

April 1, 2024**MEMORANDUM****TO:** UF/FLREC Faculty and Staff**FROM:** Jack Rechcigl and Kim Moore**SUBJECT: HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS PLAN FOR 2024**

The following is the FLREC hurricane preparedness plan of action for 2024. Page 4 of this memo contains UF websites regarding suggested hurricane preparedness for offices and laboratories. The last page is the hurricane phone chain.

Print this document and take it home with you, as you may not have access to the network to download when you need it. As long as the analog phone line is working, and Kim Moore or Javier Herrera have access to it, messages about the closure or opening of the center will be left on the answering machine at 954.424.6850.

- 1) Hurricane Season Preparation:** Please check your areas **now** to decide what items should be thrown away **now**, and not just before the storm. File your work orders for help with heavy projects **now**, as the farm crew will not be available to help with trash removal right before a storm.
- 2) Storm Monitoring:** The latest storm updates are available from the National Hurricane Center website at www.nhc.noaa.gov or load the free Maxtracker app on your cell phone <https://www.local10.com/news/download-the-free-max-tracker-hurricane-app>.
- 3) Decision to Install Storm Shutters:** In the main building (5001), teaching building (5002), research/teaching headhouse, hurricane house and graduate student houses, all window and door glass are now impact-resistant. We do still have shutters for front and west exterior doors for 5001, and they will likely be installed for a category 4 or higher storm to help prevent wind-driven rain from entering the buildings. Shutters are still necessary for the older support buildings (e.g., garage). The decision to install shutters will be made by the Center Director based on reports from the National Hurricane Center and Broward County. It is usually done at the time of a hurricane watch announcement (hurricane conditions are possible in our area within 36 hours). The following factors will be taken into account: 1) storm forecast predictions (timing, storm intensity, and landfall predictions), 2) timing of weekend (since shutters will not usually be installed over the weekend), and 3) availability of staff.
- 4) Storm Shutter Installation:** Fred Hirning will be in charge of shutter installation. He will ensure that battery-operated screwdrivers are charged and operational, appropriate washers and bolts are available, and shutters are easily accessible.

NOTE: If the decision is made to activate shutters for the doors, the roll-down shutters for the east wing's doors that exit into courtyard and the front door shutters will be the last shutters closed.

- 5) Decision to Close Center:** Because some UF faculty and staff are located in the FAU building (Davie West), which has different closure rules, PLEASE READ CAREFULLY. The decision to close the FLREC facility (both main building and 2nd floor Davie West) for an impending hurricane or tropical storm is delegated to the Center Directors or designee, if neither is available, unless a Governor's executive order is in place for the county, in which case, it takes precedence. **In general, when Broward County closes non-essential governmental offices, the entire FLREC unit will be closed.** Updates for Broward County closures can be viewed at <http://www.broward.org>. In all cases, the IFAS Vice President's Office (352/392-1971) and IFAS Personnel Affairs (352/392-4777) will be contacted to obtain approval of administrative leave. As long as the analog phone line is working and Kim has access to it, messages about the closure or opening of the center will be left on the answering machine at **954-424-6850**.
- **NOTE:** Employees located in the FAU Davie West building must abide by the FAU closure rules. Thus, it is possible for FAU to be closed when the FLREC is officially open. In that situation, UF/FLREC employees in the Davie West building will be accommodated in the main building of FLREC, or they may elect to take a day of annual leave.
 - **NOTE:** **Once we announce the day and time when the center is officially closed, no one is allowed back in the main buildings (except graduate houses) without authorization until the storm has passed and it has been determined that it is safe to enter the property and buildings.**
- 6) Communication Procedures for Hurricanes:** When the decision to close the FLREC has been made (which may occur during working hours or not), each professor will be contacted by one of the hurricane committee members who will inform them of the status at the FLREC. (See attached phone chain chart.) **Each professor is then responsible for contacting all their personnel or to designate one of their employees to do so immediately.** After the hurricane, the phone chain will be mobilized to contact everyone.
- Kim Moore will remotely change the answering message on the phone at **954-424-6850** to give details about the re-opening of the center, but only if the phones are operational. In the event of a very damaging storm, the following Gainesville phone number can be called for an update on the Center at 352-392-1971 (IFAS Vice President's office).
- 7) What About Classes?**
- On-site classes are cancelled when the center is closed.
 - On-site classes may be cancelled *before* the center is officially closed if Dr. Moore and/or the professor in charge of a class feel it is necessary. A message will be placed on the Fort Lauderdale web site.
 - After the storm, students should contact their instructor or check the FLREC website.
- 8) Computer Operations:** Javier Herrera will coordinate shutdown and protection of the computer system with IFAS and UF IT services as needed to comply with the Wide Area Network requirements. It should be noted that system shutdown, if necessary, will now be controlled by the IFAS and UF IT services while previously it was controlled by local IT personnel. Therefore, there will be no guarantee of continuous network services even if the center remains open. You should consider regular computer back-ups during the hurricane

season and plan ahead for water-safe storage of peripheral storage units (DVDs, memory sticks, etc.) in the event of a storm.

