

IATSE Local 478 Weather Related Work Procedures

Revised 4-10-2023

If an eminent weather situation threatens the Gulf Region, IATSE Local 478 procedures for closure is as follows:

*All Local 478 members will be notified by the Local 478 union hall if an evacuation in their area is being considered, and if they will be required to vacate the premises of stages and locations.

* It is up to each production/employer to notify all their crew members/employees of the evacuation procedures and departmental preparations.

* IATSE Local 478 will secure the perimeter of the Local's Office. The security system will be set on emergency mode, access to the office will no longer be possible, all doors and gates will be locked, and flood barriers put in place.

* The phone system and website will be updated with information about when the facility will reopen.

*Re-opening will occur once clearance is given by the City of New Orleans.

* The posted IATSE Local 478 Weather Practices have been prepared using best practices to ensure the safety of our members, and this is provided to all productions with our jurisdiction. Please note it is not contractual and non-enforceable.

* Please contact the Local 478 union hall with any weather related concerns.

Weather Related Resources:

<https://www.spc.noaa.gov/products/watch/>

<https://www.weather.gov/safety/>

Hurricanes

Hurricane Watch – The National Weather Service announces a **Hurricane Watch** when hurricane conditions (sustained winds at or exceeding 74 miles per hour) can be expected in a specific coastal area. The National Weather Service will issue a Hurricane Watch 48 hours before possible landfall.

-Watches

Listen closely to instructions from local officials on TV, radio, cell phones or other computers for instructions from local officials. Evacuate if told to do so.

- **Storm Surge Watch:** There is a possibility of life-threatening inundation from rising water moving inland from the shoreline somewhere within the specified area, generally within 48 hours.
- **Hurricane Watch:** Hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or greater) are possible within your area. Because it may not be safe to prepare for a hurricane once winds reach tropical storm force, The NHC issues hurricane watches 48 hours before it anticipates tropical storm-force winds.
- **Tropical Storm Watch:** Tropical storm conditions (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph) are possible within the specified area within 48 hours. Source www.weather.gov

It is Local 478's strong suggestion that once a Watch is issued, production should cease work by the end of the workday on which the watch is issued. Production should consider ending the workday at the end of the eight (8) hour minimum workday. The day a Watch is announced should be the last workday until the storm has passed. During this last workday, employees can be requested to assist production in securing equipment and locations. At the close of the workday, Local 478 employees (and those working in a Local 478 covered craft) must be released from work until the weather threat has passed. Please consider releasing crew early enough to account for members who have to drive long distances home.

If a Watch is issued prior to the start of a workday Production may choose to not start on that day. Essential personnel may be asked to report to work for a brief period to assist production in securing sets, equipment and locations but it is, as always, to the discretion of the employee to accept the work call.

Hurricane Warning – The National Weather Service issues a **Hurricane Warning** when sustained hurricane force winds of 74 miles an hour or more are expected in an area within 36 hours.

-Warnings

Listen closely to instructions from local officials on TV, radio, cell phones or other computers for instructions from local officials. **Evacuate immediately if told to do so.**

- **Storm Surge Warning:** There is a danger of life-threatening inundation from rising water moving inland from the shoreline somewhere within the specified area, generally within 36 hours. If you are under a storm surge warning, check for evacuation orders from your local officials.
- **Hurricane Warning:** Hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or greater) are expected somewhere within the specified area. NHC issues a hurricane warning 36

hours in advance of tropical storm-force winds to give you time to complete your preparations. All preparations should be complete. Evacuate immediately if so ordered.

- **Tropical Storm Warning:** Tropical storm conditions (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph) are expected within your area within 36 hours.
- **Extreme Wind Warning:** Extreme sustained winds of a major hurricane (115 mph or greater), usually associated with the eyewall, are expected to begin within an hour. Take immediate shelter in the interior portion of a well-built structure.

Source www.weather.gov

Since a Watch always precedes a Warning, Local 478 covered craft employees should have already been released from work and production should have ceased and secured sets and equipment. Production should be in the evacuation process for all personnel. New workdays should never be scheduled once a warning is announced.

