



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEMA URGES BUSINESSES TO PREPARE FOR 2008 HURRICANE SEASON

Pearl –Now is the time for business and business owners to take precautions and prepare for hurricane season, said Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Director Mike Womack.

Businesses located along the Gulf Coast are not the only ones that could be affected by a hurricane or any other tropical storm system. Inland businesses could be affected by these storms if coastal businesses and suppliers have to stop production or temporarily close.

“Small to mid-size Mississippi companies could also be significantly impacted by a hurricane that narrowly misses our state or by any small storm,” Womack said. “When faced with an actual tropical system, our business owners will be able to take fewer risks if they plan ahead and prepare early for any possible emergency.”

Business owners should develop a recovery plan for their business by taking the following precautions:

- Include emergency preparedness information in company newsletters, company intranet, employee emails or other company communication tools.
- Consider a telephone calling tree or a voice recording to communicate with employees during an emergency.
- Designate an out-of-town number where employees can leave an, “I’m okay” message during a catastrophic disaster.
- If you have employees with disabilities or special needs, talk with them about what their needs may be during a disaster.
- Plan for payroll continuity.
- Review and practice what you and your employees intend to do during and after an emergency.
- Establish facility shutdown procedures.
- Establish warning and evacuation procedures.
- Make plans for assisting employees who may need transportation.
- Make plans for communicating with employees' families before and after a hurricane.
- Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery backup.
- Survey your facility. Make plans to protect outside equipment and structures.
- Check if your phone system will work without electricity. If not, have at least one phone line that can operate without electricity.
- Make plans to protect windows. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection. Covering windows with plywood is a second option.
- Consider the need for backup systems such as portable pumps to remove floodwater and generators to provide emergency power.
- Prepare to move records, computers and other items within your facility or to another location.

“Disaster Preparedness Saves Lives and Property”
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- Consider how to recover any digital data if there is a significant power outage or if computers and servers are damaged. Keep tax and payroll records, records of inventory and essential information at an alternate site.
 - Establish an alternate operating location and back-up suppliers.
 - Maintain three to five days of inventory. If a disaster occurs, the loss isn't as great.

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