

## BEFORE THE STORM

- As major storms approach, check your Polk State email for alerts
- Think about items in your work area that need to be secured
- If the College President announces a campus closure, follow your department's closing routine before leaving:
- Your department office will coordinate all department members to follow a plan
- Close and lock all office and classroom windows in your department
- Turn off all office machines, computers, coffee pots, and any other electrical appliances
- Cover all computers, televisions, DVDs, and other equipment with plastic bags provided by Facilities. If possible, move equipment away from windows
- If you are not able to cover your equipment, call Facilities at extension 5059
- Place items subject to flood damage as high as possible, such as on counters, shelves, or desks
- Lock your file cabinets, desk drawers, and storage closets in that contain important items
- Lock office, break room, and classroom doors in your department
- Remove all items from refrigerator, as loss of power will cause spoilage

## DURING THE STORM

Monitor news and weather on a local radio station. Have plenty of fresh batteries for your radio. Have an NOAA weather radio on hand. Polk State will remain closed to ALL employees until Facilities and Emergency Coordination teams assess the immediate danger. Do not return to Polk State College unless your supervisor requests it. All emergency-essential personnel must check in with Polk State College Security.

Barricades may be placed around campus entrances, parking lots, and buildings to keep people out of dangerous areas. Only authorized personnel may cross barricades. Do not ignore barricades as they are there for your protection.

## REOPENING ANNOUNCEMENT

Check local media for reopening information. The best way to determine whether the College will be open or closed is our website at [polk.edu](http://polk.edu) or call the main phone number: 863.297.1000.

**The only way to reduce the devastation of a hurricane is **to be prepared.****



# HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS EMPLOYEE AWARENESS



999 Avenue H, NE  
Winter Haven, Florida 33881  
863.297.1000

**polk.edu**



## HOW TO PREPARE FOR A HURRICANE

If the threat of a hurricane affects our area or the immediate surrounding area, be prepared for a possible temporary closure of the College. The following information is intended to answer questions you may have regarding the steps you should take to assure the safety and security of Polk State College students, employees, and College property.

Polk State College is not a designated evacuation shelter and is not equipped to handle emergencies associated with a hurricane. A list of shelters is available from Polk County's Citizen Information Line: 863.534.0321.

### FIRST STAGE OF PREPARATION

As soon as a tropical disturbance originates in the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico, the College Facilities division begins to monitor weather conditions. A tropical disturbance is the first sign of a potential hurricane. As the disturbance strengthens into a tropical storm (winds of 39 to 73 mph), we track the storm. If the storm's direction indicates it might affect the College, we begin preparing for the safety and security of Polk State College students, employees, and property.

The Facilities Personnel, Information Technology Department (IT), and Office of Communications and Public Affairs (OCPA) combine efforts to prepare the College for

tropical storm and/or hurricane conditions.

Facilities will distribute plastic bags to use for covering computers, televisions, DVDs, and any other office or lab equipment that should be protected from water damage.

Storm drains are cleared of debris to assure the flow of run-off water from campus parking lots. Tree branches are trimmed to help deter damage to College buildings.

Emergency equipment, such as barricades, police barrier tape, safety cones, generators, power tools, first aid equipment, plastic sheeting, and plywood is inventoried and made ready for use. College vehicles, gasoline, and other supplies are made ready for use.

Facilities continues to monitor the storm conditions, reporting the storm's status, as well as the status of all facilities, to the President.

### SECOND STAGE OF PREPARATION

The second stage of preparedness begins before the imminent threat of a tropical storm or hurricane reaches the Central Florida area and prior to the time a hurricane watch is issued for our area.

The Emergency Coordination Team meets to decide when to close the College and to determine what additional preparations need to be made. Prior to this meeting, there has been a constant, close monitoring of storm conditions and area emergency

management plans by each person involved in this decision making process. At this point, the Polk State College President announces when the College will officially close to students and non-essential personnel. Non-essential personnel are employees who are not needed to help secure the College and its property.

Official notice that the College will close at a specific time will be announced by the following:

1. Polk State College's Outlook e-mail, website (polk.edu), and social media accounts
2. On-campus closed-circuit television (CCTV)
3. Local area media
4. Recorded message at Polk State College main switchboard at 863.297.1000

College officials, Facilities Personnel, IT, and all other essential personnel will then continue to monitor the storm, assist with the evacuation of students and employees, and secure the College.

Before leaving your department and campus, follow steps in "Before the Storm." Once the College is secure, all essential personnel (with the exception of the security officers) are sent home to secure their families and homes. These measures are taken on all campuses.