



The Resilient Dry Cleaning Business Ways to “Weather the Storm”



Building your business took a lot of effort and is a significant investment. However, you may be vulnerable to a threat you have not considered, such as an extreme weather event, which is becoming more common due to climate change. It is important to make your business and property resilient to natural hazards and reduce the risks of contamination from chemicals you have on-site. Here are some resources to assist you with being better prepared:

Use Maps to determine if your property is in a vulnerable area:

1. Locate your property on **FEMA Flood Zone Maps**

- <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>

2. Use **NOAA Sea Level Rise Viewer** to verify potential impact to your property

- <https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/slr>

3. Use **Interactive Mapping Tools** for more information

<http://circa.uconn.edu/2015/09/23/interactive-mapping-tools-for-sea-level-rise-and-storms-a-review-and-user-guide>

Guidebooks for Businesses contain useful planning information for business owners:

1. ***Open for Business: A Disaster Planning Tool Kit for the Small Business Owner***, by the Institute for Business & Home Safety and the U.S. Small Business Administration

<http://www.crew.org/sites/default/files/openforbusiness.pdf>

2. **Disaster Protection and Recovery Planning Toolkit for the Small to Mid-Sized Business**

<https://disastersafety.org/wp-content/uploads/open-for-business-english.pdf>

There are several Useful Websites with a variety of related information:

1. **Ready.gov** for business: <https://www.ready.gov>

2. **CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security:** <http://www.ct.gov/demhs>

3. **Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) home page:** <https://www.fema.gov>

4. **FEMA Emergency Preparedness Documents for Businesses:**

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/resources-documents/collections/357>

5. **FEMA Flood Insurance Info for Businesses:** <http://bit.ly/FEMAsmallbusInsure>

6. **FEMA Protecting Your Business:** <https://www.fema.gov/protecting-your-businesses>

7. **NOAA flooding in CT:** <http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov/states/ct-flood.shtml>

8. **Small Business Association (SBA) Planning for Disasters in Advance:**

<https://www.sba.gov/managing-business/running-business/emergency-preparedness/disaster-planning>

9. **CT Past Storms archive:** <http://www.ryanhanrahan.com/past-stormsarchive>

Steps to Take to Make Your Dry Cleaning Business More Resilient

1. Check if your business is located in a vulnerable area. Use flood and sea level maps.
2. Know what chemicals & hazardous & other materials you have on-site, including:
 - Dry cleaning solvents & spot cleaners
 - Filters
 - Lint
 - Rags and other absorbents
 - Hazardous and solid waste
 - Cleaning products
3. Keep good records of what you buy, use and dispose.
4. Eliminate or reduce chemicals and waste.
 - By switching from perc to wet cleaning you eliminate solvents; detergents used for wet cleaning are non-toxic and reduce risk and liability from contamination.
5. Better manage what you have on site.
 - Tightly close all chemicals, cleaning products and waste storage drums.
 - Secure chemicals as high up off the floor as possible and in cabinets if feasible.
 - Don't keep any open buckets with waste around; empty immediately into drums.
 - Secure waste tanks, chemical storage cabinets and oil tanks as necessary.
 - Use secondary containment to hold at least the volume of largest chemical container.
6. Have an Emergency Contingency Plan in place and posted!

Benefits of Being Prepared:

- Minimize your loss of inventory & equipment.
- Avoid expensive special clean-up.
- Recover quickly, re-open and get back to business.
- Prevent potential liability and fines resulting from chemicals migrating off-site and causing widespread contamination.