Armstrong

HURRICANE RESPONSE PLAN

Armstrong State University is located in close proximity to the Atlantic Ocean; the following plan was developed to provide guidance and specific duties for faculty, staff, and students in the event a hurricane threatens the Armstrong Community. These procedures apply to all personnel, buildings, and grounds owned and operated by the University.

DEFINITIONS

Hurricane Season: Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico Hurricane Season is June 1 - November 30

Tropical Storm: Tropical storms have sustained winds from 39 to 73 mph

Hurricane: Hurricanes have sustained winds greater than 74 mph

Watch: Conditions are possible in the area within 36 hours.

Warning - Conditions are expected in the area within 24 hours or less.

ACTIONS PRIOR TO HURRICANE SEASON

1. On or before June 1 each year, all Armstrong employees will receive a reminder via email system about Hurricane Season.

2. The email will include a link to this Armstrong website’s emergency Information page. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to review the guidelines and other preparatory information contained here.

3. Units will be reminded to review their hurricane action plans and to ensure that phone trees and other contact information are up-to-date. Departments with special emergency requirements, like those with laboratories, should pay special attention to their preparations to make sure they are up to date.

Watch vs. Warning:

A Hurricane Watch means that hurricane conditions could develop within 36 hours. This is an indication that you should begin preparations for a potential disaster. When a Hurricane Watch is announced by the National Weather Center/National Hurricane Center, Armstrong officials should have at least 36 hours to take precautions for the safety of students, faculty, and staff and to leave campus physical facilities as secure as possible.

Updated May 2016
A **Hurricane Warning** means that sustained winds of 74 mph or more are expected within 24 hours.

**ESTABLISHED OPERATING CONDITIONS IN HURRICANE SEASON**

1. **Normal University Operating Conditions:** No imminent threat of tropical storms or hurricanes exist.
   - Individual unit plans have been reviewed and communicated.

2. **Named Tropical Storm or Hurricane (96 hrs):**
   - A message is sent through the BLAST system to all Armstrong employees when the Georgia coast falls within the forecast cone of a named tropical storm or hurricane that is expected to create severe weather conditions within 96 hours.
   - The BLAST message will link to the Armstrong Emergency information website where further information and updates will be posted. [https://www.armstrong.edu/health-safety/emergency-info](https://www.armstrong.edu/health-safety/emergency-info)
   - Units will be reminded to review the Unit Level Preparations listed below and department specific hurricane plans (if any) and to ensure that phone trees and other contact lists are up-to-date.

3. **Named Tropical Storm or Hurricane (72 hrs):**
   - The Campus Safety Committee (CSC) is convened.
   - The CSC conducts information gathering to develop recommendations for the Crisis Response Team (CRT)
   - The CSC provides information and recommendations to CRT by no later than 48 hrs before forecasted severe weather conditions.

4. **Tropical Storm or Hurricane Watch (36 hrs):**
   - A message is sent through the BLAST system to all Armstrong employees when there is a **Tropical Storm or Hurricane Watch** for our area.
   - The BLAST message will have specific instructions depending on actions taken by the CRT and will include a link to the Armstrong Emergency Website: [https://www.armstrong.edu/health-safety/emergency-info](https://www.armstrong.edu/health-safety/emergency-info)
   - Individual units are instructed to execute pre-impact preparations as detailed below and their department specific hurricane action plans (if any).
   - *The Hurricane Hotline* (912.344.2500) will be activated.
5. **Tropical Storm or Hurricane Warning (24 hrs or less):**
   - A message is sent through the BLAST system to all Armstrong employees when there is a Tropical Storm or Hurricane Warning for our area.
   - The BLAST message will have specific instructions depending on actions taken by the CRT and will include a link to the Armstrong Emergency Website with a list of specific actions for commuter students, residential students, and faculty [https://www.armstrong.edu/health-safety/emergency-info](https://www.armstrong.edu/health-safety/emergency-info)
   - Individual Units are instructed to fully execute their department specific hurricane action plans (if any).
   - In the event of campus closings, essential personnel are alerted.

