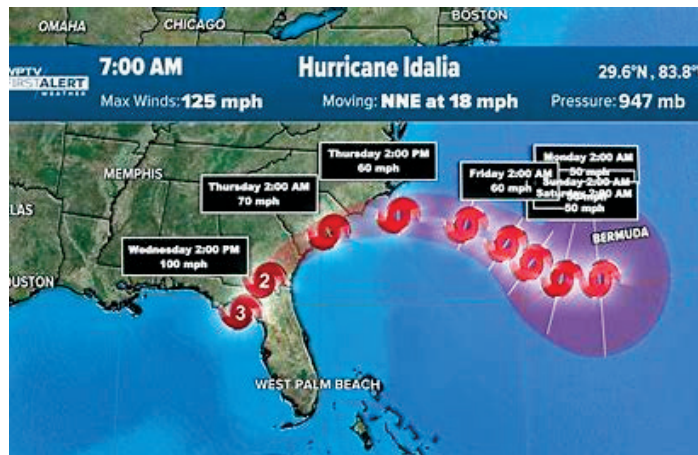


# ARE YOU PREPARED?

By Kevin Maine

Recent events in Florida (Hurricane Idalia) hopefully have made us stop to review our preparedness for numerous events. Here in the northeast, typically we do not experience hurricanes, however we do experience rain events from hurricanes that move up the eastern coast. We should be asking ourselves are we prepared for these heavy rainfall and other environmental events.



These events are somewhat unpredictable, one method to be prepared for some of these events would be to complete both a vulnerability assessment and emergency response plan. The vulnerability assessment will help you pinpoint areas that may need attention or improvement. The emergency response plan will give you guidance during an emergency event. There are several templates available online including New York Rural Waters Association's template at <https://nyruralwater.org/downloads/downloads-vulnerability-assessment>.

Unlike the southern states, the northeast typically experiences short-term power outages due to environmental localized events. These events may be as simple as a tree falling on the power lines to an ice storm knocking out power lines.

The first item that should be reviewed in your vulnerability assessment and emergency response plans is a standby power source. Typically, these rely on natural gas- or diesel-powered generator systems. Is the fuel supply adequate to carry you through an emergency event. Does your alternate power source have adequate power to run your facility at 100%, or do you have to shed load and prioritize equipment needed for basic operations.

Is your source exercised routinely? If so, is it exercised under load? Is there an advantage to exercising this equipment under a load? Yes, testing under load verifies the capacity of the unit and verifies frequency and proper voltages. Another advantage if there are operations demanding high power requirements, you could reduce your electricity consumption by operating the equipment consuming the high power during the generator exercise cycle.

In the event of natural disasters, it may be necessary to reach out to state and federal resources for assistance. Under these circumstances, it may be necessary to have someone on staff certified with the incident command systems 100 and 700, often referred to as IS 100 & 700. These courses are free via the EPA website at the following links FEMA - Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Course | IS-100.C: Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS 100 & FEMA - Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Course | IS-700.B: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System. When each course is completed, a certificate is created in a PDF and downloadable for printing and posting.

Once the event has concluded, everyone involved should review the emergency response plan to identify and correct any deficiencies discovered during the event. Additionally, it is recommended that the vulnerability assessment be reviewed again for any deficiencies that need improvement. If you haven't had to activate your emergency response plan, I suggest you review both the vulnerability assessment and the emergency response plan on an annual basis.

This may also be a good time to draft shared services agreements or review any existing shared services agreements that would address vulnerabilities and emergencies. Again, these should be considered living documents and possibly will need revision from time to time depending on review and regulatory requirements. 💧💧

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