Every Business Should Have A Plan.

Preparing Makes Good Business Sense.

How quickly your company can get back to business after a terrorist attack or tornado, a fire or flood often depends on emergency planning done today. While the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is working hard to prevent terrorist attacks, the regular occurrence of natural disasters demonstrates the importance of being prepared for any emergency. While recognizing that each situation is unique, your organization can be better prepared if it plans carefully, puts emergency procedures in place, and practices for all kinds of emergencies.

This guide outlines common sense measures business owners and managers can take to start getting ready. A commitment to planning today will help support employees, customers, the community, the local economy and even the country. It also protects your business investment and gives your company a better chance for survival.

Emergency Planning for Employees: Your employees and co-workers are your business’ most valuable asset. Two-way communication is central before, during and after a disaster. Include emergency information in newsletters, on your company intranet, in periodic employee emails and/or other communication tools. Designate an

Preparedness and Business Continuity Standard (NFPA 1600) developed by the National Fire Protection Association and endorsed by the America National Standards Institute and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

This common sense framework is designed to launch a process of learning about business preparedness. For more information go to:

www.ready.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, DC 20472

Plan to Stay in Business

Business continuity planning must account for both man-made and natural disasters. You should plan in advance to manage any emergency. Be prepared to assess the situation, use common sense and available resources to take care of yourself, your co-workers and your business’ recovery.

Continuity Planning: Risk assessment can be a sophisticated area of expertise that ranges from self-assessment to an extensive engineering study. Your organization’s risk needs will vary according to the specific industry, size, scope and location of your individual company. Start by reviewing your business process flow chart, if one exists, to identify operations critical to survival and recovery. Carefully assess your internal and external functions to determine which staff, materials, procedures and equipment are absolutely necessary to keep the business operating. You should also establish procedures for succession of management.

Include co-workers from all levels in planning and as active members of the emergency management team. Make a list of your most important customers and proactively plan ways to serve them during and after a disaster. Also identify key suppliers, shippers, resources and other businesses you must interact with on a daily basis. A disaster that shuts down a key supplier can be devastating to your business.

Plan what you will do if your building, plant or store is not accessible. Talk with your staff or co-workers and frequently review and practice what you intend to do during and after an emergency. Just as your business changes over time, so do your preparedness needs. Review and update your plans at least annually and inform your employees of the changes.

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out of town phone number where employees can leave an "I'm okay" message in a catastrophic disaster. If you have employees with disabilities or special needs, ask them what you intend to do during a disaster. Conduct regularly and communicate regularly with employees before, during and after a disaster. Speak with service providers about potential alternatives and identify back-up options such as mobile food service. Provide a way for customers and visitors to communicate with the company. Your emergency plan should include provisions for online ordering and payment options. Your emergency plan should also include instructions for handling customer calls and inquiries. Make sure your building's Heating, Ventilating and Air-conditioning (HVAC) system is working properly and is well-maintained. You should also determine if you can feasibly upgrade the building's filtration system or use air purifiers to reduce the amount of airborne biological and chemical and other airborne threats. Improve Cyber Security: Protecting your data and information technology systems may require specialized expertise, but even the smallest business can be better prepared. Use anti-virus software and keep it up-to-date. Don’t open email from unknown sources. Use hard-to-guess passwords: Protect your computers from Internet intruders by using firewalls. Back up your computer data and download security protection updates known as patches regularly. Subscribe to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security National Cyber Alert System, www.us-cert.gov, to receive free, timely alerts. An investment in planning today will not only help protect your business investment and your livelihood, but will also support your employees, customers and stakeholders as the community, the local economy and even the country. Get ready now.