Preparing for Severe Weather: Protecting Your Asset

By Jason Rivera
Business Development Associate, Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing
jrivera@chamberlinltd.com
713-490-7923

Damage caused by severe weather events can mean unwarranted costs and possibly temporary loss of space for your property. While you can't predict or stop the weather, you can be prepared and ready to take action before a storm hits.

Severe weather or not, roof maintenance is of utmost importance to your building. Not only is your roof the first line of defense from water infiltration, but it is one of your most important assets. Preventative care and maintenance throughout the years can extend the life of your roof making sure you get the most out of your investment. It also helps you maintain manufacturer warranty requirements so if disaster does strike, your contingency plan is in place.

Here are some recommendations to help you prevent potential severe damage to the roof of your buildings that may develop from high winds and heavy rain that could be generated by hurricanes, tropical storms or tornados:

Proper Drainage to Prevent Collapse
Proper drainage of your roof system is critical. Clean all gutters, check downspout drainage and clean all debris in and around drains to maximize water runoff from the roof during periods of heavy rains. Severe ponding of water on roofs can lead to total roof collapse. Keep in mind that the dead-load weight for one gallon of water is equal to 8.33 pounds. A 200-square-foot area of ponding water on your roof at an average depth of three inches increases the dead-load bearing weight upon a structural deck system close to 3,000 pounds. This weight can be concentrated in a relatively small area in and around the drains. This condition can significantly decrease the designed safety load that was intended for the structural decking system and has been the major contributing factor in roof collapses in the past.

Secure Components
Many roofs are lost to high winds because the perimeter sheet metal has not been adequately secured. Inspect metal coping and secure all loose panels and joints. Critical components of mechanical equipment can also be lost during a storm if not properly secured. Secure all HVAC access panels and loose parts.

Eliminate Hazards
Large projectiles can cause a huge amount of damage during severe storms. Secure all common area items such as trash containers, benches, urns, etc., that are not secured to the property. Airborne objects cause the most damage to buildings during high winds. Walk your roof and remove all debris that might become airborne.

Contract a Professional

If your personnel or time resources are limited, a roofing professional can lend a hand to make sure you are prepared in advance of severe weather. At Chamberlin, our technicians are available to our clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In the event of a roofing emergency we can survey your property, assess possible damage and make any necessary repairs.

Chamberlin's 40+ years of hands-on experience with the building envelope has taught us a thing or two about keeping water out of buildings. It has also shown us first-hand the damage severe storms can cause properties. We helped rebuild Houston, Texas, after Hurricanes Ike and Harvey. The severity and frequency of storm damage over the last few years has led Houston insurers to increase their rates and deductibles for flood insurance by 15–40%. Even more reason for you to do all you can to protect what you have.

Call your local Chamberlin office today to create an emergency plan and secure priority service for your urgent roofing and waterproofing needs. A little preparation now will ultimately protect your building and tenants when severe weather strikes.