



BE PREPARED

**THE BEST BUSINESS CONTINUITY TIPS
FOR THE 2018 HURRICANE SEASON**

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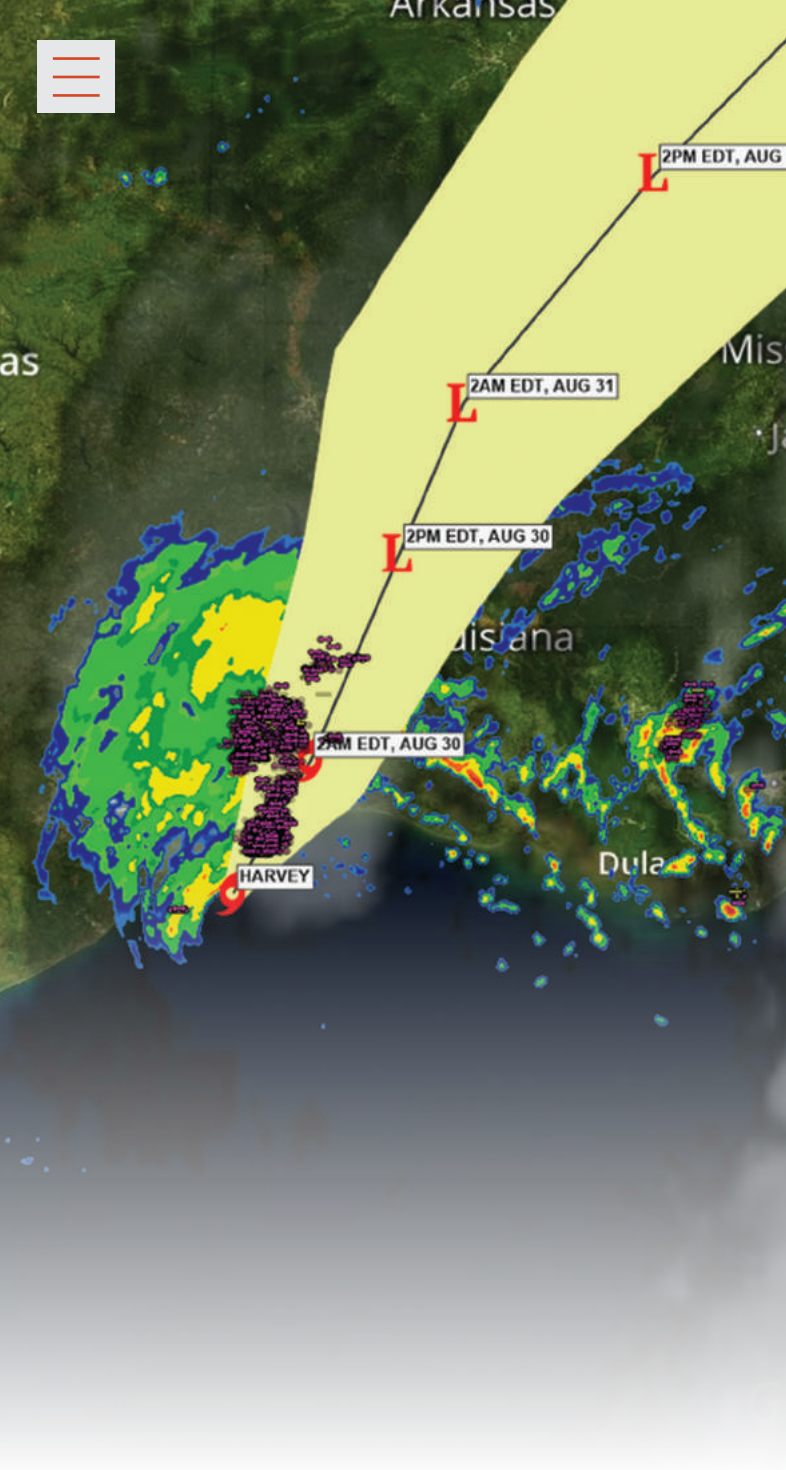
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HURRICANE SEASON: **YOU CAN'T WING IT**

August is here and hurricane season is just ramping up, which is crazy to think about considering we've already had five named storms. With the peak of the season on the horizon and the 2017 season still casting a heavy shadow, it's time to put your business continuity plans in place.

This year, our meteorologists predicted 10 to 14 named storms to form. Out of these storms, we expect five to seven to develop into hurricanes. Our forecast calls for two to four of those hurricanes to be major hurricanes with sustained winds of at least 111 mph.

This is very close to the long-term Atlantic season average. For reference, from 1968 to 2015, the Atlantic Hurricane Basin produced an average of 11.8 named storms, 6.2 hurricanes, and 2.4 major hurricanes per year.



LOOKING BACK

2017 Hurricane Season Cost Billions

While average might sound encouraging to the optimistic business continuity professional, this is not the case. It all depends where these hurricanes land.

