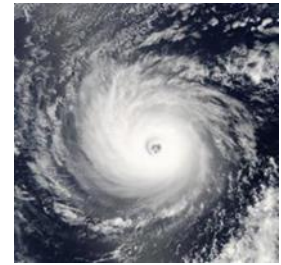


## 2021 SE Texas Hurricane Season Begins June 1st

SE Texas has had a number of weather events over recent years including severe flooding and hurricanes in East Texas and Louisiana. We don't want to forget that hurricane season is starting again and we need to start reviewing and updating our plans. Keep in mind that while a flood and a hurricane may have some similarities, a hurricane will bring with it high winds and other hazards and it's been a while since the Metro Houston area has had a serious hurricane. We should plan for all contingencies. With Covid-19 still lurking around we need to consider how that will impact our plans. Many employees have been working remotely, personnel and suppliers may have changed. Some facility operations may have been changed or modified. You're encouraged to take a close look at your operations and preparations and plan accordingly to keep your employees safe and ensure business continuity.



One thing you may want to do is to ensure you have a business continuity plan in addition to an OSHA Emergency Action Plan (if required). The OSHA Emergency Action Plan is primarily directed at protecting workers during an emergency and not business continuity. They serve separate purposes and both are important. Your insurance carrier may have plans available for your use. There are several places where you can find examples of business continuity plans such as:

- Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS)  
<http://disastersafety.org/ibhs-business-protection/ofb-ez-business-continuity/>
- Ready Business Toolkits  
[https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/ready\\_business\\_hurricane-toolkit.pdf](https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/ready_business_hurricane-toolkit.pdf)
- Ready Business Continuity Plan  
<https://www.ready.gov/business-continuity-plan>

A sample OSHA Emergency Action Plan template can be found at:

- Texas OSHCON Sample OSHA Emergency Action Plan  
<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/oshcon/>

Once you review your plan, make adjustments, and ensure the information is correct, run your plan through a test to ensure it operates as planned. Since Covid-19, life and work have been different. If a hurricane or flood occurs, we need to be ready.

It is important that employees have a home emergency action plan. By planning ahead they can protect their family, property, and minimize damage. An employee who has a family action plan will be more likely to be available after the hurricane to help implement the return to business. Encourage employees to prepare and inform them of local planning checklists. If employees are not available after the hurricane it will be more challenging to get your business operations up and running. Examples of family emergency plans can be found at:

- Ready Houston  
<http://readyhouston.wpengine.com/prepare-today/make-a-plan/>

- Ready Harris County  
[http://prepare.readyharris.org/?\\_ga=2.174522466.1186323952.1527641542-1166658323.1527641542](http://prepare.readyharris.org/?_ga=2.174522466.1186323952.1527641542-1166658323.1527641542)
- Ready.gov  
<https://www.ready.gov/plan>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/index.html>
- National Hurricane Center (NHC)  
<https://www.weather.gov/safety/hurricane>

Responding after a hurricane will present you with multiple hazards, many which can be life threatening. We've had a worker who had been doing demolition work on Harvey flood damaged houses die from necrotizing fasciitis e.g. the flesh eating bacteria. Train yourself and your employees in conjunction with your plan to ensure the necessary equipment, including safety and personal protective equipment and safety procedures, are readily available to prevent injuries and illnesses. There are many resources available on hurricane related safety including the website mentioned above and at:

- OSHA  
<https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/hurricane/index.html>  
<https://www.osha.gov/etools/hurricane>  
<https://www.osha.gov/flood>
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)  
<https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=2472>

States, Counties, and cities usually will have an emergency operations webpage covering specific information such as flood zones, storm surge evacuation zones and other important information. It's a good idea to check for information specific to your area(s) and consider signing up for emergency notification emails, texts, or apps.

Mention of any group or organization is not an endorsement and the links provided are for informational purposes only. This information has been developed by an OSHA Compliance Assistance Specialist and is intended to assist employers, workers, and others as they strive to improve workplace health and safety. While we attempt to thoroughly address specific topics [or hazards], it is not possible to include discussion of everything necessary to ensure a healthy and safe working environment in a presentation of this nature. Thus, this information must be understood as a tool for addressing workplace hazards, rather than an exhaustive statement of an employer's legal obligations, which are defined by statute, regulations, and standards. Likewise, to the extent that this information references practices or procedures that may enhance health or safety, but which are not required by a statute, regulation, or standard, it cannot, and does not, create additional legal obligations. Finally, over time, OSHA may modify rules and interpretations in light of new technology, information, or circumstances; to keep apprised of such developments, or to review information on a wide range of occupational safety and health topics, you can visit OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). For questions contact Jim Shelton at the Houston North Area Office at [shelton.james@dol.gov](mailto:shelton.james@dol.gov).