FLORIDA INSURANCE ALLIANCE

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

Florida Insurance Alliance provides specialized insurance programs and expert risk management guidance to ***public charter schools****. Our mission is to empower schools with the knowledge and resources, like this guide, to ensure safer communities and resilient operations.*

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Introduction

This guide provides Florida public charter schools with procedures and direction for hurricane preparedness, response, and recovery. The primary goal is to ensure the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff during and after a storm event. Additionally, it aims to help schools protect their facilities and assets, manage potential roles as community resources (like shelters), and facilitate an efficient return to normal educational operations as quickly as possible following a disaster. Proactive preparedness is essential for mitigating potential risks and fulfilling the school's duty of care.

Florida public charter schools, while operating with certain flexibilities, must adhere to state statutes concerning student health, safety, and welfare. Effective emergency response requires charter schools to establish comprehensive emergency plans and coordinate closely with their local County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and potentially the local school district, especially if designated as a public shelter or resource hub. School facilities often play a vital role in community recovery, serving as shelters, distribution points, or relief centers, necessitating clear lines of communication and cooperation with emergency management authorities.

As demonstrated by past hurricane events, thorough preparation and pre-planning significantly improve post-storm outcomes. It is essential to develop a comprehensive, written Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) *before* a hurricane threat emerges. This plan should be strategic, address the specific risks and vulnerabilities of the school, outline procedures for various scenarios (including worst-case impacts), define roles and responsibilities, and detail communication protocols. The plan must consider not only physical safety and property protection but also the logistics of potential closures, shelter operations, and the psychological well-being of the school community. Regular review, updates, training, and drills are necessary to ensure the plan remains effective and staff are prepared.

Specific Risks to Charter School Facilities and Assets

Charter schools face significant risks to their physical facilities, outdoor areas, and equipment during a hurricane. Understanding these vulnerabilities is key to effective preparation:

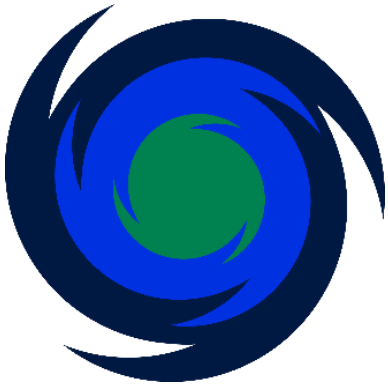
- **Buildings:** Roofs are susceptible to damage from high winds (loss of shingles, decking, or entire structure). Windows can be broken by wind pressure or flying debris. Water intrusion through roofs or windows can cause extensive interior damage. Severe storms can cause major structural damage, potentially rendering buildings unsafe (requiring "Red Tagging").
- **Outdoor Areas:** Playground equipment can be damaged or become hazardous. Athletic field fences, windscreens, and backstops can be bent or destroyed. Landscaping, especially trees with dead or weak limbs, can fall, damaging property, blocking access, or downing power lines. Unsecured items like garbage cans, benches, portable equipment, and planters can become dangerous airborne missiles. Site drainage systems can become clogged with debris, worsening flooding.
- **Equipment:** HVAC systems can be damaged. Electrical systems are vulnerable to power outages and surges. Technology, including computers, servers, and audiovisual equipment, can be damaged by water intrusion, power surges, or impacts if not properly secured and protected. Communication systems (phones, internet, radios) are often disrupted or completely disabled. School vehicles like buses need to be secured away from potential hazards. Generators require maintenance and fuel to be operational.
- **Records & Supplies:** Critical student, personnel, and financial records can be lost or damaged by water or wind intrusion if not secured. Classroom supplies and library materials are also vulnerable.

