



**Visit Sarasota County
Crisis Management & Business Continuity Manual
2026-27**

Updated & Approved August 2026

Note: This manual has been condensed to ensure the protection of confidential information and security protocols specific to Visit Sarasota County. For questions about the full plan, please contact partnership@visitsarasota.org.

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BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN OVERVIEW

The purpose of this Plan is to keep employees informed on an annual basis of the Visit Sarasota County's Disaster, Business Continuity and Hurricane Preparedness Plans. It is to be used as a tool to assist you in knowing what to do in the event that we are impacted by natural OR man-made disasters such as but not limited to: hurricanes, red tide, tornados, pandemics, fires, bomb threats and civil unrest. We strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with these guidelines.

HURRICANE SEASON BEGINS JUNE 1ST AND CONTINUES THROUGH NOVEMBER 30TH. Because hurricanes are one of the most prevalent natural disasters in our geographic region, a good portion of this guide addresses emergency procedures in the event we are affected by an extreme weather system. Other types of disasters are also reviewed and should not be regarded as any less important.

This plan is designed to help safeguard VSC operations, in all aspects, and to provide you with personal safety information.

Information will be updated as necessary and distributed in a timely manner.

Post Evaluation AAR (After Action Review) Process: On an annual basis, VSC will review this plan and any instance in which it has been activated over the last year in early summer and shall hold a mandatory staff meeting to review this plan by mid-summer.

Your cooperation is critical and appreciated.

VSC's Role during a Crisis

VSC is a public-private partnership tasked by Sarasota County Government to ensure Sarasota County is a must-experience destination for leisure visitors and group business, including sports events and team trainings. During a crisis – such as adverse weather conditions, flooding, or hurricanes – VSC serves the County's Emergency Operations Center by maintaining accommodation inventory and assisting in tourism business recovery. VSC also focuses on providing up-to-date information to our visitors, groups, residents, and industry businesses, collaborating with community stakeholders to promote Sarasota County's vitality on the world stage.

VSC recognizes the importance of balancing the immediate needs of the community with the continuity of business operations. We also understand that many of our resources support travelers who are planning and booking future visits. Maintaining timely, accurate communication during an emergency helps address current circumstances while protecting future visitation and the long-term economic vitality of Sarasota County.

VSC Department Communication Responsibilities

Defined in detail beginning in Departmental Procedures beginning on page 6

- **President:** VSC Board; VSC staff; Sarasota County Emergency Management ESF 18 (Business and Industry).Research Vendor
- **Vice President of Marketing & Communications:** Creative agency of record (paid media) ; visitor guide publisher; Domestic & International PR vendor; ; Neighboring DMOs; VISIT FLORIDA; Mail Fulfillment vendor
- **Vice President of Finance & Administration:** I.T. vendor (FourWinds); County Contract Liaison; Admin and visitor center leases.
- **Director of Web & Digital Engagement:** Website vendor; CRM vendor
- **Director of Sales & Industry Relations:** Hotel/accommodation partners; European Travel Trade Vendor; groups and convention meetings; international tour operators; administrator of Smartsheet forms.
- **Director of Sports:** Sport venues and local vendors; sports-related clients, groups, rights holders.
- **Director of Community Relations & Partnership:** VSC partners (all); Sarasota County Emergency Management ESF 18 (Public Information); VSC Visitor Centers (including volunteers and part-time staff); backup admin of Smartsheet forms.

Chain of Command & Order of Communication

Remember the **VSC President is primary spokesperson and must approve communications**, unless otherwise determined.

Order of Communications / Crisis-Related Decisions:

1. Board & Staff Message
2. Partners
3. Consumers via website, social media, etc.
4. Media – both responding to inbound inquiries and proactively sharing crisis response messaging.

IMPORTANT: If unable to do this and media breaks the news of the crisis and then asks us for comment, immediately update appropriate audiences with communications and information.

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS HOLDING STATEMENTS – EXAMPLES ONLY

Sample Responses for Crisis Situations

"Our hearts are with the families of those in harm's way at this time."

"VSC has implemented our crisis response plan, which places the highest priority on the safety of our visitors."

