



American Society of Safety Engineers News

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Diane Hurns, 847-768-3413, dhurns@asse.org

ASSE OFFERS BUSINESSES, COMMUNITIES HURRICANE SEASON SAFETY TIPS, LIST OF RESOURCES

Des Plaines, IL (August 29, 2012) — As Hurricane Isaac pounds the southern states and with Hurricane season running through November, the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) notes the importance of having an emergency plan in place when a contingency situation, such as a Hurricane, happens at work, at home or in the community. ASSE is providing tips and lists of resources to help.

ASSE notes there are three critical phases of crisis management: vulnerability assessment, response management, and, business continuity. To prepare for contingency situations it is suggested that companies/communities integrate emergency preparedness into an organization's overall safety management system; to conduct a vulnerability assessment of the organization to determine the probability and impact of a loss; to activate an up-to-date response management plan in the face of an emergency; and, assist their organization in its efforts to recover from a crisis/disaster. Other areas to consider include being in compliance with emergency response codes; know how to garner assistance from federal and state agencies; conduct a nuclear, biological and chemical risk assessment; have an internal and external communications plan, and, emergency response training.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but ASSE also recommends businesses 1) do a risk assessment – this can range from self-assessment to an extensive engineering study; 2) do emergency planning – assess how your company functions, both internally and externally; 3) plan what you will do if your building, plant or store is not accessible and develop a continuity of operations plan that includes all facets of your business; 4) define procedures – define crisis management procedures and individual responsibilities in advance and make sure those involved know what their responsibilities are, train others in case you need back-up help and review your emergency plans annually; 5) coordinate with others – meet with other businesses in your building or industrial complex and talk with first responders, emergency managers, community organizations and utility providers; plan with your suppliers, shippers and others you regularly do business with; and, 6) emergency planning for employees –find out what people need to recover after a disaster as they will need time to ensure the well-being of their family. For instance, do they need shelter, medical help, food, etc.?

Following a catastrophe, ASSE suggests businesses do a hazard evaluation and assessment on structural security; safe entry; clean-up safety; air quality assessment; ventilation; interior, exterior exposures; protection equipment – for fire and smoke alarms; possible electrical hazards; health/sanitation; office furniture; lighting; solid/hazardous waste removal; power checks; mainframes; machine inspections; and surfaces to prevent falls. It is also recommended that businesses use existing federal guidelines to help resume business operations and to develop and distribute new emergency procedures.

The following links to key resources will help everyone prepare for Hurricanes and other contingencies:

[National Weather Service](#) – [National Hurricane Center](#) The National Hurricane Center is responsible for tracking and predicting weather and providing up-to-date advisories, video briefings and audio podcasts on current and impending storms.

[OSHA's Hurricane Preparedness Website](#) OSHA's Hurricane Preparedness Website contains information for businesses on how to create an evacuation plan for their workers and prepare supply kits in case a hurricane or other major storm should hit their local areas. This outlines the warnings and watches used for hurricanes, including the five categories used to rate the strength of a hurricane.

[OSHA's Hurricane Response Webpage](#) OSHA's Hurricane Response Webpage includes a link to [OSHA's Hurricane eMatrix](#), which features information for business owners on hazard exposures and risk assessments for hurricane response and recovery work.

[The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\) at the CDC](#) NIOSH provides detailed information for employers, including assistance CDC/NIOSH can provide employers and employees involved in hurricane recovery, medical recommendations for emergency responders and assessment tools for hurricane response.

[The Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#) The Small Business Administration provides useful tips for business owners to develop a plan to protect employees, lessen the financial impact of disasters and re-open for business as quickly as possible.

[The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) Hurricane Preparedness Website](#) The EPA provides information to help the public understand hurricane dangers and what can be done before a hurricane comes ashore. Also available is information on how to recognize possible environmental hazards after a hurricane and what you can do to protect you and your family's health. It also provides information for commercial buildings and schools.

[The U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Association \(FEMA\)](#) FEMA has several web links dedicated to preparing for a disaster in various phases, providing the public with tips for planning, preparation, and mitigation – before, during, and after a disaster. Also includes survivor assistance links that provide direction on applying for assistance resources, disaster area applications, and response and recovery assistance.

[Ready.gov](#) Provides preparation tips for before, during and after a hurricane. Visitors can also find a list of additional relevant publications and web links.

[The U.S. Department of Transportation \(DOT\) Emergency Response Guidebook](#) Provides first responders with a go-to manual to help immediately mitigate hurricane-related hazmat accidents.

[American Red Cross Hurricane Disaster Preparedness Guide](#) The American Red Cross provides instructions for how to respond for all phases of a hurricane and educates the public on additional threatening hurricane hazards, including flooding, storm surges, high winds and tornadoes.

[National Hurricane Survival Initiative](#) This site provides a checklist for business owners to prepare for a hurricane, as well as links to other useful hurricane preparedness sites.

Founded in 1911, the Des Plaines, IL-based ASSE is the oldest professional safety society and is committed to protecting people, property and the environment. ASSE's 35,000 occupational safety, health and environmental professional members are committed to protecting people, property and the environment and manage, supervise, research and consult on safety, health, transportation and environmental issues in all industries, government, labor and education. Please go to www.asse.org/newsroom for more information.