

# HURRICANE & TROPICAL STORM TECHNICAL PREP GUIDE

Please follow our guidelines below to keep your data and network safe in the event of a weather event

## **Objective:**

Our objective is to ensure our clients are appropriately prepared in case of a hurricane or storm strike. Damage to computer equipment can be caused by rain, wind, or debris with a major cause of damage being power spikes and surges, extended power outages or repeated power outages in rapid succession. Taking the appropriate precautions can reduce or eliminate damage to computer hardware and software.

## **Our Role and Policies in Hurricane Preparation:**

As your technology partner, we can help you prepare for a storm by offering you phone and remote assistance for questions pertaining to your unique situations. After the storm, we can offer network rebuilding services and data recovery in cases of data loss. Please note that even though we offer services to help our customers, it is strongly recommended to be aware that there is usually a high demand on us at preparation time and post-storm cleanup time. We want to try to reach as many customers as possible, but patience may be required. Secondly, please be advised that it is our policy, not to perform any work beyond 6 hours after a Hurricane Warning has been issued, in order to protect our field personnel and allow them enough time to undertake their personal preparations. Therefore, it is important that you advise us early of your intent to use our services for any part of your preparation. Our technical support lines and text and email messaging will remain operational as long as possible under the conditions. Once the storm passes and the 'all-clear' is given, support to our clients will resume as soon as possible after the storm.

## TIMELINE

### **Hurricane Watch (Less than 36 - 24 hours prior to landfall):**

During the Hurricane Watch period, preparations should begin on non-core equipment and infrastructure including all PCs, printers and monitors. All loose software manuals and documentation should be stored away from windows, preferably stored in a sealed, weatherproof container or safe. It is recommended a final backup of data be run before servers are shut down. Backups can take many hours to run and therefore, preparations for final backups should start at this point. If you are a Contract Customer, please inform us of your final work schedule and when your office will close, and we will perform your final backups for you. If you are not a contract client, please let us know when you will be closing and if you would like us to schedule a final backup of your data prior to disconnection.

### **Hurricane Warning (Less than 24 hours prior to landfall):**

When the Hurricane Warning is issued, indicating that a hurricane strike is imminent, preparations to core equipment including servers, routers, switches, phone systems and firewalls should take place immediately. The final or latest backup should be stored in a safe, sent for offsite storage or taken offsite by an employee. The equipment should be protected using the process below as a guide.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DISCONNECTING COMPUTER & ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

**Generally speaking**, all Equipment close to windows should be moved to a safer location, usually an interior closet or an inside corner of a room. If some equipment cannot be moved, try to enclose it as much as you can with tape and plastic bags such as garbage bags or a tarp.

**Specifically**, all computer equipment including PCs, servers, monitors, printers, routers, switches, phones and phone systems should be shut down and unplugged. If your computers and equipment are connected to battery packs, leave them connected as is, and just unplug the battery pack from the wall outlet. If the battery begins to beep, press the power button on the battery for two seconds to turn it off. All sensitive equipment still at risk should be bagged and sealed to protect from water damage in case a window breaks or the roof leaks.