Pre-Hurricane Preparedness & Risk Mitigation Strategies

It's important to have an emergency plan in place before a hurricane is predicted to understand what steps need to be taken before, during and after a storm. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a rating that ranges from 1 to 5 based on a hurricane's sustained miles-per-hour (mph) wind speed and estimates potential property damage. The rating scale is as follows:

Category 1 (74 to 95 mph)	Category 2 (96 to 110 mph)	Category 3 (111 to 129 mph)
Very dangerous winds could damage roofs, shingles, vinyl siding and gutters. Large tree branches may snap. There will likely be power outages due to damage to power lines and poles.	Extremely dangerous winds could result in major roof and siding damage. Near-total power loss should be expected and may last several days or weeks.	Devasting damage may occur to home and business. Trees may be snapped or uprooted, blocking roads. Electricity and water may be unavailable for several days or weeks.

Category 4 (130 to 156 mph)	Category 5 (157 or higher mph)
Catastrophic damage may occur to well-built properties, including loss of roof structure or exterior walls. Power outages may last weeks to months, and the area may be uninhabitable for weeks or months.	Like Category 4, Category 5 hurricanes may cause catastrophic damage resulting in a high percentage of properties being destroyed. Power outages may leave the area uninhabitable for weeks or months.



Foundational Planning and Policy

Proactive planning and mitigation are essential *before* a hurricane threatens. This involves developing robust plans, securing necessary resources and contracts, physically preparing the campus, and ensuring clear communication protocols are in place. Regularly review and update these elements, ideally before the start of each hurricane season (June 1st).

- **Emergency Operations Plan (EOP):** Every charter school needs a tailored EOP outlining procedures before, during, and after a storm.
  - **Team & Process:** Form a planning team involving administrators, key staff, and potentially representatives from your authorizer or management organization. Coordinate with your local County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Utilize resources like FEMA's CPG 101 and guidance for developing school EOPs.
  - **Content:** The EOP should address specific risks to the school's assets and operations, define roles and responsibilities clearly, detail steps for protecting facilities and equipment, establish communication protocols for various scenarios (including system failures), outline evacuation and sheltering procedures (if applicable), and detail coordination with the County EOC. Include planning for students and staff with access and functional needs.
  - **Review:** Update the EOP annually, incorporating lessons learned from drills or actual events. Conduct annual training and exercises (tabletop or functional) for staff.

- **Insurance Policy Review:** Conduct a thorough annual review of all insurance policies with your agent/broker.
  - **Coverage:** Understand policy limits, exclusions, and deductibles, especially for wind/named storms.
  - **Property Schedule/SOV:** Ensure the Statement of Values accurately lists all school-owned assets (buildings, contents, equipment, portables, vehicles) with current replacement cost values. Update regularly to add new assets, reflect improvements, and remove disposed items.

> ***Note:*** Outdated or incomplete schedules can lead to significant underinsurance. If new assets are not added, or if values haven't been updated to reflect current construction costs or improvements, your School may face a substantial financial shortfall when trying to repair or replace damaged property after a hurricane.

- **Pre-Event Contracts:** Secure contracts *before* hurricane season for critical recovery services such as debris removal, tree services, water extraction/drying, restoration, roofing, electrical, etc. Waiting until a storm approaches is often too late and more costly.
  - **FEMA Compliance:** Ensure procurement processes meet FEMA requirements to maintain eligibility for potential reimbursement. Document procurement meticulously.
  - **Scope & Pricing:** Clearly define scope, response times, and pricing in contracts. Have backup vendors identified.
- **Budgeting:** Include funds in the operational budget for pre-season preparedness (inspections, supplies) and establish contingency funds. Account for insurance deductibles, immediate cleanup costs, and potential uninsured losses to avoid recovery delays.
- **Coordination with County EOC:** Maintain ongoing contact with your local County EOC. Understand their alert systems, evacuation plans, shelter information, and reporting procedures. Register key personnel for county alerts. Designate a trusted school representative to liaise with or potentially be stationed at the EOC during activations.

