

Disaster Preparedness

Disasters can happen anywhere, at any time. Home building industry members must prepare their homes and businesses to keep their families and employees safe if the worst should occur.

Preparing your Business for Natural Disasters

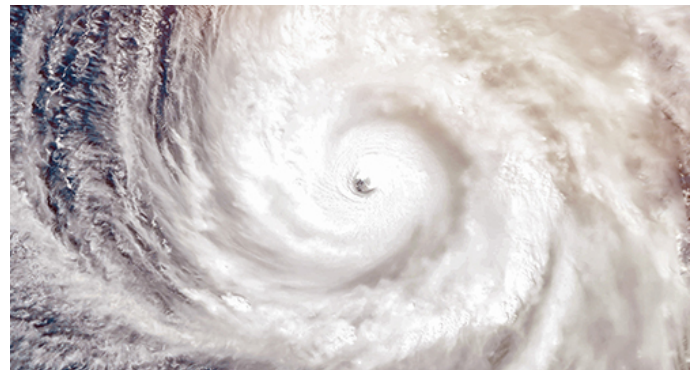
As the summer approaches, so does the risk of hurricanes, wildfires, and other natural disasters, often posing severe risks to workers in the construction and contracting industry. **Preparedness is essential** to home builders and contractors because adverse conditions can present direct emergent threats to those on a worksite and frequently do so quickly.

That's why it's recommended that all builders need to have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and a **Continuity of Operations Plan** (COOP) prepared in advance, so that should a disaster happen, they are prepared for emergencies on the worksite and minimize potential business disruptions that may follow.

In case of an impending weather event or wildfire, some preparedness actions recommended for the worksite include:

Pay close attention to local officials' reports regarding changing weather conditions and evacuation orders.

Secure the jobsite and a reasonable area around the construction zones to be sure



all loose debris or equipment is removed or properly secured to prevent damage to the project or the surrounding area.

Cover any work that is highly vulnerable to damage by wind or rain.

Create a safety zone around the project or building, remove combustible or loose materials and keep the volume of vegetation to a minimum.

Make sure your offices and job site trailers are properly secured with any copies of records either removed or copied. Back up all electronics.

Communicate any changes in planning, worksite activities and disaster preparations to workers, ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of emergency alerts and communication systems.

Disaster Preparedness and Response Safety Videos

NAHB has produced disaster safety videos for the worksite for those preparing for and responding to natural disasters. The videos outline best practices in prepping worksites and starting work after a disaster for those in the home building industry. All videos and materials are also available in Spanish. [Watch the videos here.](#)



Emergency Kits for the Jobsite or Office

Natural Disasters can develop and strengthen rapidly, sometimes with little notice. A recommendation for those in the home building industry is to prepare emergency kits for vehicles or offices that can be quickly accessed should the weather turn for the worse or an evacuation order is called.

Kits can be assembled in a bag or case and should include items that can be useful in an emergency. Items such as:

- **Battery-operated emergency radio**
- **External battery bank for phones and electronics**
- **Manual can opener**
- **Lighter**
- **Tire plug kit**
- **Small fire extinguisher**
- **Small multi-tool**
- **Small LED lantern**
- **Headlamps with batteries**
- **Small first aid kit**



- **Contractor bags, duct tape, and heavy gloves**
- **5-gallon water cube or several 1-liter bottles of water**
- **Box of small nonperishable foods**
- **Paper map**

It is also a best practice to include copies of any important documents in a waterproof document holder and a small amount of petty cash, should it be needed for purchases during an electrical outage.

Be Prepared with a Continuity of Operations Plan

Prepare for potential business operations outages or challenges associated with the disaster with a [Continuity of Operations Plan](#)

(COOP). A basic COOP plan for the home building industry should answer questions such as these:

What weather events are most likely to affect my business? Buildings, storage, vehicles, tools, materials, and IT equipment could all be vulnerable to hazards or disasters.

How do I continue operations and business functions during or after a disaster while ensuring the safety of employees and other stakeholders? What can be done to ensure financial viability in case of decreased cash flow?



How will I ensure my stakeholders know and understand my plan in case of an emergency or pending event? When will I alert them, and using what communications channels?

What preparedness

actions, processes, or physical improvements must be made before an event to mitigate or insure against weather-related risks?

When it comes to severe weather, an ounce of preparedness is worth a pound of response. Taking the time to work on preparedness and mitigation measures can help builders avoid unnecessary losses, keep their workers safe, and ensure the job continues as quickly as possible, no matter the event.

Make Use of NAHB's Disaster Response Toolkit

NAHB offers a variety of resources through the [Disaster Response and Recovery Toolkit](#) to help builders, remodelers, and contractors prepare for and respond to adverse events. The toolkit features workplace and consumer information, templates, worksheets and videos to support professionals working in the home building industry.

Other Helpful Links

Prepare your operations for disaster with NAHB's [Continuity Planning Tool](#)

Learn more about [how to prepare jobsites](#) for natural disasters

Draft a [communications plan](#)

[Safety 365](#) offers the full range of NAHB jobsite safety resources

Prepare, plan and stay informed with [Ready.Gov](#)

Review preparedness [tips from OSHA](#)

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, floods, and severe weather can affect construction worksites. Preparedness measures taken before a disaster can help builders keep workers safe, avoid unnecessary losses, and ensure that work resumes as quickly as possible once the danger passes.

Recommended everyday preparedness measures

Clean the jobsite daily

Inspect and secure tie-downs for all construction trailers

Reschedule material deliveries that have little impact on your production

Your staff should be aware of your disaster contingency and communications plan

Make sure subcontractors know your contingency plan and have your key phone numbers

Your vehicles should be fully fueled and have flashlights, water and emergency go-kits

Make sure computers and electronics are surge-protected and registered in case of loss

Have external batteries to charge small electronic devices like cell phones or tablets

Back-up all computer records either to an external hard drive or cloud-based system

Recommended when adverse conditions are possible in your area

Clean up construction zones to assure loose debris or equipment is removed or secured

Arrange to have dumpsters removed

Halt material deliveries with suppliers

Stop any work that is highly vulnerable to damage by wind or rain

Complete tasks such as concrete work if it may prevent damage to the job site

Have subcontractors secure or remove unnecessary materials or equipment from job sites

Job sites with cranes should take precautions as these could be affected by high winds

Prepare to cover windows and glass doors

Communicate plans for worksite activities and hurricane preparations to employees

Recommended when adverse conditions are imminent in your area

Make sure the dumpsters or shipping containers have been emptied, removed or secured

Remove scaffolding

Secure or remove all building materials

Turn off power at circuit breakers to homes under construction

Close and cover all windows with plywood

Make sure your offices and job site trailers are properly secured

If authorities call for mandatory evacuations, make sure employees leave immediately



[nahb.org/Advocacy/Industry-Issues/Emergency-Preparedness-and-Response](https://www.nahb.org/Advocacy/Industry-Issues/Emergency-Preparedness-and-Response)