## WHAT TO DO BEFORE THE STORM

### **Please Follow the Order Below:**

- 1.** Save your work in all software programs and log off and shut down all workstation computers.
  - a)** If you have a computer or other equipment on a battery pack, we recommend leaving the cables connected to the battery, just unplug the battery from the wall outlet. The battery will most likely start beeping. Turn off the battery by holding power button down for two seconds. This will make it easier to reconnect after the storm.
  - b)** If your workstations are on the floor and/or connected to several devices like keyboard, mouse, sensors, card terminals webcams, etc, it may be easiest to leave all devices plugged in to your computer tower, and elevate the tower off the floor and on to a chair or desk/counter and bag it if necessary.
  - c)** If the tower is inside of a cabinet or already elevated, just turn off the PC and unplug the battery from the wall. If the battery starts to beep, press the power button for two seconds to turn it off.
- 2.** Run a Backup. If you don't know how, please call us! We can check the status of your latest backup. If you are a contract client, we will take care of this for you and give you further instructions. Continue to the next step while this is being resolved.
- 3.** Power off any printers, scanners, small (under desk) network hubs/switches, credit card terminals and other peripherals by unplugging the power cable from the wall outlet. If these devices are connected to a battery, just unplug the battery from the wall and turn off the battery.
- 4.** After the backup is completed, turn off your main Server or let us know you are ready, and we will do it for you. If the backup has not completed yet, continue to the next step and we will come back to this.
- 5.** If you need to take calls while you will be closed, don't forget to Forward the phone lines to a cell phone in case the lines go down during the storm.
- 6.** Move any computer equipment away from windows and doors and place plastic garbage bags over them incase of window or roof leaks.
- 7.** Last thing to do before you leave the office:  
Wait for the backup to finish and consult with us on when and how to remove the backup disk from the office (if needed). If you have an on-site backup device (a small disk(s) connected to your server), its best to shut down the server first, then unplug the device from the server and take it with you. If you cannot shut down the server or the server has no monitor screen attached, please contact us and we will shut it down properly for you and let you know when to disconnect the backup disk.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

**BE CAREFUL WITH THE BACKUP DISK!! IF YOU TAKE THE DISK WITH YOU, PLEASE REALIZE THAT YOU ARE HOLDING THE LIFELINE TO YOUR OFFICE IN YOUR HANDS.**

**HARD DRIVES ARE FRAGILE AND SHOULD BE HANDLED WITH CARE. PLEASE BE RESPONSIBLE WITH THE BACKUP DISK WHILE IN YOUR POSSESSION. DO NOT GET IT WET. DO NOT THROW IT IN YOUR GLOVEBOX OR TRUNK OF YOUR CAR.**

**KEEP IT IN A SAFE COOL AND DRY PLACE WITHOUT TOO MUCH MOVEMENT OR VIBRATION.**

## **WHAT TO DO AFTER THE STORM**

### **Reconnecting Your Equipment:**

Even after the storm passes, damage to equipment can still occur. This damage is usually caused by power surges or brief outages while the power company begins to restore power to the affected areas. Many times, the power will come back on but then will be cut off again a few times before it becomes stable again. Please be sure FPL has given the 'all-clear' for your area before you start turning things back on. Small power surges and outages are VERY DAMAGING and often fatal to computers.

Physical recovery can begin once the damage to property has been assessed. This will include removal of bags on computer equipment and moving of equipment back to their original locations. During this phase, any equipment that may have been exposed to water or damaged will have to be more closely inspected to determine whether it needs to be replaced. Leave those items powered off and please call us to inspect these items.

### **Please Follow the Order Below:**

- 1.** Once the 'all clear' is received from the power company. The core systems and infrastructure should be restored first. These include routers, firewalls, switches, and telephone systems-all the devices that connect your office to the outside world. The order is below; please wait until an item finishes loading completely before moving to the next item:
- 2.** Plug in and turn on all Surge Protectors and Battery Packs for all devices in your data closet or where your internet equipment is stored.
- 3.** Turn on your Internet Provider's Equipment (Cable, DSL, Satellite, or Modem). If a battery was disconnected, please reconnect and turn it on and most of these devices should power on again and connect automatically.
- 4.** Turn on your telephone system and check that the phones are powered on and connecting.
- 5.** Un-forward your incoming phone calls if you are ready.
- 6.** Turn on your main server first, then other servers if any, only after the main server fully boots to the login screen. Please contact us to make sure the server is up and running properly.
- 7.** Plug in and turn on Desktop and Laptop Computers.
- 8.** Plug in and turn on Printers, scanners, any other peripherals.

**We hope you found this guide useful.  
If you need help, please contact us.  
Please stay safe!**

**As always, we appreciate the opportunity to serve you!**

**Richard Yahia**

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**Questions??: [Send us an email](#)**