

STORM-RELATED INFORMATION
WHAT TO DO BEFORE A STORM
SMALL BUSINESS

GENERAL –

- Obtaining and maintaining proper insurance is a critical protection against a large or devastating loss.
- Talk to your agent in regard to coverage offered by your policy and what coverage options are available.
 - You will need to have coverage on your building (if applicable) and your business personal property.
 - Know what you are covered for and the coverage options available so that you can weigh alternatives and determine the protection that you need.
 - Make sure that the values insured on your policy accurately reflect your exposure to loss and that you understand the basis upon which coverage is written.
 - Make sure that you understand the means that your policy uses to value a loss (Actual Cash value versus Replacement Cost) and what your rights are in the event of a total loss (NH RSA 407:11).
 - Your exposure is not limited to physical loss. What happens if your business is shut down for an extended period of time? You may want to consider purchasing Business Income and/or Extra Expense Coverage for that purpose.
 - Have your agent help you determine the level of exposure and the right form of Business Income Coverage for your business.
 - In making your decision, be aware of any “waiting periods” that might apply or time that must expire before coverage applies in making your decision.
 - Don’t forget Extra Expense which is an alternative to help pay reasonable additional expense to get your business going again as soon as possible and it is a means to reduce loss potential over all.
 - Does your business have perishables, or is it otherwise dependent upon maintenance of utilities? Make sure that you have pertinent coverage that will provide *some* protection from loss should loss occur due to failure of a utility to function, etc. Make sure that you know what coverage your policy affords in this area.
 - Know your deductibles and how they will apply.
 - Make sure that critical records are duplicated with one copy stored off-site to assist in reconstruction after a loss.

- Make sure that you have a basic understanding of what your policy does and does not cover and conditions cited in the policy for your responsibilities in case of a loss.
- Make sure that you are aware of any governmental zoning or other issues that might affect how you can replace your building or the continuance of your business at its current location. Make sure that your agent is aware of any ramifications and that you are properly protected.
- Most Business Policies do not cover flood. Are you in an area exposed to flood/water damage? Coverage is available through the National Flood Insurance Association if your community is a “participating” community (if not you will have to investigate other resources to see if any coverage is available. If you are located in an area prone to flooding, you should consider adding flood coverage.
- Proper coverage is best obtained early as it will be unlikely that coverage for anything will be readily available when a major storm or flood is imminent.
- Have your insurance producer (agent) and company contact information readily available.
- Review your coverage annually with your agent to make sure it is up to date and meets your needs.

PRE-STORM PREPARATION -

- Develop a plan of action –
 - Take steps to protect property before disaster happens.
 - Make a pre-loss inventory utilizing photos or video and file it in a safe place along with ownership or lease documents. Perhaps an off site location might be considered. These will expedite loss assessment and replacement of your property.
 - Make sure you have identified what essential services you need to continue your operation. Make sure your insurance agent is aware of this.
 - Be aware of reasonable alternatives (perhaps another location is available and feasible to consider, providing temporary means to getting service to the premises until full service can be restored, etc.) to keep your business going should that become a necessity.
- Check your premises and make sure that it is secure or that there are no visible problem areas apparent (awnings, if any, are rolled up and secure, vulnerable areas such as large glass panels are secured to the extent possible, etc.).

STORM-RELATED INFORMATION
WHAT TO DO AFTER A STORM
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If you have fallen victim to a severe storm and have sustained property damage to your premises, you should do the following:

1. Take reasonable steps to prevent further damage to your property. Insurers may allow for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred until they can inspect the premises (taking temporary measures to secure the premises if openings are breached, moving undamaged furniture or other vulnerable property from an area where a breach has occurred raising the potential for further damage, etc.).
2. Contact your insurance agent or insurance company right away to verify coverage applies.
 - a. Let them know that damage has occurred, nature of the damage, and the date of occurrence.
 - b. It will be helpful that you have your insurance policies or numbers available to facilitate the report of your claim.
 - c. Provide your agent and/or company with good contact information.
3. Take photographs/video of the damage, if possible, or otherwise document the damage that has occurred.
4. **Do not** make any permanent repairs until your insurance company has inspected the property and you and they have reached an agreement as to the extent and cost of the necessary repair, or they have authorized you (in writing) to proceed with the repair.
5. Do not throw out damaged property before your insurance company has seen it, particularly larger items such as furniture, or items of significant expense.
6. If you have the means at your disposal (during a time when you have lost your electrical power), provide temporary heat or other services to all or part of the premises through the use of generators and/or other supplemental resources. If you do not have the means to maintain heat for the premises while outside temperatures are near freezing or below, consider turning off the water supply and draining pipes.
7. Save all receipts for expenses incurred as a result of the loss. This should be submitted to your insurance company for review.
8. Be prepared to stay open, if possible.
 - a. Are alternative sites available should your site be unusable for an extended period of time?
 - b. Can you resume business to reduce loss with a reasonable expenditure? Confirm with your agent that coverage to do so applies.
9. Keep copies of all correspondence with the insurance company, and keep records concerning your communications with the insurance company. Write down information about your in-person and telephone contacts, including the date, time and name of the person you spoke to and what was said.

If you have concerns about how your claim is being handled or you have questions that are not being sufficiently addressed by your agent or company, you may reach the New Hampshire Insurance Department for assistance, toll free, at 1-800-852-3416.