Last year, we experienced an above-average season, including 17 named storms, 10 hurricanes, and six major hurricanes. This season will remain infamous for years to come thanks to the location of a few major hurricanes.

Major hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria defined the season, costing billions of dollars of destruction in the U.S., Caribbean, and Puerto Rico. Hurricane Harvey alone resulted in more than \$125 billion in damages throughout Texas and along the U.S. Gulf Coast. This tied Hurricane Katrina as the costliest (in adjusted dollar terms) hurricane in U.S. history.

HURRICANE SEASON TIPS TO KEEP YOUR BUSINESS AFLOAT

To help you get ready for this year's season, we crowd-sourced the best hurricane season preparedness tips from other professionals in the business continuity industry and the results were astounding.

We're so excited to share these tips with you so you can better protect your business for this year's hurricane season. We've combined the most helpful tips together to give you one comprehensive hurricane tip list. Make sure you read through this list before the storm is at your location(s) to help save time, money, and even human lives.

A top-down view of a wooden desk with various items: a laptop, a tablet, a glass of coffee, a plate with lemons, a calculator, a notebook, and several architectural drawings. A person's hand is pointing at a drawing, and another hand is writing in a notebook.

Since hurricanes come with driving rains and storm surges, they often produce floods. Before hurricane season hits, research your organization's properties and identify if any of them are in flood zones. If you know beforehand you can automatically cut any losses by preparing for floods. Some things you can do include moving any company vehicles to areas outside of flood zones. You can use this tip for indoors as well. Be sure to remove any critically important documents or infrastructure before the storm hits. It's helpful to identify a person or people who will carry out this duty in the case of an impending hurricane.

You should also move items indoors. For example, if your business is a restaurant, ensure all outdoor seating, tables, and signs are moved indoors to a designated storage area ahead of the storm.



DURING THE STORM

5. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!

Communication and collaboration were two of the most common types of tips we received from business continuity professionals this year. Especially in large businesses.

Tyler Hough, Director of Business Continuity at Walgreens, had a great story to share from the 2017 hurricane season. He explained how a lead from each of the functional businesses came together to help solve the problems hurricane season threw their way. They found that as soon as people ran into a wall within their own silo of business, there were others that could help break down that wall. By working a problem from end-to-end, they realized that they were more effective and efficient. For example, after Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, they knew they needed to get their facilities team on the ground to assess the damage. However, no commercial flights were operating. Luckily, the community affairs team had already been working on sending down humanitarian supplies through a major airline. By working together, they were able to get the team on board as well.

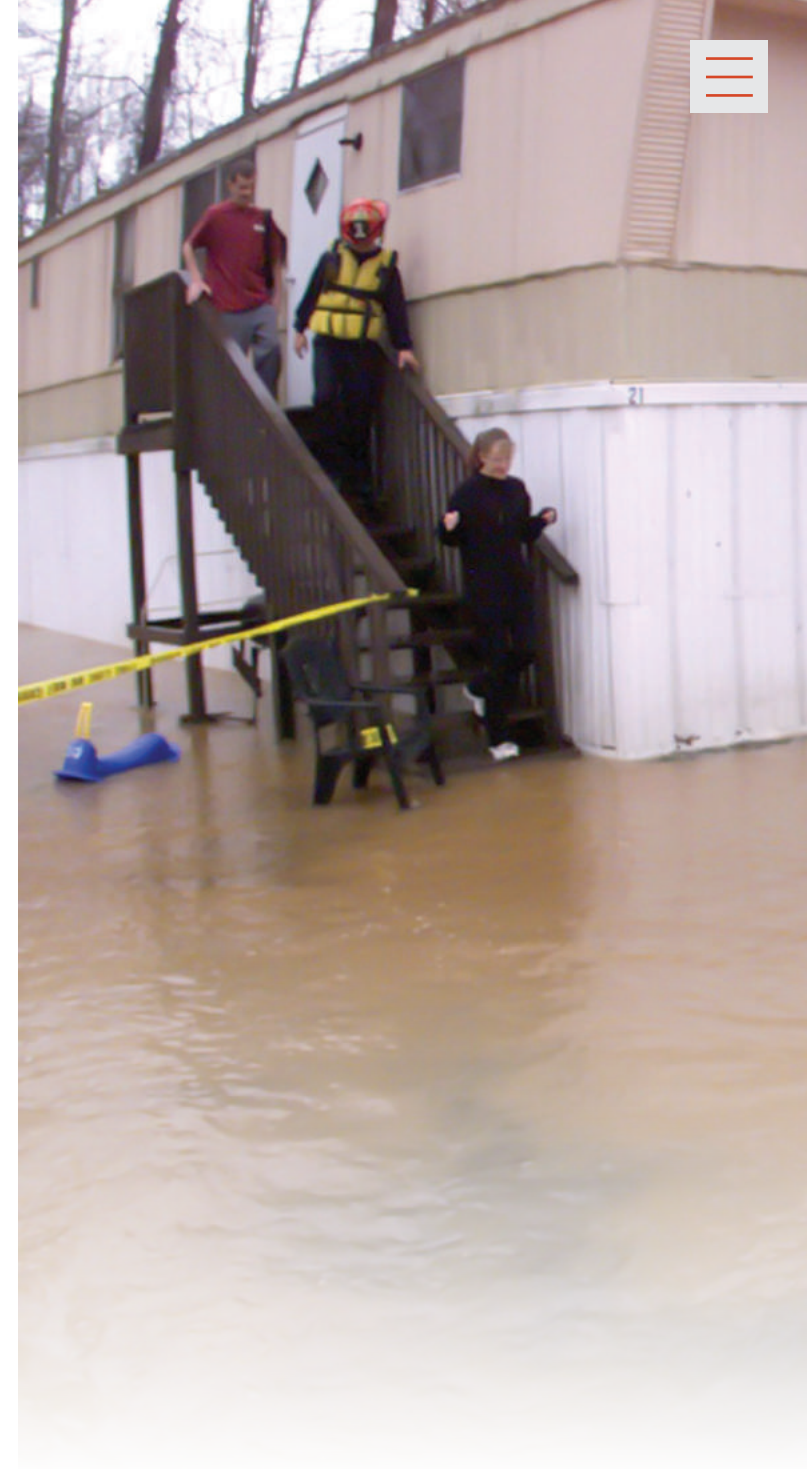
No matter the size of your organization, it's essential to communicate with members of the workforce following a significant event. You should have a pre-defined emergency communication plan. Since hurricane damage can impact both data and cell service, you should have multiple ways of keeping in touch. Your organization should have updated cell phone numbers, a temporary social media page, personal email addresses and designated physical check-in locations in case cellular and landlines go down.

