Using Moisture Meters to Help

Prepare For Hurricane Season

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Hurricane Season Preparation for Distributors

From late May/early June to the end of November, home and business owners have to contend with the dangers of hurricane season. In 2017 alone, "the U.S. suffered more than $200 billion worth of damage from 17 named storms during the season," according to a report by National Geographic.

> *Considering the widespread devastation that hurricanes can cause, it's important for people throughout the U.S. to prepare as thoroughly as they possibly can for hurricane season.*

Hurricane-force winds can strip roof tiles free from homes, send heavy objects flying through windows, and create storm surges that send water far inland. Unprepared homes and offices can be thoroughly ruined from the outside in as flood waters carry pollutants into the structure en masse and hurricane force winds tear open the structure. If a hurricane is severe enough, it can flatten a building entirely.

Considering the widespread devastation that hurricanes can cause, it's important for people throughout the U.S. to prepare as thoroughly as they possibly can for hurricane season. However, in addition to the standard emergency supplies recommended by government agencies, there's one more thing people in hurricane zones should add to their hurricane preparedness checklist: a high-quality moisture meter.

How do moisture meters help people prepare for hurricane season, and how can distributors market their moisture meters as a hurricane preparedness tool?

Why Moisture Meters Are Critical Hurricane Preparedness Tools

A moisture meter can help users better prepare for an oncoming hurricane by letting them identify points of moisture intrusion throughout the structure. Some examples of moisture intrusion sources include:

- ❒ Gaps near window seals and door frames.
- ❒ Leaks in the roof/attic from missing/damaged roof tiles.
- ❒ Cracks in the foundation/exterior wall.

By checking for moisture in these areas, users can identify potential weak points where rainwater or flood water from a hurricane could penetrate the building so they can seal the leaks before they become a problem.

This can help to prevent the incidental damage from relatively minor hurricanes or make the difference between "some" water damage and a ruined structure for larger, more powerful storms.

Choosing a Moisture Meter Type to Stock

Moisture meters come in two basic varieties:

Pin Type Meters

These meters have two (or sometimes more) contact pins that are inserted into building materials to take measurements of moisture content (%MC) using the principle of electrical resistance. The pins are electrodes, and the material between them is used to complete the circuit. Since water conducts electricity, lower resistance means more water and vice versa.

Pinless Meters

These meters use electromagnetic radio waves to "scan" building materials for moisture. Often referred to as nondestructive meters because they don't have to punch pinholes in the material being tested. Requires a large, flat surface to achieve optimum accuracy.

Pin-type meters are generally better at helping users determine the exact depth of a moisture pocket than pinless meters are, and can get readings in irregular surfaces that make getting smooth contact impossible for pinless meters. However, pinless meters can cover large areas faster than pin-type meters, and remove the worry of leaving pinholes in building materials.

Many experts carry both kinds of meters, or specialized 2-in-1 devices that have both pin and pinless moisture measurement capabilities. This way, they get the best of both worlds. Ideally, distributors should stock both kinds of moisture meters so they can meet their customers' preferences.

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It may be necessary to talk to first-time buyers to talk about the pros and cons of both types of moisture meter to help them decide which one they will be able to best employ. It's also important to, for customers who aren't restoration industry professionals, to discuss how moisture meters can be used to identify potential moisture intrusion points in a structure and fix them before a hurricane hits.

Tracking Moisture Intrusion Sources in a Structure

If customers are wondering how they can use a moisture meter to track potential moisture intrusion sources so they can remediate them before a hurricane hits them, here are a couple of tips you can share:

With Pin-Type Meters

There is a method for quickly tracing a moisture intrusion source to its origin point using pin-type meters. This method of tracking a moisture intrusion source requires:

- ❒ A ductile metal nail;
- ❒ An insulated ductile wire with exposed ends; and
- ❒ A pin-type moisture meter.

1 Start by driving the nail into a piece of material that is known to be wet—either because of previous testing or obvious outward signs of moisture.

2 Then, tie the wire to the nail and one of the prongs on the moisture meter.

3 Finally, push the other contact pin into other parts of the affected material and take a reading, repeating until a circle is completed around the nail. If the meter gives a "wet" response, the material is wet between the two points. If the meter gives a "dry" response, the material between the pin and nail isn't in the path of the leak.

Repeating this process a few times can quickly tell a moisture meter user the overall size and probable location of a leak.

With Pinless Meters

In large, flat surfaces, pinless meters can be used to scan a lot of material quickly.

1. Simply press the scanning plate against the material to be tested and take a reading.

2. Then, lift the meter, press it against another section of material, and take another reading.

the user can repeat this process as necessary until they have a complete picture of the material's moisture content.

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Stocking Up On Moisture Meters for Hurricane Season

Moisture meters have obvious applications for restoration efforts following a hurricane or other major moisture intrusion events—which is why many experts in the water damage restoration industry carry multiple moisture meters and thermo-hygrometers wherever they go.

Some home and business owners even use moisture meter readings as proof for their flood insurance damage claims.

After a major hurricane passes through an area, there is little doubt that restoration contractors in the area will have a sudden need for accurate and reliable moisture testing tools. So, stocking up on moisture meters early in the hurricane season so you can service these customers is a good idea. However, you may need more than just moisture meters.

Professional restoration companies might also need key moisture meter accessories, such as specialized electrodes or moisture content standards (MCS). They may also need devices for testing relative humidity (RH) in a structure to verify dry-out progress.

Do you need help finding the right moisture meter to prepare for hurricane season?

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