



CASE STUDY

2018
Hurricane
Season

Atlas Fuels The Weather Channel Crews in Disaster Zones, Keeping News Feeds Live

When a hurricane strikes, most people do what it takes to avoid the storm. Not the reporters and field crews at The Weather Channel: To deliver real-time news about severe weather and its impact, reporters, camera operators, satellite trucks and news-gathering vehicles head into the thick of things.

During these severe weather events, access to power and fuel can be nonexistent. When power lines are down and local gas stations have been evacuated, news teams need a unique solution to stay on the air and ensure their vehicles have enough fuel to drive out of harm's way.

In the Weather Channel's case, a partnership with Atlas Oil provided the resources to keep their operations running 24/7. This year, Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael wreaked devastating damage to the southeastern United States. The Weather Channel's crew was able to provide live on-site coverage from Mexico Beach, Panama City Beach, Port St. Joe, and other Florida locations before, during and after the storms.



CASE STUDY

2018 Hurricane Season

P2

Emergency Fueling

ATLAS SERVICES

Multiple Mission Critical Industries During Storms.

Healthcare, Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Surgery Centers, Datacenters, Server Storage, IT Warehousing, Cloud Storage, Cell Towers, Communications, Telecom, Head End Sites, Big Box, Food Storage, Reefer Trucks, Retail, Government, City, County, State, Federal, Insurance, Financial Institutions, Banking, Property Management, Credit Unions

“Our crews are out there in very tough conditions – there’s a lack of food, a lack of hot water, and a lack of sleep,” said John Thayer, director of satellite broadcast operations for The Weather Channel. “On top of that, they have to worry about where to get fuel, whether they can drive safely to get it, and how to keep the vehicles running. With Atlas Oil, they didn’t need to worry about those things. During Florence and Michael, we could call them and say ‘we need fuel,’ and they brought it to us.”

John Thayer | Director of Satellite Broadcast Operations – The Weather Channel

The Weather Channel required two types of fuel to achieve reliable operation and transportation: Diesel fuel to power its satellite trucks’ onboard generators, and regular fuel so that its vehicles could travel. Atlas Oil’s ability to respond instantly and provide both resources required extensive planning informed by years of experience.



Paul Barnard, emergency operations manager for Atlas Oil’s Emergency Services division and a U.S. Air Force veteran, worked for more than a decade managing fuel facilities in Afghanistan and Iraq. During Florence and Michael, Barnard managed day-to-day fueling operations, tracking weather situations that would put the team’s safety at risk and ensuring The Weather Channel’s fuel supply remained steady.

“Even in places where there’s a ton of fuel, the general populace can exhaust every bit of fuel during a hurricane,” Barnard says. “When Atlas dedicates fuel services, we guarantee fuel support in very challenging areas. The hundreds of assets we manage across the U.S. give us an advantage. We can bring fuel in from other areas and re-direct the fuel supply we have at hundreds of terminals across the country when the fuel is exhausted on the local level.”

Paul Barnard, Manager of Operations / Emergency Fuel Services – Atlas Oil Company

While every natural disaster presents its own set of unique challenges and surprises, Barnard says his team undergoes extensive preparations to avoid Mother Nature’s worst behavior. In addition to devising a comprehensive plan based on each Atlas customer’s fueling needs and fuel consumption -- sometimes more than 100,000 gallons per day -- Barnard and his team work with real-time information to assess hazards, rerouting options and potential safe zones.



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“We know exactly the areas we shouldn’t be in, but we want to be as close to the action as possible,” Barnard said. “Those are the safe areas or staging areas. We never want to put our guys in harm’s way. One example is the situation we had in Panama City. There were winds between 80 and 100mph, and that’s where we don’t want our assets. We put them in a staging area or close to a hotel where there’s lower risk, then bring them in once it’s deemed safe.”

Paul Barnard, Manager of Operations / Emergency Fuel Services – Atlas Oil Company

During a weather event, he uses FEMA’s real-time dashboard and constant communication with his drivers -- often using satellite phones -- to stay on top of road conditions. During Hurricane Michael, Atlas Oil also had a brand-new vehicle on hand to help The Weather Channel remain operational throughout the storm.



“With the Weather Channel, we deployed our brand-new stormproof truck,” Barnard explained. “It had just come off the assembly line, and it was something our director [Jayme Oyen] designed himself. It’s a custom-built tough rig. It has multi-product capability and is set up for accessing extremely challenging environments including high water crossings utilizing the winch and elevated air intake along with a suspension lift and aggressive off-road tires.”

Paul Barnard, Manager of Operations / Emergency Fuel Services – Atlas Oil Company

That one-of-a-kind truck helped The Weather Channel broadcast live throughout the hurricane, shuttling fuel from safe zones to their trucks as needed. This was The Weather Channel’s first year working with Atlas Oil during hurricane season, and the Atlas team’s expertise and reliability shone through.

“Atlas provided a lot of relief to us,” Thayer said. “We had fewer people driving around in bad conditions. We were on location for Michael for two weeks, and they had local fuel tanks supplying their smaller trucks, keeping them fueled so that they could be shuttled to us. There was never a worry about an interruption of operations. There was never a concern about running out of fuel, or about Atlas running out of fuel. They had everything buttoned up very nicely.”

John Thayer, Director of Satellite Broadcast Operations – The Weather Channel

Schedule an Emergency Fueling Consultation
800.878.2000