"We will be supplying additional information when it is available."

"We will connect you with appropriate subject matter experts, as applicable."

Internal/Employee Crisis

"It is with sadness we announce the passing of [board chair, board member, staff]. NAME was a member of the VSC family for X years. Our thoughts are with their family at this time."

"We are working with authorities to assess the situation and will share information as it becomes available."

Natural Disaster/Hurricane, Tornado, other threat

Preparation

"Visit Sarasota County continues to work with local officials to monitor the situation and its potential for impact on Sarasota County tourism."

"Visit Sarasota County is following the lead of Sarasota County officials during this time. Please refer to XYZ for more information."

➔ Direct them to the officials' website: Sarasota County Government; City governments of affected areas

During

"Visit Sarasota County continues to work with local authorities and officials to assess the situation. For updates, visit [WEBISTE LINK] or follow [social media handles]."

Post-crisis

"Visit Sarasota County is working with local officials to gather information about the impacts from [hurricane/tornado]. We will share more information as it becomes available."

Note on Training Exercises & Simulations

VSC acknowledges that the EOC is the lead on all training and simulation exercises and may ask for VSC participation as needed.

VSC will work with EOC staff on potential trainings of VSC full-time and part-time staff as well as volunteers once a year, as these are the individuals tasked with communication with the public and industry during crisis.

Additionally, VSC staff stay up to date on the latest emergency preparedness and crisis communications practices through continual professional development in regional and national associations.

TYPE I DISASTER Hurricanes

General Procedures

In the event of a forecasted hurricane, the following general procedures shall take effect.

- President/CEO, Vice President of Marketing & Communications and/or Director of Community Relations & Partnership will participate in the Sarasota County government PIO calls, as assigned by the President.
- All departments activate their departmental procedures (as stated in sections below).

Weekend, Holiday & Compressed Week Protocol

In the event a storm develops and/or is named over the weekend and/or holiday, VSC Leadership (Directors/VPs) should convene that day virtually via Teams or over the phone to assess which stage the storm is in – 96-hours, 72-hours, 48-hours, 36-hours, or sooner. Based on this assessment, leadership will activate the corresponding sections of the Crisis Plan as outlined in the timeline above and in the below departmental preparation plans.

All vendors should be informed by their managing director that VSC is monitoring and/or preparing for the storm and may enlist their services.

VSC Directors will evaluate if assistance from full-time, salaried, non-exempt team members is crucial to accomplishing the above directives. Every effort will be made to contain work to the leadership team, and salaried staff during the weekend; however, in crisis situations, exceptions may need to be made.

In the event of a crisis occurring on a weekend, holiday, and/or compressed week, all salaried non-exempt employees may be asked to execute their departmental responsibilities.

Regardless of employee title or role, internal communications will always proceed, regardless of day, to ensure teams stay informed and safe pre-, during, and post-storm.

Any of the below activation triggers may fall upon a weekend and/or holiday, which would activate the weekend protocol.

Note on VISIT FLORIDA

Each Summer, in the partner E-Newsletter, VSC will include a reminder to all lodging partners to ensure their information is up-to-date on Expedia and Priceline – to ensure if VISIT FLORIDA activates its Emergency Accommodations Portal, no updates will be needed during a crisis.

Priceline Contact: Heidi Bodalia, FL Area Manager heidi.bodalia@priceline.com

Expedia Contact: Shawn Rush, Sarasota Area Manager, shrush@expediagroup.com

VISIT FLORIDA maintains [a list of Hurricane and other crisis resources on its industry-facing website](#), and VSC will monitor, attend webinars, and remain in active communication with the state DMO to ensure their own efforts are timely and relevant.

During “Blue Sky” times, VISIT FLORIDA uses the hashtag #LoveFL. During “Gray Sky” times, VISIT FLORIDA switches over to #FloridaNow to show visitors what’s happening in Florida in real time. VSC will encourage partners to use this hashtag in pre- and post-crisis communications – as VISIT FLORIDA uses this hashtag to track local destination updates. VISIT FLORIDA asks to keep use of the #LOVEFL hashtag minimal in preparation phase and emphasizes use in recovery phase to showcase positive imagery of destination.