Facility Preparation

Execute per EOP plan and phases. Additional items are included in the checklists that follow:

- **General Site Prep:**
  - Survey site for potential hazards; secure or bring indoors all loose outdoor items (garbage cans, portable playground equipment, benches, tables, planters, temporary signs).
  - Inspect and clear all site and roof drains, gutters, and swales of debris. Have sandbags ready for flood-prone doors.
  - Remove flags from poles.
  - Check and secure roof hatches and roof-mounted equipment.
  - Install shutters or board up windows/doors as needed per EOP; close and lock all windows and doors. Lower blinds.
  - Fuel all school vehicles and generators; perform generator checks. Check emergency lighting.
  - Secure any ongoing construction work.
- **Classrooms, Offices, and Labs:**
  - Move books, papers, electrical equipment, computers, and AV devices away from windows. Elevate items off the floor where possible and cover securely with plastic sheeting.
  - Secure important documents and records.
  - Shut down gas service to science labs if applicable.

- **Special Areas:**
  - **Playgrounds:** Inspect equipment for loose parts; remove/store detachable items like shades or swings.
  - **Athletics:** Remove windscreens from fences; secure goals and equipment; verify out-building doors/windows are locked.
  - **Kitchens:** Manager to complete inventory; ensure adequate non-perishable food and supplies (paper goods, trash bags); check cooler/freezer temperatures. Empty refrigerators if extended outage is expected.

Essential Documentation & Communication:

- **Pre-Storm Asset Inventory**: Create a detailed photographic and video record of *all* school assets (buildings, rooms, equipment, grounds, vehicles) before the storm, ideally at the start of each hurricane season. Date-stamp visuals if possible. Store copies securely off-site/digitally. This is vital for insurance claims and potential FEMA aid.
- **Secure Critical Records:** Keep copies of essential documents (EOP, insurance policies, vendor contracts, asset inventories, staff/student emergency contacts, financial info) in waterproof/fireproof containers on-site and also in secure digital formats (cloud storage, off-site drives).

During the Hurricane

Once hurricane conditions begin, the absolute priority shifts to the safety of personnel, students (if on site for any reason, such as sheltering), and any other individuals at the school facility. All preparedness actions should already be complete before the storm's arrival.

Monitoring and Safety Protocols

- **Stay Informed:** Continuously monitor official updates from the National Hurricane Center (NHC) and local emergency management. Utilize NOAA Weather Radio or designated local news/radio sources. Track the storm's path, intensity, and specific local warnings (e.g., tornado, flood).
- **Heed Official Guidance:** Strictly follow all instructions from local and state emergency officials, including any evacuation orders or curfews issued before the storm's onset. Compliance is critical for safety.
- **Personnel Safety First:** Ensure all school staff, essential contractors, and any sheltered individuals are safely located within designated secure areas of the facility. Cease all outdoor activity. No non-essential personnel should be attempting to work, and essential personnel (like shelter staff) must prioritize their own safety above all else, avoiding unnecessary risks. Do not attempt outdoor activities or travel during the storm.

Limited Actions and Communication

- **Life Safety is Paramount:** During the peak of the storm, cease all activities unless absolutely essential for immediate life safety. Property protection measures should have been completed beforehand. Do not attempt repairs or further facility securing once dangerous conditions arrive. If not done pre-storm and if safe to access panels, consider turning off electrical breakers to prevent damage from surges.
- **Critical Communications Only:** If communication systems (like emergency radios or satellite phones) are operational *and* it is completely safe to do so, the designated school spokesperson may relay urgent safety warnings or critical updates received *directly from official emergency management sources* (e.g., tornado warnings, flash flood warnings). Be acutely aware that power outages and infrastructure damage may severely limit or disable communication capabilities.
- **Do Not Assess Damage:** Avoid sending personnel out to check on facilities or make repairs until conditions are officially declared safe by emergency authorities *after* the storm has passed. Remote monitoring systems may be checked only if they do not require personnel to be outdoors or in unsafe conditions. Emergency situations requiring immediate response (e.g., medical emergency within a shelter) should utilize 911 or established emergency radio channels, understanding that response may be delayed until conditions improve.

