

Will your Business Survive a Disaster?

A disaster can hit anyone, anywhere at any time. Have you ever asked yourself what would happen if your Business was to suffer a major disaster? Would your business survive? How would you survive?

The survival of your income is the first priority and business continuity / business planning, coupled with effective time in preparing for a disaster, will go a long way to actually allowing you and your business to survive and also to prosper from a disaster.

If you can protect your livelihood, which includes effective planning in advance, as well as a sound insurance program, you should be able to recover quickly, which has a flow on effect to you, your family and your employees.

Key measures to put in place to avoid a disaster:

- Identifying the risks that face your business and plan to avoid these risks. The reliance on electrical gadgets to run our lives is evident in almost every business, so an important place to start is backing up your IT systems.
- Very good housekeeping and maintenance including testing and modernising equipment and security and fire alarm systems – get an independent person to take a look around – insurers will usually offer to do this for you free of charge, as it is in their interest as well as yours.
- Turn off electrical equipment – install sensors and timing devices to save on power as well as reduce the risk of an electrical problem – avoid using power boards, and have licensed tradesmen check and rectify any power board usage at least annually.
- Careful control of hot works / safe works procedures.
- Control stock levels / fire walls / non combustible materials.
- Check roof for any problems and regularly maintain, as this is often the major cause of storm damage.

How to develop a business continuity plan and why all businesses must have one:

- Keeping up-to-date triplicate records of both electronic and written records is critical.
- Identifying the critical business activities and the resources needed to support them in order to maintain customer service while your business is closed for repairs.
- Planning for the worst possible scenario. Do research before a disaster strikes by finding alternative facilities, equipment and supplies, and locating qualified contractors to repair your facility.
- Setting up an emergency response plan and training employees how to execute it.
- Consider the resources you may need to activate during an emergency such as

back-up sources of power and communications systems. Also, stockpiling the supplies you may need such as first-aid kits, and flashlights.

- Compiling a list of important phone numbers (including mobile phone numbers) and addresses, including local and state emergency management agencies, major clients, contractors, suppliers, real estate, financial institutions, insurance broker and [loss management](#) expert. The list should also include employees and company officials. Keep copies off the premises in case the disaster is widespread. Ideally a copy should be kept on the internet and also stored in communication devices such as iPads and iPhones.
- Deciding on a communications strategy to prevent loss of your customers. Clients must know how to contact your company at its new location. Among the possibilities to explore, depending on the circumstances, are posting notices outside the original premises; contacting clients by phone, text, e-mail or regular mail; placing a notice or advertisement in local newspapers; and asking friends and acquaintances in the local business community to help disseminate the information.
- Review and exercise your plan on a regular basis and communicate changes to key employees.

Austbrokers Countrywide are specialists in insurance and risk management and offer tailored insurance solutions to help you survive a disaster, in order to protect your life's work.

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