

How to Prepare your Computer Network for a Hurricane or Major Storm

Objective:

Our objective is to make sure our clients are appropriately prepared in case of an upcoming hurricane. Damage to computer equipment can be caused by rain, wind or debris with a major cause of damage being power spikes and surges, extended power outages or repeated power outages in rapid succession.

Taking the appropriate precautions can reduce or eliminate damage to computer hardware and software.

Hurricane Watch (36 - 24 hours until Landfall)

During the Hurricane Watch period, preparations should begin on non-core equipment and infrastructure including all PCs, printers and monitors. All loose software manuals and CDs should be stored away from windows, preferably stored in a sealed, weatherproof container or safe. It is recommended a final backup of data be run before servers are shut down. Backups can take many hours to run and therefore, preparations for final backups should start at this point. If you have offsite backups through us, you have no need for concern.

Hurricane Warning (24 hours prior until landfall)

When the hurricane warning is issued, indicating that a hurricane strike is imminent, preparations to core equipment including servers, routers, switches, and firewalls should take place immediately. The final or latest backup should be stored in a safe, sent for offsite storage or taken offsite by an employee. It is also recommended that multiple tapes or drives be taken offsite, preferably by multiple personnel. The rest of your equipment should be protected using the steps below.

~ What to do Before the Storm ~

Step by Step Preparation for Disconnecting Computer and Electronic Equipment: The following guidelines should be followed in order to protect computer equipment before a storm arrives:

Move devices away from windows and other vulnerable areas.

Moving other valuables away from windows is also recommended, of course -- both to protect them, and to keep loose objects from becoming missiles that damage your computing devices.

Locate devices under a sturdy desk or piece of furniture that could withstand the effects of falling debris (such as from a collapsing ceiling). (Do not put devices directly on the floor, because of the risks from flooding, unless they are in secure waterproof containers.)

If you are in a flood prone area, if possible, move your devices to the 2nd floor, up high or offsite.

Store your backups in a secure location to secure against both weather threats and those from human intruders.

Ideally, use a closet or windowless room away from external walls. If that is not possible, use the corner of the room farthest from windows, out of the path of wind drafts

Please follow the order below:

1. Turn off and unplug any Printers.
2. Save your work, turn off and unplug Desktop and Laptop Computers.
3. Call your Service Provider to turn off your Servers. Once servers have shut down, unplug them.
4. Turn off and unplug Backup Devices.
5. Turn off and unplug your Network Switch.
6. Turn off and unplug your Firewall or Router.
7. Unplug Telephone Handsets.

8. Turn off and unplug your Telephone System.
9. Turn off and unplug your Internet Provider's Equipment (Cable, DSL, Satellite, or T1 Modem).
10. Unplug and Turn Off all Surge Protectors and Battery Packs for all devices.

It is critical to unplug all devices for two reasons: First, during a storm's approach the chances of damaging power fluctuations are high, as the electrical transmission grid and generating plants are affected. Second, the results of any water-induced damage are likely to be much greater if the device is not completely disconnected from power sources.

~ What to do After the Storm ~

Reconnecting Your Equipment: Even after the storm passes, damage to equipment can still occur. This damage is usually caused by post storm power surges or outages while the power company begins to restore power to the affected areas. It is best to receive the "all clear" from local authorities before reconnecting expensive equipment.

Do not plug in devices that have been exposed to water or other contaminants.

- Physical recovery can begin once the damage to property has been assessed. This will include removal of bags on computer equipment and moving of equipment back to their original locations. During this phase, any equipment that may have been exposed to water or damaged will have to be more closely inspected to determine whether it needs to be replaced. Leave those items powered off and please call Franktronics to inspect these items.

Failure to follow these procedures can cause extensive damage to equipment from power surges and repeated or rapid succession power outages.

- Once the all clear is received from the power company. The core systems and infrastructure should be restored first. These include routers, firewalls, switches, servers and telephone systems. The order is as follows; please wait until an item finishes loading completely before moving to the next item:

Please follow the order below:

1. Plug in and turn on all Surge Protectors and Battery Packs for all devices.
2. Turn on your Internet Provider's Equipment (Cable, DSL, Satellite, or T1 Modem).
3. Turn on your Network Switch.
4. Turn on your Firewall or Router.
5. Turn on your Telephone System.
6. Turn on your Main Server (DC) first, then other Servers if any.
7. Plug in Telephone Handsets.
8. Plug in and turn on Desktop and Laptop Computers.
9. Plug in and turn on Backup Devices.
10. Plug in and turn on Printers.
11. Activate any other peripherals.

Remember that your safety comes first

We hope you found this guide useful and of course wish you the best should the storm affect our area. Please call with any questions