

Creating a Disaster Recovery Plan

Recent terrorist activities and natural disasters have prompted organizations to review their plans for handling different types of emergencies. Being prepared for any type of natural or man-made disaster makes good business sense. Here are some ideas to consider for handling an emergency that make good common sense.

Important Files

- Store a copy of all computer operating system and important files off site.
- Back up critical data on a regular basis and rotate storage disks (floppies, CDs, tapes) to an off site location.
- With many programs having a "remember this password" feature, it can be easy to lose track of passwords (and IDs) used for different systems.

Writing down passwords is not advisable for security purposes so be sure there is more than one trusted employee who can reset passwords for key systems.

- For important financial records like balance sheets, income statements and tax returns, keep a copy in a secure location.
- Keep copies of critical contracts, licenses and operating agreements off site. Don't forget to update these off site materials regularly.



Physical Assets

- Keep an updated inventory of all equipment and other fixed assets. This should include identification numbers, costs and locations.
- Make sure all physical assets are adequately insured.

Useful Information

Keep a file of contacts, phone numbers and email addresses off-site. In an emergency, being able to contact employees, vendors and customers is critical. Be sure to include office and mobile numbers, as well as email addresses.

Communication Plan

It is important to have a plan outlining how to contact critical parties. Specific people should be assigned to handle specific contacts—employees, vendors, customers and others. You may also want to have a designated media contact. In the confusion of a disaster, it is critical that accurate and consistent information is made available.

Summary

Common sense, a well thought-out plan and remaining calm are some of the key ingredients for successfully dealing with an emergency. Make sure you and your business are prepared for whatever the future holds.