- All computer and electronic/electrical equipment such as power supplies (UPS), power strips, scanners, printers, faxes, copiers, etc. must be switched off, unplugged from wall outlets, and elevated at 2-3 feet above floor level. It is also highly recommended to put heavy duty plastic bags over the computers and electronic/electrical equipment where possible and tie the bags at bottom of units to prevent water spill on equipment when the bags are removed.
- Each group is responsible for protecting their equipment. If you need advice on how to do this, please see Javier now.

9) Where did all the Automobiles and Chain Saws go? Maintenance staff will be in charge of making sure that all of the FLREC vehicles, bobcat, big trucks, etc. are filled with gasoline and parked in as safe a spot as possible. If you have your own state vehicle, please fill it up prior to the storm (no electricity, no gas!) Chain saws and extra containers will also be filled with gas.

10) When Do I Have to Go Home or Leave the FLREC Property? You must close the lab/office and leave in a timely manner when the Center is closed. Individuals living in the trailer must move to a shelter or to a friend's house when the center is closed. It is up to the individuals living in the graduate student houses to decide whether to stay in the house or not. Please inform your supervisor or host if you leave the FLREC property for another location.

Once we announce the day and time when the center is officially closed, no one is allowed back in the main building without authorization until the storm has passed and it has been determined that it is safe to enter the property and building.

11) Who Is Manning the Center? No one is authorized to stay within the buildings (except for graduate student houses) at the FLREC during a hurricane. The Hurricane House is NOT a shelter.

12) What about the Gate? As long as there is power to the gate, the gate will function normally with current opening and closing times. Once power is lost, it will continue to function normally until the battery-operated power back-up system loses energy. At that time, the gate will open automatically and remain open. Emergency personnel have access to the gate when it is closed.

13) Re-opening of Center: The opening of the center will depend upon a safety evaluation. The center will be checked for electrical, water and mechanical damage that could pose a health or safety risk before re-opening. Faculty and staff will be informed about the re-opening of the center via the phone chain or by calling **954-424-6850** (if phones are operational). Maintenance staff may be called to help clear debris, etc. for re-opening. In the case of extensive damage, IFAS Facilities and Planning will be consulted.

14) New Flooding Categories: Please avoid flooded areas until cleared, regardless of the cause. There are five South Florida flood warning categories based upon the amount of rainfall and the degree and duration of expected flooding. As some of you recall, Hurricane Irene (1999) did not cause much wind damage in Broward County, but the flooding, due to more than 10 inches of rain in 24 hours, was extensive. Most of the local roads leading to the FLREC were flooded.

15) Use Common Sense: If you have not been able to communicate with anyone and you are still not sure about coming to work, then use common sense. If there are indications of any life-threatening safety problems near your home or at work, do not take risks trying to get to

work. It is not worth risking your life when considering taking a day of annual leave versus paid administrative leave.

16) What to remember:

- a) Get ready for storm season **now** by cleaning up around your areas.
 - b) Primary persons on the phone chain should have their phone lists at home or on their person.
 - c) Keep informed of the progress of named storms at www.nhc.noaa.gov
 - d) When a hurricane watch is announced, storm shutters are installed, cars filled with gas, sandbags placed as necessary, etc. at request of the Center Director.
 - e) When center prepares to close, call the people on your phone chain list (at the request of Center Director).
 - f) In general, when Broward County closes non-essential governmental offices, the entire FLREC unit will be closed.
 - g) Employees located in the FAU Davie West building must abide by the FAU closure rules. Thus, it is possible for FAU to be closed when the FLREC is officially open. In that situation, UF/FLREC employees in the Davie West building will be accommodated in the main building of the FLREC, or they may elect to take a day of annual leave.
 - h) Call this phone number **954-424-6850** for information on closing and re-opening of the Center (depending upon whether phones are operational). The phone chain will be activated to provide information to everyone about the re-opening.
 - i) **Use common sense about safety and health when coming back to work.**
- UF Disaster/Emergency Management: <http://www.ehs.ufl.edu/programs/em/>
 - Broward County Emergency Management: <https://www.facebook.com/BrowardEMD/>

Hurricane Phone Chain for FLREC

Either Jack Rechcigl or Kim Moore will contact Sarah Kern, Fred Hirning, and Brian Bahder. The persons in the first column will then contact the persons in the second column. Faculty are then expected to contact their staff and students, or to designate one of their employees to do so.

Sarah Kern

Javier Herrera
Janay Johnson
Lourdes Mederos
Susan Thor

Fred Hirning

Jorge Gomez
Clyde Morrow

Kim Moore

Corey Callaghan
Braham Dhillon
Lyn Gettys
Willm Martens-Habbena
Mica McMillan
Marco Schiavon
Extension
Broward County EPD

Brian Bahder

Thomas Chouvenec
Henry Hochmair
H. Dail Laughinghouse
Frank Mazzotti
Jiangxiao Qiu
Rudi Scheffrahn
Nan-Yao Su
USDA

The Foundation for The Gator Nation