

Branch Disaster Planning

Branch Reopening Checklist

“Lessons Learned”



I. Preparing for Disasters

The Louisiana Bankers Association and Labarre Associates are pleased to provide a Branch Reopening checklist as well as “Lessons Learned” for facility related issues as you prepare for the hurricane season. Sections Include:

Branch Re-Opening Checklist

- Site
- Drive Thru
- Branch
 - Exterior
 - Interior
- Vendors

Lessons Learned

- Preparation
- Supplies
- Generators
 - General
 - Off Road Diesel
 - Portable Generators
 - Natural Gas Generators

This guide will assist you in getting your branches up and running as soon as possible after a disaster.



II. Branch Re-Opening Checklist

1. SITE

- Freestanding, lighted identity signs** – verify power to sign is working and sign is not cracked or scratched (night)
- Wall-mounted identity signs** – verify power to sign is working and sign is not cracked or scratched (night)
- Site circulation and information signs** – verify that they are firmly attached to ground.
- Fences** - Push fences to make sure the supports are not sheared off or split. Check for damage behind bushes.
- Catch basin inlets (holes in curb for drainage)**. Check to ensure the inlet and basin (inside) are not obstructed.
- Visually scan adjacent street for signs of flooding**. Report blocked drainage paths to the authorities.
- Light poles**. Carefully push poles to make sure they are sturdy and bolts are not sheared off.
- Site and Exterior Building Lights** – Pole lights, wall packs, flood lights, ground flood lights (Inspect for operation at night).
- Trees** - Inspect for hanging limbs.
- Chain Saws** - Any employees operating chain saws should have appropriate OSHA training and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (chaps, leather gloves, hard hat with face guard, appropriate vest).
- Avoid downed power lines**. Do not drive over downed lines. Call Power Company to report downed lines.
- Directional Signage** – Verify that all signs are still in place or not blown over. Closely examine signs for dents and damage.

2. DRIVE THRU

- Lane “Open and Closed” and ATM lights**. Switch open/close and on/off (Have someone outside checking operation).
- Drive thru canopy lights** - check at underside of canopy.
- VAC (RTU) Units** – gently push against units to make sure they are still firmly attached. Inspect overhead tubes for cracks and attachment. Check VAC/ RTU unit operation after inspection. Clean if needed.
- Drive Thru Window** – Wash (if needed)
- Drive Thru Structure** – Check (columns/ framing) for signs of damage
- Drive Thru Roof** – Check for signs of damage (missing shingles or portions of the roof, dented metal roofing, drips from underside, punctured flat roof).



Branch Re-Opening Checklist – Facility Related Items

- Underside of Drive Thru Structure** - check for signs of water leaks. Check drive thru lanes for tell-tale drip marks from water leaks that are not visible.
- ATM** – Check Operation and check unit for damage. Clean if needed.
- Night Deposit** - Check interior for signs of water intrusion. Clean if needed.
- Deal Drawer** - Check interior for signs of water intrusion and exterior for damage.

3. BRANCH

A. EXTERIOR

- HVAC Units** - Clear debris from exterior HVAC unit(s) and immediate area. Hose down units to remove straw, mulch and leaves from the side or top of unit. Check for dents and that unit is sitting properly on base and not loose.
- Exterior Walls, Columns, Eaves and Windows** - Check for signs of damage.
- Shingle, Slate and Metal Roofs** – Complete visual inspection from the ground for dents, missing shingles, and other signs of damage. Asphalt shingles that show damaged corners, loss of grit, dents and visible fiberglass threads are likely indicators of failure. Verify that all visible flashing is not damaged. Consult warranty before contacting a roofer for repairs. Photo record of all damage is required.
- Flat Roof** – Visually inspect parapet coping for damage. If there is no apparent water leakage on the interior or underside of the drive-thru, no further action is required. If there is interior water damage, and the roof is accessible, check the roof for blocked drains and scuppers. Inspect the roof for cuts, dents and other problems with the membrane. Remove all limbs and foreign objects from the roof. Only walk in areas designated for foot traffic. Consult warranty before contacting a roofer for repairs. Photo record of all damage is required.
- Gutters and downspouts** – Visually survey gutters and downspouts for signs of damage or blockage.

