

Simplified Business Continuity Planning Guide

Provided by:
preferred 
group

You need a plan.

No matter the size or location of your business, you have a responsibility to your customers, employees, and stakeholders to continue business operations throughout and following a disaster. You should not wait until disaster strikes to decide how you are going to continue. No business is too big or too small to have a plan.

Planning does not have to be difficult or require a large amount of time. You can create a meaningful business continuity plan in as little as one day.

Why plan?

History has shown that businesses without a disaster recovery plan take much longer to recover, and many do not survive at all. Robust new technology offers tools to protect data and recover businesses faster and simpler than ever before, but they are not enough. Plans are required to make sure you and your employees are available and know what to do.

We have come up with a simple and quick method to develop tools you can rely on to prepare yourself for survival. We have engaged in business continuity planning to streamline the steps. We have tested the process in our business and we now have faith that the short time we spent focused on planning will result in a much smoother and effective response to a disaster.

You can't wait, because disasters don't wait.

Spend a few hours on this now. You will greatly increase the chances of your business surviving a disaster.

Your plan must be tested.

Some things you didn't anticipate are likely to show up only when you stress your system.

A live test should identify areas you need to fix or shore up to prepare for a real disaster.

The time to test your system is now, before a disaster, not during one.

Philosophy

1. Focus on the most critical things – people, facilities, and operations.
2. Prevent business interruptions whenever possible.
3. Have a plan to address people, facilities, and operations when interruptions occur.
4. Utilize everyday tools whenever possible.

People

SAFETY IS FIRST. No exceptions. Employees need to be educated that they are NEVER to place themselves in danger for the company. You should have office safety procedures that include evacuation & sheltering plans based on likely risks..

Facilities

Inform your employees to stay at home, or what site to go to, if they cannot get to the office. Test work-from-home to make sure it meets the needs of your company and service delivery. Identify alternate facilities should yours be unavailable. Have 7x24 contact information for your facility, and any alternate sites- off-site and with multiple managers.

Operations

- Plan for temporary operations by having critical forms and reference information off-site, with multiple managers.
- Plan to function at limited capacity, to focus only on critical business and customer's needs, with limited staff.
- Plan to work for a time without your computer systems, using manual processes and forms to gather information to be input when systems are back up.
- Be able to access calendars and customer contact info even if computer servers are down.
- Have multiple Internet providers, in case one fails.
- Utilize and test an off-site recovery service to protect your data, server images, and critical applications.
- Test restores to ensure they will work in an emergency.

Technology

Before selecting a solution you need to determine your tolerance for data loss and downtime.

Two determining factors - Restore Point Objective (RPO) and the Restore Time Objective (RTO)

RPO is your tolerance for how much data you can afford to lose.

RTO is your tolerance for how long you can be down.

There are many technology products and services that promote themselves as business continuity solutions. With virtualization and high-bandwidth Internet connections it is easy to move large amounts of data and server images to off-site locations. However, using our definition that business continuity requires ongoing critical operations, many of these are quickly eliminated when you consider the dynamics of a disaster.

- a. Off-site tapes & Offsite electronic data-only protection**— Tapes have proven to be unreliable and require the right hardware and software to recover. Electronic data protection is popular because it is scalable and requires little manual intervention. However, files can be large and can take days to restore. Even with this critical information off-site, it can take days or weeks to assemble all the hardware and software and restore the data needed to recover critical business operations. Data-only protection is not Business Continuity.
- b. Off-site data and server images**— Better than just data, these files can help you recover data and servers, even to different hardware. Because these files can be very large and impractical to restore across the Internet, services often offer to save the files to a hard drive and ship it to you. This is not always reliable because disasters often interrupt delivery services. Also, you must have server hardware and your application programs and network infrastructure in-place to use the data and server images. If your disaster has damaged your facility or it cannot be accessed, having a hard drive with your data and server images can still take days to recover.
- c. Off-site data, server images, and application programs**— These solutions provide everything needed to recover, if the recovery can take place into the vendor's technology. If the vendor's strategy is to save everything to a hard drive and ship it to you, it can take days before the drive arrives and the recovery can take place. Business Continuity can only be accomplished if the data, server images, and applications can be recovered into the vendor's infrastructure and accessed securely through an Internet connection.
- d. Redundant Servers/Applications/Infrastructure in Multiple Locations** — While the most costly solution, having duplicate equipment in multiple locations, managed by automatic replication software that can duplicate each transaction as it happens, provides the shortest time to recovery. Users simply need to be re-directed to the alternate site so that operations can continue with minimal downtime.

