



CHAMBER of COMMERCE

HURRICANE RESILIENCY RECOMMENDATIONS



Due to St. Petersburg's vulnerable geographic position between Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, it is essential for the business community to be well-prepared and proactive in the approach to hurricane preparedness. The St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce organized a trip to Fort Myers and Fort Myers Beach in May 2023 to meet with business leaders and elected officials in the region following Hurricane Ian.

One of the main take aways from the trip was that all preparation, planning, and recovery efforts need to be collaborative projects between public, private and nonprofit entities.

Sustainable resiliency of a community depends on not just one group of people, but for all stakeholders to be united. By taking proactive measures, the business community can protect their employees, minimize damage, and ensure a smooth recovery process, ultimately safeguarding their long-term success.

CHAMBER LEVEL

- **Vendor & supplier guides**
 - o Contractors
 - o Restoration and tree services
 - o Solar chargers, solar lanterns
 - o Generators
 - o VOIP phone system
 - o Auto & home insurance
- **Relationship building with utilities**
 - o Advocate for buried power lines
 - o Temporary internet access
 - o Temporary electricity access
 - o COW (cell tower on wheels)
- **Coordinate with nonprofit network**
 - o People who want to help
 - o People who want to donate items
 - o People who want to donate money
- **Printed resource list for preparation & recovery**
 - o Connecting to disaster planning resources
 - o Food banks
 - o FEMA/SBA

BUSINESS LEVEL

- **Data backup and recovery**
 - o Store backups securely off site or in cloud
 - o Test data recovery process frequently
 - o Replicate data to multiple locations and in multiple formats, ie: paper copies
 - o 90 days cash on hand is recommended
- **Employee safety and well-being**
 - o Develop evacuation plans
 - o Consider provisions for remote work
 - o Implement employee assistance program
- **Communication plan**
 - o Develop comprehensive plan to keep employees & customers informed
 - o Consider plans for relocating staff member off site to ensure consistent communication
- **Plan maintenance & updates**
 - o Regularly review and update the plan to reflect organizational changes
 - o Schedule periodic drills and audits to assess effectiveness

New state legislation (Senate Bill 250) made various changes throughout Florida Statutes regarding the preparation and response activities of state and local government when natural emergencies impact the state. Specifically, the bill:

- Provides that counties and municipalities cannot prohibit a resident from placing a temporary structure on their property for up to 36 months following a natural emergency
- Requires local governments to expedite the issuance of building permits following a natural disaster
- Increases the extension of certain building permits following a declaration of a state of emergency from six to 24 months
- Authorizes local governments to create specialized building inspection teams following a natural disaster