

What families can learn from Hurricanes Florence and Michael: PREPARE NOW

Published on October 15, 2018



Sheldon Yellen

> [See my posts](#)

Unconventional CEO. International Businessman. Undercover Boss. Sheldon Yellen is the CEO of BELFOR Holdings, Inc. – a \$1.7 billion entity which operates a number of companies including BELFOR

As the damage from Hurricanes Florence and Michael continues to be assessed, our thoughts are with the families, businesses and communities affected by the storms' destruction. Hurricane Michael was the strongest storm in October on record, but meteorologists are projecting more tropical storms and possible hurricanes before the end of season on November 30th.

September marked National Preparedness Month, an observance that serves as an important reminder that we must prepare ourselves and our families throughout the entire year for any type of disaster – from natural disasters like hurricanes and tornadoes to man-made ones like kitchen fires or burst pipes.

Property Restoration, the global leader in disaster recovery and property restoration. BELFOR has proven track record of superior response and unmatched resources to repair damages caused by fire, water, wind or other catastrophes - such as the California wildfires and Hurricanes Katrina, Harvey, Irma and most recently Florence and Michael to name a few - but Sheldon believes that the feeling of "Restoring More Than Property" is the most fulfilling part of his job.



A recent survey commissioned by BELFOR Property Restoration revealed an alarming lack of preparedness among U.S. homeowners, with 60 percent reporting they do not have a disaster preparedness plan, and 45 percent of respondents not knowing what items they should have on-hand in the event of an emergency. Even more concerning, nearly half (47 percent) have not made a preparedness plan because they have never thought about it.

As CEO of BELFOR for more than 30 years, I've helped restore communities in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina, Maria and Harvey, the California wildfires, and countless other disasters, and I've seen the devastating toll unpreparedness has on families, homes and businesses. To ensure you and your family are ready to weather any disaster that comes your way, follow the below 5 tips to PREPARE NOW:

- **Make a plan.** Knowing how your family will communicate and evacuate in the event of an emergency – whether it's a fire or a flood – should be the top priority when it comes to disaster preparedness. Discuss your plan with family and friends to be sure everyone knows what to do when a disaster hits. And don't forget about furry friends – too often, pets are overlooked until the last minute.
- **Practice your plan.** At-home practice of your emergency plan is a good way to review with your family what to do during a crisis. Determine specific responsibilities for each member of your household and discuss the importance of staying together. Schedule practice drills twice a year and be sure to model the drill for younger children first and then have them participate.

- **Keep important family documents and keepsakes safe.** Before the next emergency occurs, families should centralize and secure all important paperwork in waterproof containers. Beyond birth certificates, medical and financial records, and passports, also remember to protect those family photos and kids' artwork. Memories are just as irreplaceable as official documents!
- **Update and modernize your “disaster go-kit”.** Beyond the typical items like water, non-perishable food, flashlights and batteries, consider what modern items your family might need: medicines, laptops and portable phone chargers. Depending on the ages of your children, also think through necessities like diapers, wipes, activities and special snacks – whatever might make them most comfortable in a stressful environment. Keep one kit in the home and one ready to take with you should you need to evacuate.
- **Inventory your belongings.** For insurance purposes, take photos of all valuables – appliances, furniture, jewelry, artwork and other collectibles – and video each room. It's also important to review insurance policies before a storm hits, so you know what's covered in the aftermath.