

WHAT TO DO BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A HURRICANE

We love the warm days of summer and mild days of autumn, but it can be a time of volatile weather. The Atlantic hurricane season begins on June 1 each year and continues through November 30. In the US, all Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal areas – and even several hundred miles inland – can be impacted by hurricane damage.

Now's the time to make sure you're prepared.

What to do before a hurricane

We work regularly with risk managers and property managers who tell us they're worried that their bases aren't totally covered in an emergency. Priority No. 1 is to develop a disaster plan (such as BluSky's First Aid Disaster Response Plan™) with a restoration partner. Look for a provider who will assist with pre-planning and give you priority status in the event of a widespread disaster, pre-established and agreed upon pricing, and open lines of communication.

Know any areas around your property or business that are prone to flooding from storm surges or heavy rains. Consider purchasing flood insurance for your property or business. The closer you are to the coast, the more you should know about evacuation routes in case you're instructed by local authorities to leave the area. Be sure trees and shrubs near any structures are well trimmed in order to be more wind-resistant. Plan to cover windows with shutters or boards, and bring in all outdoor furniture, garbage cans, etc. Read your insurance policies and familiarize yourself with both your coverage and procedures for filing a claim.

Build an emergency kit with supplies, medicines, and other essential items in case you lose electricity or must evacuate in a hurry. You can find a good list of recommended items in our article [Emergency Kit: What to Include](#) at goBluSky.com.

What to do during a hurricane

When a hurricane is approaching, tune into NOAA weather radio or TV for information. Secure windows and outdoor objects. If instructed, turn off utilities and propane tanks. If unable to evacuate, stay indoors and away from windows and glass doors; ideally stay in an interior room or closet. If you're in a high-rise building, follow the building's emergency plan and avoid elevators as they will not operate if power goes out due to the storm.

What to do after a hurricane

Stay tuned to radio or TV news for updates. If you evacuated, don't return until local officials say it is safe. Carefully walk around your property or business to look for damage and downed power lines. Take photos of any damage you find for use later with an insurance claim. If driving, avoid flooded roads and washed out bridges; watch for fallen trees, electrical wires, and weakened roads and bridges.

If you sustain hurricane damage, call a reputable disaster restoration company. Ask to see their identification and licenses and ask for references.

6 TIPS FOR AVOIDING CONTRACTOR SCAMS AFTER A HURRICANE

In the wake of a hurricane or tropical storm you'll see a lot of contractors offering to help with repairs. Some are very reputable, some...not so much so. How do you avoid being scammed?

BluSky offers the following advice:

1. Be suspicious of any high-pressure contractor who tries to rush you to make decisions, particularly if the repairs are not an emergency or the work is temporary
2. Ask for references; an ethical contractor will be happy to provide them
3. Do not deal with a contractor who asks you to pay for the entire job upfront
4. Immediately dismiss any contractor who claims to be backed by FEMA – they do not endorse individual contractors
5. Ask to see the contractor's driver's license – write down the license number and the license plate number of their vehicle
6. Never allow a contractor to discourage you from contacting your insurance company; you should contact your insurance company immediately

WHEN SHOULD I CALL A RESTORATION CONTRACTOR?

Our property and facilities management clients often ask us when they should call a restoration contractor after they experience water, fire, mold, or storm damage to their property.

Not every situation requires an emergency restoration firm. Many of our clients have access to internal maintenance departments and janitorial companies that work with them daily. However, there are situations which require the expertise of a professional restoration contractor such as BluSky.

Situations in which a restoration contractor should be involved:

- Technical expertise is needed
- The health and safety of building occupants is at risk
- Water or contaminants have traveled through walls or between floors causing several areas of the property to be isolated or shut down
- There is exposure to hazardous materials such as biological contaminants, lead, or asbestos
- The structural integrity is compromised

Another important reason to call a restoration contractor is business interruption. What could you lose if you can't restore your property quickly?

- Are your residents unable to return to their homes?
- Is there a risk of losing residents to another community?
- Is the property unsafe for building occupants?
- Can employees or tenants return to work?
- Is there loss of productivity, loss of rents, loss of income, loss of market share?

If the answer is "yes" to any of those questions, a restoration contractor should be involved.



MOBILIZING WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY

A quick response saves everybody time and money and protects the health and safety of building occupants. With that said, we shouldn't assume being the first one there means being the first one to complete the project. There is a major difference in mobilizing with a sense of urgency versus an emotionally-charged panic of rushing to a job.

Whether it's common events such as a burst water line or fire, or an area-wide catastrophe like flooding, tornado or hurricanes, restoration firms are ready to respond to our clients' needs. If an area-wide disaster occurs, critical resources may become scarce and unavailable. That's why pre-loss planning is key for your recovery. It's more important to be prepared and ready when you deal with a loss than to rush in with poor planning, preparation, and execution.

About BluSky

Centennial, Colorado-based BluSky Restoration Contractors, LLC provides restoration, renovation, environmental and roofing services to all commercial and multifamily real estate classes across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. BluSky's emergency response team mobilizes whenever a tropical storm or hurricane is forecast to strike the United States and stands ready to respond to any storm damage loss. Call us 24/7/365 at 888.882.5875 if you need help following severe weather.

To learn more, visit goBluSky.com.