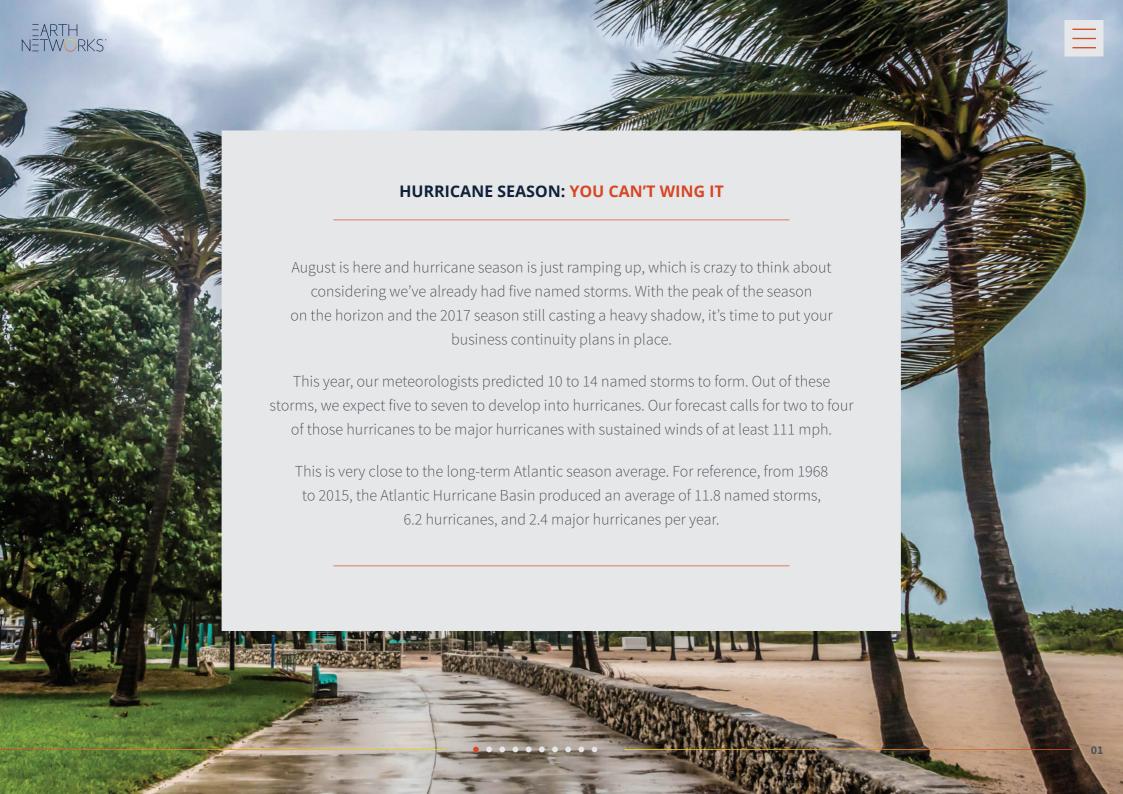
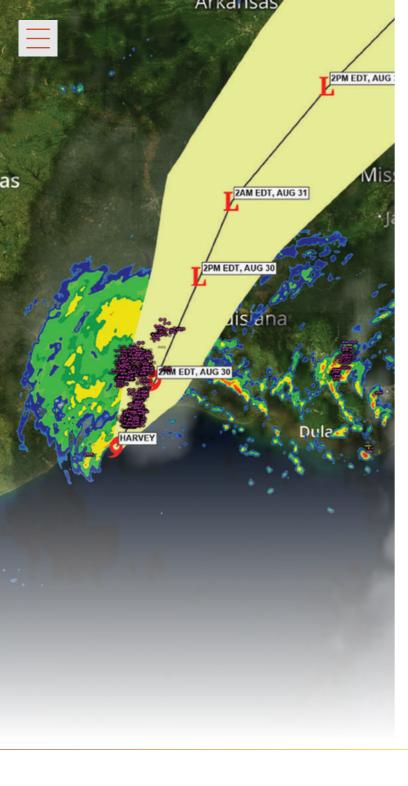




TABLE OF CONTENTS

8	01
	02 02
	02
	03
	03
	03
Stock Supplies	04
Prepare Your Property	04
During The Storm	05
Communicate, Communicate, Communicate	05
Utilize Meteorologists & Other Weather Tools	06
After The Storm	07
	07
Understand Your Social Infrastructure Risk	07
Ask For Help	08
	08
	09
	09
	09
	09
	10







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.



BEFORE THE STORM

1. Go Over Last Year's Plans

The first step in preparing your business for hurricane season is planning. A strong plan needs to be in place before a storm hits. To kickstart this plan, you should have a meeting with your organization to go over last year's season. What worked well? What did not? It also helps to bring in experts for this conversation to answer any questions your coworkers may have. Meteorologists are always a great bet. This way you can go over best practices and figure out what training might be necessary to prepare.

2. Know Your Zones

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.



