

AT&T Disaster Preparedness – 2008 Hurricane Season

Millions of residential and business customers depend on AT&T for critical voice, data and video communications as well as entertainment services. AT&T is committed to delivering the highest levels of service quality and reliability for customers under all circumstances.

Network Preparations

A critical element of AT&T's efforts to maximize network reliability is the company's ability to swiftly respond when disaster strikes. AT&T monitors and maintains its networks 24/7 and conducts readiness drills throughout the year to ensure that the networks and personnel are ready to respond in a moment's notice. Network preparations include:

- Adding capacity to the wireless network to accommodate increased call volume.
- Testing the high-capacity backup batteries located at every cell site.
- Maintaining a robust backup power plan, which includes deploying extended battery life and portable generators, and maintaining existing fixed generators.
- Topping off generators with fuel at cell sites and central and field-level switching facilities.
- Using natural gas in some of the permanent generators to eliminate the need to refuel.
- Staging generators in safe locations for their immediate deployment once a storm has passed.
- Elevating switches critical to network operations above expected flood levels.
- Protecting physical facilities against flooding.
- Preparing the following for deployment in the wake of a storm:
 - Mobile cell sites
 - Mobile command centers
 - Emergency communications vehicles
 - A self-sufficient base camp, complete with sleeping tents, bathrooms, kitchen, laundry facilities, on-site nurse and more than 10,000 meals ready to eat (MREs), plus more
 - Hazmat equipment and supplies
 - Equipment-trailers to provide infrastructure support and mobile heating ventilation and air conditioning
 - Internal and external resources for initial assessment and recovery efforts

Hurricane Season Preparation Tips for Consumers

Have a family communications plan in place. Designate someone out of the area as a central contact, and make certain that all family members know whom to contact if they become separated. Most important, practice your emergency plan in advance.



Fact Sheet

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Be sure you have a "Hurricane Phone." It's a good idea to have a wireless phone on hand and at least one corded (landline) telephone that is not dependent on electricity in case of a power outage. Cordless telephones usually have receivers that are electrically charged, so they won't work if you lose your power.

Program all of your emergency contact numbers and e-mail addresses into your mobile phone. Numbers should include the police department, fire station and hospital, as well as your family members.

Keep your wireless phone batteries charged at all times. Have an alternative plan to recharge your battery in case of a power outage, such as charging your wireless device by using your car charger or having extra mobile phone batteries or disposable mobile phone batteries on hand.

Keep your wireless phone dry. The biggest threat to your device during a hurricane is water, so keep your equipment safe from the elements by storing it in a baggie or some other type of protective covering.

Forward your home number to your wireless number in the event of an evacuation. Because call forwarding is based out of the telephone central office, you will get incoming calls from your landline phone even if your local telephone service is disrupted at your home. In the unlikely event that the central office is not operational, services such as voice mail, call forwarding, remote access call forwarding and call forwarding busy line/don't answer may be useful.

Track the storm and access weather information on your wireless device. Many homes lose power during severe weather. If you have a wireless device that provides access to the Internet, you can watch weather reports through MobiTV[®] or AT&T Mobile TV or keep updated with local radar and severe weather alerts through My-Cast[®] Weather, if you subscribe to those services.

If you have a camera phone, take, store and send photos — even video clips — of damaged property to your insurance company from your device.

Take advantage of location-based mapping technology such as AT&T Navigator, available on some wireless devices, to seek evacuation routes or to avoid traffic congestion from downed trees or power lines.

Hurricane Season Preparation Tips for Small Business Owners

Set up a call-forwarding service to a predetermined backup location. Set up a single or multiple hotline number(s) for employees, employees' families, customers and partners, as appropriate, to call so that all parties know about the business situation and emergency plan. For this to be most effective, maintain an updated contact list, including mobile and home phone numbers and e-mail addresses, for all employees.

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Protect hardware/software/data records/employee records, etc. Routinely back up these files to an off-site location. Use a generator for supplying backup power to vital computer hardware and other mission-critical equipment. Prearrange the replacement of damaged hardware with vendors to ensure quick business recovery.

Outline detailed plans for evacuation and shelter-in-place plans. Practice these plans (employee training, etc.). Establish a backup location for your business and meeting place for all employees.

Assemble a crisis-management team and coordinate efforts with neighboring businesses and building management. Be aware that disasters affecting your suppliers also affect your business. Outline a plan for supply chain continuity for business essentials.

Maximizing Service During and After a Hurricane

- During an emergency, more people are trying to use their phones at the same time. The increased calling volume may create network congestion, leading to "fast busy" signals on your wireless phone or a slow dial tone on your landline phone. If this happens, hang up, wait several seconds and then try the call again. This allows your original call data to clear the network before you try again.
- Try wireless text/short messaging service (SMS). During an emergency situation, text messages will often go through quicker than voice calls because they require less network resources. All of AT&T's wireless devices are text messaging capable. Also, if you have a wireless data device such as an Apple iPhone or a BlackBerry® smartphone, you can use its messaging capabilities to communicate. Depending on the call plan, additional charges may apply.
- Keep non-emergency calls to a minimum, and limit your calls to the most important ones. If there is severe weather, chances are many people will be attempting to place calls to loved ones, friends and business associates.

Additional information and tips for disaster preparedness can be found at www.att.com/vitalconnections.

SOURCE: The December Seasonal Forecast issued by Dr. Bill Gray and Phil Klotzbach of Colorado State University (CSU).