

Happy Friday Rural Water!

As we approach this Labor Day weekend there are a few things that come to mind. The first is a genuine thank you to our industry for the hard work we do. The water and wastewater industry in Florida works tirelessly to provide valuable services to our customers and environment. Thank you for all you do.

The second is the looming Hurricane Dorian. If you haven't been watching its progress you probably should start now. Hurricane Dorian is approaching Florida and the National Hurricane Center has it predicted to make landfall Monday morning. However, as we all should know with hurricanes, this can change rapidly. Keeping an eye on weather models and predictions is just the start to preparedness.

Since emergencies can strike at any time, it is important to be prepared. Per DEP rules, you should be exercising your generators on a regular basis. Your generators should also be serviced and in working condition. It takes only a few minutes to change oil, flush coolant, and top off the gas tank so make sure it's done now.

In addition to physical preparations, other preparations are needed. Answering questions such as, "Should our employees shelter in place at the plant?" or "Who is our contact for spare pipe if our stocks get wiped out?" are important to have answered prior to an emergency. To help organize this information it is important to have an emergency response plan (ERP). A template can be found on the FRWA website, [linked here](#), along with other emergency response information.

According to the FlaWARN Best Management Practices (BMP) for Emergency preparedness, "The purpose of Emergency Preparedness Planning is to identify those components of normal operation disrupted by the emergency so the utility can respond appropriately and protect the health of customers and the community." The BMP can be found on the FlaWARN website, [linked here](#). In addition to this BMP, you should make sure you know your login for FlaWARN in case you need to request aid through FlaWARN. Now would also be a good time to review the Mutual Aid Agreement of FlaWARN and get it signed and submitted. For more information contact Carol Hinton with the TREEO Center at chinton@treeo.ufl.edu or call 352.294.3875.

Another part of preparedness is being able to report boil water notices and system operational status to DEP. This is done through StormTracker, which can be found online [here](#) or can be contacted by calling the StormTracker hotline. DEP will notify you when the system is active. At the time of writing this article, StormTracker has not been activated.

We've talked a lot about preparedness and probably consumed a lot of your time on this busy holiday and hurricane weekend. So to summarize, here is a small list of things to do prior to the storm to ensure that you are prepared.

- Check your generators: Do they have fuel, oil, coolant? Do they start? Have they been run under load in the past month?
- Clean up around your plant: Strong winds can blow debris around often damaging controls. Equipment should be stored inside a secure location.
- Review your Emergency Response Plan (ERP): Do you have a chain of command? Is all the contact information up to date? Do all of your employees know their role(s)? Who will report to StormTracker and FlaWARN?

- Have your system information on hand: Stormtracker requires your PWSID or FLA ID, do you know it? What equipment and personnel do you need in an emergency? What equipment and personnel can you send to affected systems after the storm?
- If you are not in the storm's path, can you help with the response? If so, who, what and, when will you be able to send to help?