

VOLUME 16 | ISSUE 3
JULY - SEPTEMBER 2025

SAFETY & LOSS PREVENTION

OUTLOOK

GET READY &
STAY READY

EMERGENCIES
DON'T WAIT
FOR YOU TO
BE PREPARED

HURRICANES • TORNADOES • FLOODING • EXTREME TEMPERATURES • WILDFIRES

MEDICAL CRISES • OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS • POOR AIR QUALITY • VIOLENCE

ALSO INSIDE:

FBI's Active Shooter Event
Quick Reference Guide

Disaster-Resilient
Landscaping

Ladder Safety:
The Results Are In



A Message from the Editor

The word "emergency" has its roots in the Latin word "emergere," which means "arise, bring to light."

We now define it as "a sudden unforeseen situation requiring prompt action to avoid disaster; an urgent need for assistance or relief."

Emergencies do happen suddenly, but we can mitigate their unforeseen nature by looking and planning ahead. Hurricanes have a season; forecasts can help us predict the arrival of dangerous weather and extreme temperatures. We can look at patterns in social behavior and political climate to help foresee workplace violence, civil unrest, scarcity of supplies, etc. Epidemiologists can look at outbreaks of illnesses across the globe, track their movement, and warn us when our local communities need to prepare. Technology and resources help us see and get ready for emergencies before they emerge.

September is National Preparedness Month, and in this issue of the DFS Safety & Loss Prevention OUTLOOK, we focus on ways to prepare your organization for emergency situations before they happen so the employees and facilities will be ready when they do.

Lori Taylor

Managing Editor

**HURRICANE SEASON:
JUNE 1 - NOVEMBER 30**

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL

If you know an agent, employee, or volunteer who has made exceptional contributions to the reduction and control of employment-related accidents, contact your agency's safety coordinator to submit a nomination. Safety coordinators should submit nominations to the Division of Risk Management's Loss Prevention section at least two weeks prior to an upcoming quarterly IAC meeting. Decisions to approve the nominations will be made by IAC members during the meeting discussion.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The next Interagency Advisory Council Meeting will take place online via GoToMeeting at 2:30 pm on

AUGUST 12, 2025

Council Members: Look for an email invite coming soon

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NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

- NATURAL DISASTERS
- EXTREME WEATHER
- MEDICAL EMERGENCIES
- OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS
- MASS VIOLENCE EVENTS

Since 2004, the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) spends each September encouraging Americans to plan for emergencies and disasters that threaten their homes, businesses, and communities.

Knowing the types of emergencies that can occur is the first step to preparing for them. Providing employees with a clear plan of action and training on how to implement it when necessary gives people confidence and peace of mind at every level inside an organization.



PREPARED, NOT SCARED WHAT'S IN YOUR WORKPLACE DISASTER KIT?

FIRST AID KIT:
first aid instruction sheet
• assorted adhesive bandages • medical tape
• gauze pads • roller gauze bandage • antibiotic ointment • antiseptic wipes • gel-soaked burn dressing • cold pack • eye coverings • eye/skin wash
• hand sanitizer • medical gloves • medical scissors
• tweezers • splints • chucks pads • tourniquet • thermal blanket • naloxone
• OTC pain medications • AED (somewhere onsite)

FOOD & WATER:
• Keep an emergency supply of non-perishable foods (energy bars, canned fruits & juices, dried meats, nut butters, etc.) that are easy to store, easy to carry, and as nutritious as possible. Avoid salty & fatty foods, especially if water is limited.
• FEMA recommends a minimum of a 3-day supply -- that's one gallon of water per person per day for drinking and sanitation. In worksites with limited storage space or large numbers of employees, provide enough water for those who may need to be onsite during an emergency, or encourage those essential workers to keep a personal supply in their workspace.
• Store emergency food & water on an upper shelf in airtight, waterproof containers; this will keep out insects and rodents, as well as the elements. Don't forget paper plates, cups, utensils, and a manual can opener.

OTHER SUPPLIES:
basic toolkit • flashlights • LED lanterns • batteries • glowsticks/ flares • fire extinguisher • fire blanket • multipurpose knife
• scissors • duct tape • plastic tarps • bungee cords • blankets & towels • dust masks • solar battery chargers • extension cords • power strips • emergency whistle • portable handcrank radio • cooler & ice packs • paper towels • toilet paper • disinfectant wipes • small & large plastic bags • ziploc bags • spare office/building keys/codes • petty cash • emergency contact info

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

IN THE WORKPLACE

Preparing your organization and its employees for an emergency will look different from preparing your home and family, but it's no less important. Make sure your workplace is ready for anything, whether disaster strikes inside or outside of work hours.

1

CREATE AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

- Determine the potential hazards specific to your workplace (fires, natural disasters, workplace violence).
- Have a written plan with protocols for every employee in each scenario, including building evacuation routes, shelter-in-place locations, and assembly locations.
- Include a business contingency plan that outlines the steps needed to ensure essential work can continue even if facilities are inaccessible. Invest in secure and reliable virtual communication tools, cloud-based platforms, and cybersecurity measures to facilitate seamless remote operations when in-person work is not possible.
- Communicate the plan so that employees understand the specific roles and responsibilities of the team during an emergency, such as evacuation wardens, first aid responders, and communication coordinators.
- Know who is responsible for utilities, generators, and general maintenance in your facility, and keep their contact information in your emergency plan/ disaster kit.
- Maintain up-to-date emergency contact info for employees and their family members. Create a phone tree or other centralized communication hub (such as the Everbridge system) so that employees can be contacted and receive real-time updates and other relevant information during critical events.

2

ASSEMBLE A DISASTER KIT

- Include equipment and supplies needed to provide first aid to those injured, stay safe during the event, send and receive updates, and any other items addressing the specific needs of that location.
- Place the contents into a secure container stored in a location easily accessible to all employees.
- Assign one or more team members the responsibility of keeping track of supplies on a regular basis and restocking them as needed. Remember to look at expiration dates on food, water, and first aid items.
- Have backup systems for essential equipment, such as power generators and communication devices.

Protecting the workplace is about safeguarding operations while prioritizing the well-being of the most valuable asset -- its people. Create an emergency action plan that best supports employees in each individual facility so that they stay safe, stay productive, and weather the challenges together.

3

STAY READY & INFORMED ABOUT POTENTIAL THREATS

- Keep phones and laptops charged, and refer to local news and radio alerts to stay up to date with imminent threats to your region or workplace.
- Provide formal emergency training to employees at every level, especially supervisors and those directly involved in safety and emergency management. Run drills as often as needed to confirm employees understand their roles and know how to work together during a crisis situation.
- Conduct regular evaluations of the emergency plan and keep it up to date. Analyze past emergencies to identify what went well, as well as any improvements that should be made for future events.
- Assess your facility's vulnerability to damage from extreme weather and encourage building managers to make upgrades to fortify the infrastructure. Consider installing backup power generators, reinforced windows, adequate drainage systems, and insulation to protect against extreme temperatures.

