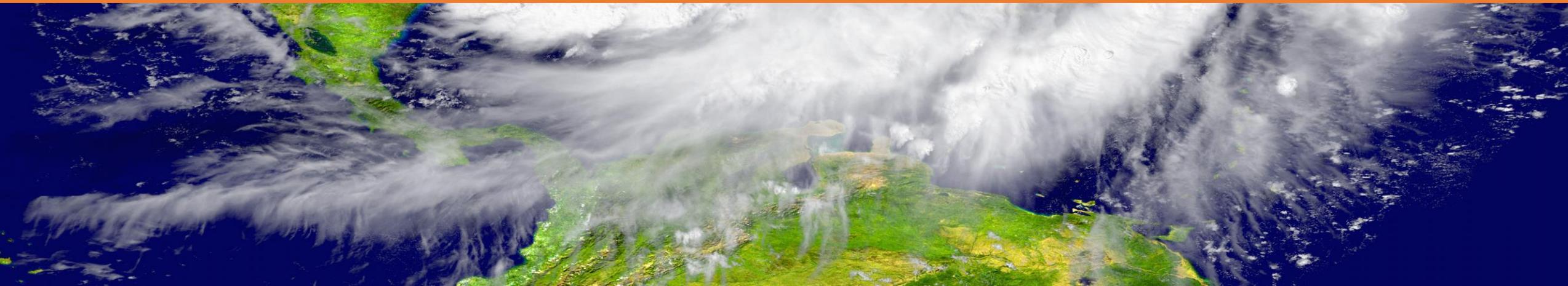




Disaster Preparation Guide

Updated for COVID-19



**“The time to repair
the roof is when the
sun is shining.”**

— John F. Kennedy

Prepare Now!

Disasters come in many flavors: Fire, floods, hurricanes, tornados, extreme storms, and now pandemics. Every business must prepare. Those companies that don't plan risk failure. Harsh but true.

This checklist is extensive. Some points can be an entire eBook by themselves. So, as you read through the list, expand on them and prepare beyond the bullet points. Detail matters!

Safety and survival involves preparation, planning, and implementation. Build upon this foundation until you have a comprehensive, written response to catastrophes that will likely occur in your area (and some that don't, like COVID-19).

Prepare while you have the time, not when the rain starts to fall, the winds start howling, rivers overflow their banks, or the Governor issues a sudden stay-at-home order!





Preparation

- ➔ Do you have emergency equipment on hand and are they in good working order?
- ➔ To protect against COVID-19 and other viruses, do you have PPE for all staff members in sufficient quantities?
- ➔ Do you have pandemic procedures in place as suggested by the CDC and are they strictly enforced?
- ➔ Have you updated HR Policies to include COVID-19 procedures and instructions?
- ➔ Is sensitive equipment, hard copy records, etc. locked and protected from destruction?
- ➔ Do you follow a prescribed overall security protocol (NIST, NY Shield, GDPR, etc.).
- ➔ Can your employees work remotely and are they set up to work securely?
- ➔ Have you moved part of your infrastructure to the Cloud and upgraded critical applications to their cloud versions?
- ➔ Are your Cloud applications backed up properly and secure against cyber-attack?
- ➔ Do you have access to financial resources to handle sudden shutdowns?
- ➔ If you need to evacuate during a sudden disaster, do you and employees know where local shelters are located?
- ➔ How will you monitor local news and pass that information to your employees (i.e., portable hotspots during internet outages)?

Disaster Recovery



- ➔ Do you have a written, tested Disaster Recovery Plan?
- ➔ Do you have an emergency response team ready-to-go?
- ➔ Do they have clear, defined roles?
- ➔ Does your plan include sections for Facilities, IT systems, Employee communications, Customer communications and Records Management?
- ➔ Do all of your employees have copies of your plan?
- ➔ Do you know if your employees have read the plan and know what to do should a disaster strike?
- ➔ Are you updating your plan regularly as information changes (i.e. personnel changes, contact information, etc.)?
- ➔ How recent was the last test?
- ➔ Did you document your findings and corrected issues that arose?
- ➔ Did you re-test your plan to see if plan revisions worked appropriately?
- ➔ Does your plan include the latest safety guidelines from the CDC and local officials?

Structural Integrity



Periodically inspect your premises:

- ➔ Roof
- ➔ Electrical wiring
- ➔ Plumbing
- ➔ Signs of water leaks
- ➔ Safety hazards
- ➔ Storm protection for windows and glass doors
- ➔ Sufficient number of sump pumps if needed
- ➔ Safe area within facility, without windows, for employees to gather during sudden violent storms

Outside facility Inspection



Before each storm warning:

- ➔ Are there any trees close to the facility that can come down in a storm and damage your facility?
- ➔ Has all outside furniture (i.e. tables, chairs, and benches) been removed and stored inside a safe area?
- ➔ Look around. Can strong winds propel anything on your property through the air and impact either your own facility or that of adjacent structures causing damage or injury? If so, move them inside a safe area.
- ➔ Are windows and doors protected against flying objects during violent storms?