The most critical Business Continuity considerations you need to understand.

RISKS

First you need to protect lives, and then you can focus on your business. All businesses share common risks of fire, equipment failure, hazardous materials incidents and illnesses that can interrupt normal business operations. All efforts should be made to minimize both the possibility and impact of these risks.

Depending on your location, you may be in the path of severe natural risks including hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornados. You need to prepare for these risks, understand how to properly respond, educate your employees and run periodic drills so they don't panic when an incident occurs.

INSURANCE

You must have adequate insurance to ensure your business survives a disaster. Basic coverage may cover the costs of replacing facilities and equipment, but is not enough to ensure your organization's survival.

You need Business Income insurance to cover both lost profits and the costs you will incur to continue to run your business while you rebuild. Business Income insurance may pay for your relocation to temporary quarters, office rental, equipment rental, server and data recovery, and reimburse you for lost profits. Business insurance policies may pay for water damage from burst pipes, but will not pay for flood damage caused by natural disasters. You will need separate flood insurance to cover your losses.

Review your insurance policy with your agent, so you both understand your risks and potential losses and recovery costs. Do this now to be sure your coverage will help ensure the survival of your business.

AWARENESS & TRAINING

This won't cost anything, but can be the key to helping your business become more resilient to survive a disaster. You can ensure that your most important resource—your PEOPLE—are available during and immediately after a disaster to keep your business alive. Encourage them to make a plan for their families, and work with them to understand your plan. Conduct office drills so they know how to respond.

YOU SHOULDN'T WAIT

Attached are simple forms and checklists for you to use to build your plan. Copy and paste them into separate documents and distribute. It won't take long, it won't cost much, but it can have a HUGE payoff.

Disaster Planning Checklist

- Create Teams who will plan and respond to disasters.
 - Depending on the size of your organization, members of the teams may overlap.
 - Remember that a person can only be in one place at a time.
 - Plan for the possibility that key people may not be available when disaster strikes.
 - Typical teams include Corporate Management; Location/Facility Management; Human Resources Recovery; IT Recovery; Accounting; Service Delivery / Operations
- Prioritize business functions for recovery.
 - Office closure, evacuation, return-to-work.
 - For employee safety, including awareness & training.
 - Store equipment, materials, and forms in multiple locations.
 - Pay employees and allow PTO if sent home, if office is closed, if activities are reduced.
 - Give response assignments, to determine roles and responsibilities prior to a disaster.
- Provide employees with emergency policies & requirements.
- Maintain records of emergency response training.
- Require employees to provide personal contact information outside of your network so you can communicate if your systems are down.
- Encourage employees to sign up for Reverse-911 (if available) so you are alerted to local disasters.
- Complete and update a Facility Profile for each location & distribute to managers.
- Have a tested plan to re-direct your business phone number to cell phones or alternate office locations.
- Document evacuation information including nearby and distant assembly points. Educate employees & conduct drills.
- Document plans for alternative operations, & distribute to managers.
- Have the plan reviewed by someone who understands disasters.
- Have a kit containing key forms (paper service orders, time sheets, checks, etc.) in alternate office locations.
- Test your plan by working from home or from an alternate site. (Consider the diminished capabilities of home Internet and cell phone services during a disaster).
- Prevent outages with redundant equipment whenever possible.
- Store confidential information on **encrypted** thumb drives and SD cards.
- Identify tornado shelter, inform employees.
- Maintain current list of employee emergency contact info & distribute to managers. Update and distribute as needed.
- Plan to run payroll manually if systems are down, from off-site if necessary
- Have critical vendor/partner contact information available at the office and off-site.
- Maintain parts for quick resolution of equipment failures.
- Document critical systems and processes in case key employees are not available.
- Maintain supplies of plywood, sandbags, duct tape, to prepare facility for wind & water.
- Mark shut-offs and make sure any required tools are nearby.
- Train location managers to properly shut down utilities and maintain financial records at each office.
- Prepare to perform accounting functions even if systems are down.
- Provide paper forms for record keeping and data for input when electronic systems are recovered.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR OFFICE CLOSURE DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR UNINHABITABLE FACILITIES

Our offices will be closed only at the direction of the owner or a senior manager.