HURRICANES

TORNADOES

FLOODING

EXTREME TEMPERATURES

WILDFIRES

2025 HURRICANE SEASON

ATLANTIC STORM NAMES

ANDREA	HUMBERTO	OLGA
BARRY	IMELDA	PABLO
CHANTAL	JERRY	REBEKAH
DEXTER	KAREN	SEBASTIEN
ERIN	LORENZO	TANYA
FERNAND	MELISSA	VAN
GABRIELLE	NESTOR	WENDY

ATLANTIC BASIN PREDICTIONS

	2025	AVG.	2024
TOTAL NAMED	13-19	14	18
HURRICANES	6-10	7	11
CAT. 3 OR HIGHER	3-5	3	5

NOAA correctly predicted 2024 to be a hyperactive season -- it was the first in five years to see multiple Category 5 hurricanes. NOAA predicts 2025 has a 60% chance of being more active than average once again.

NATURAL DISASTERS & EXTREME WEATHER

HURRICANES

Extreme weather events can be unpredictable, even with advanced warning of their arrival. Hurricanes have their own season, from June 1 through November 30, with its peak around the beginning of October, so we know when to be on the lookout.

Thanks to advances in meteorology by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and others, predicting when and where hurricanes will form, their strength, and where they will make landfall has become more accurate than ever. Still, hurricanes have been known to surprise us by forming suddenly in the Gulf, gaining strength, or veering off their expected course. Even if you think you're ready for the storm, have a backup plan in place in case you need to make any last-minute changes.

WHAT NOT TO DO DURING A HURRICANE:

- **Ignore evacuation orders.** Even if the building is sturdy, staff could be stranded due to damaged and impassable roads.
- **Go outside during the storm.** Wait until officials confirm the danger has fully passed.
- **Have only smartphones for communication.** Cell towers can be damaged and lines often go down. Consider backup methods such as walkie-talkies, offline messaging apps, satellite internet, or even temporary networks flown in by drone (especially first responders and emergency personnel).
- **Wait too long to prepare.** Charge devices, fill up generators and fuel tanks, and gather emergency supplies as soon as possible.
- **Fail to backup important data.** Data stored solely on internal hard drives risks loss due to power surges, floods, or other damage. Backup data to external drives or the cloud.

PREPARING YOUR FACILITY FOR A TROPICAL STORM

SURROUNDINGS

- Reinforce or remove awnings, signs, and banners.
- Secure flagpoles and take down flags.
- Store or secure outdoor objects such as tables, benches, and trash cans.
- Have a professional landscaper trim or remove trees that put the property at risk, and develop a plan for storm-resilient landscaping. (Some types of plants will help prevent soil erosion and absorb flood waters more quickly than others.)
- Ensure fences, gates, and lighting fixtures are installed securely.
- Consider installing floodwalls or drainage structures on the property to help repel and drain floodwaters.
- Eliminate areas where water can pool up after heavy rains; standing water can spawn mosquitoes, bacteria, and fungi.

STRUCTURES

- Board up windows, if necessary.
- Protect critical contents by storing them at least one foot above where flood waters might reach, covering/wrapping equipment in plastic bags or tarps, or relocating equipment to a safe location.
- Safeguard chemicals to prevent damage or accidental release/contamination.
- Determine the integrity of wall systems, roof structures, skylights, and decking to know what to expect regarding wind loads, uplift, and water intrusion. Install adequate flashing to minimize water intrusion through vents and other openings.
- Designate a shelter-in-place area where employees working onsite during the storm can stay safe (known as the Best Available Refuge Area (BARA)).

EXTRA CREDIT: ● Install a safe room or shelter that meets FEMA Guidelines or ICC/NSSA 500 Standards.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE / TECHNOLOGY

- Back up all critical data.
- Secure or move servers to a safe location.
- Check that backup communication devices and generators are in working order.

DURING THE STORM

- If your facility must stay open during a hurricane, ensure onsite staff follows proper shelter-in-place procedures.
- Stay away from windows and exterior walls.
- Have a battery-powered weather radio to monitor emergency alerts and current conditions.
- Stay indoors until the danger has passed (except for first responders and other emergency personnel).

AFTER THE STORM

- Check onsite staff for injuries.
- Assess the facility for any damage or hazards and document any losses.
- Activate the organization's Emergency Action Plan, including communicating with off-site employees.
- Follow recovery protocols and activate the business continuity plan.
- Be certain the facility is safe before resuming onsite operations.
- Conduct wellness checks to assess employees' physical and emotional needs.
- Make employees in need aware of resources such as medical services, financial aid, food assistance, and post-trauma counseling.

CLICK HERE to learn how Florida's Babcock Ranch, a solar-powered town designed to weather the most severe storms, kept its lights on and emerged nearly unscathed after a direct hit from Cat 4 Hurricane Ian in 2022.

PREPARING FOR A TORNADO AT WORK

BEFORE A TORNADO:

- Safety professionals should devise a written tornado emergency plan for your facility.
- Designate safe spots for employees to use as a shelter -- basements, stairwells, bathrooms, and internal rooms away from windows and doors work best. Include alternative sheltering guidance for outdoor workers.
- Assign team leads to help people get to a safe area and account for employees after the fact. Make sure people know who their safety lead is so that they know with whom to check in after the tornado has passed.
- Make accommodations for individuals with handicaps and be sure someone will be helping them get to safety.
- Run drills to familiarize employees with tornado emergency procedures. Use whatever notification system will be used during an actual tornado (i.e., building alarms, phone alerts, etc.).
- Each employee should be able to recognize the warning, know where to go, and evacuate in a calm, orderly fashion.

DURING A TORNADO WARNING:

- Follow tornado emergency procedures and seek shelter in a designated safe spot.
- Avoid large open areas in buildings, such as cafeterias or auditoriums, which are more likely to collapse during a tornado.
- In the event of flying debris, get under a sturdy desk or table and try to protect your head.
- Stay in the shelter location until receiving the all-clear from authorities.

IF A TORNADO HITS THE BUILDING:

- Follow the emergency action plan. Employees should report to a designated location where safety leads can conduct a headcount and check for injuries.
- Provide first aid and call 9-1-1 if needed.
- Stay out of damaged areas until deemed safe by authorities or building management.
- Document any damage for insurance purposes.

TORNADOES

Unlike hurricanes, tornadoes occur with little or no warning, so making sure you and your coworkers know what to do beforehand is essential. Preparation involves knowing when conditions are favorable for tornado formation, monitoring weather reports, and heeding warnings immediately.

