Hurricane season IT guide

Do the big work before June 1, and the last 72 hours before a storm become a short checklist.

Panama City learned in 2018 that the businesses that reopen first are the ones that planned for it. Wind and water can take your building for weeks. With a little work ahead of time, they don't have to take your business.

Before the season (by June 1)

- [ ] **Backups run every night**, and one copy lives outside our area, not just on a box in the server closet.
- [ ] **Test a restore.** Bring back one file and one whole computer, so you know it works before you need it.
- [ ] **Everyone can work from home:** email, shared files, the phone system on cell phones, tested from a home internet connection.
- [ ] **Phone plan:** who forwards the main number, to which phone, and how.
- [ ] **Print an emergency contact sheet:** staff cell numbers, key clients, vendors, insurance agent, landlord, internet provider account numbers, and your IT support.
- [ ] **Photograph your equipment** and list serial numbers for insurance claims.
- [ ] **Check battery backups.** Their batteries wear out every 3 to 5 years.
- [ ] **Decide who makes the call** to close a location, and how staff hear about it.

The one thing to get right

A backup that sits in the same building as your computers floods with them. Make sure a recent copy is kept far away, and that someone has tested bringing it back.

When a storm heads our way

5 DAYS OUT

Get ready

- [ ] Confirm last night's backup ran (or ask IT)
- [ ] Check laptops, chargers and hotspots
- [ ] Draft your out-of-office message, voicemail greeting and website notice

72 TO 48 HOURS

Take work home

- [ ] Laptops go home with staff
- [ ] Charge phones and battery packs
- [ ] Print the contact sheet
- [ ] Move equipment off the floor and away from windows

24 HOURS

Close up

- [ ] Run a final backup
- [ ] Shut down computers and servers properly
- [ ] Unplug everything from the wall, including battery backups
- [ ] Cover equipment with plastic, forward the phones, turn on the out-of-office message

AFTER THE STORM

Reopen safely

- [ ] Never power on wet equipment
- [ ] Call IT before turning servers back on
- [ ] Power up in order: internet, firewall, network, servers, computers
- [ ] Check the first backup after reopening

Watch for storm scams

- Fake disaster-aid, insurance or contractor emails and texts asking you to sign in or pay a fee.
- Fake charities that appear the day after a storm.
- "New bank details" from a vendor while everyone is distracted. Always call back on a number you already have.

No one to call when a storm hits?

Flux Labs watches local businesses' systems before, during and after a storm, and helps them reopen in the right order. Call **(850) 250-5590**.