HURRICANE DISASTER PLANNING & COVID-19
The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is excited to launch its virtual Mississippi Business Emergency Operations Center (MSBEOC). This center will serve as a way for businesses that would like to contribute to the fight of COVID-19 or any natural disaster to register with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. The MSBEOC provides disaster-specific communications from MEMA to registered members to coordinate private-sector businesses. It connects those who need resources with resource providers during response and recovery from an emergency or disaster event. MSBEOC is open to any business or organization, there is no cost to join. Purchases made through the MSBEOC will be on a case by case basis. Registering with the MSBEOC does not qualify your business as a vendor for the state of Mississippi. This site is only in its beginning phase. In the next phases of the website, MEMA’s MSBEOC will be an exclusive source of information for businesses to chat with one another online during disasters. This communication will give business owners the ability to discuss their needs, who can help and how soon that help can arrive. Multiple states across the country operate a business emergency operation center. MEMA will serve as the coordinating office to put those in need with the resources that are necessary in recovery.
The SBA declares an economic disaster for Mississippi due to COVID-19.

Mississippi Small Businesses prepare for a potential active hurricane season.
The SBA now offers low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to Mississippi small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

SBA assistance available in the entire state of Mississippi.

Eligibility for Economic Injury Disaster Loans is based on the financial impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The interest rate is 3.75 percent for small businesses. The interest rate for private nonprofit organizations is 2.75 percent.

SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years and are available to entities without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship.
MEMA’s first priority is, and always will be, the safety of Mississippians. Though we have been fortunate enough for the last two years to avoid a devastating hurricane season, Mississippi has endured some of the longest duration flood events and a record number of tornadoes during 2019.

For that reason, we always stress preparedness!

We urge you to make sure your family has an action plan. As a coastal state, Mississippi must be prepared for hurricanes beginning on or around June and lasting well into the holiday season. However, as Mississippians, we have become all too familiar with tornado strikes and flash flooding. Between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, MEMA responded to 115 confirmed tornadoes across the state as well as experiencing the longest federally declared weather event, Backwater Flood, in the history of FEMA.

As Executive Director, MEMA, I hope this guide will help you prepare for those dark and stormy days. Know where you will go and what supplies you will need to take with you. Prepare for days, perhaps weeks, without electricity after a storm passes. Be sure to discuss your evacuation plan with loved ones and have multiple ways to receive emergency alerts and warnings.

We urge homeowners and renters to carry insurance, including flood insurance, on your homes and belongings. MEMA will be there to assist you should a disaster affect you, but carrying the proper insurance is the only way to guarantee a full recovery. We live in a beautiful state and I am proud to serve Mississippians in this role as Director of MEMA.

I continue to always be prepared and stay alert to your local and state officials when severe weather threatens our state.

I’m proud to serve!

Greg Michel
Hurricane Preparedness

Fifteen Years Later: We Remember Hurricane Katrina
Remembering Katrina

Fifteen Years Later, We Remember Hurricane Katrina

WE REMEMBER, AUGUST 29, 2005

The tropical depression that became Hurricane Katrina formed over the Bahamas on August 23, 2005, and meteorologists were soon able to warn people in the Gulf Coast states that a major storm was on its way. By August 28, evacuations were underway across the region. That day, the National Weather Service predicted that after the storm hit, “most of the [Gulf Coast] area will be uninhabitable for weeks...perhaps longer.” Over 1836 lives were lost due to Katrina's devastating impacts on our Gulf coast and neighboring states. Source: History.com

BE HURRICANE READY!

This year marks 15 years since Hurricane Katrina struck Mississippi on August 29, 2005, taking the lives of 231 citizens, destroying thousands of homes and causing billions of dollars in damage. As Hurricane Season begins, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency wants to remind all Mississippi residents to begin preparing for the 2020 Hurricane Season. As part of Mississippi's Hurricane Preparedness week, MEMA Executive Director Greg Michel reminds Mississippians to discuss their Family and Business Disaster Plans. The plan should include an evacuation method and route, a communications plan and a disaster supply kit. By promoting preparedness information about the dangers to the public's health and safety that hurricanes pose and helping with relief efforts when these powerful storms strike, we can reduce the loss of life and property and help our neighbors recover more quickly from their devastating effects. With education, preparation, forecasting and coordination, we can save lives and improve Mississippi's ability to withstand the impact of hurricanes. Residents should contact their county emergency management directors to learn about emergency plans for their area, locations of shelters and evacuation zones and routes. The Atlantic Hurricane Season runs from June 1 through November 30. Remember no matter what the season holds, it only takes one.
Training Doesn't Happen Once, it's Daily

Office of Preparedness, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency

ARE YOU READY TO RESPOND?