TORNADO WARNING SIGNS

Tornadoes can form so quickly that you may not get an official alert in time. Know the signs that a tornado may be imminent:

- dark, often greenish-colored sky
- a wall cloud (large, localized, abrupt lowering of the cloud base, often rotating)
- an approaching cloud of debris
- large hail or heavy rain followed by a dead calm
- a roaring noise (the "freight train sound")

WATCH

CONDITIONS ARE FAVORABLE FOR TORNADO FORMATION

WARNING

A TORNADO HAS ACTUALLY BEEN SIGHTED IN YOUR AREA

TORNADO SAFETY
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS



Identify Shelter Locations: Use small interior rooms or hallways on the lowest level (away from windows, doors, outside walls).



Warning Alerts: Always know who is in the building. Create emergency response roles (with backups). Have a tornado alert system.



Store Emergency Supplies: Keep first aid kits, food, water, batteries and a NOAA weather radio in all shelters.



Train Staff: Ensure everyone knows what to do during emergencies. Conduct tornado sheltering drills at least yearly.

DID YOU KNOW?

The right side of a hurricane is called the "dirty side," where the risk of storm surge is greater, and winds can be twice as strong as on the left.

Tornadoes frequently form inside hurricanes, typically in the upper right quadrant, often spun off from outer bands -- another reason a hurricane's "dirty side" is more dangerous.

Though Florida has no "tornado season," the highest number occur between June and September, and the most destructive tend to occur between February and April.

Florida has more frequent tornadoes per 10,000 square miles than any other state (including those in the area known as "tornado alley").

Tornado winds can range between 40 and 300 mph. The winds in a microburst are typically between 40 and 100 mph but have been known to exceed 165 mph.

HOW A TORNADO DEVELOPS

When cold dry air is pushed over warm, humid air, a THUNDERSTORM is formed.

The warm air then rises through the colder air, creating an UPDRAFT.

The updraft begins to ROTATE as it draws in more warm air from the thunderstorm.

As the speed of rotation increases, a FUNNEL CLOUD forms, growing longer as it gains strength.

MICROBURSTS

Tornadoes aren't the only wind events that can cause damage -- in fact, straight-line winds caused by downdrafts in thunderstorms are much more common in Florida and can be just as destructive. Many people who experience microbursts mistake them for tornadoes because of the damage they can do.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

A **tornado** is created by an **updraft** -- air flows into the storm in a rotating funnel-shape with a narrow, well-defined track. Tornado debris is found laying at angles due to the curving winds.

A **microburst** is created by a **downdraft** -- air is pushed down and flows out across the ground, creating straight-line winds with a broad, diffuse track. Debris from a microburst can often be found laying in straight lines parallel to the wind flow.

HOW A MICROBURST OCCURS

Inside a storm, dry mid-level air causes rain to evaporate as it falls.

Evaporating rain cools the surrounding air, making it denser.

This cooler, denser air falls rapidly, creating a powerful DOWNDRAFT.

Air hits the ground and fans outward, creating a MICROBURST with strong straight-line winds.

What can a
WIND GUST
do?

25-31 MPH make tree branches sway, whistle through power lines

32-38 MPH make whole large trees sway

39-54 MPH break twigs off trees, make walking difficult

55-72 MPH damage chimneys & antennas, topple shallow-rooted trees

73-112 MPH peel off roofs, break windows, uproot large trees, destroy trailer homes

FLOODING

Flood mitigation should be a part of your Emergency Action Plan, even if your facility is not inside a flood zone. Heavy rains can cause flooding just about anywhere. More deaths occur due to flooding than from any other thunderstorm-related hazard. Flood waters can hide dangers, weaken infrastructure, and harbor deadly contaminants. The force of flowing floodwater can sweep people off their feet and carry off objects as large as vehicles. Downed power lines and electrical equipment that becomes inundated with flood water puts people at risk of electrical injury, and damaged lithium batteries can release deadly chemicals, spontaneously catch fire, or even explode.

PREPARING YOUR WORKPLACE FOR A FLOOD EVENT

Many of the procedures in your facility's Flood Emergency Action Plan will look similar to plans for other types of weather events. Your flood plan should include instructions for maintenance and other staff to prepare the facility (both inside and out) and procedures for employees to follow should flooding occur while they are onsite.

FACILITY DESIGN:

If possible, design the facility to be flood-resistant:

- Plant trees and shrubs that absorb rainwater quickly and help prevent soil erosion.
- Build retaining walls and storm gutters to guide flood waters away from structures.
- Install storm doors and windows to help seal out water.

FACILITY PREPARATION:

- Anchor or store loose outdoor items.
- Take extra precautions to protect chemical storage and fuel tanks.
- Know where gas, water, and electrical shutoffs are located and who will oversee them during an emergency.
- Move essential equipment from the ground floor if flooding is a concern.
- Raise elevators to a higher floor and power them down.
- Plug any indoor drains in floors and showers to prevent water from the sewer from seeping in.
- Unplug and/or secure any electrical items, equipment, or physical files that might be at risk.

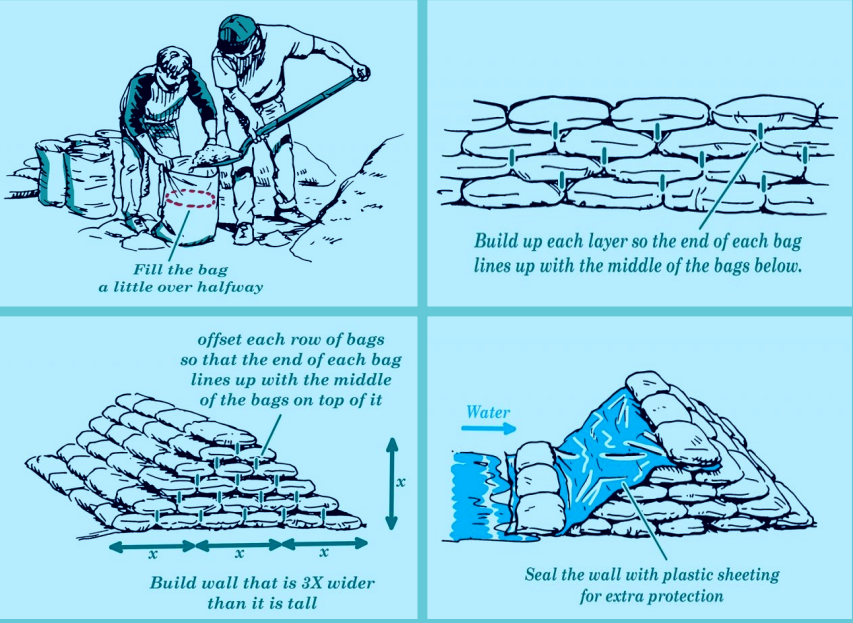
AFTER A FLOOD EVENT

- Avoid flood waters -- they could be electrically charged or contaminated with dangerous chemicals, organisms, and/or raw sewage.
- Have professionals thoroughly inspect the facility for damage both inside and outside of buildings, as flood waters may have weakened structures and paved surfaces.
- Do not attempt to use any electronic equipment that has taken on water. Dispose of damaged electronics and lithium batteries at the local hazardous waste facility.
- Document any damage for insurance purposes.