For more information regarding hurricane preparedness you may visit the National Weather Service at www.weather.gov/safety/hurricane.

Mandatory Evacuation

If any federal, state or local governmental authority calls for a mandatory evacuation at any time, production as well as construction and office duties in the geographical area of the Mandatory Evacuation must cease within one hour and all personnel shall be dismissed from work immediately, regardless of the current weather conditions at that time. This could pertain to a **Hurricane Watch** or **Warning**. Curfews always accompany a mandatory evacuation order. Productions cannot place employees in a situation where they are violating curfew laws.

Flash Floods

The jurisdiction under Local 478 has experienced severe flooding in the past which was not hurricane related. The rainstorms that produce this type of flooding are at times predictable, but this is not always the case.

www.weather.gov lists:

- **Flash Flood Warning: Take Action!** A Flash Flood Warning is issued when a flash flood is imminent or occurring. If you are in a flood prone area move immediately to high ground. A flash flood is a sudden violent flood that can take from minutes to hours to develop. It is even possible to experience a flash flood in areas not immediately receiving rain.
Flash Flood Warnings are changing to an Impact-Based format to improve public response. [Read the factsheet.](#)
- **Flood Warning: Take Action!** A Flood Warning is issued when the hazardous weather event is imminent or already happening. A Flood Warning is issued when flooding is imminent or occurring.
- **Flood Watch: Be Prepared:** A Flood Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for a specific hazardous weather event to occur. A Flood Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for flooding. It does not mean flooding will occur, but it is possible.
- **Flood Advisory: Be Aware:** An Flood Advisory is issued when a specific weather event that is forecast to occur may become a nuisance. A Flood Advisory is issued when flooding is not expected to be bad enough to issue a warning. However, it may cause significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, it could lead to situations that may threaten life and/or property.

If a **Flash Flood Watch** is issued, production need not cease, but a heightened level of awareness to weather conditions in the production area should be established within production's command chain. Production should begin to identify nearby shelter of sufficient elevation in the event of flooding.

If a **Flood Warning** is issued in the immediate vicinity of production, Production should be prepared to stop at a moment's notice. employees should be directed to a previously identified shelter.

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If flooding begins anywhere within a one mile area of the production location or a **Flood Advisory** is issued for the area within one mile of production then production should cease. Personnel need not be dismissed as this may result in sending employees home and into the path of floodwaters. Personnel may be asked to assist in securing equipment and/or locations as long as other weather hazards such as lightning are not present in the immediate area. All personnel should, in fact, remain on location and be directed to predetermined shelters situated at least three (3) feet above street level.

For more information regarding flash flood preparedness you may visit the National Weather Service at www.weather.gov/safety/flood

Lightning

The National Lightning Safety Institute (NLSI) recommends the suspension of outdoor activities when lightning is within a 6 mile range and further recommends remaining in shelter for 30 minutes after lightning has passed. Lightning range can be detected via commercially available lightning detectors. More often the “5 second rule” is used. Sound travels 1 mile per 5 seconds. To calculate lightning range divide the number of seconds counted from the time a lightning flash is seen by the naked eye until the time the associated thunder clap is heard by the number 5. For example, if the difference between a visible lightning strike and the associated thunder is 15 seconds the lightning strike is approximately 3 miles away. NLSI states that if you can see lightning and hear the associated thunder, lightning is within 6 to 8 miles, and lightning strikes can, indeed, occur 6 to 8 miles out from an electrical storm system. The “When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors” catchphrase is good rule of thumb.

Safer Locations during Thunderstorms and Locations to Avoid

- No place is absolutely safe from the lightning threat, however, some places are safer than others.
- Large enclosed structures (substantially constructed buildings) tend to be much safer than smaller or open structures.
- The risk for lightning injury depends on whether the structure incorporates lightning protection, construction materials used, and the size of the structure (see NFPA 780, Appendix E & H).
- In general, fully enclosed metal vehicles such as cars, trucks, buses, vans, fully enclosed farm vehicles, etc. with the windows rolled up provide good shelter from lightning. Avoid contact with metal or conducting surfaces outside or inside the vehicle.

