

# FOUR MYTHS THAT HINDER PROPERTY RECOVERY AFTER A HURRICANE

Over the last few years hurricanes have made catastrophic impacts along the Gulf of Mexico and Eastern Seaboard. In 2018, the combined damage estimates for Hurricanes Florence and Michael were greater than \$50 billion. And, the year prior, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria caused an estimated \$245 billion in economic damage and as much as \$115 billion in insured losses.

Given such staggering costs, many organizations want to learn how they can quickly recover from these potential threats to their businesses. But no matter how proficient an organization has become in dealing with other disasters, hurricanes are different and require specialized approaches for recovery. It's especially important to examine any preconceived notions about the best way to recover from a hurricane. This article dispels the most common myths when planning and recovering after a hurricane. Following best practices can help organizations take a proven path to accelerate property recovery.

## THE FOUR BIGGEST RECOVERY MYTHS

When it comes to large catastrophic events, the selection of a recovery partner and the communications plan for coordination after a hurricane is essential. This should be done well in advance of the emergency. The following four myths can undermine your recovery. While these myths may appear to offer the quickest, cheapest and easiest way out of an emergency, they only provide a false sense of security when it comes to major catastrophes and can hinder a quick and smooth recovery.



### SEVEN ESSENTIAL HURRICANE RECOVERY CONSIDERATIONS:

1. **Have a plan**
2. **Vet your recovery provider well before a disaster occurs**
3. **Make safety the top priority**
4. **Outline recovery priorities and goals**
5. **Focus on communication**
6. **Bring together all key parties to streamline processes**
7. **Remember that arrival time may not make a big recovery difference**

## MYTH #1

The fastest response time means the fastest recovery

vs

## FACT

It's not about who can get to the property the fastest. While a quick arrival might provide temporary peace of mind, it only matters if the recovery provider brings the right resources, expertise and equipment.

## MYTH #2

The most locations mean the best ability to respond

vs

## FACT

The number of offices the recovery provider has doesn't matter if it doesn't have the expertise, equipment or ability to mobilize in the event of an area-wide disaster. And a local provider may itself be impacted by the same storm and have difficulties in responding to its customers' urgent needs.

## MYTH #3

The cheapest prices mean a less expensive recovery

vs

## FACT

When recovering from hurricane damage, it's good to be mindful about recovery costs. However, cutting the wrong corners or making poorly informed decisions can produce a significantly larger bill in the end—and a much longer recovery time.

## MYTH #4

An (overly) diversified vendor list means someone will respond

vs

## FACT

It sounds good in theory to have a list of 6-8 vendors. The philosophy is that "if something happens, I will call each vendor down the list and someone will show up." But when it comes to major catastrophes, this is a big gamble. In widespread disasters, providers are very busy and focus on customers they have established partnerships with first. Finding a contractor at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour doesn't provide a guarantee that it will have the horsepower and expertise to get the job done properly. This can lead to costly delays and rework.

# TOP THREE TIPS TO ACCELERATE RECOVERY

An accelerated recovery starts by developing a deep partnership with a trusted provider who has a proven ability to expertly orchestrate key steps with all the stakeholders in the recovery process. Here are three steps for accelerating recovery after a hurricane.

## 1. ESTABLISH A PARTNERSHIP WELL IN ADVANCE

Finding a provider well before one is needed allows time to properly vet their qualifications, experience, and operational approach to ensure the best fit with the customer's business. An often-overlooked step in the vetting process is to check references. Once a partner has been identified, ensure that they understand the needs of the business and will be ready to meet them.

## 2. EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE FROM DAY ONE

In a large loss situation when many buildings on-site are impacted, coordinating cleanup and recovery can be tricky. Understandably the leadership team of any business will want to get started as soon as possible, but they may not know what they are up against until the worst passes and it's safe to go back on-site. Fortunately, having a Disaster Recovery Plan and partnership with a restoration provider in place can help speed recovery by streamlining decision-making and job coordination challenges.

## 3. INVOLVE ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO STREAMLINE PROCESSES AND DECISION MAKING

When it comes to streamlining the claims process, a close working relationship among all the key players and clear, frequent communication that builds trust are key. The organization needs to be aligned internally to streamline decision making.

It's also important to involve other consultants and adjusters upfront to ensure that their expectations are met to process a fast claim. When everyone is on the same page about goals and expectations, a faster recovery and claims process are possible.

Open the lines of communication with a restoration provider before a disaster to discuss the nuances of the business and relevant insurance coverages. Ongoing discussions will not only improve safety during a disaster, it will pay huge dividends in time, money and safety after a disaster by helping to streamline decision-making and avoid costly starts, stops and reversals.

Hurricanes are different from other types of natural disasters and recovery requires specialized skills, equipment and expertise. Consider a restoration provider who has broad experience in helping organizations quickly and cost-effectively recover from hurricanes.

## ABOUT INTERSTATE

Interstate Restoration is a leading emergency response and general restoration contractor with more than 20 years of experience in commercial property remediation, restoration and reconstruction. And, with more than 50 locations throughout the U.S. and Canada, and an extensive partner network, Interstate provides the coverage you need, no matter where your properties are located.