Offices will be open during normal business hours unless closure is specifically directed by an owner or senior manager for purposes of protecting the safety and health of employees and/or the public. The only exception to this policy is in the event of a state of emergency declared by properly-empowered authorities (e.g. police or fire officials). In such events, employees are to follow the direction of such authorities.

Inclement Weather

Management will monitor weather conditions and recommend when it is in the best interest to declare an office closure, to delay the opening of the office, or to allow for the staggered release of employees.

Once a final decision is made regarding a closure, an announcement will be made declaring that the office is closed, the time the closure takes effect and the anticipated duration of the closure. Notification of employees is normally done through cell phones and/or electronic mail.

A staggered release is not an official office closure, and every effort should be made to maintain service within normal office hours.

Uninhabitable Office Conditions

Management is to be notified of uninhabitable office conditions which may include but are not limited to:

- very low or very high office temperatures;
- excessive noise;
- lack of running water;
- lack of available restroom facilities, etc.
- other impacts from a natural disaster such as a earthquake, flood, volcanic eruption, etc.

Management will determine when it is in the best interest of the company to declare an office closure. Prior to declaring any office closure due to uninhabitable office conditions, the expected duration of the condition will be considered in addition to the availability of an alternate worksite.

All employees who are normally scheduled to work are expected to be ready, willing and able to return to work upon direction to do so; immediate supervisors should maintain a list of contact numbers.

When the office is closed, permanent full-time employees not on leave initiated prior to the closure will be compensated for scheduled work time.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR SAFETY INCLUDING AWARENESS & TRAINING

(Company) is sincerely interested in the safety and well-being of our employees. The (Company) will make every effort to keep the office equipment in excellent condition and make sure that all safety devices are working properly.

Employees are never to place themselves or anyone else in danger. Dangerous situations are to be avoided, and reported to Management.

If, in spite of our efforts to ensure safe working conditions, an employee has an accident or becomes ill on the job, it should be reported to the manager immediately. They will see that prompt medical attention is provided.

Periodic safety communications will be distributed, and meetings will be held to discuss safety. Participation is mandatory unless you are specifically excluded by a manager.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

(Company) is sincerely interested in maintaining its reputation by providing consistent information that has authorized by Management.

1. Only the company president or his specific designee may speak to the media or provide written information to the media or outside entity, with the sole exception of information required by a government or law enforcement agency and compelled by subpoena.
2. Employees are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement as a condition of employment.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY

(Company) is sincerely interested in recovering its critical business operations as quickly as safely possible during and immediately following a disaster.

The (Company) will make every effort to have a current written business continuity plan, defining the strategies and tactics that will be used to recover the business.

1. The business continuity plan is to be reviewed at least annually.
2. Material changes to the business, including changed processes, are to be reviewed and modified in the plan as needed.
3. Critical equipment, materials, and forms are to be stored in multiple locations as determined by Management.
4. Response teams will be identified and are to report to their assigned duties when alerted.
5. Non-essential personnel, as determined by Management, are to remain willing and able to return to work upon direction to do so.
6. Personnel will be compensated at the discretion of management based on the nature and duration of the emergency.

Notification Outline

When notified by the Emergency Management Team that the Business Resumption Plan (BRP) has been activated, the team leader or alternate should record the following information that will be passed along to department personnel:

Brief description of the problem: _____

Location of the Emergency Operations Center: _____

Phone number to contact the Emergency Operations Center: _____

Any immediate support requested by the Emergency Management Team: _____

Whether or not the facility can be entered: **Yes ()** **No ()**

If the facility cannot be entered, the location that the team should use for a work area or meeting place:

Notification Procedure

The team leader, alternate or assigned individual upon activation of the Business Resumption Plan will contact team personnel using the following procedure:

Place phone call and say, "May I speak with (individual)?"

