

# STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING THE MESSAGE TO EMPLOYEES AFTER A NATURAL DISASTER

It's hard to imagine. Apocalyptic destruction. Scarcity of housing. Flattened schools. No clean water. No electricity. No fuel.

Yet, these are the conditions employees can face in their personal lives after a natural disaster strikes. In fact, just trying to find ways to exist and survive can become a full-time job.

As "danger season" approaches for wildfires, hurricanes, and other natural disasters across the U.S., consider these tips to help manage the message if a catastrophe strikes your area and severely impacts your employees.

## THE 8 "ES" TO GUIDE EMPLOYER-TO-EMPLOYEE MESSAGES

1

**Expect** recovery to take time. Some employees may have lost everything and are facing months to repair, rebuild, and recover. Others can't get to work because roads are blocked. And even if roads are clear, there may be no gas to get there because of interrupted supply chains.

2

**Enable** electronic communications. Very often after a catastrophe, text messaging can work even though power, cell service, landlines, and cable are all out. So, activate "call trees" you may have set up in your disaster recovery plan to reach out to all employees electronically, make sure everyone is ok, and offer support.

3

**Empathize** with employees. Let them know that you understand it's a difficult time and reaffirm that they must prioritize their needs and family.

4

**Ease** their minds. On top of the physical devastation, they may be facing, employees may also feel guilty about missing work and worried about losing their jobs... at a time when they need it most. So, reassure them of job security and why they are essential to the team.

In addition, seeing total devastation and lives lost also takes a toll on mental health - even for survivors and those with little or no direct damage. Remind employees of mental health counseling and services through your employee assistance program that can help with the trauma and distress of a disaster.



5

**Extend** deadlines for work-related or administrative duties, such as benefits enrollment, required trainings, retirement plan contributions, and other time-sensitive tasks, at least until the initial chaos and trauma has passed. This way impacted employees have breathing room to prioritize more important decisions.

6

**Enlist** employees who are not directly impacted to assist those who are. That can mean:

- organizing relief efforts
- collecting or donating non-perishable food items, gas, and other basic necessities, and delivering them to those in need
- contributing to employee assistance funds that can be distributed to co-workers who need financial help to recover
- donating unused or unneeded PTO to “banks” so that fellow employees can take the extra time off they may need with pay

7

**Engage** impacted employees on a regular basis so they feel connected to their job. Consider offering modified work schedules or remote arrangements to smooth their eventual return to work.

8

**Explain** insurance claims processes, resources, or general financial support from federal, state, and local agencies, such as FEMA, SBA, the Red Cross, etc. that can help employees get back on their feet as quickly as possible.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW WE CAN HELP YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYEES  
PREPARE AND RECOVER FROM A NATURAL DISASTER, CONTACT US TODAY.

[AHTINS.COM/CONTACT-US/](https://AHTINS.COM/CONTACT-US/)

*This material has been prepared for informational purposes only. BRP Group, Inc. and its affiliates, do not provide tax, legal or accounting advice. Please consult with your own tax, legal or accounting professionals before engaging in any transaction.*

**AHT**  
INSURANCE  
A BALDWIN RISK PARTNER