DID YOU KNOW?
More than 20% of flood claims come from properties located outside designated flood zones.

SANDBAGS:

- Properly filled and placed sandbags can act as a barrier to divert moving water around buildings.
- Know where to get sandbags, how many would be needed, and where to place them.
 - Bags should be made of polypropylene or untreated burlap, no larger than 18" wide and 36" deep, filled no more than halfway with heavy-bodied or sandy soil.
 - Place sandbags against exterior doors, stacked as high as flood waters are expected to rise.
 - Build a wall of sandbags about eight feet from the building you are trying to protect, in the direction from which flood waters are expected. This allows room to maneuver and add to the wall if necessary.
 - Sandbags will not block water from seeping through; if you expect water will be against the bags for an extended time, place a plastic sheet between sandbags and doors, and line sandbag walls with plastic sheeting.



BY THE NUMBERS:

The average sandbag weighs **30-40 lbs.**
It takes at least **60 bags** to build a wall **one foot high** and **ten feet long**.
It takes **one cubic yard** of sand to fill **75 bags**.
It takes the average person **3 minutes** to fill one bag.



Around 75% of all flood-related deaths are attributed to drowning, with nearly half of these occurring in vehicles.
Just **six inches** of rushing water can knock a person off their feet.
Just **two feet** of rushing water can carry away most vehicles. Rising water can reach above most vehicle doors in less than **one minute**.
Never underestimate the power of a flash flood.
Don't walk or drive into flood waters. If you can't see the road, TURN AROUND. DON'T DROWN.

DID YOU KNOW?
Nearly three out of four workplace fatalities attributed to heat illness occur in the worker's first week on the job.

- HEAT STROKE**
confusion • slurred speech • seizures • unconsciousness • rapid heartbeat • extremely high fever • heavy sweating or hot, dry skin
- HEAT EXHAUSTION**
fatigue • irritability • excessive thirst • nausea or vomiting • dizziness • lightheadedness • heavy sweating • fever • fast heartrate
- HEAT CRAMPS**
muscle spasms • muscle pain in arms, legs, or trunk
- SYNCOPE**
dizziness or fainting
- HEAT RASH**
clusters of red bumps on skin, often on neck, upper chest, and skin folds
- RHABDO**
muscle pain • muscle weakness • dark urine or reduced urine output • often starts hours or even days after heat exposure

For more useful information about preventing heat illnesses, go to:
NOAA/National Weather Service -- <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat>
CDC/NIOSH -- <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/heat-stress/about/index.html>
U.S. Dept. of Labor/OSHA's Heat Safety Tool -- <https://www.osha.gov/heat/heat-app>

EXTREME TEMPERATURES

The risk of exposure from extreme heat is a serious issue for Florida residents. Outdoor workers are at most risk, but those that work in hot indoor environments need protection as well. Be sure your organization has a heat illness prevention program based on the specific needs of each workplace and its staff.

TRAIN workers to be aware of heat hazards, mitigate heat stress, recognize the symptoms of heat illness in themselves and others, and know how to provide first aid and when to call 911.

ACCLIMATIZE new and returning workers to working in the heat. Begin with short periods of less strenuous activity and gradually build the workload over time, taking extra breaks as needed during the first week. Full acclimatization may take up to 14 days.

MODIFY WORK SCHEDULES by postponing non-essential work until cooler days, shifting physically demanding work to cooler times of the day, rotating workers, and/or splitting shifts to reduce heat exposure.

WATER, REST, SHADE
Provide access to cool water and encourage workers to drink at least one cup every 20 minutes they are exposed to heat, whether they feel thirsty or not. Give workers a cool location to take breaks and recover -- an air-conditioned room or vehicle, a shady area equipped with fans and misting devices, etc. The cooler the location, the quicker the recovery time. How long workers will need for breaks will also depend upon the temperature, humidity, physical activity level, hydration level, and personal risk factors.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT
Workers should dress for the heat whenever possible -- wear loose-fitting, breathable clothing and a brimmed hat. Keep in mind that protective equipment required for some jobs can increase the risk of heat illness.



PREPARING THE PERIMETER

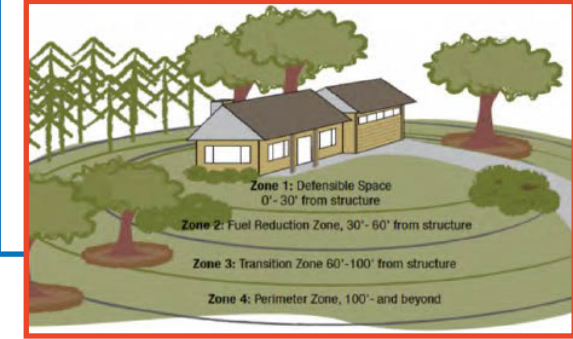
Creating and maintaining a buffer of 30-100 feet around buildings, decks, and other structures can reduce the risk of flying embers and keep fire from spreading.

- ZONE 1: DEFENSIBLE SPACE (0-30 FEET)**
- Remove dead vegetation from yard, roof, rain gutters, windows, and under decks.
 - Trim trees regularly to keep branches <10 feet from other trees to prevent canopy spread, and to prevent branches from hanging over roofs.
 - Relocate wood piles to Zone 2.
 - Create a separation between trees, shrubs, furniture, and other flammable items.

- ZONE 2: FUEL REDUCTION (30-60 FEET)**
- Cut grass down to <4 inches tall.
 - Create horizontal and vertical space between shrubs and trees by removing vegetation and allowing plants to be separated by groundcover.
 - Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches.

- ZONE 3: TRANSITION (60-100 FEET)**
- Create space between plants as in Zone 2.
 - Remove or trim low-growing vegetation under pine trees.

- ZONE 4: PERIMETER (100+ FEET)**
- Engage in fuel management practices to reduce the risk of wildfire threats.
 - Be aware of adjacent properties that may be prone to fire.



WILDFIRES

DID YOU KNOW?
Embers from wildfires can destroy properties miles away from the actual flames.

Forests cover nearly half of Florida, and that means the risk of wildfires caused by dry conditions, lightning strikes, or human causes (both accidental and not). Because so much of our urban population has been built in and around wooded areas, many of our homes and businesses are also at risk.

Your workplace emergency action plan for wildfires should look similar to plans for other types of emergency and include many of the same details regarding preparation, communication, and evacuation. Monitor local news, weather reports, and emergency alerts for updates on wildfires.

WHERE THERE'S FIRE, THERE'S SMOKE
Smoke from wildfires and prescribed burns can affect air quality, causing visibility issues when driving and making it difficult and unhealthy to breathe.

DRIVING IN SMOKE: If you encounter smoke while driving, 1. Slow down; 2. Use windshield wipers in heavy fog; 3. Turn on low-beam headlights. If you still cannot see, pull over and turn on emergency flashers, and report the hazard to the Florida Highway Patrol.

