

## Keeping Workers Safe During Hurricane Recovery Operations

Dear Valued Agent:

It is very likely that many of your clients and Beacon Mutual policyholders have been impacted by Hurricane Irene and are already in the process of cleaning up and recovering from the storm. As businesses begin to clean up, repair and reopen, employees may be conducting work which they are unaccustomed to and for which they may not be trained.

Work conditions change drastically after hurricanes and other natural disasters. In the wake of a hurricane, response and recovery workers will face additional challenges, such as downed power lines, downed trees, and high volumes of construction debris, while performing an otherwise familiar task/operation. Even experienced employees are at risk in storm recovery operations. For example, a Rhode Island employee involved in hurricane preparations was severely burned when the tree he was trimming contacted power lines.

Taking time to train and re-train employees involved in storm clean up operations will be beneficial. Below are safety links to help your clients avoid accidents and injuries that could occur during recovery efforts.

Chainsaw safety

[http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_Hurricane\\_Facts/chainsaws.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/chainsaws.pdf)

Tree Trimming

[http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_Hurricane\\_Facts/trim.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/trim.pdf)

Downed Electrical Lines

[http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_General\\_Facts/downed\\_electrical\\_wires.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/downed_electrical_wires.pdf)

Electricity Safety

[http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_Hurricane\\_Facts/elect\\_safety.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/elect_safety.pdf)

Portable Generators

[http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_Hurricane\\_Facts/portable\\_generator\\_safety.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/portable_generator_safety.pdf)

Working Outdoors

[http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_Hurricane\\_Facts/working\\_outdoors.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/working_outdoors.pdf)

Chipper Safety

[http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_Hurricane\\_Facts/chipper\\_machine.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/chipper_machine.pdf)

Even in the cleanup of natural disasters, the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) requires employers to comply with hazard-specific safety and health standards. In addition, pursuant to the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the OSH Act, employers must provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

OSHA's Hurricane/Exposure and Risk Assessment Matrix, provides information on many of the most common and significant hazards that response and recovery workers might encounter when working in an area recently devastated by a hurricane. This Matrix highlights a number of tasks and operations associated with disaster response and recovery. The Matrix is designed to help employers make decisions during their risk assessment that will protect their workers working in hurricane-impacted areas.

US DOL OSHA Hurricane Matrix

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hurricane/index.html>

At Beacon Mutual, we are dedicated to making workplaces safe. A safe workplace reduces claims and in turn lowers premiums. This is The Beacon Mutual Service Advantage - unparalleled service at no additional cost. Please call or email to arrange for a loss prevention or ergonomic consultation.

As always, if you or our mutual clients have questions please call Beacon's loss prevention department at 401-825-2667.

Yours truly,

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