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BEFORE THE STORM

3. Stock Supplies

Regardless of your business type, you're going to need some essential supplies to help you get through a hurricane. With hurricane speeds just beginning at 75 mph, power outages are regular occurrences and can last weeks. It's key to have battery-powered lights, radios, and other electronics on-hand so you can stay in the light and in the know. A generator (and fuel!) is an important tool that will keep your business powered in the event of a long-term outage.

We also recommend stockpiling flashlights, walkie-talkies, first-aid kits, duct tape, bottles of water, garbage bags, gloves, and rain gear.

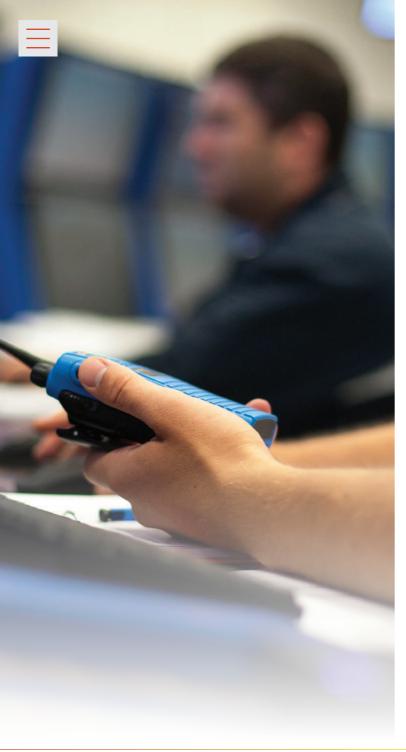
4. Prepare Your Property

You should also prepare your property. Depending on your location(s), you might want to have sandbags and plywood on hand to protect your buildings. This is also a good time to check property for any roof damage, cracked windows, or dead limbs. One great tip from **Betsy Cody**, IT DR Coordinator at Diamond Drugs Inc., was to measure and cut your plywood ahead of time and have them in an easily accessible location. Trust us, when a major hurricane is on the way, you'll be thankful for this timesaving tip!

Make sure you move any HVAC and electrical equipment out of flood zones. This includes items like pumps and storm water control features that could become inundated in a storm.

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!

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.





DURING THE STORM

6. Utilize Meteorologists & Other Weather Tools

As we saw during the 2017 hurricane season, local and national news outlets tend to hype up storms. This leads to a lot of misinformation and it also makes everyday people think they are weather experts. We hate to break it to you, but only meteorologists have the strongest grasp of what's going on when it comes to hurricane season.

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.



AFTER THE STORM

7. Be Flexible

Becky Cohen, Director of Business Continuity at BBX Capital and one of our Honorable Mention recipients put it best: "Plans and checklists are important, but no storm will be like the last one; No flood or fire will have the same recovery." Well put, Becky!

As business continuity professionals, it's your job to live outside the box and have all the answers. When your plan no longer contains the answers your business requires to get back on track, you have to make them up as you go. When it comes to hurricane season, you really must plan well beforehand and then be on your toes throughout in order to be the most valuable asset to your organization. Planning is important, but realizing the plan isn't enough is much more important!

Flexibility is key when planning return to work schedules, job duties, and crisis management roles.

8. Understand Your Social Infrastructure Risk

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.



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AFTER THE STORM

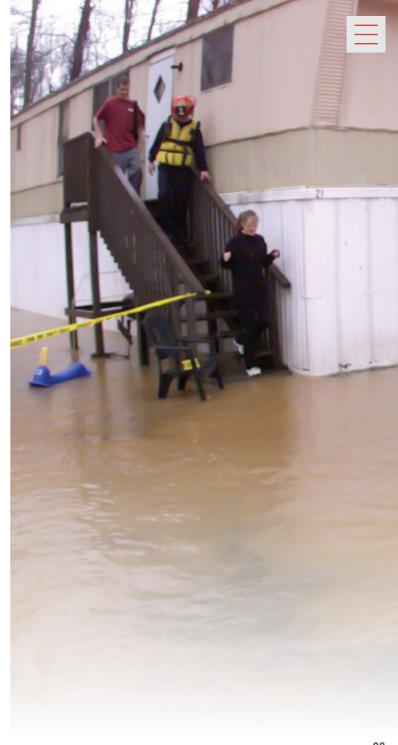
9. Ask for Help

Something that many businesses fail to do after a hurricane is ask for help. Asking for help can make a huge difference in returning to business as usual. One of our contest participants recommended leveraging business relationships to help your team recover. Utilize business partners remote from the disaster zone to help with things like equipment rentals, food and water shipments, off-site work staging areas, and more. Your supply chain, customers, and organization will greatly benefit from a strong support system.

10. Remember Your Employees

Michael Garza, Business Continuity Professional at Toyota Motors North America and our contest winner put it best when he said "People first. Your ability to recover from a disaster rests highly on your employees. Share your plans with everyone after your meeting and solicit ideas often." The best strategies always involve sincere consideration of what employees and their families are experiencing. Oftentimes, businesses can forget the personal impact of a hurricane on their employees.

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 altering 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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