AVOID being in or near:

High places and open fields, isolated trees, unprotected gazebos, rain or picnic shelters, baseball dugouts, communications towers, flagpoles, light poles, bleachers (metal or wood), metal fences, convertibles, golf carts, water (ocean, lakes, swimming pools, rivers, etc.).

When inside a building **AVOID**:

Use of the telephone, taking a shower, washing your hands, doing dishes, or any contact with conductive surfaces with exposure to the outside such as metal door or window frames, electrical wiring, telephone wiring, cable TV wiring, plumbing, etc.

Source: www.lightningsafety.com

It is Local 478's Strong Suggestion that:

1. If lightning is seen and thunder heard all manned aerial lifts must be lowered to the ground and cease to operate. Unmanned lifts should be secured and all personnel are required to remain at a safe distance from the equipment.
2. If lightning is seen and thunder heard production must direct all but essential staff to shelter.
3. If lightning or related electrical storm activity is within a 6 to 8 mile range of production all outdoor activity must cease and employees must be sheltered until 30 minutes after the last strike in area has occurred.
4. It is recommended that a designated person have access to reliable lightning detector who will monitor any forecasted weather and observe on-site developments to keep all cast and crew informed

For more information on workplace safety as pertains to lightning you may visit the National Lightning Safety Institute's website at <http://www.lightningsafety.com>.

<https://www.weather.gov/media/safety/Lightning-Brochure18.pdf>

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3863.pdf>

Tornados

Tornado Watch – A **Tornado Watch** is issued by the National Weather Service when weather conditions are favorable to the formation of a tornado. Weather such as thunder, electrical storms and/or hail usually precede tornadoes. If a **Tornado Watch** is issued work need not cease but protective shelter should be identified and production should be prepared to cease if weather conditions deteriorate..

Tornado Warning – A **Tornado Warning** is issued when formation of tornadoes is highly possible or if a tornado has been sighted in an area. At this stage all or some of the following could be seen or should be watched for: dark greenish or orange-gray sky color; hail; and large, dark, low-lying, fast moving clouds.

Tornado Watch-Be Prepared **Tornado**
Warning- Take Action.

Tornado Watch: Make a Safety Plan and Communicate with Crew

A **Tornado Watch** is issued by the National Weather Service when weather conditions are favorable to the formation of a tornado. Weather such as thunder, electrical storms and/or hail usually precede tornadoes.

If there is a particularly bad line of storms on the way, production may want to consider letting the crew go for the day to allow them adequate time to get back to their homes or hotels. Let IATSE 478 know what you plan to do.

Tornado Safety Plan:

If a **Tornado Watch** is issued, it is imperative that the production be proactive about making a Safety Plan, as production is responsible for providing a safe working environment. This means adequate indoor protective shelters should be identified and secured for all crew. A car, work truck, trailer, or overhang is not adequate shelter for a tornado like it would be for a lighting delay. Work with the Locations Department to identify and secure indoor shelter (ideally with access to a bathroom) for all on and off set crew. What will you do with large pieces of equipment if weather conditions deteriorate quickly?

If production elects to continue to work, all manned aerial lifts should be lowered to the ground and cease to operate. Unmanned lifts should be secured, other equipment such as lighting fixtures and grip apparatus should be lowered.

All crew should be briefed on production's Tornado Safety Plan as soon as possible --often weather conditions deteriorate rapidly and communications can't be made quick enough in the moment, or cell service goes out completely.

Crew should be briefed through **safety meetings, email, text, AND walkie**. Don't depend on one form of communication to get the Safety Plan out, and remember to include folks out on runs, at basecamp, and working at different locations. Make sure all AD staff and PA's have a written copy of the plan so that they can answer questions. If they can't answer them, they should know who to ask to get additional info. For offset workers, phone and text chains through department heads and stewards will be the most effective. Designate a point person at each location/area to conduct these safety briefings and keep crew updated on weather.

