

## Essentials for any Disaster Plan:

1. **Knowledge is Power - Identify and inventory your assets.** Remember, your assets are not just your historic or cultural ones. Any climate or humidity controls, special cases for artifacts, etc. need to be taken into account.
2. **Preventative maintenance – Protect that which you can now.** Are there things you can do now to better protect those assets? Examples include elevating critical artifacts to a second floor, identifying possible storage sites that artifacts could be brought to, in the event that a storm is forthcoming, having lists of contractors that you could call for moving, remediating, or repairs to resources or facilities.
3. **Don't just hope for the best - Prepare for the worst.** If a storm takes out your infrastructure, have a comprehensive plan for replacement of that infrastructure that is more sustainable. If you are unable to operate out of your facilities for any length of time, do you have an alternative site where you or your staff could work from? Do you have a computer system that would allow work from home? These are things that you should put in your plan so that, when you seek funding for rebuilding, you already have what will be required by those holding the purse strings.
4. **To be forewarned is to be forearmed – Prepare your site.** Have a strategy for closing down your facility in advance of a storm, again protecting critical assets as best as possible, battening up the site, etc. And do it well in advance so that your most critical assets (your employees) have the time to attend to their needs and the needs of their families.

5. **Safety first – Keep you and your staff out of harm’s way.** Never place yourself or your employees in harm’s way by staying to babysit the facility. It is a stupid premise that your presence will have any effect on the outcome of a storm. You will only be placing yourself and those emergency rescue personnel on call in danger. Even the most sensible of people will often attempt stupid actions, when the adrenalin is pumping.
6. **After the storm - Damage Assessment.** Have an experienced assessment team ready to analyze the damage done, and be sure to document everything with photos. An experienced team can be just yourself, you and key staff members, or a contracted service. I would only bring in a contracted service after you survey the damage firsthand.
7. **Pick up the pieces - Secure that which you can.** Any artifact or other asset that you can secure is a benefit. This is especially true if you have to hire outside contractors to do the work. No temptation at all is always best. If you are unsure as to the stability of that asset, leave it for an experienced conservator to deal with.
8. **Come back better than ever - Rebuild Intelligently.** As we all know, climate change is something we will be dealing with for a long time, if not forever. With new technologies coming out all the time, it is important that we all stay current with those infrastructure improvements that will better withstand another attack by Mother Nature.
9. **Conclusion: Be the First One on Your Block – Have a plan.** If you have a comprehensive plan on hand, you will have a substantial jump on others when you go to seek funding, or to get those contractors needed to rebuild. The early bird does catch the worm.