



## Emergency Preparedness for Weather

Even when we think about disasters or consider preparing for them, most of us think they will never happen to us. The truth is emergencies can happen to anyone without a moment's notice. Having a plan in place before a disaster or emergency strikes is the first step to being prepared. A second important step is ensuring that the plan is reviewed annually and updated to handle any changes that have taken place in the previous 12 months. A third step is to make sure that everyone on the jobsite understands it.

Natural and man-made disasters include hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, fires, ice storms, structural collapses, hailstorms, thunderstorms, snowstorms, terrorist acts, severe flooding, and hazardous material incidents. Some types of emergencies may require everyone to shelter-in-place, while other types will require site evacuation. Some disasters may require you and your family leave the community you live in. Plan ahead for all types of emergencies.

As you make your plans, consider this short list of emergencies and the different ways to respond to them:

**Hurricanes** are tropical cyclones with very strong winds ranging from 74 miles per hour for a category 1 hurricane to more than 155 mph for a category 5 hurricane (like Katrina in 2005). Hurricane season begins June 1st and ends in November. Fortunately, hurricanes give you plenty of time to tie down anything that might become airborne, secure your work area or residence, pack, gas up, and get out of town. If you decide to stay through the storm, make sure you have enough food, water, prescription medications and other supplies for a minimum of 72 hours.

**Tornados** are violent storms that can destroy an entire neighborhood in seconds. If a tornado is headed your way, go to a safe place right away. If you are at home and live in a single-family home, seek shelter in a bathroom or interior closet on the lowest level or in a basement or a storm cellar.

**Earthquakes** are infrequent but when they occur, they can be devastating. If you live or work in an earthquake zone, check with local authorities for what steps to take.

**Fires** can happen at any time. Prevention is key. Store flammables in approved containers. Dispose of flammable packaging and scrap materials properly. Never smoke around flammable liquids or combustibles. Review escape routes and post



emergency phone numbers at home and on the job. Install smoke detectors in your home.

**Winter Storms** may not be here yet but start to think about what to do in case of an ice storm or heavy snowstorm. Have a plan in case you lose power or get snowed in. Get your car or truck tuned up before the winter season begins.

### **SAFETY REMINDER**

**Emergency preparedness is important all year round. As the seasons change, take time to dust off, review, and update your plan.**