Post-Hurricane Response & Recovery

The actions taken immediately after a hurricane passes are crucial for safety, limiting further damage, and beginning the recovery process efficiently. This phase begins when hurricane-force winds subside (sustained winds below 35-40 mph) during daylight hours.

Immediate Actions (Safety First)

- **Await Official Clearance:** Do *not* attempt to enter damaged areas or begin assessments until emergency officials declare it safe. Road conditions may be hazardous.
- **Personnel Check-in & Reporting:** Account for the safety and status of all essential school staff and key contractors. Staff should report to work based on pre-defined categories and instructions from school leadership. Always carry school ID. Establish communication with the district/management Incident Command Center.
- **Initial Safety Assessment:** Once safe access is permitted, conduct a rapid visual assessment focusing *only* on immediate life-safety hazards:
  - Downed power lines (Assume ALL are live; report immediately to the utility company).
  - Gas leaks or hazardous material spills (Report immediately).
  - Major structural damage to buildings (potential collapse).
  - Significant flooding, especially near electrical equipment.
  - Blocked roadways impeding emergency vehicle access.
  - Unstable trees or large, hanging limbs.

- **Secure and Warn:** Immediately report critical utility hazards. Secure or clearly mark off unsafe areas using "Red Tags", caution tape, or barriers to prevent entry. Do not enter red-tagged buildings until cleared by the appropriate building official.
- **Safety Communications:** Use all available channels to inform staff, students, and families of known immediate hazards and advise them to avoid the campus until declared safe.

Systematic Damage Assessment and Documentation

- **Detailed Inspection:** Once immediate safety issues are addressed, perform a thorough, systematic inspection of ALL school-managed assets (buildings, classrooms, playgrounds, fences, equipment, landscaping, vehicles, etc.).
- **Meticulous Documentation (Crucial for Insurance & FEMA):** This is imperative for reimbursement.

  - **Photos/Videos:** Take extensive photos and videos *before* any cleanup begins. Capture wide shots for context and close-ups of specific damage. Use apps that provide GPS location and timestamps if possible. Compare with your pre-storm documentation.
  - **Written Logs:** Keep detailed written logs describing the damage, specific location (building/room number), date/time observed, and initial severity estimate. Use standardized forms if provided (e.g., Initial School Damage & Utility Assessment, Detailed Damage Reporting Form). Develop a detailed Damage Inventory.
  - **Submission:** Submit initial assessments promptly (e.g., within 4 hours) and detailed reports as required (e.g., within 24 hours) to the designated district/management entity.
- **Prioritize:** Focus assessment efforts first on issues affecting safety (e.g., damaged structures, playground hazards), essential services (access routes, critical utilities), and potential for escalating damage (e.g., roof leaks).

Activating Response & Recovery Operations

- **Engage Pre-Contracted Vendors:** Activate your pre-negotiated contracts for debris removal, tree services, emergency repairs, etc. Issue formal work orders defining scope and cost limits as per the contract. Ensure procurement complied with FEMA rules.
- **Coordinate Debris Removal:** Oversee debris operations. If seeking FEMA reimbursement, ensure contractors strictly follow FEMA guidelines for debris segregation (vegetative vs. construction/demolition), hauling, load ticketing, and monitoring. Document the immediate threat being eliminated. Understand the distinction between debris removal from school common areas (generally eligible) vs. private property.
- **Prioritize Repairs:** Address repairs based on the damage assessment, focusing first on: 1) Safety hazards (structural issues, playground damage, electrical hazards), 2) Essential functions (clearing access routes, critical drainage), and 3) Preventing further loss (roof tarping, patching leaks, covering windows). Submit repair requests through the appropriate work order system. Remove wet materials like ceiling tiles and insulation promptly. Contact for water extraction services if needed.

