

The Quarterly Question

Given the very active hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005, with numerous Florida landfalls, what if anything are you planning or doing differently to prepare for the next hurricane season?

I would continue to make sure that I had local contractors set up prior to hurricane season, ones that you can rely on to be there and hopefully you have done enough business with over the year or years to get their best prices. There are a lot of people that come into town or raise their rates through the roof after the hurricane.

(Editor's Note: *There is a law against price gouging. Contact Commissioner Bronson's Office in Tallahassee if you suspect this is happening*).

After the hurricane we contracted a company that installs our palms trees to come out and stand and stake as many trees as possible, which took a lot of work off my staff and got the trees up quickly.

At the beginning of the season we will buy a pallet or so of water and numerous non-perishable items to feed the guys who are working after the storm — lunch, breakfast etc, — until power is restored.

One thing that was very helpful and that my administrative assistant, Jean Mears, came up

with was to go to the Board and have them approve all expenses that had to do with the storm be put into the capital budget, which saved my operational expenses.

*Matthew R. Taylor, CGCS
Royal Poinciana Club, Naples*

We go into hurricane preparation 48 hours prior to storm hitting. I am proactive in making an early decision. Park large equipment in front and behind all overhead doors.

Our chain saw inventory has tripled and chain inventory is 10 times what it was before 2004.

We stockpile fuel. We usually only keep 500 gallons each of unleaded and diesel on hand for insurance reasons and we have a 1000-gallon capacity for each.

We have purchased two 12-volt pumps for the fuel tanks in case of power loss. We have a generator big enough to run miscellaneous shop items.

We do our major tree-trim projects early in the summer — June or July — instead of waiting until September.

During the summer we minimize golf-course items on the course — hazard stakes, ball washers, trash cans, etc. There are many more things you could do if you had unlimited funds, such as purchase a large generator for the pump station.

Secure a tree-trimming company's service but they are going to go where the big money is. When they finish with high-



income projects, they come and take care of Hobe Sound Golf Club.

*Roy MacDonald, GCS
Hobe Sound Golf Club, Vero Beach*

I have considered this question since your original e-mail. As a cracker and resident of Southwest Florida since 1964, I was shocked when we were hit by a hurricane in 2004. I really had convinced myself that it would never happen. Some of these items may sound ridiculous, but since you asked:

Mentally prepare that we may/will have a hurricane.

This winter prepare the materials necessary to secure my house and course. When/if we have a potential hurricane, try to keep the staff well informed, but do not allow the potential storm to be

an obsession.

Have a safety plan for family if the potential becomes great, so you can also go to work knowing they are safe and secure.

Encourage the staff to have a safety plan, but also communicate the need for them at work after the storm passes. Stay calm and organized during the clean-up. Try to communicate realistic expectations up the chain of command. Remain positive in all things.

*Mike Mongoven, CGCS
Shell Point Golf Club, Ft. Myers*

There are a few things I would do differently from what I have done in the past.

I normally rent a medium-size loader with tree boom or backhoe before the storm. Instead I would get a very big loader with tree boom next time. I also would rent another dump truck to help with removal of material. I have done this once before but didn't for Wilma, unfortunately. I would get a tree company lined up to come in the day after the storm. It seems that other courses

have established relationships with a lot of the local tree companies. I have connections, too, but if a local company is not available, then I would contact a tree company in another part of the state that would not be affected by the hurricane. It is even possible to contact others in another state. They like coming down if the price is right.

Get your generators ready, especially to run your fuel tanks. Everyone, I'm sure, gets their tanks fueled up. If money isn't a problem, then get a generator large enough to run at least the irrigation jockey pump at the pumphouse. I always get one or two more chain saws with oil and gas mix to handle the increased tree work and breakdowns.

*Craig Weyandt, CGCS
The Moorings Golf Club, Vero Beach*