OUTDOOR WORKERS should be provided with protective equipment such as N95 masks, reduce physical activity, and stay hydrated during periods of low air quality. Monitor air quality so that those with health conditions can take extra precautions. Reschedule outdoor work if possible, or adjust work times to avoid the worst spikes in poor air quality.

- [Click here for current wildfire information from FDACS](#)
- [Get up-to-date air quality data for your area at AirNow.gov](#)

Willful, malicious, or intentional burning of forest, grass, or woodlands not owned by the person burning is a FELONY punishable by a fine of up to \$5000, five years in prison, or both.

Report suspicious wildfire activity by calling 1-800-342-5869.

Information that leads to the apprehension of an arsonist could result in a reward of up to \$5000.

CARDIAC ISSUES | STROKE

CHOKING | POISONING

CUTS | SCRAPES | BURNS

SLIPS | TRIPS | FALLS

ASTHMA | ALLERGIES

CHECK | CALL | CARE

The American Red Cross suggests using this mnemonic device to remember the steps to take in a medical emergency.

CHECK

- When approaching an injured worker, ensure your own personal safety to avoid becoming an additional victim -- survey the scene and communicate any dangers to others.
- Secure the scene and move the injured person to a safer location if necessary.
- Ask bystanders to help by retrieving medical equipment or watching for oncoming traffic.

CALL

- Dial 911 or your local emergency number. If no phone or service is available, instruct a bystander to go and call.
- Be prepared to verify your location. Use addresses, GPS, or landmarks, and be as precise as possible.
- Listen and follow the operator's instructions carefully.
- Communicate effectively by staying calm and speaking clearly. If possible, use a speakerphone to be better able to pay attention to your surroundings.
- Stay on the scene while on the phone.

CARE

- Identify and prioritize life-threatening conditions -- look for severe bleeding, unconsciousness, and signs of drug overdose.
- If multiple people are injured, prioritize emergency conditions first.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES & OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

Emergencies at the workplace can happen suddenly, with or without any warning. We may not be able to predict or prevent them all, but we can be prepared to help those who become sick or injured at work.

Create a comprehensive emergency response plan for your organization to help minimize the impact of medical emergencies in the workplace. Providing employees with training in basic first aid, CPR, and AED use can make all the difference when minutes matter.

SLIPS, TRIPS, & FALLS

These are the most common workplace injuries, often leading to sprains, fractures, and head injuries. Be ready to treat minor injuries with bandages and ice packs.

BURNS

Run minor burns under cold water for about 20 minutes. Loosely cover the area with a clean, dry dressing or cling film.

CHOKING

Look for signs: Inability to cough or speak; squeaking noises or no sound; pale or blue skin; panicked, confused expression; holding throat with hands. *Only intervene when the airway is completely blocked, as rescue attempt could convert a partial airway block to a complete block.*

BACK BLOWS: Using the heel of your hand to issue five blows between their shoulder blades.

ABDOMINAL THRUSTS: Stand behind the person and lean them forward; press your fist just above their navel and cover it with your other hand; pull in sharply, inwards and upwards. Continue these steps until the blockage has moved and they can make sounds.

ELECTRIC SHOCK

Call emergency services for any electrical injury. Do not touch a person who has been shocked until the power supply has been cut off at the main.

ALLERGIC REACTION

Remove the allergen if possible. Use an epi-pen if the person has one. Call 911 for serious reactions, even if their symptoms improve.

LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

No matter the cause (cardiac arrest, stroke, seizure, blow to the head or chest, etc.), if a person has collapsed and is unresponsive and not breathing, they need CPR or use of a defibrillator (AED).

CALL 911 FOR MORE SEVERE INJURIES.

DID YOU KNOW?

Each year, approximately one in four Americans is exposed to air quality that is considered unhealthy.

Indoor air pollution is often 2-5 times greater than outdoor air pollution due to poor ventilation and filtration.

Increasing the indoor air quality in workspaces has been found to reduce sick leave requests by 35%.

- Provide personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, etc.) to workers exposed to high levels of air pollution.
- Create a no-smoking/vaping zone around the workplace, and encourage employees to quit.
- Keep the workplace clean, including regular cleaning of windows, blinds, rugs, upholstery, cabinets, shelves, and cluttered areas where dust and debris can accumulate.
- Schedule cleaning, painting, and repairs to happen when most employees are not onsite.
- Reduce excess moisture that may be causing mold growth.
- Decorate with live plants that help to clear toxins (like carbon dioxide) and provide oxygen.
- Keep the workplace free from pests (like cockroaches and mice) that can trigger allergies and asthma.

The Environmental Protection Agency uses this Air Quality Index (AQI) to report on the status of air quality data collected across the U.S. Learn more at <https://www.epa.gov/outdoor-air-quality-data>

UNHEALTHY AIR QUALITY

Environmental issues such as wildfires, heat waves, droughts, mold and dust, and even plumes of sand from the Saharan Desert can make air quality unhealthy in Florida, putting workers both indoors and outdoors at risk, especially those with conditions such as allergies, asthma, or COPD. Poor air quality can not only affect the lungs, but also mental function and productivity.

IMPROVING AIR QUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

- Ensure the HVAC system in the building has adequate air intake, proper air distribution, and effective filters (HEPA) installed, and keep it maintained.
- Keep the temperature well regulated between 68-76 degrees F.
- Consider stand-alone or portable air cleaners for problem areas.
- Create a policy for employees that discourages strong scents or odors (perfumes, air fresheners, aerosols, etc.).

AQI CATEGORY & COLOR	INDEX VALUE	DESCRIPTION OF AIR QUALITY
Good (green)	0 - 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate (yellow)	51 - 100	Air quality is acceptable; however, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (orange)	101 - 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects; the general public is less likely to be affected.
Unhealthy (red)	151 - 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy (purple)	201 - 300	HEALTH ALERT: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Hazardous (maroon)	>301	HEALTH WARNING: Emergency conditions; everyone is more likely to be affected.

SOURCES OF INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

- mold • cockroaches • dust mites • animal waste & dander • fumes from cleaning products • perfumes & hairspray • scented candles, oils, and sprays • smoke • burning fuels • paints & solvents • outdoor pollution entering indoor space • building materials • furniture • electronic equipment

MASS VIOLENCE EVENTS

These types of events are unpredictable and evolve quickly. While the location and timing are almost always premeditated, the actual victims of mass attacks are chosen at random, which means it could happen to anyone who happens to be there at the time of the event. Preparing for a situation, both mentally and physically, can help save lives.

- ACTIVE SHOOTERS
- VEHICULAR ASSAULT
- BOMBS | EXPLOSIVES
- HIJACKING OF TRANSIT
- RIOTS | CIVIL UNREST

DEFENSE THROUGH PREVENTION

After years of extensive study, researchers at the RAND Corporation have created a [Mass Attacks Defense Toolkit](#) to help reduce the likelihood of mass shootings and other public attacks, as well as reducing the casualties of such attacks.