6. **Recovery:** The named storm has passed and assessment and cleanup begins.

**Crisis Response Team Actions:**

If conditions warrant emergency action, the Crisis Response Team members will be contacted and will assemble in Gamble Hall, in the second floor Film Room, to assess the situation and if necessary, begin implementing the Armstrong Emergency Operations Plan.

**Communications:**

The Crisis Response Team will announce closings and other weather-related communications via global emails, www.armstrong.edu, text messaging, and social media.

Students, faculty, and staff should be sure to have their BLAST preferences updated via the Port of Armstrong: [http://port.armstrong.edu](http://port.armstrong.edu)

In case of an evacuation, the phone message system and website will be maintained at remote locations.

**UNIT LEVEL PREPARATIONS**

Each Armstrong unit is expected to have a hurricane response plan that identifies key actions and personnel responsible for those actions.

**Supervisor Action--To Be Done Routinely:**

- Review and update any department specific Hurricane Plans. Discuss office and individual preparation checklists at the beginning of hurricane season (1 June) with staff.
- Appoint an alternate who will be responsible in your absence or if people cannot contact you.
- **Update unit communication information:**
  - Update phone tree and unit communication plan, ensuring that cell phone numbers and personal email addresses are up-to-date.
  - Update names of personnel assigned to specific duties during the emergency or evacuation.

- **Gather materials and supplies to secure or “evacuate” critical departmental equipment, research projects, intellectual property, etc., in the event of an evacuation. (Departments are responsible for procuring their own preparedness supplies.)**

- **Photo Documentation:** (FEMA often requires pictures as proof of any item(s) lost or damaged items when processing claims). Pictures should include the entire department, for example:
  - Take pictures of the office space as a whole and not each specific item of value in an office.
  - The picture should reflect the office setting, show items of value.
  - If equipment is in a storage room and/or closet or filing cabinet in the office, take a picture of the contents.
  - Each department should upload their own pictures to a shared or cloud based drive.

**Supervisor Action--Once an Evacuation Has Been Declared:**

- Initiate the unit specific Hurricane Action Plan (if any).

- Ensure individual actions (outlined below) have been satisfactorily completed; assist everyone with vacating the facility as soon as possible and do a final walk-through of your area before leaving.

- Contact your immediate supervisor with an update on the status of employees who report to you.

- If necessary, during non-business hours (i.e., weekend or holiday), contact employees to return to work in order to assist in preparing their offices for the disaster.

**Individual Actions:**

- Review your individual unit plan with your supervisor and execute the portions of the plan for which you are responsible.

- Back-up critical files and store them in an off-site location. Review the ITS instructions for file back up: [https://www.armstrong.edu/departments/its-backup-campus-solution](https://www.armstrong.edu/departments/its-backup-campus-solution)

- Turn off and unplug all electrical equipment including printers, copiers, computers, UPS, lights, window air conditioners, microwaves, etc. Refrigerators should be turned off, left open, and completely empty.

- If practical, move desks, file cabinets and equipment away from windows and off the floor; store as much equipment as possible in closets or in windowless rooms away from external walls.

- Clear desk tops completely of paper and other articles. Store items in plastic containers with locking lids if practical.
• Remove any food and perishable supplies. Provide for the necessary care and feeding of all animals, where applicable.
• In locations where flooding is a possibility, to the extent practical, relocate critical equipment from the ground floor to a higher floor or a higher off-site location. If your computer is located on the first floor, elevate it.
• Remove all loose items (garbage receptacles, chairs, tables, plants, etc.) from outside of buildings. Remove all items from window ledges.
• Lock all file cabinets and desk drawers. Lock and secure all doors and windows (close blinds).
• Protect books, valuable papers and equipment by covering them with plastic sheeting and storing them inside cabinets, boxes or transferring them to an interior room.
• Take laptop computers home. Users are responsible for their laptops and the data contained on them and should take care to provide adequate back up.
• Secure lab and research operations (See checklist below)
• Close and latch all windows.
• Drop all blinds and close all shades.
• All personnel shall notify their supervisor when hurricane office preparations have been completed and they are planning to leave campus.

