



Natural Disaster and Emergency Weather Preparedness Guide for CBRM Businesses

1. Know the Risks of Cape Breton:

- **Identify Potential Risks:** Understand the specific weather-related risks your business may face in Cape Breton. Hurricanes, heavy storms, flooding, and power outages are common threats.
- **Seasonal Risk Timelines:** Ensure yourself and your staff have a clear understanding of what weather to expect throughout the year.
- **Create an Emergency Response Team:** Appoint key personnel to form an emergency response team. Ensure they are well-trained and familiar with the emergency plan.
- **Communication Plan:** Establish a clear communication plan to reach employees, clients, suppliers, and emergency services during a crisis. Share contact information and establish an emergency contact tree.

2. Early Warnings & Alerts:

- **Official Alerts:** Keep up to date on official alerts through channels like government's social media, [Nova Scotia Emergency Alerts](#), or [Cape Breton Weather Alerts](#).
- **Weather Monitoring:** Ensure proper weather monitoring during risk seasons, be aware of alerts from Environment Canada, [Canadian Hurricane Centre](#) and other news sources.

3. Secure Your Facility:

- **Building Inspection:** Regularly inspect your building for vulnerabilities and structural weaknesses. Ensure roofs, windows, and doors are in good condition.
- **Secure Loose Items:** Anchor or store outdoor equipment, signage, and loose items that could become projectiles in strong winds.
- **Flood Prevention:** If your business is in a flood-prone area, consider flood barriers, sandbags, or elevating critical equipment and documents.
- **Wind Protection:** If possible, reinforce windows and doors, secure outdoor signs and equipment, and bring in anything that could be blown away.

4. Develop a Business Continuity Plan:

- **Data Backup:** Regularly back up critical data to secure offsite locations or the cloud. Ensure important documents are readily accessible.
- **Alternate Locations:** Identify backup facilities or remote working arrangements for your employees in case your primary location is affected.
- **Supplier and Customer Relations:** Establish plans for maintaining essential business relationships during an emergency.

5. Emergency Supply Checklist:

- **Household 72-hour kit:** Prepare a list of important items to use in the event of power outages or other emergencies (Food, Water, Flashlights, Batteries, First Aid)
- **Specialty Needs:** Create a list of special items for employees who may need to stay at the workplace during a storm (Prescriptions, Mobility Aids)

6. Evacuation Planning:

- **Business Evacuation Plan:** Develop a concise evacuation plan for your businesses including routes, meeting points, and transportation options. Conduct drills with your employees to ensure all staff are prepared in the case of an emergency.
- **Pre-Evacuation Prep:** Ensure all staff are aware of local shelter locations and accessibility resources prior to oncoming storms. Have supply bags prepared and ready in the need of a quick evacuation.

7. Employee Safety:

- Prioritize employee safety above all else. Encourage them to stay home during severe weather events if they feel unsafe travelling to work.

8. Insurance Review:

- Review your business insurance policy to ensure it covers damage from hurricanes and other weather-related events. Make any necessary updates.

9. Post-Emergency Assessment:

- After the weather event has passed, conduct a thorough assessment of the damage and the impact on your business. Use this information to refine your emergency plan.

10. Community Involvement:

- Consider participating in local community emergency preparedness initiatives, such as local emergency response teams or business associations.