B. INTERIOR

- Power** – Look at electric meter to determine if there is live power to the building. Spinning wheel indicates power, even if all lights are off. If the surrounding area has power and your building does not, the problem may be a severed connection with the main line. An electrician may be able to troubleshoot your problem and get you up and running sooner than the electric company.
- Breaker Panel** - Check breaker panel for tripped circuit breakers. Reset if needed. Write down indicators of possible loss of power (blinking thermostat, clocks with the wrong time etc.). Relay this information to appropriate departments for equipment recalibration (IT, Security, Bank Ops etc.).
- Ceiling Tiles** –Ceiling tiles should be examined for signs of dampness or water spots. Fiberglass insulation above ceiling tiles should also be checked for moisture. All wet tiles and insulation should be removed from the building immediately and placed in the dumpster. Remember that water often takes a circuitous route from the source.



Branch Re-Opening Checklist – Facility Related Items

- Doors** – Floors at doors should be inspected for signs of wind-driven water intrusion. Use janitor mop and bucket to remove water from all floor surfaces. Pull back wet carpet and install fans to dry out carpet and floor.
- Baseboards** – Check area below drive-thru window and other windows for signs of water intrusion (may be under carpet)
- Window Sills** – Visually inspect for signs of water intrusion (puddles, water stains)
- Interior Air Handling Unit** – Check inside and exterior for water intrusion. Write down description of any noises that may be a sign of problems.
- Thermostats** – Verify settings are programmed correctly. Reprogram if blank or blinking. Coordinate settings with branch manager. Count exterior Heat Pumps and make sure a like number of interior thermostats have been reprogrammed. After checking Exterior Units, turn on each unit and check operation.
- Interior lights** – Check for burned-out bulbs or operation problems.
- Flooring** - Check for signs of water or leaks
- Communication Lines** – Verify that phone, computer and power lines are in operation. Note: security system requires both power and phone connections.
- Plumbing** – Turn on faucets in rest room, break room and janitor’s closet. Turn on exterior hose-bibs. Run water for an extended period, check samples for discoloration. Smell the water for unusual odors. Check that hot water is working. Take appropriate actions (i.e. re-light pilot light on water heater) if needed. Check operation of toilets.

4. VENDORS

- Insurance Company** – Record all expenses, including loss of revenue associated with disaster closure. Have a copy of your policy readily available and report damage noted above to your insurance company. Most insurance companies pay for more than direct damage **only** if you submit a claim.
- Cleaning/ Dumpster** - Contact the cleaning and waste removal vendors to inform them about reopening schedule and verify that service will be restored.
- Security** - Contact Security Vendor with reopening schedule. Phone and power are typically required for operation of the security system. Have cell phone ready and vendor contact information available at re-entry.
- Landscape** – Work with Landscape vendor to restore lost planting beds and removal of downed limbs and trees. At current contract negotiations, insist that you be listed in their priority list for after disaster response. Negotiate a fair rate and response time. Remember that after a disaster, they are focused on a lucrative line of temporary work – tree removal and trimming.
- HVAC** – Make sure someone from your staff is available to meet the contractor at the site. Explain exactly what the problem is during your request for service.
- Mud** – Where there is mud or debris in the parking lot, contact the pressure wash vendor to pressure wash the impacted areas.
- Roofer** – Warranties should be readily accessible before and after the storm. Rely on your architect for advice in this area. Repairs that are not completed as specified in



Branch Re-Opening Checklist – Facility Related Items

the warranty can void the warranty. Typically, slate roofs are the quickest to repair and shingles can be replaced as soon as replacements are located. Asphalt shingle roofs can be patched as soon as they are dry. Flat roofs must be completely dry before repair. If there has been water intrusion, the wet areas must be cut out and replaced. Metal roofs typically take the longest time to repair as materials must be ordered from the factory.



III. Lessons Learned

This section is divided into three Subsections:

- Preparation
- Supplies
- Generators

These are facility-related “Lessons Learned” and it is our intent not to repeat information from national organizations or other readily available checklists.