BUILD A PREVENTION TEAM

Foster relationships between local businesses, schools, government organizations, law enforcement, and the community at large. Ensure ongoing communication between agencies by maintaining key liasons and/or points of contact in each agency, and setting up policies and procedures for sharing information related to threats. Provide threat assessment training to management and safety coordinators in your organization.

FOSTER A MINDSET OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND PREVENTION

A mass attack can be prevented by anyone, simply by understanding, observing, and reporting suspicious behavior or warning signs. Research has shown that workplace culture directly affects whether bystanders come forward. A climate of safety and respect, where people feel a positive emotional connection to their environment, can turn bystanders into upstanders. Encourage those in your organization and your community to share potentially relevant information; one tip can make all the difference. **Remember -- "If you see something, say something."**

MAKE REPORTING SIMPLE & FOLLOW UP ON LEADS

Reporting mechanisms need to be easy to understand in order to be effective. Offer multiple options, including a way to report anonymously. Provide training to your organization's threat assessment team on what to do when they receive a report regarding a potential threat. Take any information received seriously.

DID YOU KNOW?
Almost two-thirds of foiled mass attack plots were prevented because of public reporting.

EDUCATE

Promote awareness of violence prevention methods, threat indicators, & reporting tools throughout your organization.

DISRUPT

Invest in programs & initiatives that address underlying factors that contribute to an increased risk of violence and support early intervention for at-risk individuals.

MITIGATE

Provide active shooter & other relevant training to all staff; conduct vulnerability & security assessments for potential targets within your organization and have a plan in place.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

A threat assessment is a systematic, fact-based investigation that guides a course of action to mitigate a potential threat, focusing on an individual's patterns of thinking and behavior to determine whether a person is moving towards potential violence.

TO REPORT A THREAT, CALL
1-800-CALL-FBI
OR REPORT ONLINE AT
tips.fbi.gov

ASSESSING A THREAT is a complex and nuanced discipline that requires time and thoughtful consideration of all evidence, including the individual's risk factors, warning behaviors, stressors, precipitating events, and mitigating factors. Potential attackers usually share indicators before their attacks, which allows opportunities for bystanders to observe and report suspicious behavior.

THERE ARE NO "USUAL SUSPECTS." Individuals of any age, sex, race, religion, education, income level, marital status, mental health status, or occupation have the potential to commit violence. Avoid pitfalls by assessing the behavior of the individual, not demographics. Personal circumstances, such as recent or anticipated losses or hardships, and other environmental factors should be looked at after the behavioral concern is raised.

No single behavior means a person is on a path toward violence, but multiple behaviors may be cause for concern:

- Comments, jokes, or threats about violent plans; detailed violent fantasies
- Comments about hurting themselves or others
- Documents, videos, notes, or other items to explain or claim credit for future violence
- Seeing violence as a way to solve their problems; angry outbursts or physical aggression
- Unusual difficulty coping with stress; expressions of hopelessness or helplessness
- Reduced interest in hobbies or other activities; worsening performance at school or work
- Increasing isolation from family, friends, and others
- Obsessive interest in prior attacks or attackers
- New or excessive interest in weapons, tactical gear, and/or military paraphernalia
- Bizarre or unexpected changes in appearance, including dress or hygiene
- Testing the boundaries or probing security at a potential target
- Changing vocabulary, style of speech, or behavior in a way that reflects a hardened point of view or new sense of purpose associated with violent extremist causes, particularly after a catalyzing event

When an active shooter incident occurs, the FBI proactively assists first responders in local, state, campus, and tribal law enforcement agencies as needed by:

- sending multiple investigators to the scene
- integrating into an established command post
- establishing a mobile command post
- mobilizing and deploying critical incident response teams (SWAT, crisis management personnel, evidence response, behavioral analysis, bomb technicians, public information specialists)
- utilizing resources from a regional computer forensics laboratory (RCFL)
- providing services to victims, family members, first responders, and investigative teams through its [Victim Services Division](#)

THREAT MANAGEMENT

Mass attacks are not spontaneous or impulsive, but nearly always premeditated. Attackers don't just "snap" -- they frequently have a grievance towards a person, group, or organization, often experiencing multiple negative events that build over time, leaving them susceptible to having a "last straw event." Potential attackers typically move along an identifiable pathway before initiating an attack. Threat professionals refer to this as the Pathway to Violence.



It may take days, weeks, months, or even years for an individual to reach the attack phase, sometimes moving forward and backward along the path, prolonging, expediting, or even skipping steps. Because not every potential attacker will follow this exact process, early intervention and identification of risk indicators is essential. Success in preventing violence is more likely the sooner a potential threat is addressed.

Whether or not a specific grievance can be pinpointed, perpetrators of mass attacks generally have one or more of the following motives: revenge for a real or perceived injury; justice (as defined by the offender); notoriety/fame/recognition; solving a problem perceived to be unbearable; desire to kill or be killed. They reach the conclusion that violence is justified, necessary, and often the only solution. Having a plan to commit a violent act can feel like a relief, which is why a sudden turnaround by a formerly angry, depressed, or menacing person should not be presumed as good news.

THREAT INHIBITORS

In determining an individual's likelihood to commit a violent act, consider the presence of protective factors in their life that may help mitigate the threat, such as supportive family members, a strong social network, and other positive influences. A person who talks about future plans, participates in constructive activities (such as music or sports), and/or engages in healthy coping mechanisms (exercise, seeking help, etc.) is less likely to follow through with thoughts of violence. Access to assistance, such as mental health and social services, educational and financial assistance, and medical care, can also reduce concern -- if the person is receptive to it. Eliminating the stigma associated with seeking help and encouraging those at risk to use the resources available to them can lower the risk of violence.

THE ROLE OF MENTAL ILLNESS

While serious mental illness is present in the majority of mass violence offenders, it is not the driving force behind the decision to commit a violent act. Having a mental disorder in and of itself does not preclude someone to violence.

AVOID UNINTENDED BIASES BY UNDERSTANDING AND RECOGNIZING THEM:

CONFIRMATION BIAS

The tendency to look for evidence or interpret information in a way that confirms a preconceived opinion. It can make us notice or give more weight to facts that support beliefs we already hold and overlook or downplay facts that do not.

AVAILABILITY BIAS

The tendency to assign the most importance to the most memorable information. Example: Dramatic plane crash footage can make us mistakenly believe that air travel is more dangerous than it is.

HINDSIGHT BIAS

The inclination to look back on an event and see it as having been more predictable than it was and thinking the outcome should have been known in advance. This can lead to foresight bias.

