

# ORANGE BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY

## HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Due to its geographical location, it is a statistical certainty that, sooner or later, a hurricane will hit Orange Beach. In order to best promote the safety of the Staff and the Library, steps must be taken before and after the storm to minimize danger and the aftermath.

Because of the intensity of a major storm's wind the inevitability of an accompanying storm surge, there are limits to the protection afforded any structure in the hurricane's path. Should a Category 3 or higher storm make landfall in Orange Beach, a minimum storm surge of six (6) feet is predicted. With the combination of high wind and flooding, it is a distinct possibility that windows and/or doors will be damaged thus breaching the building's envelope and leading to some degree of structural failure. Covering windows and sandbagging doors may provide some protection and any positive storm preparation that be readily accomplished is advisable.

While there is little that can be done to blunt the storm's full effect, steps can be taken to minimize damage and aid in recovery after the hurricane.

1. Prepare the grounds surrounding the Library. Trim overhanging tree limbs and remove dead trees.
2. Store outdoor furniture, garbage cans and bike racks.
3. Prominently display written instructions on how to turn off gas, electric and water.
4. Gather and maintain supplies for preparation and recovery.

Among the supplies suggested are:

First aid and essential medications.

Sufficient fresh water to provide two gallons per day per person for at least three days.

Canned food, can opener, dried fruit, crackers, granola bars or cookies sufficient for three days.

Alkaline batteries, disposable cameras, battery operated radio and flashlights.

Toilet paper, two five-gallon drums and plastic garbage bags.

Rubber gloves, cleaning supplies (especially Clorox), waterless hand soap and face masks.

Sand bags and duct tape.

Plastic tarps, wax paper and paper towels.

Cash sufficient to purchase additional supplies for a week.

It is advisable to divide and store the supplies in at least two locations within the Library to increase the chance of access after the storm.

# PLANNING, PREPARATION AND RECOVERY PROCEDURES

## ***Emergency Level 1:***

*Pre-Disaster:* Planning, training, stockpiling supplies.  
Normal Library activities continue.

## ***Emergency Level 2: Hurricane Watch***

*Pre-Disaster:* Maintain close contact with local authorities.  
Monitor weather reports.  
Spot check inventory of supplies.  
Determine which employees may have special circumstances (medical, family, etc...) that would require early departure.  
Bring inside all patio furniture, trashcans and potted plants.  
Assign Staff Post-Disaster duties.

## ***Emergency Level 3: Hurricane Warning***

*Pre-Disaster:* Complete all preparation activities.  
Secure Library, locking doors, taping windows and laying sandbags.  
Library Director will notify Staff and public of Library closing.

*Post-Disaster:* Assess damage, if any, to Library.  
Library Director coordinates clean-up and salvage with Staff and local Emergency Management personnel.

<b>EMERGENCY NUMBERS</b>	<b>HOME</b>	<b>CELL</b>
Steve Russo (Mayor)	981-4400	979-7520
Robert Vinson (Police Chief)	981-6615	747-2278
Phil Williamson (O.B. Water)	981-3872	979-6021
Bill Silvers (O.B. Street/Sanitation)	981-6633	
Command Center/Fire Station 1	981-4773	
Alabama Emergency Mgmt.	334 280-2200	800 843-0699
O. B. City Hall	981-6141	

## **INVENTORY FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES**

In addition to an inventory of supplies, a photo and video record should be made of the Library and its holdings. A walk-through of the Library, including the Circulation Desk, each room and storage area, should be made in early May of each year to visually document the condition of the Library. Close-up and panoramic photos of the interior and exterior should also be taken. This will provide visual proof of the Library's condition prior to any disaster. Should the Library suffer damage, having a multi-media record of the Library will serve as both a guide to recovery and will assist in any insurance claims that are filed.

While no area of the Library can be considered safe in the event of a Hurricane striking the City of Orange Beach, it is still advisable to store equipment in the most protected areas of the building. Placing equipment, especially computers, on a raised, stable surface and covering all materials with a plastic tarp will provide a degree of protection from water. There is sufficient room behind the circulation desk to place any of the Library's tables and any equipment that is not already in a raised, protected area.

