

Small Business Disaster Preparedness Checklist

Not sure how to begin preparing your business for disaster recovery?
Perhaps this checklist can help.

1.	RISK ASSESSMENT	✓
	Analyzing possible natural and human caused disasters and prioritizing them in the likelihood of such an event occurring in your area will help you better prepare for any threat on your business. Disasters can come in many forms and sizes, so it is important to not only focus on major catastrophic events. An effective Disaster Recovery Plan is well thought out and includes an action plan that allows the business to deal with all types of situations and degree of severity from short term outages and disruptions to long term recovery operations.	
2.	ALTERNATE LOCATION	
	If at all possible, plan for the use of a secondary location to operate your business during a disruption.	
3.	SAFETY / EMPLOYEES	
	Remember, safety first. Ensure safety measures are in place to keep employees and patrons safe. Create an evacuation plan, making sure to identify evacuation routes and a meet up location. Have periodic drills to test the plan.	
	Keep employees involved and prepared. Have a step by step plan and ensure everyone knows the Disaster Recovery Plan and how to follow through with procedures.	
	Have an evacuation plan and an emergency plan for “Shelter-in-Place”. Employees and patrons may unexpectedly need to stay on the premises. A business should have an emergency kit on hand with enough provisions and supplies to last 72 hours. <small>(A resource link has been provided on our disaster recovery page of our website for your convenience).</small>	
	Have a first aid kit on site and ensure the kit is replenished on a regular basis.	
4.	COMMUNICATIONS	
	Prepare an <i>employee</i> contact list as well as a contact list of essential suppliers and key customers. Keep a copy off-site and keep it current. It is also be a good idea to have a list of alternative vendors / suppliers in case you are unable to use your main supply chain.	
	Prepare an <i>emergency</i> contact list including companies you may need to contact such as insurance, utilities, etc. – include any detailed information such as an account # or access code that you may need.	
	Plan to use of these lists in different modes of communication (telephone, texting, email, etc.). Internet access may be limited or down completely.	

5.	PROTECTING DATA	
	Perform regular back-ups if not using web-based data storage. Since back-ups can be damaged or destroyed in the event of a disaster, store a secondary back-up that is regularly updated at an off-site location so files can be easily accessible.	
	Know all your passwords and access codes. If you must, document and store them safely off-site. Make sure designated employees also have access to all required data.	
	List all hardware serial numbers and software key codes. Keep an off-site copy.	
6.	IMPORTANT BUSINESS RECORDS	
	Keep all hard copies of important business documents in a safe secure location. Have extra copies of important business records in multiple locations (insurance policies, contracts, licenses, permits, etc.).	
	Document all important assets – include serial numbers and photos if possible	
	Ensure all financial records are safe and secure.	
7.	BUSINESS PROCEDURES	
	Identifying and documenting which business operations are essential in maintaining your business during an emergency situation will help you develop a plan to restore those essential functions in time of crisis.	
	Determine who will be responsible for certain tasks in order to restore business operations. Hold regular staff meetings to test the plan and to make sure everyone understands what to do if and when needed.	
	Check with your insurance company to ensure you have adequate insurance coverage to cover any possible disaster.	

Anything from the health crisis and/or death of a business owner or key staff member to a severe storm or disaster can cause serious business disruption at any time. Protecting your business by having a “Business Continuity Plan” greatly increases your chances of overcoming a crisis situation. Having an accessible off-site business emergency kit containing hard copies and/or duplicates of all the above essential business records and information will help you to better restore business operations swiftly and effectively in the event of any business disruption or disaster. You may want to consider storing these records in a fire proof safe.