Laboratory Checklist

HURRICANE INFORMATION FOR RESIDENT STUDENTS

General Information:

In the event of a hurricane, the University may close, and all on-campus resident students and guests (this includes camp and conference attendees) may need to evacuate University Housing should weather conditions necessitate. These guidelines are meant to serve as an aid in maintaining their personal safety and well-being (this includes camp and conference attendees). For safety purposes please take the weather reports seriously.

• Do not wait until the last minute to make plans. Know where you will go should the university experience severe weather which causes a closure.
• Past experience shows that once a Hurricane Watch is announced, many supplies, including gasoline for vehicles, are depleted and store checkout lines may be long. Should you need to purchase supplies for your travel, it is best to plan ahead.
• If resident students or camp/conference attendees can leave the campus for home (or a friend or relative’s home), they are strongly encouraged to plan to do so. Make arrangements in advance to potentially stay at another location and plan to be there for an extended stay in case it is necessary. Plan to take supplies and belongings you will need for an extended stay.
• The university is unable to provide transportation to the campus shelter in the event of a hurricane. If a resident student has need for transportation due to a physical disability please notify a Residence Life staff member as soon as a Hurricane Watch is broadcasted so we may be of best assistance.
• All residential students will need to evacuate campus. We encourage all students to have a Hurricane Evacuation Plan.
• Student also need to keep their Housing Evacuation Plan information and address updated on the Housing Application Portal. This is the address where you will go in case of a campus evacuation. We encourage students who may not have somewhere to go to find a friend or another student that they can stay with during the evacuation period.

Emergency Communications for Students Living on Campus:

• Students will receive information pertaining to storm preparations and evacuation (if necessary) from their Resident Assistant (RA), The BLAST system that can be accessed through your cell phone (if registered), and through information posted in Compass Point, University Crossings and University Terrace.
• Prior to leaving campus, please inform your Resident Assistant where you are going and provide a contact number.
• Students should contact their parents prior to the storm to advise them of their location and then again shortly after the storm to inform them of their status. It is easier for students to contact their parents than for parents to locate students.
• Additional information and updates will be supplied to students in the residence halls by staff, as specifics of a storm situation are determined.

Evacuation Guidelines for Students Living on Campus:
To prepare for the possibility of an evacuation please take these steps:

• Pull all furniture, including beds, away from windows.
• Computers, TVs, stereo equipment, etc. should be raised off the floor and placed in a closet/study area.
• Unplug all electronics
• Place all articles from the floor (shoes, rugs, clothes, boxes, suitcases, etc.) on closet shelves or in drawer drawers.
• Place all loose objects in drawers or closets. Paper, books, etc., should not be left on tops of dressers or desks or near windows.
• Close and lock all windows.
• If there are mini blinds in the room or apartment, lower them to the closed position.
• If there are vertical blinds in the room or apartment, shut/close them. Curtains should be left open.
• Turn lights off
• Leave air conditioning on low.
• Disconnect the computer from the network and cover it with a plastic bag, if possible.
• Lock your door and take your key with you.
• Do not put tape on the window glass.
• Fill your vehicle gas tank (if applicable). If not using a vehicle to evacuate, park your vehicle in an appropriate parking area with the emergency brake set and in reverse gear or park. All windows should be closed and the vehicle locked. Vehicles parked near the buildings, and not in an approved parking area, (i.e. motorcycles in bicycle racks, cars in loading zones) may be removed or towed at the owner’s expense.
• Bring bicycles in from the outside and store in a bedroom. Should University Housing staff need to remove bicycles, they may be discarded.
Do NOT store motorcycles, mopeds, or any other vehicle containing combustible fuel in or near University Housing facilities. These must be stored at an alternate location for safety purposes.

