

Frequently Asked Questions
Department of Health (DOH), Clean Water Branch (CWB) Recommendations for
Severe Weather Preparedness

The CWB is providing the following recommendations to prepare a construction site or industrial facility for incoming severe storms. Permittees are responsible for ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to reduce or eliminate the chance of pollutants leaving their site even during severe weather events.

Please note that nothing in this document is to be construed as requiring Permittees to place themselves, employees, or other personnel in dangerous or life-threatening situations. Safety and prevention of harm or loss-of-life is to take priority above all else.

For Construction Sites:

1. Secure the construction site by taking the following steps:
 - a. Clear the site of any construction debris or trash that may become mobilized by storm water or high winds. Secure all dumpsters on-site by storing them indoors or securely covering them to prevent stored debris from being mobilized by storm water or high winds. Physically secure the dumpster if there is a concern that the dumpster itself may be mobilized by high winds.
 - b. Inspect the site's Best Management Practices (BMPs) for their condition prior to the storm. Where practical, repair or replace BMPs that are damaged or will otherwise not perform properly during the storm event. Clear any debris or accumulated sediment on any BMP to reduce flooding risk.
 - c. Remove BMPs if they may cause loss of life and property during the severe weather event. For example, if the severe weather includes high winds, remove any non-critical BMPs that may become airborne and pose a risk to property or people. Once conditions improve and safety or property loss is no longer a concern, BMPs must be reinstalled as soon as possible.
 - d. Secure, cover, or remove stockpiles of materials that may become mobilized by either storm water or high winds.
 - e. Secure, cover, or remove any other site materials that may become mobilized by either storm water or high winds. In particular, ensure that all containers are adequately sealed or stored indoors to prevent any spills to the environment.
 - f. Clear any drainage inlets and drainage systems of any debris or built-up sediment to ensure that they will allow adequate storm water flow to reduce the risk of flooding. Remove drain inlet protection after clearing any debris or sediment if it can be reasonably assumed that it would increase the risk of flooding, erosion, or loss of property or life. Once conditions improve and safety, property loss, or erosion is no longer a concern, inlet protection must be reinstalled as soon as possible.
 - g. Temporarily stabilize or cover exposed soil areas at the site (if feasible), to prevent erosion and discharge of sediment to State waters.
2. Implement all relevant emergency preparedness/response procedures in the site's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures.

3. If the construction site does not already have National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit coverage for construction storm water and new work will require permit coverage, please see our general permit FAQs for construction storm water at: <https://health.hawaii.gov/cwb/permitting-faqs/#NPDES-General-Permits>.

For Industrial Facilities:

1. Secure all portions of the facility that will be exposed to the severe weather by taking the following steps:
 - a. Clear the exposed portions of the facility of any debris or trash that may become mobilized by storm water or high winds. Secure all dumpsters on-site by storing them indoors or securely covering them to prevent stored debris from being mobilized by storm water or high winds. Physically secure the dumpster if there is a concern that the dumpster itself may be mobilized by high winds.
 - b. Secure any on-site fuel storage containers to prevent any spills during the severe weather event.
 - c. Inspect the site's Best Management Practices (BMPs) for their condition prior to the storm. Where practical, repair or replace BMPs that are damaged or will otherwise not perform properly during the storm event. Clear any debris or accumulated sediment on any BMP to reduce flooding risk.
 - d. Clear any drainage inlets and drainage systems of any debris or built-up sediment to ensure that they will allow adequate storm water flow to reduce the risk of flooding.
 - e. Secure, cover, or remove stockpiles of materials that may become mobilized by either storm water or high winds.
 - f. Secure, cover, or remove any other exposed materials that may become mobilized by either storm water or high winds.
2. Implement all relevant emergency preparedness/response procedures in the facility's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures.
3. For facilities that have a Conditional "No Exposure" Exclusion (CNEE) or have portions of the facility that must maintain a "No Exposure" condition, inspect all storm-resistant structures to ensure that they will function properly during the severe weather event.