



Protect Landscaping

From Disasters and Extreme Weather

M

ost management companies have a disaster recovery plan in place for their residents and employees, yet it's the landscaping that often gets left in the dust.

As the frequency of extreme weather situations continues to rise nationwide, it is crucial for owners and managers to properly identify potential hazards that exist on their properties' grounds, and to have a formulated direct-response strategy in place to establish a plan of action for every situation that could occur.

This begins with preventive measures—including identifying landscape elements susceptible to damage—that can help ready a property for a storm. Mapping and monitoring vulnerable features such as trees, branches, shrubs and

BY KEN HUTCHESON

Apartment owners and operators are urged to consider potential hazards on their grounds and develop strategies for keeping buildings and landscaping safe.

Even in the event of a natural disaster, a structured response plan can stabilize the community and prevent property damage, resident injuries and building closures.

powerlines can help staff members to map out more dangerous areas of a property. Awareness of areas that are more susceptible to damage can help bring attention to the danger zones and see that more care is taken in their upkeep.

In the event of severe rainfall or excessive snow melt, flooding can wreak havoc on a property. Property grading should be sufficient to drain the potential water accumulation from inclement weather; however, it is imperative that a professional assess a property to determine its ability to drain water.

Proper grading can save buildings and landscapes from limitless damage that would not only be expensive, but could keep a property closed for a significant length of time after a weather event.

Preventive measures can only go so far, though. Having a clearly defined plan for rapid response and recovery after severe weather is also a necessity. A standard disaster recovery plan should include debris removal, snow and ice management and cutting and removing damaged trees and branches. Other strategies should be tailored to each property's specific needs.

Any community leader knows how difficult it is to make decisions amid a crisis. The best decisions are informed ones, and a pre-written, established plan provides whoever is in charge with a controlled checklist of tasks and actions to be taken—even if a property manager isn't onsite.

Even in the event of a natural disaster, a structured response plan can stabilize the community and prevent property damage,



resident injuries and building closures. It can also alleviate the stress of making important and time-sensitive decisions in the first few hours or days after a disaster strikes, speeding up the recovery process and lessening the extent of long-term damage to the property. ■■

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