- Disconnect all unneeded appliances.
- Completely empty your refrigerator, unplug and discard all perishable food items. Place a towel around the bottom of your refrigerator. Place all non-perishable food items in cupboards.
- In the event of an evacuation, plan to take all necessary medications or other items since re-entering University Housing facilities may not be possible.
- Plan to take any valuable items. Please do not plan to leave these items in University Housing.
- Before, during, and after a storm, you are encouraged to check the university's website for updates and cancellation of classes and events. You should check the website for the date that classes will resume. The university will use BLAST to notify you of cancellation of classes and reopening of the university. Tune into local news channels for notification of the university closing and date of reopening. You should also call 912.344.2500 for the latest updates from the university.

Before Leaving:
Plan your route ahead of time and have good maps in your car in case conditions necessitate changes along the way.

- Be sure you have enough cash. ATMs can run out of money quickly.

- Decide ahead of time which route out of Savannah you will take:
  - US 80 away from the coast towards Statesboro and points northwest
  - SR 204 West to US 280 towards Claxton and points west
  - SR 21 North across I-95 and northward towards Sylvania
  - I-16 West towards Macon

- Be informed about how Contra-flow changes normal traffic patterns on major highways to speed evacuation.
  - I-16 Contra-Flow: During a hurricane evacuation, all four lanes of I-16 are turned into westbound-only lanes until west of Dublin. Also, several Savannah eastbound exit ramps are converted into westbound entrance ramps.
    These are:
    - Chatham Parkway
    - SR 307 (Dean Forest Road) between Savannah & I-95

Packing Tips for Evacuation:

Pack wisely. Include the following, if possible:

- Prescription medication and any over-the-counter medications
- Passport, visa, and driver's license
- Laptop, cell phone, i-pod, charger cords, small expensive items
- Sleeping bag, blanket, pillows, flashlight
- Textbooks
- Three days of clothing (bring tennis shoes - do not rely on flip flops)
• Toiletries-deodorant, soap, toothbrush and paste, towel, shampoo, toilet paper

Evacuation from Armstrong:

• Once the university is closed and an evacuation from the campus is ordered, no student can remain in the residence halls. Armstrong will not provide any emergency hurricane shelter on campus.
• Housing & Residence Life staff will check every resident's room to make sure you have evacuated.
• Once the emergency tape is placed on your front door, you cannot re-enter the room without the Director of Housing & Residence Life's permission.
• Refusal to leave your residence hall room once an evacuation has been mandated will result in your arrest and transportation to jail. You will also face university disciplinary action once Armstrong has reopened.
• YOU SHOULD FIND TRANSPORTATION WITH A FRIEND, FAMILY MEMBER OR USE YOUR PERSONAL VEHICLE TO EVACUATE THE CAMPUS.
• Please remember to keep your Hurricane Evacuation Plan information current on your Housing Application Portal so we know where you will be going in the case of an evacuation and so we can contact you.
• The University is not responsible for damages to, or for loss of, personal property as a result of a hurricane. Be sure you have renters' insurance prior to hurricane season.

HURRICANE INFORMATION FOR COMMUTER STUDENTS

Emergency Supplies to Have at Home:

• A week's supply of medicines and prescriptions
• A battery-operated radio and clock; flashlights/batteries
• Important telephone numbers (in case your cell phone runs out of battery)
• Car charger for your cell phone (if you own a car)
• Important papers (lease, passport, valid ID)
• Plenty of cash (in case ATMs do not work)
• Toiletries (toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, toilet paper)
• A manual can opener
• An ice chest and ice
• First aid supplies and mosquito repellent
• Non-perishable foods such as bread, crackers, cereals, cookies, snacks, peanut butter and jelly, bottled water, instant coffee and tea, canned meats, fruits, vegetables, soups, puddings, pet food—have enough to last two weeks.

