

# Safety Zone: Use National Preparedness Month to Prepare Your Business for Natural Disasters

Protecting your business property from natural disasters and adverse weather events requires more than a fire extinguisher and first-aid kit if your goal is to sustain as little damage as possible.

National Preparedness Month is a nationwide observance each September to highlight the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time.

“A critical part of disaster preparedness is knowing which hazards are common in your location, inspecting your property and addressing vulnerabilities to reduce the potential for storm-related property damage,” said Jeff Corder, Vice President of Loss Control, AmTrust North America. “It is also imperative that business owners prepare a disaster supply kit and map out an evacuation plan.”

During National Preparedness Month, AmTrust North America is alerting business owners about steps they can take to minimize property damage due to severe weather events and other disasters. There are abundant, free resources available that are specifically designed to help with these critical reparations.

“Today marks the beginning of [National Preparedness Month](#), as we’re already in the height of a very active hurricane season, while wildfire threats to communities are increasing daily,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “Now is the time that everyone should have a conversation with their family, neighbors or loved ones to discuss what you would do in the event of a disaster in your area. Use the resources on [Ready.gov](#) or [Listo.gov](#) to make sure you have taken the steps to get prepared.”

## Effective Tips

AmTrust is also offering five effective tips to prepare your property for hurricanes and wildfires that are common this time of year in many areas:

### Inspect the roof

Have your roof and drainage components inspected by a licensed, bonded roofing contractor to determine if any weaknesses could lead to further damage during a storm – and have them repaired. The roof is the first line of defense against Mother Nature and is the most vulnerable part of any building.

### Trim trees

Cut back weak branches that could be thrown against a structure or through a window due to high winds. Remove any branches that are positioned over a structure that could cause damage by breaking off.

### Seal cracks

Use a high-quality, waterproof caulk to seal gaps where pipes and electrical wires enter the structure to help keep water out of the building. Water damage is difficult to clean up, so the best strategy is to prevent water from entering your business.

## Contact Info:

PHONE: 888.486.7466

WEB: [www.amtrustfinancial.com](http://www.amtrustfinancial.com)

EMAIL: [AskLC@amtrustgroup.com](mailto:AskLC@amtrustgroup.com)

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### Pick up debris

Do you have any loose materials or any type of accumulated debris outside? This includes rooftops - have your equipment maintenance provider check and secure [roof-mounted equipment](#). Also, arrange for an experienced contractor to patrol for and remove any debris or loose objects that have accumulated or been left behind. Check for lightweight structures, signs or other types of decorative items near your business, too. These items can easily become flying debris during high winds and smash into the side of your business or a neighboring property, and cause substantial damage to siding and windows. Don't forget to bring them indoors before a storm.

### Create defensible space

If you are located in a wildfire-prone area, create a buffer zone around your business by removing weeds, brush and any combustible materials close to your building. Doing so will create a barrier to help keep the wildfire from getting too close and reduce the threat from flying embers. It also will provide a space for firefighters to safely defend your business.

For more information about how to make your buildings more resistant to a variety of disasters, big and small, visit [AmTrust's Commercial Property](#) section on our website and the [Institute For Business and Home Safety](#).