

## Be Prepared!

As Hurricane Matthew bears down on the Caribbean, it's important that all individuals and cultural institutions along the entire Southeast coast – and potentially up the mid-Atlantic to the Northeast – prepare for tropical or hurricane storm-force winds:

- Track the storm via the National Hurricane Center, <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>.
- Gather your staff and review your disaster plan today. No disaster plan? Put that at the top of the to-do list once the hurricane passes (and hope you didn't need it this time).
- If you have a disaster plan, make sure everyone has a printed copy to take home. An electronic version may be useless if you lose power.
- Make sure staff, volunteer, and board contact lists are up to date. Determine how you will communicate with one another before, during, and after the storm.
- Make sure your insurance and disaster recovery vendor contact information is readily available.
- Back up electronic records and store the back-ups off-site or in the cloud.
- Secure outdoor furniture, bike racks, book drops, etc. – anything that can become a projectile in strong winds.
- Move collections that are in areas vulnerable to flooding – i.e., the floor, the basement – or susceptible to rain – near windows or under roofs.
- If you have time, cut lengths of plastic sheeting to be able to throw them over shelves or equipment should the building envelope be compromised.
- Know the location and shut-off procedures for water, electricity, and gas.
- Download the free ERS: Emergency Response and Salvage app, based on the Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel, [www.conservation-us.org/wheel](http://www.conservation-us.org/wheel).
- Review individual or family plans. You'll feel better attending to your organization knowing that your loved ones are safe.
- For tips on what to do before, during, and after a hurricane, go to <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>.
- Keep this 24/7 hotline number handy: 202.661.8068. The National Heritage Responders, a team of trained conservators and collections care professionals, are available 24/7 to provide advice.
- Download FEMA's "After the Flood: Advice for Salvaging Damaged Family Treasures" fact sheet, with tips and resources for individuals and institutions, <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/113297>.
- Familiarize yourself with the disaster declaration process in case one is declared for your state, <https://www.fema.gov/disaster-declaration-process>.



*FEMA and the Smithsonian Institution co-sponsor the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, a partnership of 42 national service organizations and federal agencies created to protect cultural heritage from the damaging effects of natural disasters and other emergencies.*