



dbpr

HURRICANE GUIDE

FOR BUSINESSES

PREPAREDNESS | RECOVERY | RESILIENCY

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

The Atlantic Hurricane Season

Before the Storm 2

Prepare Your Business

After the Storm 3

Rebuild and Protect Your Business

Help Your Community Recover 6

How to Serve Your Community After Disaster Strikes

DBPR Resources 7

DBPR Support for Floridians, Including Licensees

State of Florida & National Resources 8

Websites and Hotlines

About DBPR 9

Contact Us

REFERENCES USED TO CREATE THIS HURRICANE GUIDE

- [FloridaDisaster.org/Planning-For-Businesses](https://floridadisaster.org/Planning-For-Businesses)
- [Ready.gov/Business](https://ready.gov/Business)
- [FEMA.gov/Businesses-Organizations](https://fema.gov/Businesses-Organizations)
- [FEMA.gov](https://fema.gov) – Keep Your Family, Pets Safe When Using Generators
- [RedCross.org](https://redcross.org) – Safe Generator Use
- [HurricaneSafety.org/Prepare/Prepare-Your-Business](https://hurricanesafety.org/Prepare/Prepare-Your-Business)

Introduction

Florida's Atlantic Hurricane Season

Florida is no stranger to hurricanes and other natural disasters. The Atlantic hurricane season occurs each year from June 1 through November 30, peak activity typically occurring in September. As families prepare for hurricanes by stocking up on water, fueling their vehicles, and reviewing

emergency plans, business owners should also prepare their businesses

This guide provided by the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) offers resources, tips and contact information for how to prepare

your business before a hurricane, actions to take during a storm and how to rebuild and protect your business after one strikes.

Preparedness is your business.

Natural Disaster Business Impact

IMMEDIATE

40%

of Small Businesses
Won't Reopen

ONE YEAR LATER

25%

More Small Businesses
Will Close

THREE YEARS LATER

75%

of Businesses
Without a Plan Will Fail

2014 data from FEMA and the U.S. Department of Labor.

Don't Become a Statistic.

Protect your business by developing a business disaster plan.

Develop a Plan of Action

Create a disaster plan, share it with employees, and practice it regularly

Minimize Impact to Essential Operations

increasing opportunity to continue to operate

Protect Data & Information

Safeguard important data to support business recovery

Increase Organizational Resilience

by proving your organization's ability to mitigate all hazard conditions

Protect Market Share & Minimize Financial Losses

by proactively planning & accounting for recovery resources before they are needed

Build Trust and Confidence

by promoting preparedness with suppliers & clients





Before the Storm

Prepare Your Business

The best time to prepare your business is before hurricane season begins. As you prepare your business, use the checklist below:

Protect Staff

- Develop business continuity and crisis communication plans and share them with your team
- Develop an employee sheltering and evacuation plan and keep an emergency supply kit on-site
- Conduct an employee training session and hurricane drill

Protect Property

- Review insurance coverage, including flood insurance
- Purchase a NOAA weather radio
- Invest in and install shutters or plywood
- Reinforce signs or remove prior to the storm
- Have the roof evaluated
- Remove dangerous branches or trees
- Anchor large furniture to wall studs
- Establish a method for safeguarding chemicals

Protect Important Documents and Information

- Back up insurance documents, legal contracts, tax returns and accounting statements
- Store important contacts and documents in an alternate off-site location
- Seal important documents in waterproof containers

After the Storm

Rebuild & Protect Your Business

The road to recovery can be difficult, but DBPR is here to help you rebuild your business and become more resilient in the face of future disasters.

Food Service Establishments

DBPR's Division of Hotels and Restaurants (DHR) urges all food service establishments to take special measures during power or water outages and other emergency situations.

Key tips for keeping food safe after a disaster:

- ✦ Keep hands, food and equipment clean
- 🔄 Separate raw and cooked food
- 🍳 Cook foods thoroughly
- 🌡️ Keep foods at safe temperatures
- 🛡️ Use only safe water and food
- 🔍 Monitor boil water notices issued by your local County Health Department

If your establishment was exposed to contamination, clean and sanitize all equipment and food-contact surfaces using potable or boiled water. Do not operate until the entire establishment has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized or disinfected.

When it comes to food, remember: When in Doubt, Throw It Out.



Food poses the greatest threat of causing a foodborne illness if it has warmed due to lack of refrigeration or has been contaminated by floodwater, storm debris or other pollutants.