For meeting planners and corporate groups, VISIT FLORIDA offers a Cover Your Event Program, a free program that will provide reimbursement of certain costs in the unlikely event of a cancellation due to a named hurricane during the Atlantic Hurricane season, as established by the National Hurricane Center. This program is open for applications for coverage during Hurricane seasons in 2026, 2027 and 2028. More information can be found at <https://www.visitflorida.org/resources/event-insurance/>.

For questions and regional support, VSC is to contact its VISIT FLORIDA Regional Partnership Manager:

SAM RUBENZER

m: (850) 491-6622

srubenzer@VISITFLORIDA.org

Activation Trigger Moments

There are several scenarios that could trigger the activation of this crisis management plan, specific to hurricanes. They include when:

- A storm is named and the projected path is toward Florida.
- Sarasota County Schools are closed.
- A State of Emergency is declared for Sarasota County.
- Evacuation levels are called.

96 Hours in Advance of Hurricane or Tropical Storm

A ‘**Hurricane Observance**’ shall begin by VSC senior management personnel. The storm strength and direction will be monitored. All employees that could be affected by the hurricane or Tropical Storm should also begin to monitor weather.

If an employee is out of the area on business or vacation, this is the time to check in with management to determine if the employee should stay in their location or return to Sarasota County.

The President will ensure that either they, or the VP of Marketing and Communications or Director of Partnership and Community Relations, is on each Sarasota County PIO call, so that they may provide updates to the VSC Leadership Team.

72 Hours in Advance of Hurricane or Tropical Storm

In the event the VSC office falls within the “**72-Hour Projected Path**” of a hurricane, a “**Hurricane Committee**” shall convene and continue to monitor the storms strength and direction.

The President, Vice President of Marketing & Communications and/or Director of Community Relations & Partnership will serve as liaison with the Sarasota County Emergency Management ESF 18 and ESF 14 teams. The President will communicate with ESF 18 to determine the information they might need such as hotel availability and the preferred method of communication. Remind ESF personnel of the use of Expedia and VSC Lodging Availability Form for hotel availability. When requested, a member of VSC will report to the Sarasota County EOC. The President – or chosen representative – will confirm with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) who will be our liaison at Sarasota County Government and inform the VSC team, to ensure that contact is added into our CRM database.

The President will convene an all-staff meeting – either in-person or virtually – to determine which team members are evacuating and which are sheltering in place. In the case an employee cannot fulfill their crisis duties due to power outages or other reasons, their backup support* will step in. Each department has been assigned backup support (see Departmental Procedures for more information).

**Note that all employees with power before, during, and after the storm are expected to assist in crisis response/recovery. This collaboration goes beyond function or role and is truly a team effort. This especially pertains to employees who evacuated and may have power throughout the storm, while those who stayed may not.*

The President will direct staff, ideally the Community Relations and Partnership team or Sales team, to send out the [Crisis Communication Form](#) to all non-waterfront, mainland, Sarasota County hotels to determine who will be the general manager on duty each day for the next week, if there are any special accommodations available (emergency lighting, air handling, air conditioning), and what their cellphone is for post storm

communication. That information is to be shared with the President, VPs, and Directors. Hotels will be reminded to upload their availability to Expedia and fill out VSC's Lodging Availability Form pre and post storm.

Every employee is responsible for ensuring that his/her belongings are secured away from the windows, prior to vacating the VSC office. **REMEMBER THE OFFICE IS SHUT DOWN 48 HOURS PRIOR TO THE ONSET OF TROPICAL STORM FORCE WINDS THEREFORE SECURING OFFICES AND REMOVING VITAL PAPERWORK IS ESSENTIAL.** The Community Relations and Partnership Team will oversee securing the visitor centers, communicating with part-time staff and volunteers, and coordinating any closings of those buildings.

In general, the Hurricane Committee shall consist of the VSC Leadership Team, the President, Vice Presidents, and all VSC Directors.

The Hurricane Committee / Leadership Team will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all VSC property is safe, secure, and ready for a Hurricane.
- Determining if an employee wants/needs to leave the area and will be the person to maintain access to communications tools for VSC.
- Ensuring the VSC is secure for employees' safe return to work after a Hurricane.
- Managing, and coordinating all VSC pre-and post-hurricane activities.
- Communicating essential information to the local tourism industry, partners and visitors, including the importance of leveraging Expedia and the VSC Lodging Availability Form.
- Link the VSC website to Sarasota County's storm webpage.
- Staff will be designated whose post storm responsibility will be calling, texting hotel GMs to determine the condition of their properties and whether they have room availability – with the Director of Sales taking the lead on these efforts. When requested by the Sarasota County EOC, the VSC will share information and encourage hotels to sign up for FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) Program.
- Staff will be designated post storm to survey any damage to attractions, sports facilities, and cultural facilities.
- Reporting basics of plan to VSC Board Chair.
- Check that all team members have access to Microsoft Teams to ensure communications can be maintained throughout the storm.

Based on the hurricane/ tropical storm forecasts, we will begin to allow employees to leave work a few hours early each day or work from home to prepare for the storm unless it is a weekend or holiday event.

Should the storm dissipate, change course away from us, and no longer pose a threat to the VSC, business shall continue as usual.

In general, if Sarasota County Government offices or Sarasota County Schools close or dismiss early, VSC will follow suit.

All employees will provide contact information including (family/friend) name, email and telephone contact. Annually, VSC's Office Coordinator works with the team to update this information. Leadership then keeps a copy of the VSC staff and family contacts. Guidelines for updating this contact information are spelled out in VSC's Employee Handbook. VSC will share information on areas of evacuation when Sarasota County issues evacuation orders with staff.

48 Hours in Advance of a Hurricane/Tropical Storm - Official Watch Period

Forty-eight hours before the onset of tropical storm force winds, all VSC staff will cease normal day-to-day operations and go into full preparedness mode for the organization.

In the event the hurricane continues to pose a threat and the [NOAA](#) issues a **"Hurricane/ Tropical Storm Watch", for Sarasota County**, VSC employees will begin final hurricane preparations pursuant to individual departmental preparation guidelines in section three of the Disaster Recovery Plan.

Issue communication to all partners and industry businesses informing them of the means of communication including the use of partnership@visitsarasota.org and social media groups on Facebook and LinkedIn. Emphasize to the lodging partners the importance of reporting room availability to Expedia and the VSC Lodging Availability Form.

All staff should use Teams to communicate through the storm event. VSC will conduct a test of Teams communication to make sure it is working for all staff.

The Hurricane Committee shall assemble "Main Support" and "Back-up Support" individuals from each functional department and review the preparation guidelines and discuss pre-hurricane activity.

36 Hours in Advance of a Hurricane/ Tropical Storm - Official Warning Period

In the event the forecasted hurricane continues to pose a threat, [NOAA](#) will issue a **"Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning."**

Employees may continue to work remotely either from their home or from an evacuation place.

Should the "Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning" be issued during non-work hours/days you should not report to work but instead check corporate email for updates. Any time spent checking emails or working should be accurately accounted for on your timesheet.

Post-Hurricane

In the event of a dramatic event, it is not unusual for all communications to be completely offline for 48-72 hours. Employees will make every effort to utilize Teams to update their status and check for messages and or try to send a message to the partnership@visitsarasota.org email address once the storm has passed.

- Updates on business hours and staff requirements for reporting to work will be communicated through Teams and the VSC email system.
- If VSC emails are not working, employees should attempt to communicate with Teams.
- The President, VP's, and Directors will determine when it is safe to return to the VSC offices based upon communication from Gateway management.
- Notify our office subletters, EDC of Sarasota County about status of office.
- Once VSC can access office, update open status signage, voicemail, and digital channels.

VSC – Vendor Point-of-Contact

The following VSC staff will be responsible for connecting with the corresponding vendors:

- President → Research
- Vice President of Marketing & Communications → Creative Agency of Record; Domestic PR; Mail Fulfillment
- Vice President of Finance & Administration → FourWinds/ I.T.; leases and sublease holders
- Director of Sales & Industry Relations → International Sales/PR & Sales Representative
- Director of Web & Digital Engagement → Website, CRM

Compressed Days During a Crisis

If the EOC is activated in preparation of an emergency, compressed days for all employees will be put on hold until the crisis has passed and will be reactivated at a date/time determined by the President and the EOC status level.