- **Address Potential Liabilities:** Evaluate situations like fallen school-owned trees damaging adjacent property. Consult with legal counsel and FIA regarding liability, especially if hazards were known pre-storm.
- **Utility Restoration:** Ensure utilities (electrical, water, gas) are safely restored and checked before reopening facilities or allowing full access.
- **Reopening Schools:** Recognize that reopening schools is a critical milestone for the community. Address the numerous challenges involved, including facility repairs, transportation disruptions, potential need for temporary configurations (merging classes, split schedules), ensuring adequate staffing, addressing childcare needs for staff, and prioritizing the social-emotional needs of students and staff upon return. Plan for a potentially phased reopening.
- **Handling Donations:** Implement pre-planned procedures for receiving, sorting, storing, and distributing donations. Communicate needs clearly and manage unsolicited items effectively.
- **Ongoing Communication:** Keep the school community (staff, students, families) informed about recovery progress, repair timelines, facility reopening status, and any ongoing safety issues. Manage expectations, as full recovery takes time.

FEMA Public Assistance (PA)

Following a Presidential Disaster Declaration covering your area, your charter school *may* be eligible for FEMA Public Assistance (PA) grants. PA primarily reimburses costs for Category A (Debris Removal) and Category B (Emergency Protective Measures), typically at a 75% federal cost share or higher. Navigating the FEMA PA process requires meticulous attention to detail and robust documentation. Hiring experienced FEMA consultants can be beneficial but requires careful vetting.

- **Key Resource - PAPPG:** The Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) is the comprehensive guide for the PA program. Familiarize yourself with it thoroughly.
- **Initiating the Process:**
  - **Applicant Briefing:** Attend the mandatory applicant briefing held by state/FEMA officials as soon as possible after the declaration.
  - **Request for Public Assistance (RPA):** Submit your RPA through the FEMA Grants Portal by the deadline (typically 30 days from declaration). Step-by-step instructions can be found in the Grants Portal Account and Request for Public Assistance Guide.
  - **FEMA Points of Contact:** You will have an exploratory call and then a Recovery Scoping Meeting with FEMA and State officials. You will be assigned a Program Delivery Manager (PDMG) who is your primary point-of-contact.
- **Documentation is Paramount:** Failure to properly document work and costs is a primary reason for denial or de-obligation of funds.
  - **Required Records:** Compile detailed documentation for each potential project, including damage descriptions/dimensions, location-specific details, geo-tagged photos/videos, relevant maintenance records, your full insurance policy, and all cost documentation (labor, equipment, materials, contracts).
  - **Organizational:** Charter agreement, non-profit verification, board list, mission statement.
  - **Facility:** Proof of ownership or lease agreement (showing repair responsibility). Site plans/blueprints if available.
  - **Record Retention:** Maintain ALL records related to PA grants for 5 years *after* the grant closeout date, as they are subject to audit.
- **Debris Removal Specifics:**
  - **Eligibility:** Work must be in the public interest. Document the immediate threat being eliminated. Debris on public property and rights-of-way is generally eligible. Includes vegetative and construction/demolition debris. (Note: Specific size requirements for hazardous limbs/stumps were eliminated, but threat documentation is still required).
  - **Monitoring:** You MUST actively monitor all debris removal operations (contractor and own forces) from collection to final disposal and document this monitoring. Failure to monitor jeopardizes funding.
- **Beyond Debris Removal:** Emergency Work (Generally 6-month completion deadline) and Permanent Work (Generally 18-month completion deadline, extensions possible)

