

# HURRICANE CHECKLIST FOR BIOLOGY

## 1. General:

- a. Back-up computer files, make more than one copy, and store the copies in several different locations.
- b. Cover and secure or encase and seal vulnerable equipment with plastic/visqueen.
- c. Valuable files, papers, and other important documents should be moved or cabinets covered with plastic/visqueen and secure.
- d. Unplug all computers, printers, and other electrical equipment, with the exception of refrigerators and freezers. Disconnect data lines from computers. Department heads of departments conducting research using perishable items will ensure that equipment needed to preserve the research is tied into a generator to ensure electrical power will be available.
- e. Move equipment and other valuables away from windows, off the floor, and to interior areas of the building. *All items of equipment should be tagged for easy identification and retrieval.*
- f. If an area is prone to flooding, and if necessary, relocate valuable equipment and other valuables to a higher floor if in a multiple-floor building. If the building has only one floor, it is recommended that valuable equipment and items be moved to another building outside the flood prone area.
- g. Clear desktops, tables, and exposed horizontal surfaces of materials subject to damage.
- h. Take all personal possessions home.
- i. Close and lock all office doors when the above have been completed.
- j. Update emergency contact rosters so all personnel can be contacted regarding closure and re-opening information.
- k. Special attention should be given to buildings with large amounts of glass windows.

## 2. Specific Laboratory Preparations:

- a. When a hurricane watch is issued, make necessary preparations to suspend ongoing experiments involving biological materials, radioactive agents, and hazardous chemicals. Secure all equipment and materials. When a hurricane warning is issued, suspend operations in the laboratory. Plan to shut operations down within three hours of the initial hurricane

warning. Do not count on the availability of power or water after onset of the storm and for several days following.

b. Always keep chemical/radioactive materials in your inventory to a minimum. Dispose of hazardous materials and old materials routinely to minimize chemical loading in your facility.

c. Consider turning down refrigerators and freezers to the lowest practical setting (temperature).

d. Due to the possibility of power outages, volatile toxic materials should not be stored in fume hoods or the open room but in tightly sealed, break-resistant containers.

e. Remove any equipment or supplies stored or mounted in outdoor or rooftop locations once a hurricane watch or warning is announced (based on ease of removal and set-up).

f. Laboratories with outside windows should develop a secure area for the storage of water-reactive chemicals, radioactive materials and biohazard agents. Ideally, materials with significant potential hazard should be moved to interior rooms (i.e., solvent stills containing reactive metals, glove boxes containing air reactives, etc.).

g. Collect notebooks and secure samples/data as practical for colleagues who are in a travel status or unable to reach the lab.

h. Check emergency phone numbers. Update emergency notification lists on lab doors. You may consider temporarily posting an extended list with all lab personnel's home phone number, pager number, and cellular phone number if the University is to be closed.

i. Maintain a supply of plastic waterproof containers to store reactive chemicals, lab notes, research documentation, computer discs, and any other materials that you cannot afford to have damaged or destroyed.

j. Inform the University Police Department (985-549-2222), if essential persons will need to remain in your building. No one is to be permitted to stay in the actual laboratory(ies) during the storm.

k. Each lab must maintain an inventory of all chemicals. A copy of this inventory must be kept in the lab. A copy must be given to the Safety Director if dangerous chemicals are involved.

l. All containers in the lab must be labeled.

m. Move equipment which must receive electrical power during a general outage to an emergency outlet powered by the generator.

**o. Remember, you must take responsibility to protect your own laboratory(ies). Plan ahead and implement your plan as soon as a hurricane watch is issued.**