

# Storm Response Safe Work Practice

The purpose of this pamphlet is to specify general work practices that will safeguard those workers who may be involved in post-storm cleanup operations. If you need more detailed information, ask your supervisor, or contact your FLC Safety and Risk Consultant.

## **Before the Storm (Your Home/Family):**

- Review your homeowner's insurance for coverages and gaps in coverage (i.e. Floods)
- Place a copy of your policy in a secure place (Water tight, or scanned on a cloud server)
- Clear rain gutters and downspouts
- Bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans and anything not tied down
- Cover windows and brace doors (Storm shutters, 5/8" marine plywood)
- Stock tarps, plastic sheeting, lumber and fasteners to secure damaged areas
- Conduct a home inventory, especially of high value items (Record a video walk through)
- Secure and protect irreplaceable items and keepsakes (Consider wind & water)
- Develop a family emergency plan. Learn community hurricane evacuation routes (and alternatives). Have family evacuation destinations planned out in advance. Consider food and water needs

## **After the Storm (Your Home):**

- Assess your home for potential hazards and damages. Take pictures of damage prior to repair or cleanup
- If needed contact your insurance carrier. They may have contractors prequalified and lined up which will save you time and further damage
- Document, Document, Document!

## **After the Storm (At Work):**

### General Practices:

- Unskilled personnel should not be performing skilled clean-up work
- Only trained and experienced equipment operators should be operating equipment especially heavy equipment
- Do not work alone (work in small teams)
- Check work areas for pits, holes, or protruding objects
- Be alert for sharp or jagged debris

### Protective Equipment:

- Wear heavy work gloves when handling sharp or abrasive materials (Hand injuries are the #1 injury during storm clean up)
- Wear disposable nitrile gloves when you may encounter infectious materials or harmful chemicals
- Wear safety glasses ALL THE TIME!
- Wear a hard hat for overhead hazards
- When working on or near water wear a personal flotation device (PFD)



### Heat Illness:

- Take frequent breaks and pace yourself

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- Schedule strenuous work for the coolest part of the day
- Wear light colored clothing
- Use sun screen
- Most importantly, DRINK WATER regularly!

## Flood Water Hazards:

- Do not drive through standing water. 6" of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control and potential stalling
- Flood water can contain infectious agents such as bacteria, viruses, protozoa, and parasitic worms from human and animal waste
- Always practice good hygiene, wash hands frequently especially before eating

## Electrical Hazards:

- Hazards include downed electrical wires, submerged electrical outlets/equipment or any conductive material in contact with a live circuit
- Avoid all power lines because the domino effect may pull other poles/lines down
- Don't go into any room if water is covering cords or if water has reached the wall outlets or if you hear popping, buzzing, or see sparks
- Stay at a safe distance until power outage can be verified through a utility representative

## Dangerous Animals, Insects and Plants:

- Be extra alert for dogs, rats, gators, snakes and insect nests. Storms can affect their behavior
- Avoid tall grass and check before you stick your hand in places, like debris piles
- Always wear heavy boots, pants and gloves to protect hands from insects and plants
- If you are experiencing skin irritation from plant contact wash with soap & water immediately

## Chain Saws:

- Read and follow all the manufacturer's instructions including labels or placards
- Ask a mentor or supervisor to provide coaching if in doubt!



- Wear eye, face, head, hearing, hand and leg protection when operating a saw. The often-overlooked leg protection (called chaps) are especially important since most chain saw injuries are to the operator's lower legs!
- A dull chain is more dangerous. Always have lots of extra chains available for your saws
- Turn off the saw when refueling servicing or adjusting
- Fuel must be stored in approved safety cans. Use a funnel to prevent spills and fires
- Hold the saw against the ground when starting. Do not drop start your saw or secure it between your legs while starting
- Always keep BOTH hands on the handles when operating
- Kickbacks are extremely dangerous. Never contact anything with the upper tip of the chainsaw, always make sure your chainsaw brake is functional, and always wear your face/head protection.