  - **Category B: Emergency Protective Measures:** Actions to save lives, protect health/safety, and prevent further damage. Examples include temporary roofing/boarding, safety inspections, mold remediation, security, potentially costs for temporary daycare or instructional spaces if necessary for safety/operations.
  - **Category E: Public Buildings and Equipment:** Repair, restoration, or replacement of damaged school facilities (classrooms, gyms, admin offices) and equipment (HVAC, electrical, plumbing). Includes funding to upgrade facilities to meet current applicable building codes and standards, allowing schools to build back stronger and more resilient.
  - **Contents & Temporary Facilities:** Typically includes repair/replacement of essential educational contents (desks, computers, books, lab equipment). Costs for temporary facilities (leased space, modular units) may be eligible if primary facilities are unusable.
- **Procurement & Contracting:**
  - **Compliance:** Strict adherence to federal procurement standards (2 CFR Part 200) is required for contract work to be eligible. Review the FEMA PA Contracting Requirements Checklist.
  - **Analysis & Estimates:** Perform cost/price analysis for procurements over the simplified acquisition threshold. Make independent cost estimates before receiving bids.
  - **Contract Types:** Fixed-price and cost-reimbursement contracts are allowable. Time and Materials (T&M) contracts are discouraged and only potentially allowable under specific conditions (e.g., clear scope not initially possible, contract has a ceiling price, high degree of oversight). Cost-plus-percentage-of-cost contracts are ineligible. Ensure contracts include federally required provisions.
- **Insurance & Other Considerations:**
  - FEMA PA is supplemental and cannot duplicate benefits from other sources, primarily insurance.
  - You must file claims with all applicable insurance providers first.
  - Provide FEMA with policy details and proof of insurance settlements (itemizing coverage) or denials.
  - FEMA may cover eligible costs not covered by insurance (e.g., deductibles, damages exceeding policy limits, costs for items excluded from the policy).
  - Carefully track insurance proceeds to clearly identify the remaining unmet needs for which FEMA assistance is sought.
  - **NFIP:** For flood-damaged facilities located in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) for over a year, FEMA must reduce PA funding if the facility was uninsured or underinsured for flood loss. The reduction is based on the amount of insurance that *could* have been obtained or the value of the building/contents.
  - **Other Factors:** Be aware of potential impacts from Floodplain Management, Hazard Mitigation opportunities, Environmental Protection, and Historic Preservation requirements.
- **Project Thresholds:** FEMA distinguishes between small projects (under $1 Million for recent disasters, check current threshold) and large projects. Small projects are typically funded based on initial estimates, while large projects are funded as work is completed and require quarterly reporting.

Long-Term Mitigation & Resilience

Effective hurricane risk management is a continuous cycle of planning, mitigating, responding, recovering, and learning. Building long-term resilience requires ongoing effort, strategic investment, and honest reflection on past events.

Post-Event Review and Analysis

- **Conduct After-Action Review (AAR):** After every significant storm or preparedness exercise, convene the planning team (administrators, key staff, relevant vendors/partners) to conduct an AAR.
  - **Evaluate Performance:** Honestly assess what worked well and what didn't in executing the EOP and response/recovery efforts. Identify strengths, weaknesses, lessons learned, and specific opportunities for improvement.
- **Evaluate Vendor Performance:** Assess how pre-event contractors performed during the response. Did they meet response times and contractual obligations? Were they compliant with FEMA documentation needs? Use this evaluation for future contract decisions.

- **Assess Financial Preparedness:** Review the storm's financial impact. Was insurance coverage adequate? Were reserves sufficient for deductibles and uninsured costs? Adjust future budgets and reserve planning based on this real-world experience.

Implementing Mitigation Upgrades

- **Identify Mitigation Opportunities:** Use damage assessments and the AAR to identify specific projects that could reduce future damage and losses. Examples include:
  - Strengthening or replacing fences with more wind-resistant designs.
  - Installing impact-resistant glazing or shutters on buildings.
  - Hardening electronic gate systems against water/surges.
  - Replacing vulnerable trees with more resilient species.
- **Seek Grant Funding:** Explore potential grants to help finance mitigation projects. FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and others may be available post-declaration. Participating in your local government's Hazard Mitigation Plan updates is often key to eligibility.
- **Update School Standards:** Incorporate lessons learned into school design and maintenance standards for future construction or major renovations to build resilience.

Ongoing Preparedness Activities

- **Regular Training and Exercises:** Conduct annual training for staff on the EOP and their specific roles. Periodically conduct tabletop or functional exercises to test plans and maintain readiness.
- **Annual Reviews:** *Before* each hurricane season (June 1st), review and update the EOP, emergency contacts, vendor contracts, and insurance policies.
- **Continuous Community Education:** Regularly educate staff, students, and families on hurricane risks, personal preparedness measures, school procedures during storms, communication methods, and available mental health supports. Use newsletters, website updates, meetings, and other channels.

