



March 17, 2026

March is a great time for digital spring cleaning.

Spring is often the time of year when we open the windows, clear the clutter, and take stock of what has been neglected during the winter months. For businesses, that same mindset should apply to the digital environment. While many organizations think of preparedness in terms of storms, generators, and emergency supplies, true resilience also depends on the health of the systems, records, and communications tools that keep operations moving when disruptions occur. That makes March a good time for a little digital spring cleaning.

Digital spring cleaning does not need to be intimidating. In fact, some of the most important improvements come from small blocks of dedicated time focused on the overall health of our digital systems. A few intentional steps now can make daily operations run more smoothly and can also reduce confusion and disruption when the skies turn gray. Here are five easy tips to help your organization get started.

1. Review user accounts and access permissions

One of the simplest but most important steps is to make sure your user accounts match your current workforce. This is a good time for Human Resources and Information Technology to sit down together and verify that active user accounts align with current payroll records and staffing rosters. Former employees, temporary staff, vendors, or contractors should not continue to have access to systems they no longer need. This is especially important for email, shared drives, financial systems, and other critical areas. Access control is one of those basic housekeeping tasks that is easy to overlook, but it plays a major role in both cybersecurity and continuity.

2. Use daylight saving time as a reminder to update passwords and security settings

For years, many people have used daylight saving time as a reminder to change smoke detector batteries or complete other routine safety tasks around the home. Businesses can use that same seasonal marker as a reminder to review passwords and strengthen account security. This may be a good time to update passwords for key accounts, verify password management practices, and review multi-factor authentication settings. Even if your organization already uses strong password policies, a regular checkpoint helps ensure that security habits do not become stale or inconsistent over time.

3. Verify backups and make sure recovery actually works

Backing up data is important, but simply assuming that backups are working is not enough. Spring is a good time to have your Information Technology staff or managed service provider confirm that backups are being completed successfully and that files can actually be restored when needed. That last step is critical. A backup that cannot be recovered is not much help during an emergency. Whether the threat is a severe weather event, equipment failure, accidental deletion, or a cyber incident, it is far better to discover and correct backup issues when operations are calm rather than during a response.

4. Make sure devices and software are fully updated

Digital preparedness is not limited to desktop computers. Businesses rely on laptops, tablets, smart phones, routers, printers, and a range of connected devices to keep operations moving. If these systems are out of date, they can become weak points in both performance and security. Take time this spring to confirm that operating systems, business software, mobile devices, and network equipment are all current and patched as required. These updates are sometimes delayed because they seem inconvenient, but staying current is one of the easiest ways to reduce preventable problems.

5. Clean up your contact lists and communication tools

When was the last time you really looked at the contacts stored in your phone, email system, or emergency notification list? Outdated contact information may seem like a small issue until the moment you urgently need to reach someone. This is a good opportunity to review employee contact rosters, vendor lists, emergency notification groups, and even your own phone contacts. Remove what is no longer needed, update what has changed, and make sure the right people can be reached quickly when it matters most. Good communication depends on good information.

Digital spring cleaning does not require an all day project or a complete overhaul. As little as 30 minutes at a time, spread over several weeks, can make a meaningful difference. Small efforts taken now can improve efficiency, strengthen security, and support continuity when spring showers or stronger storms begin to affect normal operations.

Preparedness is not only about what we put on shelves or store in a supply room. It is also about the systems we maintain, the records we protect, and the communication tools we depend on every day. A little digital spring cleaning this March can help ensure that your business is ready to respond, adapt, and recover when disruption comes.

Jim



James 'Jim' Williams
Public-Private Partnership Operations Officer
LABEOC at the NIMSAT Institute
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
james.williams@louisiana.edu
[337.482.0633](tel:337.482.0633)

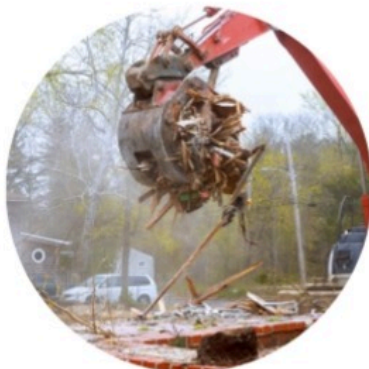
Register for the 2026 GOHSEP Academy Spring Courses



March 18 - 19
Evacuation, Sheltering, and
Re-entry



March 25 - 26
Stronger Standards, Safer
Homes



April 1-2
Public Assistance – Debris
Removal



April 29-30
Hazard Mitigation and
Assistance Grants

The [Governor's Office of Homeland and Emergency Preparedness \(GOHSEP\)](#) Academy is offered to the public at no cost. The GOHSEP Academy partners with the [University of Louisiana at Lafayette](#) and the [Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Association](#) to provide classes in Abdalla Hall through the NIMSAT Institute, an emergency preparedness research center on campus.

The courses consist of varying topics, facilitating refinement in processes critical for community efficiency and resiliency. We encourage you to share these upcoming opportunities with the appropriate partners and stakeholders to maintain and build capabilities within your communities. Make your reservations as soon as possible. All courses will be available in the STEMS portal and are being added monthly.

For any cancellations, please get in touch with Trevis Thompson at Trevis.Thompson@la.gov.

[Register on GOHSEP STEMS](#)

1. March 18-19, 2026 - [Evacuation, Sheltering and Re-entry](#)
2. March 25-26, 2026 - [Stronger Standards, Safer Homes](#)
3. April 1-2, 2026 - [Public Assistance - Debris Removal](#)
4. April 29-30, 2026 - [Hazard Mitigation and Assistance Grants](#)

[Register here](#)

Register for the Louisiana Emergency Management Conference (LEMC)



S A V E T H E D A T E

2026
LEMC
CONFERENCE

MAY 4-7, 2026

**GOLDEN NUGGET HOTEL & CASINO
LAKE CHARLES, LA**

**THE PREMIER CONFERENCE FOR
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS**

The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) and the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Association (LEPA) will co-host the 2026 Louisiana Emergency Management Conference to be held in Lake Charles, Louisiana on May 4 - 7, 2026.

[Learn more about the conference](#)

Do you need help with your government contracts?

The Louisiana APEX Accelerator can help!



The LA APEX Accelerator provides specialized and professional procurement technical assistance to Louisiana businesses who are actively seeking and/or performing on contracts and subcontracts with the U.S. Department of Defense and other federal, state and local governments.

Our work with both small and large businesses gives the LA APEX Accelerator the opportunity to make a difference in the economy of Louisiana. Being able to work one on one with the companies, to assist them in marketing to government agencies, preparing proposals, and resolving problems/issues that arise in the contracting process, keeps our counselors energized and excited.

As a result of assistance provided by the LA APEX Accelerator, clients have received more than \$8.6 billion in government contract awards since LA APEX Accelerator was founded.

537 Cajundome Boulevard
Lafayette, LA 70506
337-482-6422 (Main)
800-206-3545 (Toll Free)
Website: apex.louisiana.edu
Email: la-apex@louisiana.edu

Quick Links

[Helpful Links](#)



[Latest News](#)



[Planning](#)



[Register with the LABEOC Network](#)



Follow us for the latest news!