



BAHAMAS HURRICANE PREPARATION TIPS

The best time to prepare for the 2009 hurricane season is before it begins. In the event of a hurricane within The Islands Of The Bahamas, the Ministry of Tourism will coordinate communications with representatives throughout the islands to gather information and develop status reports. It is important to communicate accurate and timely information to the media and the public. Effective teamwork between the public and private sectors will facilitate better crisis management and communications.

Please take a moment to review the following:

- **Crisis Management Plan:** The Ministry of Tourism maintains a crisis plan for the destination. Draft or revise a crisis management plan specific to your interests.
- **Create/Update Emergency Contact List:** Emergency contact list should include current information for key personnel on- and off-shore with alternate e-mail addresses where possible. It is helpful to include additional numbers for local and national Ministry of Tourism offices, Bahamas Hotel Association (BHA), NEMA, etc.
- **Designate an off shore Web site or spokesperson:** In the event of transmission issues, designate an off shore person, to collect information and forward to the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism.
- **Damage Assessment Form:** Download and store a Damage Assessment form in advance in case there is a power or phone failure. In the event of a hurricane, these forms are critical tools for the BHA and Ministry of Tourism in collecting and evaluating information.
- **Satellite Phone:** If you have a satellite phone, please share the number with the appropriate Promotion Board, BHA and Ministry of Tourism.
- **Prepare for Recovery:**
 - Draft a swiss cheese outline of communications in advance of the storm and fill in pertinent, verified information for distribution after the event.
 - Prepare to distribute update to guests, reservation holders, post update on Web site, etc.
 - Create a script for front desk, reservation desk, etc. so inquiries from the public are responded to accurately and uniformly.

In the event of a hurricane:

- The Ministry of Tourism will conduct task force conference calls to keep key agencies apprised of preparations and developments
- Please keep your local Ministry representative and the BHA current on status of your property
- Post-hurricane please complete and return your damage assessment form as quickly as possible

Answering questions from media and visitors:

- It is very important to communicate only accurate, verified information in times of crisis
- Please refer media inquiries to the **Ministry of Tourism** as they will collect information as widely as possible
- Individual properties will receive inquiries from visitors and potential visitors. It is important to establish one spokesperson to direct responses to questions and ensure that visitors are answered with accurate information
- If you do not know the answer to the question, do not be afraid to record the pertinent details and follow up with the right information



BAHAMAS HURRICANE KIT

Key Points to Remember

The Islands Of The Bahamas: Prepared for 2009 hurricane season.

In spite of continuing predictions for active hurricane seasons, The Bahamas continues to attract an increasing number of visitors. This positive outcome is attributable to several factors with two of the most important being:

- The Islands Of The Bahamas are comprised of 700 islands, about 30 inhabited, which spread across 100,000 square miles of the Atlantic Ocean
- Residents and business people in The Bahamas accept hurricanes as a fact of life in the destination and prepare for the occasional direct threat appropriately

What about tourism in The Islands Of The Bahamas?

- Tourism is the number one industry in The Bahamas contributing 75 percent of the nation's GDP
- More than half of all Bahamians derive their income directly, or indirectly, from tourism
- Nassau/Paradise Island is the #1 tourist destination in The Bahamas, followed by Grand Bahama Island and Abaco in the Out Islands
- The Islands Of The Bahamas takes visitor and resident safety seriously before, during and after hurricane season
- Nearly 4.5 million travelers visited The Islands Of The Bahamas in 2008

How did The Islands Of The Bahamas Weather The 2008 Hurricane Season?

The Islands Of The Bahamas benefited from a very quiet hurricane season within her territory. Hurricanes Hanna and Ike passed through the country's region causing only a temporary disruption in air and sea traffic.

Is The Islands Of The Bahamas ready for the 2009 summer travel season?

Yes. Resorts, lodges and hotels on Nassau/Paradise Island, Grand Bahama Island and throughout the Out Islands are open. Visitors will find miles and miles of some of the finest sand beaches in the world and adventures abound from diving and snorkeling to fishing, kayaking and more.

What should visitors know before planning a Bahamas vacation?

- The Islands Of The Bahamas are a safe destination year-round

- With 100,000 square miles of ocean, a hurricane within The Bahamas' territorial waters, rarely disrupts the experience of a majority of visitors
- Hotels have well rehearsed preparedness plans should a hurricane threaten
- The Bahamas Hotel Association has a hurricane cancellation policy in which most members participate

Is it safe to plan a Bahamas vacation during hurricane season with such active seasons?

