



FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
Schmidt College of Medicine

Hurricane Emergency Plan 2025

This plan was drafted in accordance with FAU Emergency Policy and supercedes all previous plans for the College of Medicine. FAU Hurricane Emergency Information is available at <https://www.fau.edu/emergency/>. Please take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the information. The majority of the preparation guidelines and rules for offices, personal property, classrooms, and common areas are given at this link.

Hurricane Season - The hurricane season in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico runs from June 1 to November 30. Hurricanes have a sustained wind speed of 74mph or higher.

Hurricane WATCH – Hurricane conditions are possible within the specified area within 48 hours. At this point, take immediate action to protect your family, personal property, and laboratory.

Hurricane WARNING – Hurricane conditions are expected in a specified time, usually within the next 36 hours. FAU will close, if our area is in a Hurricane Warning zone. The National Hurricane Center in Miami has a good website for storm tracking at <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

It is during a Hurricane WATCH that all preliminary preparations must be COMPLETED. Once the University is CLOSED, NO ONE except COM Building Safety Supervisors, top administrators, EH&S staff, Physical Plant personnel, and Police will be allowed back on the campus. Once the University is closed, it is **TOO LATE** to make preparations. If you do not prepare during the WATCH stages, the remaining personnel will be too busy to secure any of your computers and/or equipment etc.

All department personnel are expected to actively assist in the preparatory steps when a Hurricane Watch is declared. Be sure to take personal property home since FAU and the COM cannot accept responsibility for these items.

There is normally plenty of time to complete all your preparations if you start when the Hurricane WATCH is declared. Just be calm and methodical. Have a plan for your office and/or laboratory ahead of time. The COM Building Safety Supervisor can help you make a plan and provide information.

Things to do before a storm is headed our way

1. **Make a plan for your lab or office and discuss it with your staff and students.** Only certain Faculty and Staff are issued an Essential Personnel Letter, therefore only those employees will be allowed back on campus immediately after a hurricane. What would be the critical functions or experiments that would have to continue? Is there someone with an Essential Personnel letter who can help?
2. In preparation for potential claims to be made to FEMA for lost and damaged materials, each PI or office supervisor should **make an inventory of equipment, instruments, and chemicals** in his/her charge. This inventory should include manufacturer, model, size, color, year purchased, PO# (if available), cost, and a picture. It is also advisable to have pictures of your lab or office, such that individual items are recognizable. If you have a video camera available, this can make the documentation process easier.
3. It may sound silly, but **take a photo of the inside of your lab freezer and refrigerator.** Make a list ahead of time of everything you have in your lab freezers and refrigerators. Attach the list to the freezer or refrigerator so it is easy to update. If the freezer/refrigerator melts down, it will be easier to write up a FEMA claim form. FEMA can ask for original invoices and/or replacement invoices for any or all items which you claim, including melted freezer contents. It is best to develop some kind of filing system to keep all invoices handy. Electronic copies of these documents can be kept both on site and at home.
4. If you are listed on the **COM emergency telephone tree**, take it home with you. Please do not post it in your lab or office as it contains home and cell phone numbers. Do not distribute it to anyone who is not on the list. Many people pass thru the labs and offices. Many home phones and cell phones do not work after a storm knocks out the power. If you are on the telephone tree and do not hear from anyone, try to contact the “captain” or someone else in your group. “Captains” are listed in bold type on the tree. Lab staff and students should try to contact their primary investigator. There is a separate tree for the medical students.
5. Primary Investigators are responsible for staying in contact with their lab staff and students. **Make a list of cell and home phone numbers that includes everyone in your lab.** They will need to be notified when it is safe to come back on campus.
6. If you are responsible for an **ultralow -80 freezer** keep in mind that during a hurricane, no one will be able to come on campus to deal with a freezer alarms. If a breaker blows, the generator fails or a freezer is having a mechanical problem, the freezer alarm will alert the COM Building & Lab Operations Teams. After the storm, the first people back in the building will check all the freezers and do whatever is possible to save the samples.
7. **Hang all plugged-in power strips** from a small hook or nail so that they are not lying on the floor. A power strip sitting in a puddle of water may electrocute someone when the power comes back on.
8. **Phone Service & Power:** Since extended power outages are common, it’s suggested that you have your cell phone fully charged before the storm and when possible, you have a backup charger available to recharge your phone. Keep in mind that cell service and internet service may not be available for several days. Be sure you enable Wifi calling should your cell carrier be down, you have the option to make/receive calls via Wifi if your Wifi provider still has service.

