



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY



MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
400 Worcester Road

Framingham, MA 01702-5399

Tel: 508-820-2000 Fax: 508-820-2030

Website: www.mass.gov/mema

Deval L. Patrick
Governor

Andrea L. Cabral
Secretary

Kurt N. Schwartz
Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 26, 2013

CONTACT: Peter Judge, MEMA PIO
(508) 820-2002

MEMA ISSUES HURRICANE SAFETY TIPS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

FRAMINGHAM, MA – “Our business community should be aware of the potential of hurricane damage here in the Commonwealth,” said Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Director Kurt Schwartz. “Every business owner should prepare or review their own Preparedness and Recovery Plans. ‘Business as usual’ will not happen without good planning.”

- Understand the risks and hazards that your business may encounter and learn about specific types of disasters with the resources at MEMA’s [Be Informed](#) webpage
- Review your property insurance with your insurance agent. Take photographs or make a video of your business establishment, both inside and outside.
- Determine and establish a written Hurricane Preparedness Plan for your business and its contents. Coordinate this plan with local and state officials. Specify the conditions under which the plan will be implemented.
- Test your plan, reviewing it annually. Establish an employee-training program of your Hurricane Plan.
- Make plans for protection of your computer files, including an off-site back-up system to secure and safely store data.
- Protect corporate records, keeping duplicates at an alternate location.
- Consider a stockpile of emergency supplies for your business. Things like water, food, battery powered radios, flashlights, and other items found in [home emergency kits](#) can tailored for the needs of your business in case employees are stranded at work.
- Well in advance, acquire emergency protective equipment and supplies. Heavy plastic sheeting, duct tape, sandbags, emergency generator, chain saw and large pieces of plywood will help protect your property.
- As storms approach, remember to bring in display racks and other objects, such as trashcans that might cause damage if airborne. Remove outdoor signs, especially those that swing or are portable.
- Move merchandise, equipment or furniture away from windows or skylights. Elevate boxes or equipment, if possible.

-more-

- Consider if there is non-critical electrical appliances and equipment that you might turn off if power outages are anticipated. An ensuing power surge, once power is restored, could be damaging to connected equipment. For critical appliances and equipment, consider surge protectors, batteries, alternative power supplies and other items to protect your critical equipment.
- As part of your plan, develop a crisis communications plan to detail how you will communicate with employees, local authorities, customers, suppliers and others during and after a disaster.
- Develop employee notification procedures and methods to keep employees updated on the status of the business, when and where to report to work, etc. As part of this plan, consider having multiple methods for notification and information sharing in case methods are interrupted by damage or utility outages. Consider a hotline where employees can call in for information or a check in system for employee to let the company know their status.
- Develop an employee identification system, such as picture ID badges. This may help employees gain access to the area after a hurricane.
- As part of your plans, consider transportation challenges that employees may face that sometimes occur during emergencies such as public transit system closure, travel bans, shelter-in-place orders, etc and develop contingency plans.
- Prepare for utility disruptions. Businesses are usually dependent on electricity, gas, telecommunications, internet, phone, water, and sewer services. Plan ahead for extended disruptions to these services and speak with service providers about potential alternatives and backup options such as generators.
- If possible, make arrangements to pay employees in cash. It may be several days before banking institutions are operational.

FEMA's Ready Business program and website (<http://www.ready.gov/business>) has a variety of resources for business preparedness and planning including templates, planning documents, and links to a free online assessment tool. FEMA's "[Prepare for Emergencies Now. Information for Businesses](#)" brochure. The Small Business Administration also has resource on their [Emergency Preparedness webpage](#).

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA and Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Also, continue to follow MEMA updates on *Twitter* at www.twitter.com/MassEMA; *Facebook* at www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA. Download the free *ping4alert!* app to your Smartphone to receive important weather alerts and emergency messages from MEMA. Easy instructions are available at www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp.