

WHOEVER SAID THAT LIFE, DEATH AND TAXES ARE THE THREE THINGS IN LIFE THAT ARE CERTAIN FORGOT TO INCLUDE WEATHER AS THE FOURTH.

Just ask anyone in the construction industry, and they'll tell you that Mother Nature has her own ideas. This is why disaster preparedness is more vital than ever especially if you live and

Extreme Weather

Christopher Diaz is vice president of environmental, health, and safety for Balfour Beatty's Buildings operations in Florida.

He says general contractors need to understand that storm

shovel in the ground because severe weather — such as hurricanes — is often unpredictable.

“Storms have the potential to intensify and rapidly change paths, so it's vital for project teams to be well-versed in proactive storm procedures. It's essential that these plans are communicated and executed in the preplanning phase so project teams can quickly and safely react when unexpected weather approaches.”

Diaz adds that it is equally essential that contractors structure the delivery of projects based on the weather they may have to withstand during and after construction.

“In areas of Florida, we center our buildings operations around

infrastructure is safely out of the ground and protected against corroded building foundations.”

Michael Teng is assistant vice president of regional product, pricing, and underwriting for Sentry Insurance in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. He says when a disaster occurs, the most important thing is getting workers into a safe zone quickly.

the safe zone should be in a secure, higher elevation area. Conversely, if a tornado is forecasted, the safe zone should include the lowest area in a secure building.

“If you have more time to prepare for a forecasted disaster, it may allow your business to activate its full business continuity plan like getting critical materials and equipment off the project site, while also designating a temporary work location.”

require extensive and well-executed quality control measures to keep projects safe from damages.”

Creating A Safety Plan

When it comes to instituting a safety plan, the critical areas of disaster preparedness include planning, training, and execution. If one of these is missing, it could be extremely costly to a construction business.

and planning,” explains Teng. “If you’re a contractor in the Great Plains, your tornado risk is higher, while a contractor in the southeastern region is more prone to hurricanes. Your

your geographic region, but it shouldn’t exclude less common scenarios.”

Eric Yates is the southeast region, environmental, health, and safety manager for Balfour Beatty’s U.S. Civils operations. He says ensuring the team is safe is the most critical aspect of disaster preparedness and post-disaster recovery.

“Getting teammates’ emergency response numbers and

items on our disaster preparedness checklist. In the case of

controls are necessary to consider in a storm preparedness plan to keep projects sustainable and safe from erosion and pollution. Flooding and erosion can devastate jobsites and

Yates adds that improved forecasting and real-time monitoring

“These innovative tools can alert our workforce nearly 10 days prior to severe weather, giving teams ample time to execute storm preparedness procedures. With the help of forecasting technology, we can accurately pinpoint a storm’s location 24/7. This is even more helpful if storm trajectories change so we can be agile in safely adjusting our storm preparedness operations accordingly.”

The Balfour Beatty project teams also leverage drone technology for aerial monitoring and inspections as storms