Important Web Links & Resources

- [WEBPAGE: Weather Resources, Beach Conditions \(Red Tide\) & Travel Alerts](#)
- [WEBPAGE: VISIT FLORIDA Current Travel Safety Information](#)
- [FORM: Post-Storm Status](#) ([EDIT MODE](#))
- [FORM: Crisis – Hotel General Manager Contacts](#)
- [TRACKER: Accommodation & Partner Status - Storms 2024](#)

Note on Multilingual Support during a Storm

VSC will utilize Google translate, staff and volunteer expertise, and other digital resources to ensure Sarasota County residents, businesses, and visitors of diverse languages remain informed during a storm (or any crisis).

TERMS TO KNOW – HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

By international agreement, tropical cyclone is the general term for all cyclone circulations originating over tropical waters, classified by form and intensity as follows:

Tropical disturbance: A moving area of thunder storms in the Tropics that maintain its identity for 24-hours or more. A common phenomenon in the tropics.

Tropical depression: A tropical cyclone that has maximum sustained surface winds of 38 miles per hour (33 knots).

Tropical storm: A tropical cyclone that has maximum sustained surface winds ranging from 39-73 miles per hour (34-63 knots).

Hurricane: A tropical cyclone that has maximum sustained surface winds of 74 miles per hours (64 knots) or more.

Small craft cautionary statements: When a tropical cyclone threatens a coastal area, small craft operators are advised to remain in port or not to venture into the open sea.

A Hurricane Watch: A Watch issued when sustained winds of 74 mph or higher possible within the specified area of the Watch. The Watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the onset of tropical storm force winds.

A Hurricane Warning: A Warning is issued with sustained winds of 74 mph or higher are expected within the specified area of the Warning. The Warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the onset of tropical storm force winds. Actions for protection of life and property should begin immediately when the warning is issued.

Flash Flood Watch: means a flash flood is possible in the area; stay alert.

Flash Flood Warning: means a flash flood is imminent; take immediate action.

Tornadoes spawned by hurricanes sometimes produce severe damage and casualties. If a tornado is reported in your area, a local warning will be issued. If at work in the Gateway building, proceed to the “shelter in place” designated area of the 2nd floor women’s bathroom.

TYPE II DISASTERS

Red Tide

In the event of red tide, VSC will defer to state and local officials as the authorities on monitoring its spread and effects along Florida beaches – and instead, VSC will concentrate its efforts on keeping current and potential visitors updated on conditions that may impact travel and tourism.

VSC will work collaboratively with government agencies, Mote Marine and other entities across the region to amplify unified messaging to ensure information remains accessible, and responses are not duplicated. VSC will ensure this messaging is accessible via its [Weather Resources, Beach Conditions & Travel Alerts webpage](#).

As appropriate, VSC will direct visitors, partners, and residents to <https://visitbeaches.org/> for real-time updates on beach conditions, regardless of changing winds.

While VSC will be taking direction from state and local officials, **sample** messaging could include:

“All of Sarasota County’s beaches remain open as state and local officials continue to monitor effects of red tide along beaches in the southern part of the county. Beaches in central and northern Sarasota County (north of Nokomis Beach) are showing no effects of red tide.”

“Those with asthma or chronic respiratory impairments are advised to monitor conditions where red tide impacts are being reported before heading out to the beach. Updates are available at <https://visitbeaches.org/> or by calling 941-BEACHES and pressing “1” for Sarasota County beaches.”

“Beachgoers are encouraged to check the Mote Beach Conditions Report before they go to the beach as conditions can change daily.”

TYPE III DISASTERS

Fire, Bomb Threats, & Civil Unrest

Building Fire:

In the case of a fire, the person seeing the fire should immediately activate the alarm pull station and call 911.

