

Can Your Workplace Weather the Storm? 6 Questions to Consider as Hurricane Harvey Makes Landfall

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If weather reports are accurate, by the time it makes landfall, Hurricane Harvey stands to be the first major storm to hit the United States in more than 10 years. Harvey, which as of this writing is a category three storm in the Gulf of Mexico, is expected to make landfall on Texas's central coast late on Friday, August 25, 2017, or Saturday, August 26, 2017.

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From an employment law perspective, employers must act quickly to determine their obligations in a number of contexts. Below are some questions for employers to consider as they anticipate the storm:

How will work responsibilities be covered?

How will employees be contacted in the event of office closings or delayed openings?

Will employees be permitted to work remotely, and, if so, are employees prepared to do so?

In the wake of the storm, employers may need to consider their follow-up wage-and-hour obligations. For example, employers may want to consider the following issues:

What are the requirements for paying exempt employees who missed work?

What are the requirements for paying nonexempt employees who missed work or worked modified schedules?

What are the reporting pay requirements for employees who reported to work but were sent home without working or after working fewer hours than scheduled?

Our article, “[Effective Inclement Weather Policies—Top 10 Factors to Consider](#),” provides a detailed discussion of these and other issues relating to operating in the midst of inclement weather. Hurricane Harvey should serve as a reminder to employers to review their inclement weather policies—or if they don’t have one, to implement a policy that will answer some of these questions for employees. An efficient communication protocol and a set of contingency plans will help employers weather the next storm.

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