Mental Health, Staff, and Student Resilience

- **Acknowledge Long-Term Impacts:** Recognize that the psychological effects of major disasters can be significant, delayed, and long-lasting for both students and staff. Mental health needs often surface months or even years after the event. Don't underestimate these needs.
- **Support Staff:** Provide robust mental health support for staff, addressing barriers like stigma and confidentiality concerns. Offer resources like EAPs, counseling access, self-care training, and promote a culture where seeking help is encouraged. Be mindful of burnout and compassion fatigue.
- **Address Staffing Challenges:** Anticipate potential long-term staffing issues, including turnover due to stress, burnout, or disaster-related challenges like housing shortages. Plan for recruitment difficulties and support new staff, especially those lacking experience.
- **Acknowledge Differences:** Recognize that individuals experience and cope with disasters differently; validate varying perspectives.
- **Expect the Unexpected:** Be prepared for unforeseen challenges or delayed impacts.
- **New Normal:** Understand that things will not return to exactly how they were before a major disaster. Focus on building a resilient "new normal" rather than restoring the past. Avoid setting arbitrary recovery timelines.
- **Role Modeling:** Be aware that children take cues from adult responses and conversations.

CHECKLIST

Hurricane Assessment – Planning & Administration

Planning & Administration	
Conduct EOP training/exercise with administrators and relevant staff.	☐
Review insured property schedules (statement of values) annually with your agency account manager.	☐
Confirm pre-event contracts for debris removal, tree service, electrical, plumbing, roofing, security, etc., are in place and vendors are ready.	☐
Update and secure critical records (EOP, insurance policies, contracts, asset inventory, contact lists, bank info) in multiple formats (digital cloud/off-site drive, waterproof hard copies).	☐
Update school staff emergency contact list, including their own emergency/evacuation plans and out-of-area contacts.	☐
Conduct comprehensive pre-storm photo/video documentation of all assets (date/time stamped if possible).	☐
Ensure staff safety plans are reviewed, PPE is available, and staff understand procedures, including allowing time for personal preparations.	☐
Replenish emergency supplies (water, nonperishable food, batteries, flashlights, first-aid kits, basic tools, fuel for generators/vehicles, cash).	☐
Facilities & Supplies	
Conduct comprehensive pre-storm photo/video documentation of all school assets (interior and exterior of buildings, grounds, major equipment, portables, vehicles) and store securely.	☐
Inspect and confirm operability of any storm shutters or window protection; schedule repairs if needed.	☐
Schedule annual generator maintenance (if applicable) and ensure a plan for regular operational tests (e.g., monthly during hurricane season). Verify fuel levels and service schedules.	☐
Review specific plans for securing vulnerable areas like science labs (gas shutoff), media centers (protecting collections), and athletic equipment.	☐
Food Service (if applicable): Review procedures for securing kitchen equipment, disposing of perishable food, and protecting non-perishable stock.	☐
Transportation (if applicable): Review procedures for securing school vehicles.	☐

CHECKLIST

Hurricane Assessment – Facility Preparation

Execute per Emergency Operations Plan as storm approaches, typically during watch/warning issuance.