Don't Become the Victim of an Unlicensed Activity Scam

Businesses can be most vulnerable after a storm, and unfortunately, this is when criminals strike. However, DBPR is here to help you verify a licensed contractor, teach you how to report unlicensed activity and identify which services require a state license.

Do's & Don'ts of Keeping Your Business Safe FROM FRAUDULENT ACTIVITY

DO	DON'T
 Before hiring a contractor, ask to see their state-issued license, not just an occupational license	 Hire the fastest & cheapest contractor
 Verify the license number with DBPR and check for complaints before signing a contract by visiting MyFloridaLicense.com , using the DBPR Mobile App, or by calling (850) 487-1395	 Fall for high-pressured sales tactics
 Report all unlicensed activity by calling DBPR's Unlicensed Activity Program hotline at: 1 (866) 532-1440, using the DBPR Mobile App, or emailing ULA@MyFloridaLicense.com	 Accept work from contractors who are soliciting door-to-door
 Get everything in writing & never pay cash in full until work has been completed	 Hire a contractor requesting cash only
 Contact your insurance agent before hiring a contractor to ensure your insurance policy will cover your repairs	 Forget to check with your local building department for additional info about requirements for supplementary permits and licenses

Services That Do Require a DBPR License

-  Roof Repairs — New & Replacement
-  New Window Installation
-  Plumbing Repairs
-  Electrical Repairs or Rewiring

Services That Do Not Require a DBPR License

-  Trimming or Removing Fallen Trees
-  Removing Debris
-  Placing Tarps on Roofs

Generator Usage During and After a Storm

Using a generator after a disaster can help keep the power on until utility service is restored, but generators must be used safely. Improper generator use can result in deadly carbon monoxide poisoning, electrocution or fires. Always follow the directions supplied with your generator.

Use Generators Safely

AVOID ELECTROCUTION

To avoid electrocution, keep your generator dry and do not use it in rain or wet conditions. Keep it on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure, such as under a tarp held up on poles. Do not touch a generator with wet hands.

REFUEL SAFELY

Remember to turn your generator off before refueling and allow it to cool for 15-20 minutes.

STORE FUEL PROPERLY

Store fuel for the generator in an approved safety can. Use the type of fuel recommended in the instructions or on the generator's label.

CONNECT EQUIPMENT CORRECTLY

Plug appliances directly into your generator, or use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the total of the connected appliance loads.



Prevent Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

Never use a generator indoors.

Keep running generators at least 20 feet away from your building and downwind from all windows, garages, vents and doors.

Install CO alarms in central locations on every level of your business to provide early warning of any buildup of carbon monoxide.

Test the batteries at least every six months and replace as needed.

Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO buildup.

CO cannot be seen or smelled, and it can rapidly lead to full incapacitation and death. If you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air immediately and call 911.

Help Your Community Recover

Serve Your Community in the Aftermath of a Disaster

The reopening of local businesses is one of the most important parts of a community's recovery after a disaster — not only to rebuild the local economy, but also to provide community services to impacted residents. Identify and build local relationships before a storm to create a service component in your Business Continuity Plan.



Connect with Local Emergency Management

Contact your local emergency management office during your disaster planning to learn how your business may provide service(s) before and after a disaster strikes. Include this information in your Business Continuity Plan.



Provide Voluntary Food Services

Providing a sanitary kitchen for emergency responders, volunteers, or community members to prepare or receive meals following a disaster is essential for rebuilding your community.



Store Disaster Relief Items

If your business is open after a disaster, you could become a distributor or storage warehouse for Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), water bottles, and other essential items. Providing a place for supplies to be stored locally allows volunteer organizations to readily distribute them throughout affected areas.



Provide Charging Stations

If your business has electricity after the disaster, your business location can become a volunteer charging station. Provide a safe, secure place for emergency responders, volunteers and community members to charge their cell phones, power wheelchairs and battery-powered tools.

DBPR Resources

DBPR Stands Ready to Support Impacted Floridians

Each state agency plays an integral role in the event of a declared State of Emergency, and DBPR stands ready to support impacted Floridians and protect consumers from unlicensed activity and other scams that can hurt the disaster recovery process.

The Florida Disaster Contractors Network (DCN)

DBPR is a founding partner of the Florida Disaster Contractors Network, a contractor-verified clearing-house to connect individuals with building professionals to address storm related construction and repairs. Once homeowners and businesses are safely able to assess their home and business repair needs, they are encouraged to visit DCNOnline.org and search by county for a list of Florida-licensed contractors providing these services in their local community.

