



## Hurricane Preparedness: Is Your Roof Ready for the Next Storm?

For commercial property owners, hurricane preparation starts with the roof. Small issues can quickly become major problems when high winds, heavy rain and debris are involved.

With September and October among North Carolina's most active months for tropical systems, now is the time to make sure your roof is ready.

### Start With a Roof Inspection

A roof doesn't have to look damaged to have vulnerabilities.

Before a storm threatens the area, have your roof inspected for conditions that could become problems in high winds or heavy rain, including:

- Loose or damaged membrane, panels, flashing, edge metal, or coping
- Deteriorated sealants and penetrations
- Clogged drains, scuppers, and gutters
- Areas of ponding water
- Signs of previous leaks or moisture intrusion

Addressing these issues before a storm gives building owners more options - and more time - to make repairs.

### Don't Forget the Equipment

Roofing systems aren't the only things exposed to hurricane-force winds. Rooftop HVAC units, exhaust fans, vents and other equipment should be properly secured and able to withstand the wind loads expected for the building. FEMA specifically recommends securing rooftop equipment to resist design wind loads in high-wind areas.

A pre-storm inspection should include a look at the equipment and the areas where it connects to or penetrates the roof.

## Keep Drains and Drainage Paths Clear

Heavy rainfall can put significant pressure on a commercial roofing system. If drains and scuppers are blocked by debris, water can accumulate on the roof and increase the potential for leaks or other damage. Make sure drainage systems are clear and function properly before a storm arrives.

## Secure What's Around the Building

During high winds, loose materials can become projectiles. Signs, roofing materials and other unsecured objects can cause damage to buildings and people when carried by strong winds. As part of your storm preparation, identify items around the property that could become airborne and determine whether they should be secured, relocated, or removed.

## Have a Post-Storm Plan Before You Need One

Even a well-maintained roof can sustain damage during a major storm. Having a plan in place before the storm can make the recovery process much easier.

Know:

- Who is responsible for checking the property
- Who should be contacted if damage occurs
- Where your roof plans, warranties, and maintenance records are located
- How damage will be documented
- Who your roofing contractor is
- What areas of the building are most vulnerable to water intrusion

If it is safe to access the property after a storm, photographs and documentation can be valuable

when evaluating damage and beginning the repair process. Never put yourself or your employees at risk to inspect a damaged roof.

## Don't Wait Until the Last Moment When the Forecast Changes

Hurricane preparation is most effective when it's done before a storm approaches. Once a system is headed toward the coast, contractors, materials, and emergency services can quickly become stretched thin.

A few hours of preparation now can help reduce the potential for a much larger problem later.

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