1. If available, provide the information you called to convey.

- No public statements about the situation.
- Remind the person not to call co-workers (unless instructed to) and to advise their family not to call other employees.
 - Record the information in the contact status column.

2. If not available, say, "Where may I reach (individual)?"

- If at any location other than the data center, get the phone number. Call the other location and providing the information you wanted to convey.
 - If the individual was working at the affected site, indicate that you will reach the individual there. DO NOT discuss the disaster with the person answering the phone.
 - Immediately notify the Emergency Operations Center.
 - Record the information in the contact status column.

3. If contact is made with an answering machine: Make no statement regarding the situation.

- Provide the phone number to call at Emergency Operations Center; ask that the employee make contact at that number as soon as possible.
 - Record the information in the contact status column.

4. If no answer:

- Record the information in the contact status column.

5. If no answer and the individual has a beeper:

- Place a call to the beeper number.
- Enter the number of the Emergency Operations Center for the individual to call.
- Record the information in the contact status column.

Notification Call List

Using the team member contact list in the front of the plan, the team leader, alternate or assigned individual should convey the following information when contacting the team personnel:

- **Brief description of the problem.**
- **Location of the Emergency Operations Center and / or the Business Recovery Site**
- **Phone number of the Emergency Operations Center.**
- **Immediate actions to be taken.**
- **Whether or not the facility can be entered.**
- **Location and time the team should meet.**
- **All team members should carry photo identification with them at all times and be prepared to show it to security or local authorities.**
- **Instruct everyone notified not to make any statements to the media.**

All callers should record status of everyone they call, noting the time the call was placed and whether the person was contacted. Make a reasonable number of attempts if the phone was busy or there was no answer. Forward the completed list to the EOC and the staff will continue to attempt to contact team members.

FACILITY PROFILE

Company

Physical Street Address

City

State

Zip

Main Phone Number

Emergency Phone Number

Company Emergency Contact

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Work E-mail

Personal E-mail

Alternate Emergency Contact

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Work E-mail

Personal E-mail

Own/Rent

Construction (brick, block, wood, etc.)

Building Type (free-standing, row)

Landlord

Emergency Contact

Emergency Contact #

UTILITIES/CRITICAL SERVICES

Electric Utility

Account #

Emergency Contact #

Authorized Callers

Code/Passwords

Gas Utility

Account #

Emergency Contact #

Authorized Callers

Code/Passwords

Phone Carrier #1

Account #

Emergency Contact #

Authorized Callers

Code/Passwords

Phone Carrier #2

Account #

Emergency Contact #

Authorized Callers

Code/Passwords

Internet Provider #1

Account #

Emergency Contact #

Authorized Callers

Code/Passwords

Internet Provider #2

Account #

Emergency Contact #

Authorized Callers

Code/Passwords

Alarm Company

Account #

Emergency Contact #

Authorized Callers

Code/Passwords

Generator Fuel Provider

Account #

Emergency Contact #

Authorized Callers

Code/Passwords

EMERGENCY SERVICES (DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES)

Fire Department

Non-Emergency Contact #

Ambulance

Non-Emergency Contact #

Police

Non-Emergency Contact #

INSURANCE

Company

Policy Number

Emergency Contact #

OTHER KEY CONTACTS

Company/Name

Emergency Contact #

Service Provided

Company/Name

Emergency Contact #

Service Provided

LOCAL HAZARDS (within 3 miles) State/Interstate Highway Manufacturing Plant Railroad Tracks Chemical Storage

COMMENTS

Emergency Contact Information

Your Name _____

Home Address _____

Local Family or Friend Contact

Name _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Cell Phone Carrier (Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, etc.) _____

Business E-Mail _____

Personal E-mail _____

Relationship _____

Out of State Family or Friend Contact

Name _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Business E-Mail _____

Personal E-mail _____

Relationship _____

Will you need any special assistance in an evacuation? YES NO

Do you have any of the following skills that might be helpful in an emergency?

EMT

First Aid

Volunteer Firefighter

Volunteer Ambulance

Ham Radio Operator

Past Military Training

Active Military Reserve

Red Cross/ CERT/
Salvation Army
Disaster Training