HURRICANE WATCH

This stage is declared when a storm *may* hit this area within **48 hours**. It is during a Hurricane **WATCH** that **all preliminary preparations must be COMPLETED**.

1. COM supplies XL garbage bags and plastic sheeting to cover equipment in the labs and offices. These will be delivered to the offices and placed in the Common Lab the day before the storm. The Building Safety Supervisor and Representative will cover the Common Lab equipment. The IT Group will cover the distance learning equipment, control room and the computer server. **You are responsible for your own lab and/or office.** Please save your plastic after the storm. It is better for the environment to re-use them and more economical for the department. In addition, there may be shortages of plastic if the storms come close together like Frances and Ivan in 2004.
2. **Instruments, equipment and computers should be shutdown**, unplugged, and covered with plastic. (Except refrigerators, freezers, and incubators.) You should be prepared with plastic; limited supplies of plastic sheeting, bags etc are available from your Building Safety Supervisor. Equipment should be elevated off the floor if possible in case of flooding. Window and ceiling leaks can cause water damage even on upper floors and in interior offices. Small equipment should be stored inside cabinets, drawers, or desks. You should back up data on your computers and secure CDs or flash drives in plastic Ziploc bags. It may be best to have two copies – one here and one at home.
3. **Close blinds or curtains** to decrease water damage in the event of window leaks and minimize damage from broken glass. There is **NO** need to tape the windows.
4. **Move or cover with plastic any items subject to water damage.** (Books, files, certificates/pictures.) Use Ziploc bags for important papers or notebooks. It may be necessary to elevate certain items 1-2 feet above the ground on the 1st floor of each building. Plastic garbage cans or recycle bins can be used to help protect items from water damage.
5. **Chemicals** should be reviewed and those with water-reactivity (form flammable or poisonous gases, produce heat, etc.) should be secured in plastic Ziploc bags. Remove all chemicals and other items from the fume hoods and cap tightly. **Fume hoods must be empty** and closed. The fume hood fans on the roof will likely be damaged during a Hurricane and the air will back up thru the hood into the lab.
6. **Our building 71 has a back-up/emergency power system. Emergency power outlets are identified as red sockets, which in the event of a power-outage will be powered by an emergency generator. Anything that is currently plugged into a red emergency generator outlet will be fine; however, our emergency generator is at its maximum load. You cannot plug anything more into any unused outlets. If you have a refrigerator or incubator on regular power, transfer its critical contents to one that is already plugged into a red outlet.** Refrigerator contents can be transferred to the two Cold Rooms in 71, which are both on emergency power. **Do NOT switch any plug to a red outlet.** If we overload the generator, we will pop the main breaker and all the freezers will melt down.
7. **Close and secure all biohazard and chemical waste containers.** Containers may become wet from leaks or knocked over during the storm. Environmental Health and Safety will not have time to pick up waste before the storm.

8. **Cover radioactive benches** with plastic to prevent radioactive puddles.
9. Close and lock all doors. Prepare to evacuate and **take personal possessions home with you**, including food from refrigerators— FAU does not take responsibility for personal items. Electrical outages will cause food to spoil.
10. **ONLY those people who have a current Essential Personnel Letter will be allowed back on campus immediately following the storm. ONLY CERTAIN EMPLOYEES** have these letters. Faculty should check with their lab staff and students if there are ongoing experiments, which will need to be maintained.