Yes. The majority of Bahamas vacations are not affected by hurricanes even during "active seasons." On the relatively rare occasions that a vacation is disrupted by a hurricane, Bahamian hotels and resorts make every effort to accommodate guests and extend all possible courtesies.

Many hotels participate in the Bahamas Hotel Association hurricane cancellation policy.

Hurricane Communication Plan

WHO TO CALL: Vernice Walkine
Nalini Bethel
René Mack

Step 1 - Getting the Facts

The Director General will act in liaison with **Nalini Bethel** and **Weber Shandwick** to obtain the maximum amount of information regarding the hurricane. **Weber Shandwick**, in turn, will contact tourism partners as appropriate.

In all cases **Vernice Walkine** and **Nalini Bethel** will be the qualified spokespersons and will serve as liaison with the government and private sector.

Weber Shandwick will be the primary source handling the **media**. Weber Shandwick will be responsible for contacting the **consumer** and **trade media**. All media calls should be referred directly to Weber Shandwick to be qualified, responded to and logged. Any media calls received by others at the BMOT should be recorded and forwarded directly to René Mack at Weber Shandwick in New York at 212-445-8123; fax 212-445-8196; email rmack@webershandwick.com.

Once the information is gathered, **Weber Shandwick** will produce official press communiqués and updates. In the case of hurricanes, **Weber Shandwick** will issue statements at intervals appropriate to the situation and in consultation with the BMOT. Regular updates on media coverage will be forwarded to Vernice Walkine, and Nalini Bethel.

The key facts to be gathered by **Vernice Walkine** and **Nalini Bethel** in this issue are:

When will the hurricane hit?
With what intensity?
What islands in the Caribbean will be the most affected?
Will it touch The Islands Of The Bahamas?
How widespread is the damage?
Are tourists/residents in danger?
Is there cause for evacuation?
Will transportation be affected?

Weber Shandwick will track and be responsible for the following media activity:

Which media should be notified (TV, papers, radio, Internet)?
Where did/will the negative coverage run?
How many segments?
Obtain segments/articles.
Arrange interviews.

Step 2 - Notifying Key People

WHO TO CALL: Vernice Walkine
Nalini Bethel
René Mack

Step 3 - Notifying Crucial Publics

Statements should be sent to the following, as appropriate:

Weber Shandwick is responsible for contacting:

- **BTO's, unless otherwise directed**
- **Promotion Boards**
- **Media (consumer and trade)**
- **Tour operators/travel agents**
- **Travel industry**

The Director General's office will contact and liaise with:

- **Coast Guard**
- **Police**
- **Military (if national disaster declared)**
- **Embassies and Consulate offices**

Step 4 - Assigning One Media Spokesperson

Designate a government spokesperson to discuss the situation and the effect that the disaster has had on residents and on tourism. The Director General, Ms. Vernice Walkine would be the ideal spokesperson for this type of crisis.

Step 5 - Responding to the Media & Being Accessible

Monitor the media coverage and collect all articles/taped segments. Send information to Vernice Walkine, Nalini Bethel and René Mack. Establish one direct-dial phone number for key contacts. Always have the phone manned with appropriate persons with correct, up-to-date information.

a - Taking Control of Story

Weber Shandwick will work with the MOT and spokespersons to draft a response to the media, such as a press release detailing how the situation is being handled. The releases may include key messages and tips for the consumers as well as talking points for the appropriate spokesperson.

b - Crafting the Statement

Weber Shandwick will develop an accurate, truthful statement to be delivered by the spokesperson after the accident. New releases will be drafted as conditions change.

Weber Shandwick will develop an internal and external release. Internal releases are informational and NOT meant for media distribution.

c - Delivering the Statement

Weber Shandwick will send release/statement over the wires to local and major markets and make follow up calls to the media. It will advise The Ministry if the situation warrants holding a press conference.

Following is a sample release for a hurricane:

SAMPLE STATEMENT:

INTERNAL RELEASE:

crisis communiqué

Hurricane Communiqué – Urgent

Date: September 23, 1998 at 10 am EST
To: Nalini Bethel, Vernice Walkine, David Johnson, Tommy Thompson
From: René Mack
RE: Hurricane Georges

Here's the latest on Hurricane Georges. The hurricane is currently moving along the coasts of Cuba, heading towards the central and south Florida Keys.

