

Business Interruption Preparedness / Recovery

Don't let a disaster kick you and your business down. Follow these five steps to ensure business continuity during weather-related business disruptions:

1. Do a risk assessment.

What are potential threats to your business because of your immediate environment? Are you on the 10th story of a 20-story building, or are you in your own single-floor facility? Do your neighbors work with hazardous materials? Knowing your environment is the first step in helping prioritize the essential elements of your plan.

2. Make a communications plan.

Communication is key during a business disruption incident. Set up a notification system: reroute calls, establish a hotline, post updates on your website, set up automated text messaging and email systems to keep people informed. Furthermore, encourage two-way communication tools like Facebook and Twitter to facilitate communication.

3. Do an assessment of your key partners and vendors.

Do your vendors have a disaster plan in place? Who would be a backup to the important partners you work with? Establish an account with alternate suppliers of components that are vital to your product, just in case.

4. Make sure you have strategies for working in another facility.

Identify in advance alternative office space should your group need to relocate. If your company doesn't have a secondary facility, seek out a friend's business or another group in your business association that you can share resources with.

5. Practice the plan.

Spend some time running through different variations of how a disaster could play out. The objective is to identify holes in the practice phase to find out where your business needs improvements, and familiarize employees with the plan. Taking the time to work out kinks during a trial run better ensures operations will run more smoothly when a really disruption occurs.

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