HURRICANE WARNING

If status is upgraded to **HURRICANE WARNING**, it is very likely that the storm **will hit** the area within **36 hours**. The President or his designee will declare the **University Closed**.

1. You should have **already** taken care of your office and/or laboratory and now be home taking care of your house and family.
2. If a CLOSING occurs at night or on the weekend and you need to return to campus to prepare something, you must obtain clearance from the FAU Police Department (561-297-3500). **Do not try to come on campus without Police permission.**
3. If a CLOSING occurs during regular work hours, all classes, both lab and lecture, are **immediately cancelled**. Inform your students to leave campus immediately. Resident students should check in with their dorm supervisors for instructions.
4. Teaching Assistants and Instructors should secure instruments and chemicals used for classes.
5. **ALL PERSONNEL MUST LEAVE THEIR BUILDING AND THE FAU CAMPUS.** Failure to do so in a reasonable amount of time will result in FAU Police being notified and taking appropriate action. No personnel should return until after the emergency condition has been officially lifted and it is safe to return to campus. Please be advised that the Police Department will search the building and you will be asked to leave. Note they will see your car in the parking lot and know you are here.
6. Building Safety Supervisors will check that the building has been evacuated and secured.

NO ONE WILL BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN THE BUILDING OR IN THE UNIVERSITY.

Home preparation plans and Hurricane Evacuation

There will be announcements on television and radio when shelters are opened and which areas must be evacuated. Do not go to a Red Cross shelter until they have announced that it is officially open. Bring blankets or sleeping bags, identification, valuable papers (insurance policy), cash, food for 24 hours, bottled water, flashlights, first aid kit, books/magazines, medication, and battery-operated radio. Pets are not allowed in most Red Cross shelters but there are typically some other shelters which will allow this. Even if your home is not damaged, be aware that after a hurricane, fallen trees may block the roads, and there may not be any electricity in your area for quite some time (one or more weeks). No electricity means

that some banks, home improvement stores, and grocery stores may be closed. ATMs, gas pumps, computers, air conditioners/fans, refrigerators, and hot water heaters may not work. Stores that are open may not be able to accept credit cards because they do not have electricity. Telephone lines may be down in some areas. Public transportation is often out of service. Therefore, it is imperative that you have a good plan for your home too!

POST HURRICANE PROCEDURES

ONLY those people who have a current Essential Personnel Letter will be allowed back on campus immediately following the storm. ONLY CERTAIN EMPLOYEES and the Building Safety Supervisor have these letters. Essential Personnel letter holders will be notified via phone and email when they can come back on campus. If you do not have an Essential Personnel letter, check the FAU website or the hotline telephone for information about when it is safe to come back on campus.

Do not remove anything or begin cleanup until you document the damage in your area. You may take pictures and make lists of damaged items but you must call the Building Supervisor and/or EH&S for permission to begin cleanup. Damaged items with FAU barcodes must NOT be thrown out.

Call EH&S for assistance in cleaning up any damaged or leaking chemicals. Do not dispose of chemicals in the regular trash.

FEMA forms must be filled out before cleanup can commence. Please be careful to follow all procedures now or claims may not be honored. Forms are available on the web at <https://www.fau.edu/president/blog/hurricane-season-2022/>

You can find out the status of FAU campuses pre- and post-hurricane at:

University-Wide Toll-Free: **1-888-832-8695 (1-888-8FAUOWL)**
www.fau.edu/advisory/

Emergency Numbers:

University Police Boca Raton Campus **7-3500**
Environmental Health & Safety **7-3129**

The following personnel are Building Safety designees:

Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine

Building Safety Supervisor: Jeff Clark
Office 561-297-2322, Cell 561-255-9858

For storm tracking, The National Hurricane Center in Miami is the best site <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>.

A hurricane guide is available to students who reside on the Boca Raton and Jupiter campuses at www.fau.edu/housing.

Additional resources are available at:
<https://www.fau.edu/emergency/resources/other-resources/>