

# **HVAC**

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

# **CHECKLIST**



**ARISTA**

## Are you prepared for the worst?

It seems like every day we wake up to find that another natural disaster or emergency has wreaked havoc on cities, businesses and countless lives. It's enough to keep a business owner up at night, wondering if your business could survive such a situation. What would you do if it happened to you?

It's no secret that having a disaster recovery plan can make the difference between getting back up and running after a catastrophe and losing your business permanently. But it can seem overwhelming to figure out how to prepare for the worst.

Here's a checklist to help you begin to prepare an emergency plan for your business. We've also prepared specific recommendations for how to protect your HVAC system in the event of a devastating storm.

### STEP 1: Prepare a written readiness plan in advance

Waiting until a Cat 5 hurricane is about to strike is not the time to start your emergency planning. Now's the time to think through what you'll need to do to be ready.

- Make a list of all the tasks that need to be done to protect your business in advance of the storm, including boarding up windows, shutting off gas appliances, and backing up computer data.
- Consult disaster planning resources to make sure you've covered all the bases for your location and type of business. Some good resources include [The New York Times Small Business Guide to Disaster Recovery](#), [Ready Rating from the American Red Cross](#), and facilities management industry associations such as [IFMA](#) and [BOMA](#).
- Your list should include not only what needs to be done, but when it should be done and who is responsible.
- Put backup communication systems in place so you're ready if you need them. Develop phone chains and call in systems so employees know what to do. Phone systems should be hosted off-site to prevent disruption in a local emergency. Redundancy for Internet access and phones should be in place. For example, implement T1 lines, cable modems, and wireless communication, ideally hosted in different physical locations, so service will still be available even if one access provider goes down.
- Go over the plan regularly with employees so everyone understands what to do in the event of an emergency.

### STEP 2: Make sure service vendors are ready to support you

Think beyond your own employees and make sure your service vendors are also prepared to support you in an emergency. Ask the following questions:

- Is redundancy in place for phone and Internet access?
- Can you provide multiple ways to contact your office in an emergency situation, including phone numbers, email, and social media contact information?
- Do you maintain multiple storage facilities for trucks and equipment, and have relationships with several supply houses in different locations for parts and supplies?
- Do you have generators for emergency power?

- Will you have access to maintenance and equipment records in an emergency situation? Is data stored remotely (either offsite or in a cloud-based system) and accessible via wireless devices?
- Do you have protocols regarding how to prioritize service requests and how to communicate expected response times?
- Do you have contacts for information such as road closures, power availability and access to affected areas? (Protocols for coordinating with law enforcement, fire officials and emergency responders, utility companies and other agencies can greatly improve your contractor's response times and ability to get you back in business faster.)

### STEP 3: Prepare your HVAC equipment in advance

Get your HVAC equipment ready so you'll be able to protect it from water and wind damage:

- Whenever possible, place equipment on elevated platforms to minimize the chance of flood damage. TIP: You should also consider this strategy for all computer equipment and even important business records.
- Make sure outdoor equipment can be secured to prevent wind damage in the event of a storm by ensuring that the bolts to the base are intact and tight.
- Your air conditioning unit probably has hooks for hurricane straps, since building codes may require them. Inspect the hooks for any corrosion and damage and have them replaced if needed.
- If you don't already have them, get the right hurricane straps and a cover designed to fit your unit properly.

### STEP 4: Protect Your HVAC equipment when a storm is impending

If you've taken the proper planning steps (see STEP 3), you'll be in the best possible shape when a storm is on the way.

- Secure outdoor equipment with hurricane straps.
- Turn off all HVAC equipment. When there is a possibility of a power outage, it's important to completely turn off the power to the system. That means both at the circuit breaker and at all thermostats. This simple action prevents damage to the compressor and other components from power surges both during the storm and when power comes back on. You also prevent the risk of fire or electric shock.

### STEP 5: What to do (and NOT do) after the storm

**IMPORTANT: DON'T turn equipment back on yet! Have it inspected by a professional first!**

Exposure to even a small amount of water can cause corrosion and damage, even if the outside of the unit looks dry. Your system could fail weeks later from damage caused by a storm, even if it seems to come back up with no problem.

Before powering up again, call in your NYC HVAC service company to inspect it for any signs of electrical or water damage. This is critical when there has been any flooding, especially from salt water. Don't skip this step!

If you follow these guidelines and prepared in advance, you'll minimize the stress, the cost and the time it takes to recover from a major storm.

# ABOUT ARISTA

Whether you're responsible for the installation of a new HVAC system or inherited legacy equipment, Arista has the experience to service and maintain any system throughout its lifecycle. Across the tri-state area, we're recognized as one of the region's most respected and referred HVAC experts. When you purchase a preventive maintenance service agreement from Arista, you're backed by an industry leader with that has earned its reputation through decades of trustworthy business conduct and quality service.

## Peace of mind at a fair price

Your account is managed by a senior Arista technician and backed by an expert staff of over 160 highly trained professionals. Arista boasts a comprehensive program of continuous staff training and professional development on state-of-the-art practices and processes.

Arista clients also enjoy these benefits:

- Quick-to-respond, accessible workforce and a fleet of 100+ vehicles
- 24/7 emergency standby service
- 30,000 sq. ft. corporate warehouse facility stocked with over 55,000 parts
- Industry recognition as the only NY state company to earn both the prestigious MSCA STAR and GreenStar designations
- LEED Accredited Professionals to assist in making smarter HVAC choices

Questions? Call Arista today.

We hope you've found this guide to be a handy reference as you evaluate the types of service contracts available to you.

We invite you to call us for a quote on your equipment purchase or service needs. We think you'll agree that hearing what we have to say will be one of the best decisions you make in researching HVAC maintenance contracts. Reach an Arista HVAC specialist today at 718-937-4001 or email [info@aristair.com](mailto:info@aristair.com).

**718-937-1400**   **[WWW.ARISTAIR.COM](http://WWW.ARISTAIR.COM)**   **[INFO@ARISTAIR.COM](mailto:INFO@ARISTAIR.COM)**