Critical Business Data

Make sure hard copies are stored securely and that you have digital backups:

- ➔ Customer records
 - Sales records, Contact data, Contracts, SLAs
- ➔ Financial records
 - Tax records, Company financials, Inventory records, Insurance policies
- ➔ Vendor information
 - Contracts, SLAs, Contact information
- ➔ Employee data
 - Contact information, Payroll, HR data
- ➔ Do you have copies of Government required licenses and permits (hard copies and images)
- ➔ Do you have contact information for local emergency responders

Backups



- ➔ Do you have backups of all business-critical data?
- ➔ Are copies stored offsite.
- ➔ What type of backup do you have (Business Continuity System, Onsite Drives, Cloud backup, etc.)
- ➔ Do you have redundant backups in case of failure?
- ➔ Are backups tested? If so, how are they tested (automated or manual)?
- ➔ Do you perform a full system restore when testing or do you test only a portion of the files?
- ➔ How often do you perform tests?
- ➔ Are you 100% sure that, through testing, your backups are viable and ready to go?



Source Programs

- ➔ Do you have copies of program files either at an offsite location or ready to be downloaded from a vendor or the Cloud?
 - Operating Systems, Critical Applications (Accounting, Office Productivity Suites, Industry-critical SW, etc.)
 - If destroyed, how quickly can you get and install copies?
 - Have you researched alternative SW if you cannot install licensed versions quickly (Open Office, etc.)?
- ➔ Do you have copies of license keys in a safe location?
- ➔ Do you have up-to-date copies of any proprietary SW?
- ➔ Do you have a list of websites, phone numbers, and emails for all SW vendors?

IT Hardware Concerns

When expecting a destructive storm that may result in power outages and surges, floods, etc.:

- ➔ If possible, shut down all servers, workstations, printers, etc.
- ➔ Move servers, workstations, and printers to higher ground (upper floors, on desks, counters, etc.) in case of floods.
- ➔ If possible, cover equipment in plastic sheeting to prevent water damage if sprinklers are tripped.
- ➔ Make sure all computer equipment are protected with UPS Battery Backups and surge protectors.
- ➔ Non-computer electrical equipment should, if possible, be unplugged.

Alternative Locations

- ➔ Can employees work from home?
 - Do employees have the necessary equipment, program access, etc. to perform their jobs from home?
 - Do home networks have adequate cyber-security?

If not:

- ➔ Do you have an alternate site selected?
- ➔ How soon can the site be ready (power, internet, phones, etc.)?
- ➔ If equipment was damaged or destroyed, how quickly can they be purchased or leased?
 - How will you pay for equipment before you receive any insurance funds?
- ➔ If you are a retail location, how quickly can you get replacement inventory?
 - How will you pay for replacement inventory before receiving insurance funds?

Employee Communication

- ➔ In your absence, who is in charge?
 - Are all managerial roles documented and communicated to staff?
 - If managers are not available, who can deal with issues on the ground?
- ➔ Do employees know where to meet if the premises must be immediately evacuated during the business day?
- ➔ Do managers and employees know how to contact each other should the premises become inaccessible?
- ➔ How will management communicate with employees until a temporary location is opened?
 - Will you use email, phone, intranet, or website?
 - Have you separated your email from your onsite configuration to ensure uninterrupted communication?
 - Are these technologies already in place?
 - If not, do you have a plan to install needed technologies BEFORE they are needed?

Customer Communication

- ➔ Do you have client emails so you can assure them:
 - that you're still in business
 - their information is backed up and safe
 - that you will shortly resume full operations
- ➔ Will you use your website as an information resource for customers, vendors, and prospects during the recovery period?
 - Recovering from a disaster quickly can give an added boost of confidence to clients and the outside world.

A Word Of Advice

All businesses should have a written Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP). If you are one of those companies that do not have one—you are courting disaster. We strongly advise that you start creating one now. A written, tested DRP is worth its weight in gold before, during, and after calamity strikes.

If you do not have a written DRP, click the image below and download our **FREE** Disaster Recovery Plan Template. It is in MS Excel and easy use. You'll have a complete plan in no time. **No registration required!**

Disaster Recovery Plan Template v2.0



- In MS Excel format for instant use so you can quickly create your written plan without learning a new program.
- Individual tabs for ease of use so you can quickly create and find the sections you need.
- Hyper-linked table of contents for lightning-quick navigation so you can easily manage your written plan.
- No registration required for immediate download so you don't have to worry about getting annoying sales emails.
- Fully Updated To Include COVID-19 planning so your business can be prepared for the future.

FREE DOWNLOAD - NO REGISTRATION



One Last Thought

You now have a comprehensive list to prepare your business to survive when disaster strikes.

Like anything else, this should not be the last word on preparation. As you go through the list, check off those entries you've got covered and create a written plan to satisfy the others. You know your business better than anyone, so enhance the list to cover things that are important to your company but may not have been included.

Treat this guide as a living document and update it often.

Don't procrastinate—start now—the clock is ticking! *Good luck.*

“This is not the end, this is not even the beginning of the end, this is just perhaps the end of the beginning.”

— Winston S. Churchill



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