COMMUTER STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN EVACUATION OUT OF THE CITY. ARMSTRONG DOES NOT PROVIDE ANY SHELTER ON CAMPUS. MAKE ARRANGEMENTS AHEAD OF ANY ANNOUNCED HURRICANE SO THAT YOU HAVE TRANSPORTATION BEFORE LEAVING.
• Be sure you have enough cash. ATMs can run out of money quickly.
• Clean out your refrigerator of all food. Electricity will likely go off and food will spoil before you return. You do not want to try to clean a refrigerator that has held spoiled food for any period of time.
• Place any valuables you choose to leave in an area in a room that you can secure. Move items away from the windows and off the floor (in the event of flooding).
• Unplug all computers and electronic equipment.
• Make sure ALL windows are closed and locked.
• Fill your car tank with gas before getting on the road.
• Decide ahead of time which route out of Savannah you will take:
• See the evacuation route information above

**Packing Tips for Evacuation**

Pack wisely: Include the following, if possible:

• Prescription medications and any over-the-counter medications
• Cash, credit cards
• Musical instruments
• Passport, visa, and driver's license
• Laptop, computer, cell phone, i-pod, small expensive items
• Sleeping bag, blanket, pillows, flashlight/batteries
• Bottled water
• Snacks
• Textbooks
• Three days of clothing (bring tennis shoes - do not rely on flip flops)
• Toiletries: deodorant, soap, toothbrush and paste, towel, shampoo, toilet paper

Before, during and after a storm, you are encouraged to check the university's website for updates and cancellation of classes and events. You should also check the website for the date that classes will resume. You should also call 912.344.2500 for the latest updates from the university.

**HURRICANE EVACUATION INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES**

**NO UNIVERSITY BUILDING IS DESIGNATED AS AN OFFICIAL HURRICANE SHELTER. Non-essential employees are not permitted to seek shelter in University facilities. They should remain at home, stay with friends, or go to a public shelter.**

The Essential Personnel will work from the Film Room in Gamble Hall (Gamble 221) - Armstrong’s designated emergency headquarters during a hurricane / evacuation. Essential Personnel include the Director of Facilities and the Chief of Police and a limited number of police and facilities personnel who will be identified by the Vice President for Business and Finance. Only those individuals so identified are considered Essential Personnel and all others will be expected to follow evacuation instructions.
Essential employees staying in a university facility should bring with them:

- Food and water for a least a 48-hour period
- An ice chest and ice
- First aid supplies and any needed medications
- Bedding items, flashlight and batteries
- A battery-operated radio and/or television
- Reading materials, laptop, charger cords.

- Employees shall notify their supervisors when they depart campus and confirm their contact information
- Employees should stay in close touch with authorities through radio and/or television for updates on the impending situation; all instructions given by the local authorities should be followed; no attempt to come to the office should be made until the "all clear" is given by local authorities.
- After the storm, call your designated contact for your department or call your supervisor/department chair to get information about returning to campus.
- Hurricane Recovery and return to campus will be announced via BLAST, the Emergency Information web site.
- Re-entry guidelines and procedures after the storm are listed on this document: [Re-entry Guidelines](#)

**HURRICANE FAQs:**

1. **How will I be informed that the University is closing or if I need to evacuate?**
   
   You will be contacted via BLAST or by campus-wide email. You can call the emergency phone number at 912.344.2500; or you may be contacted by your supervisor/department head or Resident Assistant.

2. **What should I do if Armstrong is evacuated?**

   **For Students:**
   - Evacuate early, do not wait.
   - First, try to find a family or friend with whom to stay; it’s more comfortable.
   - If you can’t stay with family or friends, go to a local shelter.

   **For Employees:**
   - Complete your individual preparation tasks and assist your department with its department specific preparations
   - All personnel shall notify their supervisor when hurricane office preparations have been completed and they are planning to leave campus and confirm their contact information.

3. **Is there a Hurricane Shelter on Campus?**

   **NO UNIVERSITY BUILDING IS DESIGNATED AS AN OFFICIAL HURRICANE SHELTER.**
   
   Non-essential employees are not permitted to seek shelter in university facilities. They should remain at home, stay with friends, or go to a public shelter.

4. **What if a resident student has difficulty finding transportation or an evacuation location?**

   They should contact the Resident Director or the Director of Housing and Residence Life.
5. **What actions should I take to prepare for a hurricane?**

Make sure you can answer these questions:

- What are the hurricane hazards?
- Where will I go?
- How will I get there?
- Have I updated my contact information?
- Do I have the necessary preparation supplies?