Initial Phase (72-36 hours out)	
Notify staff of the activation phase and review EOP roles/responsibilities for storm preparation.	☐
Monitor official weather updates (National Hurricane Center, local EOC) and communications from your authorizer/EOC continuously.	☐
Check inventory of on-site emergency supplies/kits; stage items as needed for facility lockdown and post-storm response.	☐
Identify all loose items needing to be brought indoors or securely anchored (e.g., trash cans, outdoor furniture, temporary signs, planters, sports equipment).	☐
Check all site drains, roof drains, gutters, and swales; clear any debris.	☐
Food Service (if applicable): Begin implementing procedures for protecting food stock and equipment.	☐
Transportation (if applicable): Fuel school vehicles and move them to designated secure locations, away from trees or flood-prone areas.	☐
Final Preparation Phase (36-18 hours out)	
Place sandbags at entrances prone to flooding, if applicable and available.	☐
Install any temporary storm shutters/plywood or deploy other window/door protection systems as per the EOP.	☐
Move books, papers, computers, electronics, and other valuable equipment away from windows and exterior doors.	☐
Elevate items off floors where possible, especially in ground-level rooms or flood-prone areas.	☐
Cover valuable equipment securely with plastic sheeting.	☐
Close and securely lock all windows and interior/exterior doors, lower blinds, secure roof hatches.	☐
Implement electrical system readiness procedures as directed by facilities personnel/IT (e.g., shutting down non-essential systems, unplugging sensitive equipment).	☐
Secure hazardous materials in labs; shut off gas service to labs if applicable and per EOP.	☐
Secure gates per EOP (locked open often preferred for access) using chains/locks if power is off or arms disconnected (per manufacturer guidance).	☐

CHECKLIST

Hurricane – During the Storm

In the event essential personnel remains on-site (shelter operations, etc.)

As Feasible	
All designated essential personnel are safely sheltered in the most secure, pre-identified interior location within the school.	☐
Continuously monitor National Hurricane Center, NOAA Weather Radio, and local emergency management alerts.	☐
Strictly follow all official evacuation orders and curfews.	☐
Cease ALL outdoor activity. No one should be outside for any reason.	☐
Identify an alternative business site and create a relocation plan in the event the hurricane makes your location inaccessible.	☐
Use established communication channels ONLY to relay critical safety warnings from official sources, if possible and safe to do so.	☐
Monitor critical systems ONLY IF feasible through remote monitoring systems that do not require personnel to be outdoors or in unsafe conditions.	☐
Turn off electrical breakers to prevent damage during power surges/outages if not done pre-storm AND if safe to access panels.	☐

CHECKLIST

Hurricane – After the Storm

To be performed ONLY after official "all clear" is given by emergency management and it is safe to access the campus.

Immediate Actions (Safety First)	
Exercise extreme caution when approaching and entering the campus. Be alert for downed power lines, gas leaks, unstable trees/structures, wildlife, and other hazards.	☐
Do NOT enter any building if structural damage is suspected (e.g., leaning walls, collapsed roof sections) until it has been assessed by qualified personnel.	
Conduct rapid initial safety assessment: downed power lines, gas leaks, flammable liquids, poisonous gases, major structural damage, damage to foundations/underground piping, flooding, blocked emergency access, unstable trees/limbs.	☐
Report critical hazards immediately to school leadership/designated contact, who will coordinate with emergency services/utility companies.	☐
Secure or clearly mark off hazardous areas using "Red Tags" (if applicable for unsafe buildings), caution tape, or barriers to prevent unauthorized entry.	☐
Assessment & Documentation	
Begin systematic, detailed inspection of all school assets (buildings, classrooms, grounds, equipment, vehicles).	☐
Begin meticulous photo/video documentation of ALL damage before any cleanup or non-emergency repairs begin. Document from multiple angles, including context (wide shots) and specific damage (close-ups). Compare with pre-storm visuals if possible.	☐
Start detailed written logs or use a "Detailed Damage Reporting Form" for each damaged area or item, noting location, type of damage, and initial observations.	☐
Communication & Next Steps	
Report initial findings and safety status to school leadership/designated point of contact.	☐
Notify insurance agent/carrier of potential claim based on initial assessment.	☐
If safe and feasible, and authorized by leadership, begin minimal mitigation to prevent further damage (e.g., covering broken windows if safe, moving sensitive items from active leaks, turning off water to localized leaks if trained to do so safely).	☐
Prioritize repairs & salvage: 1) Safety hazards, 2) Essential functions (access, drainage), 3) Preventing further damage (e.g., roof tarping, covering windows, patching leaks). Clean roof drains	☐