## **RETURNING TO THE LIBRARY AFTER THE HURRICANE**

It is unlikely that any Staff will be allowed access to the Library for 48 to 72 hours after a major hurricane. During the critical hours and days following the storm, Emergency personnel will be focusing on finding and aiding the injured, repairing and restoring water and power, clearing roads and removing the storm damage and debris. When the Staff is allowed to return, outside support will probably be minimal. Resources and manpower will be at a premium and the Staff should plan to handle initial cleanup and salvage by themselves.

Before entering the Library after the storm, the outside of the structure should be inspected for obvious damage. While photographing the building to document damage both for insurance and historical reference, attention should be given to damage to the walls or roof. If either the walls or roof appear to be weakened, no one should enter until Emergency crews can inspect the building for structural integrity. The possibility of further damage to the building and even structural collapse is very strong, especially when doors are being opened or debris is moved.

Upon entering the building, look for exposed power lines. Again, the possibility of injury due to the storm's aftermath can not be taken lightly. If electrical outlets or power lines are exposed, the probability of being electrocuted through the conductivity of standing water is high.

Check for sewage and water line damage. Disease and infection will pose a threat if sewage or contaminated water has flooded the building. Drink only bottled water and avoid using sinks and toilets until the water lines have been inspected.

Beware of snakes, insects and animals that may have entered the Library searching for higher ground.

If the structure is safe to enter, the Staff should already have assignments and the recovery phase can begin. Photograph the interior and contents. Make sure that Staff hours are documented in order to receive FEMA reimbursements.

It is important to first stabilize the building. When everything is taken into consideration, the building is more important than the collection. If at all possible, make the building weather-tight and begin dehumidification. Fans are essential to getting the air circulating and lowering the temperature. This will prevent or slow down mold growth. Mold is not only damaging to the books and furniture but is a very real health danger to the Staff. Inhaling even a small amount of mold can lead to respiratory problems and death.

During the recovery, continue to monitor the weather reports on the radio. Tornadoes frequently occur after a hurricane and can be just as destructive and dangerous.

# SALVAGING WATER-DAMAGED LIBRARY MATERIALS

1. Wear plastic or rubber gloves. Due to the storm surge, there is a strong possibility of contaminated water flooding the Library. If the Library is still wet, rinse with clean water or possibly a fine hose spray. Clean off silt and debris with a soft brush.
2. Air dry items indoors, if possible. This will require a cool, dry space, preferably with fans. Use absorbent material under objects. Remove absorbent material as it becomes wet. Books should be stood upright with open covers. Direct sunlight and other outside conditions may dry some materials too quickly, causing warping and other damage. Daylight and heat are particularly damaging to paper.
3. Water damaged books are extremely fragile. Do not attempt to repair books until they are completely dry. It is best to air dry books or refrigerate them until a salvage attempt can be made. An evaluation of the damaged books will need to be made to determine which items are worth attempting to salvage. Especially valuable or rare books should be kept refrigerated until the services of a professional conservator are available.
4. Video tapes should be packed vertically in cardboard boxes. Do not put weight on the sides of the cassettes. When time permits, dismantle the cassette and allow tape to air dry.
5. CDs and DVDs should be removed from their jackets, washed and dried. Drive heads should be cleaned frequently after initial use of all multimedia items that have been immersed in floodwater.
6. Rinse bookshelves and table with a clear water and dry immediately with a clean soft cloth. Allow heavy mud deposits to dry and cake. This will make mud removal and cleaning easier.
7. To minimize mold growth, humidity must be reduced. Increase air flow using fans, open windows, air conditioners and dehumidifiers. Do not store items in sealed plastic bags as this will promote mold growth.
8. Disinfectants should be used to remove mold growth from walls, bookshelves, tables and other surfaces.

There are several companies specializing in cleanup and restoration after natural disasters. *RAINBOW INT'L RESTORATION and CLEANUP* along with *STORM RECONSTRUCTION SERVICES* are two of the most respected and have several years of experience in dealing with the aftermath of hurricanes. Regardless of the company, if the decision is made to use a professional cleanup crew, arrangements must be made beforehand in order to insure their availability.

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