



September 2013

## Hurricane Preparedness

### Suggestions for Educational Institutions

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), there is a 70% chance that between 13 - 19 named storms could take place during the 2013 Atlantic hurricane season. Of these storms, approximately 6 - 9 would be considered hurricanes and of those, 3 - 5 would be Category 3, 4, or 5 hurricanes. The report warns of an "above normal" Atlantic hurricane season.

There are many reliable and helpful resources available to educational institutions at the federal and local levels to help administrators with hurricane awareness and preparation. All provide valuable and practical information concerning preparedness, response and recovery. Several resources are listed at the end of this article.

The steps taken during a crisis are vital to protect students, staff and others. Procedures and plans set before any emergency are just as important. The National School Safety and Security Services have created a list of emergency preparedness guidelines that educational institutions should follow prior to any hurricane occurrence:

1. Administrators responsible for emergency planning and response need to develop and maintain relationships with local emergency management and public safety officials.
2. Identify the buildings that are designated as emergency shelters. Determine how the use of these as shelters will impact school operations.
3. Plan for requests to use buses and other vehicles to assist in community evacuations or transportation. If buses are not being used, they should be moved to a safe place (higher ground or further from the path of the hurricane).
4. Identify potential fuel sources and those drivers who will be called up in a crisis.
5. Have a plan to mobilize mental health support services.
6. Develop procedures for recording expenses incurred during recovery to facilitate federal and state reimbursement procedures. Insurers require this information also.
7. Maintain emergency contact information for robo-calls and email blasts. Be prepared to initiate this process from a remote location.
8. Create multiple layers of leadership and back-up crisis team members.
9. Have a plan to screen donations and manage volunteers.
10. Develop plans for direct deposits and paycheck issuance.
11. Create post-disaster staffing, security, policing, and emergency guidelines.
12. Determine how administration will communicate with staff and the community in the event of a power disruption.
13. Develop plans for community use as a shelter during a prolonged power outage. During recent disasters, schools with power helped community members in different ways: by serving as warming and electronic charging centers, opening shower rooms to the public and dispensing food and water.
14. Have required insurance information available.
15. Have your business continuity plan fully vetted and drilled.

As a result of our policyholders' experience with tropical storms, hurricanes and other natural disasters over the past 3 years, we have additional recommendations that address other challenges which arose from these events. They include:

- Develop plans for lending or borrowing motor vehicles and mobile equipment (tractors, backhoes).
- Determine how the institution serve as a food distribution center, if requested.
- Identify procedures to relocating students (including resident students) and programs (such as athletic games, practices and elections) at other locations.

## Resources

### Hurricane-Facts.com

<http://www.hurricane-facts.com/Interesting-Hurricane-Facts.php>

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

[http://www.noaaneews.noaa.gov/stories2013/20130523\\_hurricaneoutlook\\_atlantic.html](http://www.noaaneews.noaa.gov/stories2013/20130523_hurricaneoutlook_atlantic.html)

### National School Safety and Security Services

<http://www.schoolsecurity.org/katrina.html>

### The School District of Palm Beach County

<http://www.palmbeachschools.org/employees/documents/2012HurricaneGuideA.pdf>

### 'Above Normal' hurricane season coming. Is New York Ready for another Sandy?

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2013/0809/Above-normal-hurricane-season-coming.-Is-New-York-ready-for-another-Sandy>

Sincerely,



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