FIRE SAFETY PLAN

1. Remain calm.
2. Prepare to evacuate as soon as the emergency evacuation message is broadcast.
3. Do not attempt to control the fire, leave it to the professionals.
4. Walk; do not run to the stairwells.
5. Take personal belongings that are easily accessible, i.e., purse, wallets, keys, but that will not delay or inhibit your exit from the building.
6. Close, but do not lock, all doors behind you.
7. Ladies should remove high-heeled shoes to facilitate walking.
8. Stay in single file and keep to your right as you walk down stairwell since firemen may be using the same stairwell coming up.
9. Keep the lines moving and do not stop unless directed to do so by emergency personnel.
10. If smoke is encountered, drop to the floor to find clearer and cooler air.
11. Do not open any door without first feeling it with the back of your hand for an indication of heat.
12. Once outside, proceed immediately to the designated holding area by the walkway of the rear parking lot.

The evacuation will proceed to the designated holding areas away from the building.

Bomb Threat or Suspicious Packages

If you receive a bomb threat by phone:

2. 1. Stay calm, be courteous, stop what you are doing, and concentrate on the call.
3. Listen closely and take notes of the caller's exact words, accents, sex, age, and anything else that seems of interest.
4. Ask the caller to repeat his message and try to obtain the location of the bomb, the time the bomb is to detonate and the reason for the threat.
5. Note the unusual noises in the background and record the time you receive the call.
6. After the caller hangs up, call 911 first and then Building Management for instructions.
- 2.

If you receive a suspicious parcel or package by mail:

- Do not handle the item.
- Do not show or allow fellow employees to see or handle the parcel.
- Immediately notify 911 and Building Security.

In the event of a bomb threat, you will be notified and advised of the recommended course of action.

If a decision is made to search an area, examine your office space for strange or suspicious items. No one knows your area as well as you. Do not touch any suspicious items. Some bombs are set to detonate upon movement.

Immediately report any strange or suspicious items to the appropriate authorities.

Should it be necessary to evacuate, follow the above fire evacuation instructions.

Civil Unrest

Specifically for Large Gatherings in Our Region & Beyond (Pertinent to: Sports & Sales Teams)

Civil unrest may occur just about any place at any time there are enough people and a volatile situation. In the event of civil unrest, VSC will follow county protocol and defer to local officials as the authorities and primary communicators on said incident.

The best way to stay safe during these disturbances is to avoid them or evacuate them, as quickly as possible, once you're in the midst of one. Survival can come down to luck and proper planning.

1. **Make preparations in advance.** Should civil instability erupt, especially if you're traveling abroad, you may need to be evacuated. Make an evacuation plan that includes where you can go to be evacuated (usually an embassy or an airport) and where you can go if you are unable to get to that place. Make sure all members of your team know the plan.
 - Know the locations of police stations, hospitals, embassies, and airports in the area.
 - Keep a credit card, a small supply of cash, with your passport. Make sure you know where your passport and other papers you may need are, and make sure that you can easily get to them.
2. **Know before you go.** While riots can happen anywhere, they're most common in places that are experiencing palpable tension or upheaval, where the smallest spark can ignite violence. Before you travel abroad, research conditions in the place you'll be visiting by reading news stories about the area and checking for travel advisories issued by the U.S. Department of State or equivalent agencies. Program both emergency and non-emergency numbers for the areas to which you will be traveling into your phone prior to your travel. If there is a strong possibility of civil unrest, **postpone** your trip.
3. **Pay attention to what's going on around you and get out of an area if warned.** If you're a traveler and local people, police, or consulate staff warns you of the possibility of impending violence, leave the area as quickly as is safely possible.
4. **Avoid large groups of people, especially demonstrations.** You need a lot of people to make a mob, so riots are most common in urban areas. The more people you get together in one place, the larger the chance of a riot becomes. Stay away from demonstrations – peaceful protests can quickly turn violent – and, if the atmosphere is already tense, consider avoiding festivals or other events where people crowd together.
 - If you know civil unrest is occurring, the best thing you can do is stay far away from it. Do not venture into a riot to gawk or to find out what it's about.