Hurricane Warning:

As of 8 a.m. EST on Thursday, September 24, 1998, the National Hurricane Center has put a hurricane warning for Central and Northwestern Bahamas. The hurricane continues to move west-northwest.

Current Location:

About 60 miles (97 km) ESE of Camaguey, Cuba or about 385 miles (620 km) SE of Key West, Florida Lat./Lon: 21.1 N latitude, 77.0 W longitude Winds: 75 mph (121 km/h) Moving: WNW near 12 mph (19 km/h).

We recommend that the reservation center and MOT offices stick to the facts. Please consult the Weather Channel and your air carrier for the most up to date information.

EXTERNAL RELEASE:

OFFICIAL BAHAMAS TOURISM COMMUNIQUÉ

HURRICANE FLOYD AND THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS Monday, September 13, 1999 at 9 a.m. EDT

The Next Advisory Will Be At Noon

NASSAU, THE 700 ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS -- A hurricane warning is in effect for all of the northwest and central Bahamas (including Nassau/Paradise Island and Grand Bahama Island) as Hurricane *Floyd* moves into the Western Atlantic and towards the U.S. mainland.

Floyd is a strong category four hurricane and visitors are advised that before traveling to The Bahamas they should check with their travel professionals, airlines and the weather sources listed below. All hotels and resorts in The Islands Of The Bahamas have activated their hurricane programs and are taking all necessary precautions to protect visitors and residents alike.

Schools in The Islands Of The Bahamas are closed today and emergency shelters for residents and visitors are now open. At noon today, all non-essential government offices will close and most airlines will cease flights in and out of all international airports including Nassau International Airport and Freeport International Airport. All cruise lines have re-routed their ships away from *Floyd* and The Bahamas. The storm is expected to pass over The Bahamas tonight and early tomorrow morning.

As of 8 a.m. EDT the center of this hurricane was estimated near latitude 23.9 North, Longitude 71.4 West or about 195 miles East of San Salvador. *Floyd* is moving West Northwest at 14 mph. The center of *Floyd* is packing winds of 155 mph and hurricane force winds extending outward up to 105 miles from the center and tropical storm force winds extending outward of up to 290 miles from the center.

For more information on *Floyd* and The Islands Of The Bahamas **travel professionals and consumers** are advised to access the following:

- The Weather Channel on your local cable system
- The National Hurricane Center at www.nhc.noaa.gov/index_special.html
- USA Today at www.usatoday.com
- The Weather Channel website at www.weather.com

Media Contact Only:

File: Crisis Floyd

René A. Mack

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Jeritzan Outten (GBI)	00-881641431595	881693431541
Prescott Young (HARBOUR ISLAND)	00-881641431596	881693431542
Nalini Bethel (NEW PROVIDENCE)	00-881641431597	881693431543
Petherina Hanna (EXUMA)	00-881641431598	881693431544
Antoinette Stuart (BIMINI)	00-881641431599	881693431545
Don Cornish (ABACO)	00-881641431600	881693431546
Jacqueline Gibson (ELEUTHERA)	00-881641431601	881693431547
Benjamin Pratt (CENTRAL ANDROS)	00-881641431602	881693431548
Hon. Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace (MINISTER)	00-881641431603	881693431549
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Hyacinth Pratt (PS)	00-881641487334	

HURRICANE {Name} IMPACT DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM

It is essential that we quickly gauge the initial impact of Hurricane {Name} on the hospitality industry. This will best position us to respond to media and travel partner inquiries as well as to assess the industry's readiness to return to business. Please take a moment to complete this form and respond via fax, email or phone to:

Fax: 242-502-4220 and 954-236-9282

Email: fcomito@bahamashotels.org and nbethel@bahamas.com

Tel: Vernice Walkine

Satellite # 011-881641431604 or 242-302-2036

1. HOTEL NAME & ISLAND: _____
2. # of Rooms: _____ # Rooms Occupied w/Guests during Storm: _____
3. Damage Assessment (rate on a scale of 1,2,3 – 1 being minimal; 3; extensive). Briefly describe any major damage to structure and surrounding property:

4. Overview of Island (roads, electric, telephone, airport, services):

5. Personal Injuries (please indicate if any, and severity):

6. Anticipated Date to Open: _____
7. Anticipated Date to Full Normal Operations (normal room capacity):

8. Is there any other storm-related matter impacting or potentially impacting the industry which we should be aware of:

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Alternative Tel: _____ Email: _____

THANK YOU