



Norfolk State University

Office of Information Technology

Hurricane Preparation Guide & Tips for

Personal Computer Systems

This guide is intended to provide instructions to computer users for securing and protecting their personal computing assets during a hurricane. Notifications concerning the University's official status relative to hurricanes will be communicated by Spartan E-Daily electronic mail messages, and other timely means as deemed appropriate and necessary.

Hurricane Watch

Upon the declaration of a hurricane watch, take these initial precautionary steps to:

- **1) Backup and Secure Data Files** --Your data files are valued information assets of the University. If you have access to a network File Server it is recommended you copy critical information files to the server. Please limit file server use to data files only. You do not need to copy programs or the operating system or otherwise backup your entire workstation. Programs and the OS can be easily restored but the data cannot! If you don't have access to a file server or network, backup critical files to floppy disk, CD Rewriteable disks, or USB memory keys. Be sure to carefully label or note the contents of the backup and test it to make sure the contents can be read again. The backup copy should be stored in an alternate, secure location in the event your office or storage location sustains extensive damage. If you use a laptop, be prepared to take the system home or to a shelter with you.
- **2) Organize Critical Enterprise Information Systems (Datatel, IFAS, etc.) and Other Vital Databases and/or Documents Work**-- OIT will schedule and communicate via email and the web page scheduled downtime for conducting complete backups of enterprise information systems, the electronic mail systems, and other servers. Organize and prioritize your data entry/update work so that critical or timely information is processed first. You should attempt to update any critical information records before the announced backup occurs (usually after a hurricane warning is declared).
- **3) Prepare to Store and Protect Computer and other Electronics** -- Clear space in your office/area that will allow you to move computers away from windows and up off of the floor; preferably towards the center of a room. Locate the best place/method for unplugging the unit. This may mean unplugging from the back of the computer if the wall outlet is inaccessible. Make some notes or drawings to yourself about where things are connected to your computer. eg. printer, monitor, power, network, keyboard and mouse. If needed, plastic bags and/or sheeting and tape can be obtained from the Facilities Department.

Hurricane Warning

Upon the declaration of a hurricane warning, take these additional precautionary steps to:

- **1) Finish Updating Data in the Enterprise Information Systems and Other Vital Databases and/or Documents** -- Undoubtedly, you will have some data and information in paper form that you will not have time to update/enter into online information systems. Make sure this information is accurately noted and stored in a safe place, preferably in a file cabinet or desk drawer 2 feet above the floor. Use a heavy clip to keep papers/folders together.
- **2) Computer Storage** - As a last step, your computer should be shut down properly and unplugged from the wall outlet. Do the same for the monitor and all peripherals such as printers, scanners, and speakers. Tape any notes you made concerning connections to the computer or otherwise secure them for future reference. Move the computer and peripherals away from windows and doors towards the center of the room. The equipment should be securely supported at least two feet from the floor and covered with plastic bags or sheeting provided by physical plant operations staff. Do not cover equipment that is plugged in or powered on.
- **3) Store Backups**-- If you have not already done so, put your critical file backups with your personal belongings and be prepared to take them with you when you leave. If you made arrangements with OIT to store the files, take them to the OIT help desk now.

Hurricane Recovery

These steps should be taken to resume normal computer operation after returning to work:

- **1) Initiate Damage Assessment Procedures** - Take note of the condition of the computer equipment. If it is visibly damaged or appears to be wet, do not plug the equipment in or turn it on. Wait for instructions from OIT before doing anything further.
- **2) Verify Electrical Integrity**- Computer equipment should not be turned on if electrical power is unstable.
- **3) Verify Network Service Availability** - Central services such as network connectivity, network file servers, or email servers may not be available. Information about the availability of services can be obtained from Client Services at 757-823-8678.
- **4) Verify Proper Operation** - Return the computer to its original location and reattach all peripherals. Plug in all power cords and turn the computer on. Take note of error messages and write them down.