DECIDE IN ADVANCE IF YOUR BUILDING REQUIRES SECURITY

Whether it is camera monitoring, physical security, fencing or boarding-up windows and doors, you should protect assets, people and property as best you can.



13. PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY

- Making sure emergency supplies are in place (food, water, first aid, etc.). A good rule of thumb is to have on hand at least one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days. For food, there should be at least a three-day supply of non-perishable items.
 - Trim trees to remove dead limbs.
 - Keep gutters and drains clear.
 - Cover equipment and move it off the ground if possible.
 - Protect critical documents and move to an elevated location or offsite.
 - Safeguard data and data-backup systems.
 - Ensure fuel tanks are full.
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14. HAVE AN EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN TO UPDATE YOUR COMMUNITY

- Who will be assigned to update company voicemail recordings?
 - Will you be taking interviews from the media? If so, who is assigned to this task?
 - How often will you update social media streams and Websites?
 - Is there a key contact that is responsible for reaching out to public aid organizations (Red Cross, FEMA, CDC, etc.)?
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15. TRACK THE WEATHER AND STAY ON TOP OF IMPORTANT ALERTS

- Download a severe weather emergency app on your smart phone (i.e. NOAA radio, Radar Now, Weather Mobile, Accuweather, Tornado by Red Cross, Guardly).
- If you have a NOAA Radio, make sure it has batteries and back-up batteries in case you lose power.
- Keep in mind that using data-based services like texts and emails will help limit network congestion. In many cases, text messages will go through when phone calls may not.

ABOUT INTERSTATE

We are North America's leading emergency response planning, property mitigation, and reconstruction company with over 70 years of industry experience. With over 50,000 successfully completed restoration projects in 2019 alone, we know we are the right partner to support your needs no matter what.

Visit InterstateRestoration.com to connect with us and learn more about our catastrophic storm readiness and response services.