Find a Qualified Contractor Today:
DCNOnline.org



Report Suspected Unlicensed Activity

Report all unlicensed activity by contacting DBPR's Unlicensed Activity Program:

File a Complaint: MyFloridaLicense.com

File a Complaint: DBPR Mobile App

Email Us: ULA@MyFloridaLicense.com

Call the Hotline: (866) 532-1440



Storm recovery can be stressful, but hiring the right professional doesn't have to be.

DBPR's Hire Smart website provides tools and resources to help you spot red flags, confidently hire qualified contractors, learn which services require a license and how to verify a contractor's license before you hire.

LEARN MORE: HireSmartFL.com



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unlicensed
activity
PROGRAM

State & National Resources

The State of Florida is Here to Help

The State of Florida is committed to helping communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Helpful Websites

- Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation: [MyFloridaLicense.com](https://myfloridalicense.com)
- Florida Division of Emergency Management – Make a Plan: [FloridaDisaster.org/PlanPrepare](https://floridadisaster.org/PlanPrepare)
- Statewide Emergency Information During a Disaster: [FloridaDisaster.org/Info](https://floridadisaster.org/Info)
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Business Disaster Resources: [FloridaDisaster.Biz](https://floridadisaster.biz)
- Florida Department of Transportation – Port Closures: [FDOT.gov/seaport](https://fdot.gov/seaport)
- Florida 511 Traffic & Commuter Information: [FL511.com](https://fl511.com)
- Florida Health – Boil Water Notices: [FloridaHealth.gov/environmental-health/drinking-water/boil-water-notice](https://floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/drinking-water/boil-water-notice)
- Florida Mental Health Resources: [HopeForHealingFL.com](https://hopeforhealingfl.com)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency: [FEMA.gov](https://fema.gov)
- Better Business Bureau – Hurricane Resources: bbb.org/hurricane
- U.S. Small Business Administration – Disaster Loan Assistance: [DisasterLoanAssistance.SBA.gov](https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov)
- Ready.gov: [Ready.gov](https://ready.gov)

Hotlines

- If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911
- DBPR's Unlicensed Activity Hotline: (866) 532-1440
- Florida Attorney General Price Gouging Hotline: (866) 966-7226
- Department of Financial Services Insurance Claim Hotline: +1 (800) 22STORM | +1 (800) 227-8676
- Department of Elder Affairs – Elder Helpline: +1 (800) 96ELDER | +1 (800) 963-5337
- State Assistance Information Line (SAIL): +1 (800) 342-3557
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration Disaster Distress Helpline: +1 (800) 985-5990
- American Red Cross: +1 (800) RED-CROSS | +1 (800) 733-2767

Social Media to Follow

FACEBOOK

Florida Division of
Emergency Management:
[@FLSERT](https://www.facebook.com/FLSERT)

National Hurricane Center:
[@NWSNHC](https://www.facebook.com/NWSNHC)

FEMA / FEMA en Español:
[@FEMA](https://www.facebook.com/FEMA) / [@FEMAEspanol](https://www.facebook.com/FEMAEspanol)

X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

Florida Division of
Emergency Management:
[@FLSERT](https://twitter.com/FLSERT)

National Hurricane Center:
[@NHC_Atlantic](https://twitter.com/NHC_Atlantic)

FEMA / FEMA en Español:
[@FEMA](https://twitter.com/FEMA) / [@FEMAEspanol](https://twitter.com/FEMAEspanol)

INSTAGRAM

Florida Division of
Emergency Management:
[@FLSERT](https://www.instagram.com/FLSERT)

National Hurricane Center:
[@NWSNHC_Hurricanes](https://www.instagram.com/NWSNHC_Hurricanes)

FEMA: [@FEMA](https://www.instagram.com/FEMA)

About DBPR

The Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation (DBPR)

The Department of Business and Professional Regulation licenses and regulates nearly 1.7 million licensees in the State of Florida across more than 30 fields of industry. DBPR's mission is to license efficiently and regulate fairly.

DBPR is split into two sides, Professional Regulation and Business Regulation.

Professional Regulation

- Division of Certified Public Accounting
- Division of Professions
- Division of Real Estate
- Division of Regulation
- Florida Athletic Commission

Business Regulation

- Division of Alcoholic Beverages & Tobacco
- Division of Drugs, Devices & Cosmetics
- Division of Florida Condominiums, Timeshares & Mobile Homes
- Division of Hotels & Restaurants

For more information, please visit: MyFloridaLicense.com or call us at (850) 487-1395.

Stay Social

-  @FloridaDBPR
-  @FloridaDBPR
-  @Florida.DBPR
-  Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation



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[MyFloridaLicense.com](https://www.MyFloridaLicense.com)

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