

Get Started: Emergency Preparedness Checklist for Small Businesses

Having an emergency preparedness plan in place is as important to the survival of your small business as your business plan. Consider now how a natural, human-caused or public health disaster such as a pandemic flu event could affect your employees, customers and workplace. Would business operations continue? Ask yourself the questions below and use this checklist to help you get back in business after a disaster.

1. How vulnerable would the business be if a disaster or other emergency were to occur?

- Know your region and the types of disaster most likely to have an impact on your business.**
 - Find out what emergencies have occurred in the past and what impact these had on other businesses in your area.
 - Consider your facility's physical capacity to resist damage and proximity to flood plains, seismic faults, dams, hazardous materials, nuclear power plants and other hazards.
 - Consult with your insurance agent and learn what coverage is available and what precautions to take for disasters that may impact your business. Remember, many general policies do not cover earthquake and flood damage.
- Assess the capacity of your employees to prepare for and respond to an emergency.**
 - Are 10-15% of your employees trained in basic first-aid and CPR techniques? Do all employees know how to identify individuals who are trained?
 - Are employee roles clearly defined in the event of a disaster or emergency?
- Identify internal and external emergency response resources that will provide assistance during a disaster or other emergency.** Who will you contact in an emergency and what will they be able to provide?
 - Local and state police
 - Fire department and emergency medical services organizations
 - Local government officials, emergency management office
 - Local American Red Cross chapter
 - National Weather Service
 - Telephone, water, gas and electric companies
 - Neighboring businesses
 - Insurance carriers

2. If your business was to be shutdown for more than a few days, what impacts will it have on your day-to-day operations?

- Identify policies for employees**
 - Chain of command
 - Contact numbers for employees
 - Leave policies
 - Sick day policies
 - Payroll procedures
 - Sufficient communication infrastructure

□ **Identify plan for vendors (or suppliers)**

- Contact numbers for vendors
- Contact vendors concerning their business continuity plan.
- Consider developing a plan if product distribution is interrupted.

□ **Identify plan for customers (or clients)**

- Contact numbers for customers
- Contact customers concerning their business continuity plan.
- Consider developing a plan if product distribution is interrupted.

3. What is your plan to protect the business and its employees before, during and after an emergency?

- **Identify a First Aid team.** Approximately 10-15 percent of your workforce should be trained in first aid and CPR so that they can assist in times of disaster or emergency until help arrives.
- **Obtain necessary safety equipment.** Budget for and purchase any safety equipment, first-aid kits, Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and shelter-in-place supplies that may be needed. Make sure all employees know how to access these supplies.
- **Write a plan for responding to emergencies.** Your plan should include:
 - A system for warning employees about emergencies and communicating with employees and local emergency management officials during a disaster or emergency (i.e. cell phones, computers).
 - Considerations for the special needs of employees with disabilities and medical conditions
 - Evacuation routes from your facility and an established location where employees should gather.
 - Provisions and a location for employees to shelter-in-place.
- **Develop a Business Continuity Plan.** This plan will help keep your business operating as it responds and recovers from the effects of a disaster or emergency situation. Here's how to start developing a Business Continuity Plan:
 - Designate employees to develop the plan
 - Decide whether different procedures are needed for different departments within the workplace.
 - Establish procedures for Business Continuity Plan activation
 - Identify essential business functions and staff to carry out these functions
 - Identify which employees will be considered non-essential vs. essential personnel
 - Consider whether cross-training of employees is necessary
 - Establish work schedule for employees during a flu pandemic
 - Establish procedures with suppliers, vendors and other businesses critical to daily operations
 - Create a plan for conducting business if the facility is not accessible and set up electronic back up systems for vital business files
 - Identify records and documents that must be readily accessible to perform essential functions and decide where these can be stored safely and retrieved quickly
 - Stockpile items soap, tissues, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, cleaning supplies and recommend personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees.