



Hurricane Evacuation and Preparedness Guide

This guide was developed to help cultural institutions in the path of a Tropical Storm or Hurricane prepare and respond effectively. Most of the information to prepare for a hurricane is done before a hurricane forms. Performing proper preparedness and mitigation efforts can limit the damage caused by these storms and reduce stress in staff who are confident in the emergency planning of their institution. While Tropical Storms are not mentioned specifically in this document, the same preparedness methods should be used as a hurricane category 1-3.

Safety: LIFE SAFETY IS ALWAYS FIRST PRIORITY

It is advised staff not to be onsite during a hurricane as adrenaline often results in bad and reckless decision making when protecting the collections. If an institution decides to leave staff onsite during a hurricane, consider:

1. Check with the institution's insurance company to ensure staff are covered for injuries and damage.
2. Staff should be left with medical supplies, food, fresh water and a reliable form of communication.
3. All staff left onsite should have gone through extensive scenario training to prepare for all possibilities and proper response.
4. Staff should be offered [psychological resources](#) before and after the hurricane

Exceptions for when staff should be allowed onsite are if the staff are caring for living collections (i.e. the Hemingway cats) or the institution is owned by indigenous people or First Nation who will follow their traditional methods of preparedness and response.

Before the Storm:

1. Review flood zone maps to better understand threats to the institution
2. Identify evacuation location inside the institution:

In certain circumstances it would be beneficial for objects to be evacuated to a different location within the institution. This normally consists of moving objects away from windows and doors, away from roofs in disrepair, or elevated to a higher floor. This location and a possible backup should be noted in the Emergency Plan.

3. Identify evacuation location outside the institution 100+ miles away:

Creating a contract or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with an institution or storage location over 100 miles away offers options if the institution is within a direct path of a hurricane. Due to the erratic nature of hurricanes, it is a good idea to create these contracts and MOUs with 2 or more institutions at geographically different locations to ensure at least one is out of the path of the hurricane.

4. Create a priority list of objects to be evacuated:

Depending on the size of the collection, only a portion of the collection may be evacuated due to time and space constraints. Therefore, all institutions should have a priority list of objects that will be evacuated first.

5. Purchase supplies for evacuation:

An evacuation could take specific supplies to safely move the objects, especially the priority objects. Review what is needed for an evacuation to ensure those supplies available. Examples of supplies could be, but are not limited to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Tape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic wrap | <input type="checkbox"/> Plywood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tables | <input type="checkbox"/> Tarps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carts | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bubble wrap | <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Markers | |

A list of all suggested emergency supplies can be found here:

https://www.arcsinfo.org/content/documents/emergency_supply_program_development_manual.pdf

6. Identify immovable objects:

In lieu of evacuation for objects that are large or heavy, they can be secured in place. These can be protected by surrounding with sandbags (or other barriers), covering in plastic, or construction of a structure.

7. Review and understand insurance coverage for re-entry, response, and general.
8. Identify master shutoff points for water, gas, and electricity.
9. Train staff regularly on the Emergency Plan.

Monitoring the Storm (Minimum one week before landfall):

1. Once a storm has developed the museum should appoint a person who is responsible for monitoring the storm and alerting staff to any updates (Refer to [Incident Command System](#) in Emergency Plan).
2. Verify all contact information for staff, volunteers, and responders.
3. Remind staff of evacuation protocols and procedures.
4. Inventory all supplies and purchase anything missing or needed.
5. Follow all evacuation orders given by the state emergency management division.
6. Gather all important documents and backup computers to offsite server.

Hurricane Watch (Cat 1-3): A hurricane poses a threat to the region and will make landfall within 24-36 hours with speeds from 74 – 130 mph

If in a flood zone, evacuate the collection at least 6 feet off the floor

1. Stabilize in place any outdoor sculptures or architectural pieces that cannot be brought inside.
2. Secure any outdoor non-collection objects, such as park benches and signs that can be used as a projectile.
3. Move collections away from doors and windows.
4. Cover collections, cabinets and exhibition cases with plastic tarps and secure with tape.
5. Secure all shutters and storm windows.

Hurricane Watch (Cat 4-5): A hurricane poses a threat to the region and will make landfall within 24-36 hours with speeds from 131 to 156 mph

Evacuate collections to a location 100+ miles away from institution if your institution is in a flood zone

1. Stabilize in place any outdoor sculptures or architectural pieces that cannot be brought inside.
2. Secure any outdoor non-collection objects, such as park benches and signs that can be used as a projectile.
3. Move collections away from doors and windows.
4. Cover collections, cabinets and exhibition cases with plastic tarps and secure with tape.
5. Secure all shutters and storm windows.

Hurricane Warning (Cat 1-5): A hurricane is expected within 24 hours

1. Finish evacuation and stabilization of collections either onsite or offsite.
2. Double check all locks for doors and windows are secure.
3. After all staff is out of building place sandbags or barriers around low lying areas and entrances.
4. Evacuate the area

During the Storm:

1. Continue to monitor storm information and emergency management services announcements.
2. Continue team communication with staff located at home or onsite (See **Safety** section above).
3. Stay Safe!

Response to Hurricane: See Response Procedures in Emergency Plan

1. Use a [re-entry checklist](#) to ensure the space is safe to enter as established in the Emergency Plan.
 - a. Have all members of the onsite team been accounted for?
 - b. Is anyone injured? If so, are injuries being attended to?
 - c. Has permission been given by civil authorities to re-enter? Is authorization for re-entry required? Call **911** or local emergency management services to confirm.
 - d. What is the status of the utilities? Are there downed power lines? Gas leaks? Entering spaces without confirming status of utilities can result in personal harm or death.
Warning: Even if there are power outages, the electricity should be turned off
 - e. Are you in a group of at least 2-3 people? Never enter or work alone!
 - f. Are you equipped with appropriate protective equipment? Safety First!
 - g. Do you have communications established?
 - h. Has the Incident Commander been informed of re-entry?
 - i. Do you have means for quick initial documentation?
 - j. Do you understand your objective?

Re-entry is NOT a salvage mission – you are only gaining initial access to perform initial damage assessments which lead to salvage

2. Perform an Incident Report and Initial Damage Assessment to better plan for salvage operation (supplies, people, and space needed).
3. Set up salvage operation including, retrieval, triage, documentation, and storage.