Production should stay in communication with stewards and/or Local 478 directly.

Tornado Warning- Take Action

A **Tornado Warning** is issued when formation of tornadoes is highly possible or if a tornado has been sighted in an area. At this stage all or some of the following could be seen or should be watched for: dark greenish or orange-gray sky color; hail; and large, dark, low-lying, fast moving clouds.

This is the time for all crew members to be notified (**walkie, phone/text, email**) to go their designated shelter.

It is Local 478's strong suggestion that:

1. If a **Tornado Warning** is issued or a tornado is seen in the area, Production must cease immediately and all staff should be directed to shelter.
2. All personnel are required to remain at a safe distance from the equipment while sheltering.
3. Continue to communicate with crew about weather updates and safety needs until the Tornado Warning passes.

After the Weather Passes:

Check in with your crew. Communicate to department heads that they should check with their crew members. If someone has been affected, consider allowing this crew member to leave for the day to handle things. If roads are unpassable to a crew member's home, consider offering them a hotel for the night.

If a tornado has hit a production location or very close to it, work should not be resumed there. Utilize department heads to check on all crew and verify that everyone is uninjured. Crew safety must take priority over gear. If Crew cars are damaged, crew may need transportation to be provided by production. Roads may be unpassable and crew may have to remain in the shelter until emergency crews are able to clear them.

If this worst-case scenario happens, consider taking the following day off to allow the crew to assess any damage and take a mental health day.

Heat Related Illness

Heat and humidity play a huge factor in filming in the Gulf Region, and often times we find ourselves indoors where Air Conditioning is limited. Crew should be aware of warning signs and treatment for Heat Related Illness.

"Most outdoor fatalities, 50% to 70%, occur in the first few days of working in warm or hot environments because the body needs to build a tolerance to the heat gradually over time. The process of building tolerance is called heat acclimatization. Lack of acclimatization represents a major risk factor for fatal outcomes." Source: OSHA.gov

While there is no "cut off" for indoor or outdoor temperatures spelled out by OSHA or other governing bodies, there are recommendations for work/rest and hydration dependent upon Relative Temperature. Production and Crew should be monitoring factors such as workload, rest periods, air flow, shade available, and water intake when determining the safety of cast and crew.

Production should build in periodic breaks for water, rest and shade during high heat conditions. Supervisors should make sure everyone is using the buddy system while working. Cooling tents should be made available to all crew and cast on locations where high heat is expected. Cool water (lower than 59°F) should be made readily available.

In indoor locations, Air Conditioning and ventilation/circulation should be cycled on as much as possible to keep room temperature from reaching excessive level.

<https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat-illness> <https://www.osha.gov/heat/>
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress/heatrelated_illness_firstaid.html
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3154.pdf>
https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/heat_stress.pdf

Communications

In any weather or other emergency situation, communication becomes vitally important. Production should purchase and keep on location and at the production office a National Weather Service weather radio.

Additionally, most vendors of the walkie-talkies that productions typically use can program the Weather Service radio station into the handsets. Make certain your handsets are pre-tuned to the National Weather Service radio frequency for the area you are shooting in. Here is a list of metropolitan areas in Local 478's jurisdiction and the respective radio frequency to tune walkie-talkies or weather radios to:

Louisiana

New Orleans	162.550 MHz
Baton Rouge	162.400 MHz
Lafayette	162.550 MHz
Shreveport	162.475 MHz
Alexandria	162.475 MHz

Mississippi/Alabama

Gulfport	162.400 MHz
Jackson	162.400 MHz
Hattisburg	162.475 MHz
Mobile	162.550 MHz

Resuming Work

Work in any department may resume when the aforementioned weather conditions have passed and the National Weather Service has issued updated weather reports indicating an "all clear."

When a Mandatory Evacuation has been rescinded by the issuing authority personnel may return to the specific area and work may resume.