1. PREPARATION

- Fill all vehicles with gas 3 days prior to an event
- Consider pre-paid gas for employees at a 24-7 outlet that is not open to the general public
- Communication planning (use text messaging when all circuits are busy)
- Branch Re-Opening checklist in hands of designated persons
- Branch Re-Opening plan (develop a “most likely” scenario)
- Have time sheets prepared and payroll ready before the storm hits
- Electrical outlets that plug into car cigarette lighter
- Provide baby-sitting for employees
- Designate a time and place for key personnel to meet and evaluate branches for re-opening. Prepare a press release for delivery to radio and TV stations announcing your re-opening.
- Identify and store GPS coordinates for all locations for use in locating former branch location after a tornado or similar disaster.

2. SUPPLIES

Before a disaster, suppliers like Lowes, Home Depot and Wall Mart may be out of a certain item, but they restock each night and sometimes during the day as they are pulling in supplies, not only from the warehouses but from stores that are not impacted by the storm.

- Keep all disaster supplies in a locked location as they disappear if not locked up.
- Have a supply of “Box” fans for drying out. These are very economical to purchase and store.



Disaster Planning – Lessons Learned

- Store Extension Chords (for the fans) in a secure location.
- Where applicable, develop a supply of 220 V extension cords.
- Develop a stock of Water and MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) for your staff
- Ice Chests
- Supply of Ice for Ice Chests – starting a day or two before the storm
- Flashlights
- Batteries
- Back-up batteries for cell phones
- Car chargers for cell phones (cell phones can be used for text messaging when all circuits are busy after a disaster, as messages are stored in the tower and released between calls).

3. GENERATORS

For information on starting a generator program, contact Labarre Associates for our publication *“How to budget for and launch a generator program.”*

A. GENERAL

- Generators emit toxic fumes – ventilate!
- Have electricians clearly label electrical service to all buildings (phase and voltage) as you may need this information in purchasing a generator in the future.
- Contracts for leased generators should be readily available
- Spec books, helpline telephone number and instructions for all generators should be readily available
- Set up a contract with a fuel re-seller. For off-road diesel and gasoline contact a wholesale fuel supplier. For natural gas generators, have a valve built into the fuel line that will allow switching to propane in case natural gas sources are compromised (this is a very low cost).
- Have a local back-up to your national maintenance contract (usually an electrician specializing in generators).
- Designate a person to manage the generator maintenance and fuel supply
- **Generators need to be exercised with a full building load. Most owners do not understand that the usual weekly tests do not include a full load. Contact Labarre Associates with questions or for more information about this topic.**
- If possible, all generators should be the same size



Disaster Planning – Lessons Learned

- Develop a refueling plan. It is illegal and dangerous to refill gas cans located in the bed of a pick up truck.
- Post procedures for starting up, running and turning off each generator.

B. OFF ROAD DIESEL GENERATORS

- Label Generator “Off-Road-Diesel-Only”
- Label gas cans “Off-Road-Diesel-Only”
- Do not re-start a hot generator. Depending upon size, generators can take up to 30 minutes to “cool down.”
- Do not refuel a running generator
- Clearly label fuel intake
- Prepare a “Run Chart” that calculates how long a generator will run before refueling. Don’t believe the chart and check fuel levels on a regular basis.
- Do not assume that a generator full of old gas will run smoothly or efficiently. Keep fuel levels relatively low throughout the year, and re-fill at the beginning of hurricane season. Keep enough fuel for one day’s operation due to snow storms or tornados during the remainder of the year.

C. PORTABLE GENERATORS

- See Off-Road-Diesel Section (above) for additional information
- Generators emit extreme heat and can kill plants surrounding them or even ignite wood in the vicinity
- Generators should be secured to prevent theft. For trailer-mounted generators remove the tongue, chain the trailer to an immovable object etc.
- For smaller generators, check that all parts are attached before restarting

D. NATURAL GAS GENERATORS

- Do not assume natural gas generators will run automatically. Check operation frequently as natural gas supplies may be disrupted or pressure may be inconsistent.



About the Firm

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