- Avoid public transportation, especially bus and train stations. These places may become hopelessly – and dangerously – crowded if there is a threat of impending civil unrest.
- Even airports can become swamped, potentially dangerous places, so it's best to call the airport or your embassy in advance to check on the situation there.
- Secure your home and business if rioting is imminent. Rioting often brings looting and pillaging and the destruction of public and private property. Make sure your doors are locked, and if time permits, board up all your windows. Remove small valuables to a safer place if possible, since determined rioters will get in just about anywhere.

6. Warnings

- During episodes of civil unrest, many people fail to heed warnings to evacuate so that they can protect their homes or businesses. Consider this decision carefully, as it may put you in grave danger. It's important to remember that if looters strike you will likely be outnumbered, and your attackers may be armed. If you can evacuate, it's usually better to do so – your property is not worth your life.

Active Shooter

The purpose of this section is to outline the immediate actions, roles, communication procedures, and recovery processes in the event of an active shooter situation at VSC's Administrative Office, Downtown Sarasota Visitor Center, and/or Venice Visitor Center. This plan is designed to protect staff, volunteers, and visitors while maintaining continuity of operations where feasible and assisting with post-incident recovery.

1. **Definition:** An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined or populated area. These incidents are unpredictable and evolve quickly.

2. **Emergency Procedures**

Immediate Action (Run, Hide, Fight): All employees and volunteers should be trained and empowered to take the following actions in this sequence:

- **RUN:** If there is a safe route, evacuate the premises. Leave belongings behind. Help others escape if possible.
- **HIDE:** If evacuation is not possible, hide out of the shooter's view. Lock doors, silence phones, and remain quiet.
- **FIGHT:** As a last resort, and only if life is in imminent danger, attempt to incapacitate the shooter using improvised weapons or physical force.

3. **Location-Specific Protocols**

- Administrative Office: Lockdown procedures apply. Staff should know the closest exits and shelter-in-place rooms.
- Visitor Centers: Emphasize evacuation for guests while staff follow trained hiding and/or fighting protocols if necessary. Notify law enforcement and incoming visitors if possible.

4. **Notification & Communication**

- Call 911 immediately if safe to do so.
- Notify the President and VSC's Leadership Team as soon as feasible.
- Use internal communication tools (text, Teams, etc.) to alert other team members not on-site.
-

5. **Post-Incident Recovery**

- Medical Aid: Provide emergency assistance and support injured individuals.
- Family Reunification: Designate a location and liaison to support family notification.
- Continuity of Operations: Temporarily relocate affected operations or shift workload to other locations as needed.
- Counseling Services: Arrange for trauma counseling for staff, volunteers, and affected visitors.

- Debriefing & Documentation: Conduct internal review. Update plans and procedures based on lessons learned.

Cyberattack or Power Grid Failure Response

This section equips VSC with the guidance to respond swiftly and consistently during cyber or power crises — protecting visitor safety, operational continuity, and the tourism bureau's reputation.

1. Immediate Actions

- Stay calm and prioritize safety – Ensure your personal safety and that of colleagues before taking other actions.
- Report the incident
 - Cyberattack – VP of Finance & Administration to contact FourWinds immediately via phone or designated emergency number.
 - Power Failure – Notify your supervisor and the VP of Finance & Administration, who will alert building management.
- Disconnect devices – Unplug affected computers or devices from the network/power if safe to do so, to prevent further damage or data loss.

2. Communication Protocol

- Use alternate channels – If email or internal networks are down, switch to pre-designated backup methods (e.g., text/call work phone numbers).
- Follow crisis messaging guidelines – All external communications must be approved by the President/CEO or their designee before release.

3. Continuity of Operations

- Activate backups – Access cloud-based or offline backup files if possible. Leverage SharePoint for the cloud.
- Relocate work – Move to a backup worksite or remote work if conditions allow, with supervisor approval.
- Document the incident – Note the time, nature of the disruption, and actions taken, and share with I.T. provider (FourWinds) and VP of Finance & Administration.

4. After the Incident

- Await all-clear – Do not reconnect devices or resume normal operations until IT or VP of Finance & Administration confirms it's safe to do so.
- Participate in debrief – Share observations and lessons learned to improve future response at the next All Staff Weekly Meeting.