When you use multiple channels for communication, it's key to have one person handling the communication so employees don't receive conflicting or mis-aligned information. Make sure you have a communication plan that includes who will communicate what and when.

Because of that, it's imperative to consult meteorologists when hurricanes and other tropical events threaten your business. Expert tropical storm meteorologists will not only have the best forecast, but will also understand the potential impact to your area. This is even more true when it comes to meteorologists that use hyperlocal, real-time weather data to guide their clients through hurricane season.

Your property restoration company of choice will have numerous clients to pick from and limited labor resources to support them. Unless you have a solid contractual agreement in place, create response redundancies. Credit card and debit card transactions may not be immediately available; cash reserves and partnering with your financial institution on cash access is a wise decision. Depending upon the level of catastrophe, expect long lines for basics like water, fuel, and medications. This will affect your employees which ultimately limits your business recovery efforts. Don't forget to implement an interim payroll process as well.

Mandatory and voluntary evacuations can scatter employees, making it harder for them to return to work. After a storm, first ensure your employees are stable, then transition priorities towards recovery. You may have to be flexible with teleworking or remote employee situations for weeks or even months after a hurricane.



Proven Meteorological Expertise

When a hurricane strikes, you need personalized meteorological advice—not what you hear on the news. Here at Earth Networks, we have a team with expert meteorologists ready 24/7/365 to help clients before, during, and after a hurricane. Our dedicated staff has over 100 years of combined experience in the industry. Their expertise will help your organization navigate the constantly changing forecasts, hurricane classifications, and spaghetti plots so you know you're making the best operational decisions possible.

Real-Time, Hyperlocal Weather Data

We helped dozens of organizations through Hurricane Irma last year with our real-time, hyperlocal weather data. Unlike other weather forecast providers, Earth Networks owns and operates our own network of weather and lightning sensors. With over 10,000 weather stations, there's always a station close by so you have the most accurate weather data. Most meteorologists gather weather data from your nearest airport where conditions can vary greatly from your actual location. When it comes to hurricanes and other forms of potentially devastating severe weather, planning tools driven by hyperlocal weather data are the only way to go.

Alerts On-The-Go

Another great way we enable our business continuity professionals to make the best operational decisions during hurricane season is with on-the-go alerting. With Sferic Mobile, our advanced weather visualization and alerting application, it's easy for professionals to set up alerts for their organizational locations as well as their own location, no matter where you go! This is key when hurricanes force evacuations.

THANK YOU & CONGRATULATIONS!

Thank you to all the wonderful business continuity professionals who contributed to our e-book.

We'd like to extend a special thank you and congratulations to our winner: **Michael Garza!**

Michael is a Business Continuity Professional at Toyota Motors North America. His thoughtful and complete hurricane season tips response touched on all the main points, including: People first, communication, social infrastructure, security, flexibility, and knowing the basics. Congrats, Michael!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this educational piece.

To learn what we can do for your organization this hurricane season and beyond, get in touch with us.

GET IN TOUCH!

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