A hidden gem within the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is our Office of Preparedness. As a vital role, they're responsible for planning, training, and providing exercise to our partners across the state. While preparing for potential disasters, your business should have a concrete plan that ensure the safety of your employees. In that plan, it's suggested to include the following:

1.) Conditions that will activate the plan
2.) Chain of Command
3.) Emergency functions and who will perform them.
4.) Specific evacuation procedures including routes and exits.
5.) Procedures for accounting for personnel, customers and visitors.
6.) Equipment for personnel.

FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

Understand which disasters could affect your community
Know what to do to stay safe
Take action to increase preparedness
Improve their ability to recover from a disaster

For More Information please visit:
Hurricane Preparedness

Know Where to Go.
Decide on safe, familiar places where your family can go for protection or to reunite. Make sure these locations are accessible for household members with disabilities and/or animal-friendly if you have pets or service animals. If you are ordered to evacuate, know the local hurricane evacuation route(s). Contact your local emergency management agency for more information.

Put Together A Disaster Supply Kit.
Include a flashlight, batteries, cash, first aid supplies, NOAA Weather Radio, and copies of your critical information if you need to evacuate.

Set Up Emergency Alerts
Many communities have text or email alerting systems for emergency notifications. It’s best to have multiple ways to get warnings including wireless emergency alerts and weather apps, local tv and radio, social media, and a NOAA weather radio.

Establish A Communication Plan.
Work with your family and loved ones to compile important information by completing the form on the following link: http://bit.ly/1p6Xnvc
One of the first steps you should take is to create or restock an emergency supply kit:

- Masks and gloves
- Flashlight and battery-powered radio with extra batteries.
- Non-perishable food for at least three days.
- One gallon of water, per person, per day for at least three days.
- Toiletry items.
- Pet food and pet supplies.
- Medicine and prescription medication.
- Copies of important family papers and documents.
- Cash and travelers checks

Fill up your vehicle with fuel.
As hurricane season approaches, the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for Louisiana suggests “Get a Game Plan” before June 1.

For those with medical disabilities, consider additional precautions.

Be ready to evacuate, if possible. If you can’t evacuate, know the requirements for Medical Special Needs Shelters and where they are located.

Medical Special Needs Shelters are specifically for individuals who need medical attention and cannot evacuate. For those who have health problems requiring medical expertise, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals recommends evacuating to areas that are out of harm’s way. Medical Special Needs Shelters are intended for those who need assistance that cannot be guaranteed in a regular shelter and who have no other resources. These shelters provide medical support services only, such as generators to power equipment like oxygen converters.

Maintain a list of the following important items and store it with your emergency supplies. Give a copy to a family member and a friend or neighbor:
- Special equipment and supplies used, like hearing aid batteries
- Prescription names and dosages
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of physicians and pharmacists
- Detailed information about the specifications of your medication regime.

Wear medical alert tags or bracelets at all times to identify your disability.

Source: getagameplan.org
Check First: Employees with Disabilities During a Disaster

- At least a week-long supply of prescription medicines along with a list of all medications dosage and any allergies.

- Descriptions of required accommodations, medical conditions and/or functional needs.

- List of medical supplies and durable medical equipment needed.

- Extra eyeglasses and/or hearing-aid batteries.

- Extra wheelchair batteries and/or oxygen.

- A list of the style and serial number of medical devices. Include special instructions for operating your equipment if needed.

- Copies of medical insurance and Medicare cards.

- Contact information for doctors as well as relatives or friends who should be notified if you are hurt.

- If you have a service animal, you’ll need pet food, extra water, the animal’s collar with ID tag, medical records and any other supplies.

- Handheld electronic devices loaded with movies and games (and spare chargers), headphones to decrease auditory distractions and comfort snacks and toys that meet needs for stimulation.
Protecting Your Employees During COVID-19

These steps are recommended to protect employees and prepare your business for disruption:

- Identify a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact at the workplace.
- Examine policies for leave, telework, and employee compensation.
- Leave policies should be flexible and non-punitive, and allow sick employees to stay home and away from co-workers.
- Leave policies should also account for employees who need to stay home with their children if there are school or childcare closures, or to care for sick family members.
- When possible, use flexible worksites (e.g., telework) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts) to help establish policies and practices for social distancing (maintaining distance of approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) between employees and others, especially if social distancing is recommended by state and local health authorities.
- Review your leave policies with all employees and provide information about available employee assistance services. Share information on steps they can take to protect themselves at work and at home, and any available.
- Identify essential employees and business functions, and other critical inputs such as raw materials, suppliers, subcontractor services/products, and logistics required to maintain business operations. Explore ways you can continue business operations if there are disruptions.
- Prepare business continuity plans for significant absenteeism, supply chain disruptions, or changes in the way you need to conduct business.
- Establish an emergency communications plan. Identify key contacts (with back-ups), chain of communications (including suppliers and customers), and processes for tracking and communicating about business and employee status.
- Share your response plans with employees and clearly communicate expectations. It is important to let employees know plans and expectations if COVID-19 occurs in communities where you have a workplace.

Source: cdc.gov