FORESIGHT BIAS

The tendency to overemphasize the ability to predict future events based on past outcomes, even if the two events are dissimilar. This can lead to believing a course of action is inherently wrong because it didn't work one time. Example: Mental health counseling is recommended but fails to de-escalate a person's behavior; therefore counseling should be ruled out as a course of action in the future.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT

QUICK
REFERENCE
GUIDE

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.

- ▶ Victims are selected at random.
- ▶ Event is unpredictable and evolves quickly.
- ▶ Knowing what to do can save lives.

When an Active Shooter is in your vicinity, you must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with the situation.

You have three options:

- 1 RUN
 - Have an escape route and plan in mind.
 - Leave your belongings behind.
 - Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
 - Help others escape, if possible.
 - Do not attempt to move the wounded.
 - Prevent others from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
 - Keep your hands visible.
 - Call 911 when you are safe.
- 2 HIDE
 - Hide in an area out of the shooter's view.
 - Lock door or block entry to your hiding place.
 - Silence your cell phone (including vibrate mode) and remain quiet.
- FIGHT 3
 - Fight as a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger.
 - Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
 - Act with as much physical aggression as possible.
 - Improvise weapons or throw items at the active shooter.
 - Commit to your actions . . . your life depends on it.

- When law enforcement arrives:
- Remain calm and follow instructions.
 - Drop items in your hands. (e.g., bags, jackets)
 - Raise hands and spread fingers.
 - Keep hands visible at all times.
 - Avoid quick movements toward officers, such as holding on to them for safety.
 - Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling.
 - Do not ask questions when evacuating.
- Information to provide to 911 operators:
- Location of the active shooter.
 - Number of shooters.
 - Physical description of shooters.
 - Number and type of weapons shooter has.
 - Number of potential victims at location.

The first officers to arrive on scene will not stop to help the injured. Expect rescue teams to follow initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove the injured.

Once you have reached a safe location, you likely will be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave the area until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

DISASTER-RESILIENT LANDSCAPING

Our urban forests benefit us in many ways, such as helping to conserve energy by providing shade, reducing the "heat island" effect caused by concrete and pavement, and beautifying properties and increasing their value. Some plants can even help to mitigate storm damage by providing a wind barrier, preventing soil erosion, absorbing floodwaters more quickly, and filtering out toxins from contaminated runoff.

USING NATIVE PLANTS TO PROTECT AGAINST STORMS

During severe weather, these trees can serve to help or to pose risks to life and property. Whether choosing plants for your work facilities or for your own home, it's important to know how storms will affect them. Choosing the right trees will help create a healthier and more wind-resistant urban forest. Having a variety of species, ages, and layers of trees and shrubs will help maintain diversity in the community.

Researchers at the University of Florida have studied the wind resistance of trees during hurricanes and found the following:

Choosing varieties, such as live oak, crape myrtle, dogwood, and bald cypress, that are also flood-resistant can add even more protection.

MOST WIND-RESISTANT

- sand live oak
- Southern magnolia
- gumbo limbo
- buttonwood
- Florida scrub hickory
- crape myrtle
- boxleaf stopper
- dahoon holly
- bald cypress
- pond cypress
- Manila palm
- pindo palm
- sabal palm
- pygmy date palm
- white pine
- dogwood

LEAST WIND-RESISTANT

- melaleuca
- yellow poinciana
- Australian pine
- queen palm
- African tulip tree
- weeping banyan
- Bradford pear
- sand pine
- Chinese elm
- water oak
- laurel cherry
- Chinese tallow
- Norfolk pine
- Iceland cypress
- Southern red cedar
- avocado

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PLANTING TREES

Trees native to Florida have better rates of survival and lose fewer branches than exotic tree species.

Trees that are well established and maintained stand a better chance of survival. Trees with deeper root systems are better anchored and more wind-resistant.

Pruning and thinning is essential for tree health and reducing wind resistance, especially for broadleaved varieties.

Coastal areas should also consider salt tolerance when choosing trees and other plants.

CREATE A BIORETENTION AREA

When designing a rain garden, consult with your local water conservation district or IFAS Extension office for tips on the best place to install it and what types of plants to use. Don't forget to have underground utilities marked before doing any digging (call 811).

Rain gardens work best in places where water tends to puddle, such as the bottom of downspouts, naturally low spots in the landscape, and adjacent to paved surfaces. Direct the flow of water from downspouts by using extenders, building French drains, or creating swales. Prevent erosion by surrounding your garden with landscape rocks or non-floating mulch.

DISTANCE: at least 10 feet from foundations and 50 ft from septic systems

SUN: preferably full sun

SIZE: typical residential rain gardens are 100-300 sq ft, 4-8" deep

SUGGESTED PLANTS: those that can survive dry spells and soak up excess water during Florida's rainy months

Flowering plants: goldenrod, spiderlily, milkweed (native and attract pollinators)

Ornamental grasses: fakahatchee, muhly, wiregrass

Shrubs: Virginia willow, buttonbush, wax myrtle

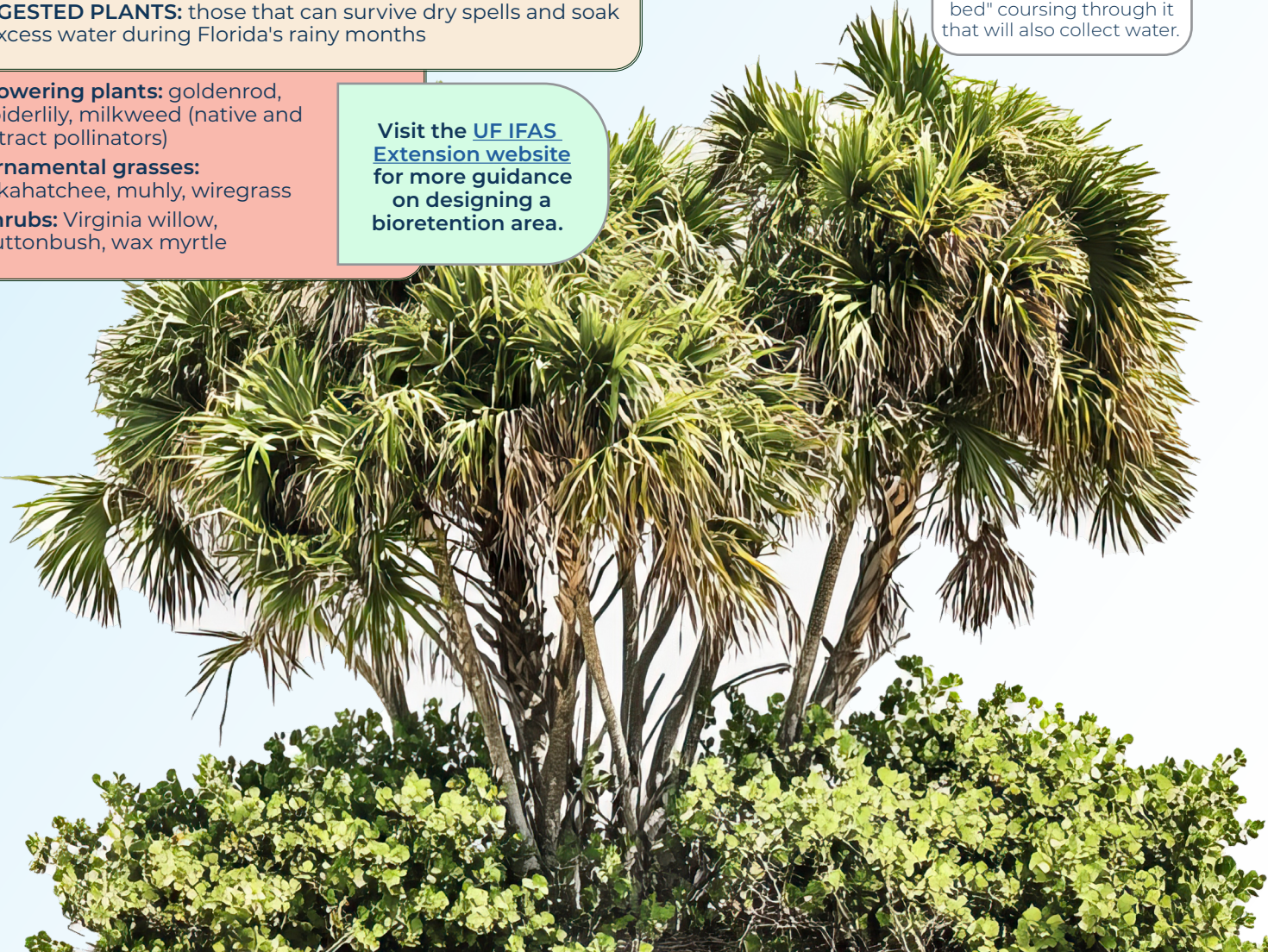
Visit the [UF IFAS Extension website](#) for more guidance on designing a bioretention area.

