HVAC Systems Hurricane Preparedness

1. Just before a storm hits is probably not the best time to check on this, but hurricane strapping for your rooftop equipment is paramount to keeping it on the roof where it belongs. Make sure all your mechanical HVAC systems, i.e., RTU’s, exhaust fans, ductwork, etc., are all properly secured per Florida Miami Dade regulations.

2. Check all removable access panels on every piece of equipment mounted on a roof. Ensure all screws are properly inserted, and if not tight, install additional zip screws to maintain a tight fit. This also applies to exhaust fan covers, which can easily fly off with high winds.

3. Turn off the breaker, power down, or cycle off each HVAC or refrigeration system. During a storm, electrical surges are common place, and can result in damage to the system. Single phasing of a 3-phase unit can easily result in burnt windings on motors; or in extreme cases, motor windings or bearing damage to large centrifugal chillers.

4. Remove all items near the HVAC systems that could turn into a projectile. No need to prematurely replace an expensive condenser coil because of something puncturing it during a storm.

5. Inspect the HVAC equipment after the storm, and BEFORE returning power. Water intrusion can easily penetrate a unit and can cause electrical damage if not properly evaluated and dried out.

6. **Cooling Towers:**
   a. Turn off power to the tower.
   b. Secure the drive fan to prevent “wind milling”
   c. Secure air louvers to prevent “flapping”
   d. Remove or tie down any items located on the hot deck.