

# We're ready for storm season. Are you?



We know the impact that a major storm can have on your business. We have a plan and urge you to prepare as well so you and your employees can get back to business safely and as quickly as possible.

Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) has invested more than \$3 billion since the historic 2004-2005 hurricane seasons to build a stronger and smarter energy grid you can count on in good weather and bad. The improvements we have made to the grid have improved service reliability for our customers by more than 30 percent over the past seven years. And, we're not stopping there. Here's what we've done in **Sarasota County** since 2006 to make the energy grid more resilient in storms and more reliable during day-to-day operations:

- Strengthened 39 main power lines, including those that serve critical services, such as Sarasota Memorial Hospital, Sarasota Emergency Operations Center, the American Red Cross – Southwest Florida Chapter location, Doctors Hospital of Sarasota and 9-1-1 emergency communications centers, that are necessary for communities to recover faster after a storm;
- Cleared tree branches and vegetation — a major cause of power outages — from 8,841 miles of power lines, an average of 737 miles every year;
- Inspected all 85,728 power poles every eight years, strengthening or replacing those that no longer meet FPL's standards for strength;
- Installed smart grid technology, including 2,055 automated switches on main and neighborhood power lines to help detect problems and restore service faster when outages occur; and
- Inspected 252 main power lines and equipment using infrared technology to detect issues before they cause a power interruption.

Tropical weather in the state of Florida is a way of life. The Sunshine State leads the nation in landfalling hurricanes with nearly 120 – almost double that of Texas, which ranks second on the infamous list. Properly preparing for hurricane season now can save you and your employees unwanted stress when a storm has its eyes set on the state. The key is having a plan in place for when that time comes. Here are some tips to help get you going.

#### **Plan ahead:**

- Ensure your employees' contact information is up to date.
- Have a plan in place to communicate after the storm passes, e.g. set up a telephone number with a recorded message that will be regularly updated to inform employees of the status of company operations.
- Consider developing a system to authorize re-entry to company facilities after a storm, e.g. I.D. cards and vehicle permits.
- Establish a safe area away from exterior glass windows and doors if you plan to take shelter at your business.
- Determine if your business is in a flood and/or evacuation zone and review evacuation routes, designating an emergency temporary site.
- Identify what you need to secure your building, important equipment and who will help; outline specific tasks and conduct a training session.
- Photograph or record your building or office – inside and out – for insurance purposes.
- Have all trees and vegetation near power lines trimmed by specially trained line-clearing professionals to minimize their potential impact on your business and neighboring businesses.
- Make sure debris is cleared prior to a hurricane warning announcement – trash pickup will be suspended during this time. Tree limbs and branches are the leading cause of outages and can become airborne during a storm.
- Bookmark [FPL.com/outage](http://FPL.com/outage) and save 1-800-4OUTAGE to your cell phone to report and check the status of your restoration.
- Download the FPL Mobile App in the App Store or Google Play, or text the word "App" to MyFPL (69375).
- Save your FPL account number to the notes section of your cell phone, or keep a copy of your FPL bill – which has your account number on it.
- Update the phone number and email address on your FPL account.
- Consider installing a generator in case of power outages.

#### **Generator safety**

- Read and follow all the manufacturer's guidelines when using a generator to avoid dangerous shortcuts and ensure safe operation.
- DO NOT directly connect your generator to your business's breaker or fuse box. Power from a generator connected to a business's wiring will "back feed" into utility lines – which can severely injure or kill a neighbor or utility crew working to restore power.
- DO NOT run generators inside your business or garage, as they produce potentially deadly carbon monoxide fumes.
- Keep generators away from all open windows to prevent the fumes from entering your business.
- Buy a battery-operated carbon monoxide alarm, which will alert you if carbon-monoxide levels become dangerous.
- Turn off all connected appliances before starting your generator.

- Turn connected appliances on one at a time, never exceeding the generator's rated wattage.
- DO NOT touch a generator if you are wet, standing in water or on damp ground.
- NEVER refuel a hot generator or one that is running – hot engine parts or exhaust can ignite gasoline.
- Ensure you have plenty of gas safely stored in gas containers to operate your generator.

**Before a storm:**

- Pay attention to instructions from public officials and the media.
- Secure the exterior of your office and protect interior furniture:
  - Identify outdoor equipment, materials and structures that could become airborne and move them to a safe location.
  - Park vehicles in safe, protected areas such as a covered garage.
  - Secure doors, windows and other openings.
  - Move items away from the windows.
  - Lock drawers and filing cabinets.
  - Unplug all lamps, radios, computers and equipment in case of a power surge; cover important equipment with plastic bags.
- Gather any important supplies and documents.
- Charge your cell phone and keep it ready by obtaining portable chargers.
- Make multiple back-ups of computer files and data and store records off premises.
- Run a special voice message informing employees and customers on the status of company operations.
- Close your offices with sufficient time to allow employees to secure their own homes, and inform clients that you're closing early and when you plan to reopen.

**After a storm:**

- Make your safety and the safety of your employees a priority.
- DO NOT travel, or ask employees to travel, until it is safe to do so.
- Watch for downed power lines. Call 911 or FPL at 1-800-4OUTAGE to report fallen power lines that present a clear and imminent danger. DO NOT attempt to touch any power lines. Always assume that every power line is energized.
- Read and follow all the manufacturer's instructions and safety guidelines if you use a portable generator. Remember to NEVER wire your generator to your breaker or fuse box – the power you generate may flow back into power lines causing severe injury or death.
- Turn off your circuit breakers, disconnect all electrical appliances and turn off all wall switches immediately in case of interior water damage. Remember to never stand in water while operating switches or unplugging any electrical device.
- Stay away from standing water and debris, which could conceal a live wire.
- DO NOT venture out in the dark because you might not see a downed power line that could be energized and dangerous.
- Make emergency repairs only when it is safe to do so. Repairs that prevent looting or further damage should have top priority, but only if the repair can be done safely.
- Take inventory to determine and record losses – based off the photos and recordings you took for insurance purposes.

### **Staying in touch with FPL following a storm**

When outages occur, we know our customers want and need information on when their power will be restored. FPL will provide updated restoration time estimates and other progress reports via mobile if a storm strikes:

- Our website: [FPL.com/storm](http://FPL.com/storm)
- Twitter: [Twitter.com/insideFPL](https://twitter.com/insideFPL)
- Facebook: [Facebook.com/FPLconnect](https://facebook.com/FPLconnect)
- YouTube: [YouTube.com/FPL](https://YouTube.com/FPL)
- FPL's blog: [FPLblog.com](http://FPLblog.com)
- FPL's outage page: [FPL.com/Outage](http://FPL.com/Outage)
- FPL's outage number: 1-800-4OUTAGE

For more storm and safety tips, visit us at [FPL.com/storm](http://FPL.com/storm).