A bioretention area, also known as a rain garden, is a beautiful and relatively inexpensive way to protect properties from flooding and drainage issues, filter toxins from the soil, and return water to the Florida aquifer.

Native flowers and grasses are added to areas that collect stormwater runoff to help absorb and filter the water. By choosing the right plants, rain gardens require little maintenance once established.



This rain garden on the UF campus has a dry "river bed" coursing through it that will also collect water.



Trees growing in clusters (five or more trees growing within 10 feet of each other, see fig. 2) or groves -- even those with shallow roots -- are more wind resistant compared to individual trees (see fig. 1).



FIG. 1: Avoid planting individual trees.

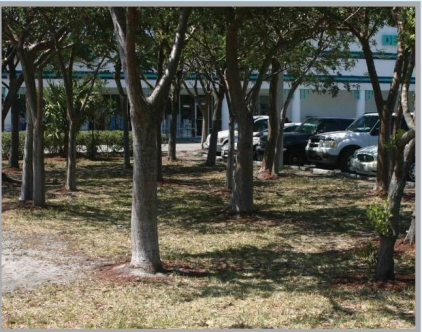


FIG. 2: Plant trees in clusters for better wind resistance.

The April-June 2025 issue of the Safety & Loss Prevention OUTLOOK focused in part on how to use ladders safely.

The following articles from the National Safety Council pinpoints a prime example of what can happen when you don't ... and when you do.

FACE Report: Carpenter dies after fall from 6-foot ladder

March 23, 2025 | Safety + Health staff

A 52-year-old finish carpenter with 20 years of experience and a co-worker were at a newly erected commercial building to install plywood panels on the ceiling. Their employer had no formal safety program. The rafters into which the plywood panels were being secured measured 11 feet, 6 inches from the concrete floor below, requiring both men to work at height. According to witnesses, several scissor lifts were available for use; however, the victim opted to use a 6-foot fiberglass stepladder. Approximately seven hours and 45 minutes after the workday began, the pair ascended their ladders to obtain measurements for the next panel. According to the co-worker, the victim was standing on the fourth rung from the bottom of the ladder. The victim was holding one end of a tape measure with his left hand and reaching beyond the ladder side rails to obtain the proper measurement. While doing so, the co-worker stated, the ladder began leaning to the victim's left. The victim fell about 46 inches to the concrete surface below, landing on his head and neck. The co-worker immediately descended his ladder, moved the victim's ladder from its original position to access the victim and attempted to provide aid. The co-worker yelled for help, and a contractor who was nearby hurried over and called emergency medical services. While waiting for EMS to arrive, the co-worker repositioned the victim, who was unconscious, and elevated his head. EMS arrived a short time later, rendered aid onsite and then transported the victim to



FACE Photo: NIOSH

Case report: #23KY096
Issued by: Kentucky State Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation Program
Date of report: Nov. 3, 2023

a hospital. The victim was later transported to a larger hospital but succumbed to his injuries three days later. Cause of death was listed as blunt force trauma.

- To prevent similar occurrences, employers should:
- Implement a job hazard analysis process.
 - Ensure employees use equipment that best reduces the risk of injury.
 - Develop, implement and enforce a formal health and safety program that includes ladder safety.



Photo: Kiewit Power Constructors/eLCOOSH

Survey indicates sharp decline in SIFs involving ladders

January 27, 2025 | Safety + Health staff

Cleveland — Serious injuries and fatalities involving ladders decreased 21 percentage points over a recent five-year period, according to the results of a recent survey.

The survey was emailed to ladder safety training managers and professions this past spring by the American Ladder Institute's Education and Outreach Committee. The 35-question survey – the fourth from ALI since 2016 – covered topics such as frequency of ladder citations, types of ladder citations and preferred methods of ladder safety education. A total of 350 responses were received.

Around 18% of the respondents reported experiencing an incident involving a ladder – the same percentage as in the 2020 survey. Of those incidents, roughly 33% resulted in a SIF – down from 54% in 2020.

The respondents were also asked about what type of incidents have occurred in the past two years. Among them: “ladder was set up incorrectly” (33%) and “the wrong ladder was used for the job” (30%).

- Other findings:
- Nearly 9 out of 10 of the respondents didn't know that OSHA's regulation on ladders (1926.1053) was No. 3 on the agency's Top 10 list of most frequently cited standards for fiscal year 2023.
 - Approximately 3 out of 4 hadn't receive a ladder-related OSHA citation in the previous 12 months.
 - Nearly half of the respondents' organizations have mandated ladder safety training for at least seven years.
 - “ALI believes that continuous safety training is the best way to empower workers to make the right decisions when using ladders,” the institute says in a press release.
 - March is National Ladder Safety Month. ALI has a four-week educational outreach program that coincides with the observation.

Miss a previous issue? Browse our online library!



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The safety training required per section 284.50, F.S. for all newly-appointed safety and alternate safety coordinators is now being provided through online training modules available at your convenience.

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