



Preparing Your Cargo Storage Facility for a Natural Hazard Event

Cargo Care Guide

Whether shipping by land, sea or air, all means of transportation are subject to varying degrees of risk that call for different types of solutions. To safeguard your property and business, you need knowledgeable advice and protection you can count on. This series of publications is designed to identify the numerous challenges facing importers and exporters today, and to provide a general overview of recommendations to help safeguard your goods against loss.

FM Global Cargo recommends you take additional precautions to protect your stored products against the hazards caused by high winds, severe rainfall, and flooding.

Natural Hazard Event Timeline

To prepare your cargo storage facility for a natural hazard event that includes high winds, severe rainfall, and flooding, appropriate planning and precautions are vital to minimizing any associated loss.

To protect your facility to the fullest extent possible, it is important to plan well in advance of an impending event and be able to readily execute that plan when a natural catastrophe is imminent. Consider the following information when preparing for natural hazards at your facility.

Off-Season Preparation

Preparing for a natural hazard event begins with the development of a carefully-thought-out emergency response plan. The response plan should be prepared well in advance of any impending storms and should identify everyone's responsibility.

The emergency response plan should include but is not limited to the following:

- Monitor local and national weather forecasts and information on a regular basis and plan for a worst-case scenario.
- Establish a chain of command: Designate leaders as well as back-up individuals and maintain an updated telephone number contact list.
- Conduct walk-throughs of the storage facility with all employees to ensure that they are familiar with all locations within the structure. This walk-through should include identifying muster locations, emergency gear lockers, fire extinguishers, egress locations, and emergency exits.
- Ensure accountability of all storage facility employees by conducting a headcount at emergency muster locations.
- Establish a communication protocol, internally as well as with third-party logistics service providers and supply chain partners, to be implemented upon notification of a pending natural hazard event.
- Identify and develop a scope of responsibility for an "emergency response team" within your organization that will liaise with logistics partners and/or building management to ensure that they are adequately prepared for any hazards that may impact their facility and your stored cargo.
- Develop and maintain appropriate internal and external property loss prevention inspections for storage facilities, including perimeter security and roof maintenance.
- Consider what security protocols should be established during the natural hazard event. Secure exterior closed-circuit TV (CCTV) or internet protocol (IP) cameras from movement in high winds and damage by debris.
- Ensure the central station alarm is supported by at least two power sources and will continue to detect intrusion into the facility if the main power source is down.
- FM Global Cargo does not recommend leaving loaded trailers in the container yard at any time. This is particularly important during a natural hazard event in which the loaded containers/trailers can leave your product exposed to severe moisture ingress and an increased risk of theft due to the limited available resources to supervise and protect the shipment.
- Once a plan is formalized, warehouse employees should be trained on their responsibilities when there is an impending event. Due to potential warehouse employee turnover or the use of seasonal workers, the emergency plan should be incorporated into temporary and new hire training.



- The emergency plan should be under constant review, and regular emergency drills should be conducted. During these drills, all systems should be tested. (i.e., emergency generators, security systems, communication protocols, etc.)

Impending Event

In advance of an impending natural hazard event, management should execute steps outlined during the planning stage.

Be sure to contact third-party logistics providers to determine the location of any of your shipments currently in transit, as well as:

- Reschedule or redirect inbound shipments to stay out of the expected path of any impending severe weather.
- Delay or advance scheduled outbound shipments to minimize the amount of product exposed in an impending natural hazard event.
- Ensure that doorways and windows are adequately secured and protected to withstand high winds, water, and moisture ingress. This will also prevent theft and/or vandalism in the event a window or door is broken during the event.
- Ensure that emergency generators are fully-fueled and vital equipment (refrigeration systems, heating, etc.) are operational prior to the storm's impact.

- Consider establishing temporary barriers around the facility to reduce the risk of floodwaters entering the building.
- Cargo that is stored along the exterior perimeter walls should be moved inward within the facility.
- Cargo on pallets should be raised to the second-tier rack or above, with higher-valued inventory getting preference to higher levels. If no racks are available, utilize spare empty pallets and raise palletized cargo above the potential flood waterline.
- Wrap higher-valued pallets in a waterproof material such as shrink-wrap, or at a minimum, cover with tarpaulins.
- All external loose items should be secured, and tree branches should be cleared away from fences and the building.

During the Event

Once the event begins, try to maintain frequent communication within your organization and with external partners (i.e. local emergency departments, carriers, etc.) to gain information on the status of your storage facility and on any cargo in transit within the impacted area.

Continue to monitor the event and the impact it is having on the local area around your storage facility. This will give an early indicator of what type of services may be needed once your team is cleared to go back into the facility.

If available, remotely monitor facility security cameras to determine conditions at the site.

Post-Event

Once your facility is deemed safe, contact essential personnel to return and assess impact of the event. Document any damages by photographs and video. Take steps to mitigate any

potential damages to your products, such as sorting and segregating damaged from sound products.

Ascertain the extent of any damages to the storage facility and critical equipment such as boilers and electrical circuit boxes and employ any essential services that may be needed to restore your operation and make any repairs necessary (e.g., plumber, electrician, roofer).

Remember that planning for a natural hazard event does not begin just before an event is imminent or end after an event has occurred, but rather is a living process that requires constant review as the severity and frequency of natural hazard events increase globally.

If it appears any damage has occurred to the stored cargo, contact FM Global Cargo claims for further assistance and a First Notice of Loss can be filed via the online portal:

<https://www.wkwebster.com/fmg/newloss/>

Additional Resources

- [National Weather Service](#)
- [United Kingdom Meteorological Office](#)
- [Japan Meteorological Agency](#)
- [Australia Bureau of Meteorology](#) (Australia, South Pacific and Indian Oceans)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [National Hurricane Center](#) (North America, Central America and Caribbean)
- [World Meteorological Organization](#)

A number of stand-alone FM Global Cargo Care Guides are available relating to the loss prevention steps outlined in this article. For further information please contact cargoengineering@fmglobal.com.

