

DISASTER RECOVERY PLANNING

I Identify Critical Systems and Vital Records.

Vital records are those records that if destroyed, lost, or inaccessible would cause severe difficulty in operating, or would cause probable financial loss.

- A. Make a list of what you must have to operate.
 - 1) That list should include vendors and contact information for those items necessary to resume operations, for example; office supplies, equipment, books, forms, furniture, etc.
- B. Make a list of your vital records.
 - 1) Develop a strategy for protecting those records.
- C. Document where the back up copies (computer data and/or microfilm) are stored.
- D. Take an inventory of your computer systems and equipment.
 - 1) Document vendor contact information for hardware and software.

II Create an Emergency Response Team.

- A. This team will most likely consist of you and your employees.
 - 1) Document the contact information for each team member, including name, phone number, address, mobile phone number, email address at home, and spouse's name. Allow for a "Contact Status" column to document which team members have been notified and which ones you need to try to contact at a later time.
 - 2) Also, make a list local emergency response phone numbers, for example; police, fire, ambulance, safety coordinator, sheriff, highway patrol, etc.
 - (a) Laminate the emergency contact list and store it near the telephone where it is easily accessible.

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B. Identify a chain of command for the emergency response team. Give specific duties to each member of the emergency response team

- 1) Identify who declares an emergency.
- 2) Identify who calls the police, ambulance, firefighters, safety coordinator, and insurance provider.
 - (a) Make a list of information the emergency officials will need:
 - Name
 - Phone number
 - Location
 - Nature of the emergency
 - Preliminary report of damages and injuries
 - Any information regarding other emergency responders that have been contacted.
 - ◆ This will help the caller collect his or her thoughts before calling. It may prevent frantic rambling of useless information, which sometimes occurs when a person panics.

C. If your employee roster differs from your emergency response team, develop a checklist to make sure all employees are notified when necessary.

III Identify an Alternate Site for Operations.

A. For example, a technology center or fair grounds may be able to provide facilities in case of an emergency.

B. Develop procedures to inform the public in the event an alternate place of operation is necessary (i.e.; newspaper ad, TV or radio announcement, post a notice on the courthouse grounds).

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IV Develop Emergency Assessment Strategy to be used by the emergency response team.

A. Determine what constitutes a disaster.

- 1)** Give criteria to use to determine if all or just part of the disaster recovery plan needs to be implemented.
 - (a)** You could use a decision table made up of a series of yes or no questions.
 - Is office intact and safely accessible?
 - Is the courthouse intact and safely accessible?
 - Is the threat of further damage imminent?
 - What critical systems or records have been damaged?
 - Does the entire recovery plan need to be implemented or just the portion of the plan pertaining to the specific damage?

B. Develop a news media communication policy.

- 1)** An organization that doesn't allow employees to communicate information with the media may develop a standard answer to media questions. An example of that standard answer is as follows:

“At this time I do not have all the information concerning the emergency, but let me refer you to our Director who will provide you with up-to-date information.”

V Document Recovery Steps.

A. What to do in a flood, tornado, winter storm, extended power outage, ruptured water pipes, gas leak, robbery, terrorist attack, bomb threats, etc.

B. Identify steps to take in each situation.

- 1)** For example, if the water pipes burst, your plan may include shutting down computer systems, having the power cut off,

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unplugging the computer equipment, and setting it up on top of a desk or somewhere safe from the water.

- 2) Another example, if paper documents get wet, you would want to carefully separate them, and dry them out. Or contact a document restoration company that can freeze and dehydrate fragile books.

C. Develop an evacuation plan.

- 1) If you have handicapped employees or customers in your office at the time of evacuation, designate procedures to help them out of the building.
- 2) Create a plan to make sure everyone was evacuated (i.e.; role call).
 - (a) If someone did not make it out of the building, you need to notify the rescue squad.
- 3) Encourage employees to keep sneakers or boots near their desk. Walking through rubble would be safer in sturdy shoes rather than heels or sandals.

D. Make a detailed checklist of procedures necessary to resume operations:

- Call vendors for supplies, forms, or equipment needed.
- Retrieve the back up copies of your computer data or microfilm.
- If temporary relocation is required, contact the organization where you will need to set up operations.
- Move any salvaged items to the temporary location.
- Notify the public.
- If emergency funding from other governmental agencies becomes available, establish steps to obtain it.

VI Offsite Storage of the Plan.

- A. Store the plan offsite (possibly at a bank, city hall, or a County barn that is located outside the city limits).

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- 1) In the event the courthouse was destroyed, a copy of the plan would be accessible to emergency response team.
- 2) If the members of the emergency response team were incapacitated, other individuals could follow the steps in the Disaster Recovery Plan to restore operations.

VII Periodic Review and/or Testing of the Plan.

- A. Things are continuously changing; you may get new employees or new equipment. You will need to review your plan periodically to make sure:
 - 1) Contact information is up-to-date.
 - 2) Equipment inventory is correct.
 - 3) Vendor contact information is current.
 - 4) Employee roster is up-to-date and has correct contact information.
- B. Make a schedule for updating the plan. Then make that schedule a part of the plan. Sign and date it each time it is reviewed or revised.
- C. Don't forget to update the copy of the plan that is stored offsite.
- D. If it is feasible, testing is a good way to find any flaws in your plan. It would be better to find a flaw during a drill than during an actual emergency.