

## Severe Storm Preparedness Checklist

We recognize that your IT infrastructure, backup, and other technology is important to your business. We've created this checklist and information document for you to review in anticipation of a severe storm. **If you have any additional questions or concerns, don't hesitate to call the office at (561)969-1616.**

- Take your computer and any backups you own with you if you can. This applies for homes or home offices. If you only need to protect one or two computers, they'll be safer with you than left for the storm.
- Take photographs and video of your office and assets prior to any storm. These will be helpful if you need to file an insurance claim.
- If you can't take your system with you (you have more than one or two computers, or you have a business network set up) – be sure you have an offsite back up available, and make sure it is as up to date as possible. You should also have a hard copy of all critical business information that you can put on an encrypted Flash drive, or if in printed form, in a fire-proof safe in case you have no power. When you have created a backup, be sure the following items are included:
  - Contracts (clients, contractors, employees, etc.)
  - Whether your business is server-based or cloud-based, be sure to take offsite a printed list of phone numbers and email addresses for all your contacts who are crucial to business operations, including suppliers, vendors, water, gas, electricity, mobile generators, staff and clients.
  - Accounting Info (tax info, payroll spreadsheets, credit card information, accounts receivable and accounts payable info)
  - Utilities Information (water, electrical, Internet provider, gas)
  - Personal Data (Photographs and Documents)
  - Multimedia (Videos, Music, Presentations)
  - Make sure you have your Business Assets Inventory taken. This includes EVERYTHING, from computer equipment to office furniture and lunchroom items and decorations.
  - Make sure you have your insurance information and phone numbers on hand

### **When you prepare your office or home for a disaster:**

- Shut down your computer and turn off your monitor. You should also turn off any peripherals, such as printers and external drives.
- Unplug the power cords from all devices. The area may lose power during a storm. Surges can happen when power is restored. Unplugging from the wall will help insure the devices will be protected.
- Unplug the network cable going to your computer, as well as your printer (networked printers only). Lightning can send voltage through these lines, possibly damaging your network cards.
- Unplug routers and disconnect them from the Internet Provider's modem to avoid lightning damage.
- After ensuring all devices have been unplugged, cover your computers with plastic bag your computers and put them in a safe place. This means wrapping the equipment and neatly wound wires in plastic, and putting them off of the ground in a safe place. One way to do this is by placing the equipment on a sturdy table (to prevent flood water from ruining them), and then placing another sturdy piece of furniture on top (protecting the equipment from falling debris).

### **Upon Your Return to the Office:**

- Remove any covering you placed over your computer.
- Plug in the power cords to all devices.
- Turn on the equipment starting with the peripheral devices first.
- Turn on your computer and monitor.

### **Be Prepared**

Your business doesn't need to go out of business as the result of a major storm. Palmtech Computer Solutions is committed to preparing our clients to protect their business, both in making sure they have the proper technology to meet their current and future needs, and in advising them about safeguarding their businesses from weather-related, cyber and other disasters. **We're always available at (561) 969-1616.**



## Equipment Specific Recommendations

### Servers

When a powerful storm hits, be it a tropical depression, tropical storm, or hurricane, one of the biggest issues you will likely face is power loss. If you have a server in your home or office, hopefully, you also have a Battery Backup set up.

- Battery Backups give connected devices about 15-20 minutes of power, depending on the number of devices connected to it and the size of the Battery Backup itself. Those 15-20 minutes allow connected devices, including the server, to shut down properly.

Make sure all documents are saved and/or backed up, hopefully both to an on-site backup drive and to an online backup drive (because if the server/workstation is damaged as well as the on-site backup, then the online backup still exists; but if the on-site backup is intact, it's easier to restore from that than the online backup).

- If your internal backups are on a hard drive or tape that can be removed from the office, take the unit(s) to a secure location.
- Most backups are scheduled to run late at night. If the server is not on at night, then the files modified during the previous day will not be on the latest backup.
- Scheduled backups can also be manually started earlier than scheduled; they usually finish within 2-3 hours of start time, depending on the size of the backup.

Prior to leaving the office just before a storm, the server should be shut down to prevent data corruption. In order to ensure that this process is completed correctly, please allow Preemo to perform this task.

- Server operating systems are very sensitive; if a server is abruptly or incorrectly shut down, it may require a restore or even re-installation to boot back up.

Keep in mind that if you currently have an Exchange server set up in your office, and you shut the server down in preparation for the storm, then you will not have access to any e-mails while the server is down. You may want to send a blast email out to your contacts informing them that you will not have access to email until a certain date.



### Workstations (i.e., desktop and laptop computers)

Leaving your computer powered on during any storm can cause major issues later on. Even if the computer is connected to a surge protector or battery backup, a strong electrical current may nonetheless cause irreversible damage to your hardware and components.

- Shut down your computer before leaving the office prior to a storm.
- Before unplugging any cables, take a picture of how everything is connected (such as the back of your computer tower). This will help you reconnect everything when the storm has passed.
- If all components are connected to a battery backup or surge protector, and everything connected to that battery/surge protector is shut down, then unplug the battery/surge protector from the electrical socket in the wall. If any components are plugged into the wall outlet, unplug everything.
  - If something, such as a server, is connected to the battery backup and it must stay on, then all devices that can be shut down should be unplugged from the Battery Backup.

If your home or office is located in a flood zone, place your computer tower in a large, heavy-duty trash bag, and place that bag in a plastic trash bin. Keep track of associated cables, and place them in plastic bags in the same plastic trash bin.

If you do not have your files and documents backed up using a formal backup system, either onsite or online (as stated above, ideally both), then save all important documents onto an external hard drive or even a USB thumb drive.

If you have questions or need immediate assistance, please contact us at (561) 969-1616.