

Be Prepared!

When you receive notice of a hurricane that has the potential to impact your area, it's important that all individuals and cultural institutions prepare for possible strong winds, heavy rain, and flooding:

- Track the storm via the National Hurricane Center, <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>.
- Monitor information via your State Emergency Management Agency. For links to public safety websites for states, territories, and the District of Columbia, see <https://www.dhs.gov/state-homeland-security-and-emergency-services>.
- Gather your staff and review your disaster plan today. No disaster plan? Put that at the top of the to-do list once the hurricane passes (and hope you didn't need it this time).
- If you have a disaster plan, make sure everyone has a printed copy to take home. An electronic version may be useless if you lose power.
- Make sure staff, volunteer, and board contact lists are up to date. Determine how you will communicate with one another before, during, and after the storm.
- Make sure your insurance and disaster recovery vendor contact information is readily available.
- If you don't already have up-to-date images (photographic/video) of your facility's exterior and interior, including storage areas, now's the time to take them. Being able to illustrate how your building and collections looked before damage will be helpful if the need arises to pursue recovery financing.
- Back up electronic records and store the back-ups off-site or in the cloud.
- Secure outdoor furniture, bike racks, book drops, etc. – anything that can become a projectile in strong winds.
- Move collections that are in areas vulnerable to flooding – i.e., the floor, the basement – or susceptible to rain – near windows or under roofs.
- If you have time, cut lengths of plastic sheeting to be able to throw them over shelves or equipment should the building envelope be compromised.
- Know the location and shut-off procedures for water, electricity, and gas.
- Review individual or family plans. You'll feel better attending to your organization knowing that your loved ones are safe.
- For tips on what to do before, during, and after a hurricane, go to <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>.
- Keep this 24/7 hotline number handy: 202.661.8068. The National Heritage Responders, a team of trained conservators and collections care professionals, are available 24/7 to provide advice.
- Download FEMA fact sheets "After the Flood: Advice for Salvaging Damaged Family Treasures" and "Salvaging Water-Damaged Family Valuables and Heirlooms," available at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/113297>.
- Familiarize yourself with the disaster declaration process in case one is declared for your state, <https://www.fema.gov/disaster-declaration-process>.



FEMA and the Smithsonian Institution co-sponsor the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, a partnership of 58 national service organizations and federal agencies created to protect cultural heritage from the damaging effects of natural disasters and other emergencies.