

A Guide to  
Business  
Continuity  
Planning



HOW WOULD A  
**DISASTER**  
AFFECT YOUR BUSINESS

## How Would You Ensure Your Business Survives?



A crisis that threatens the survival of your business could happen at any time.

The most common threats to your premises, flood, fire, power failure, break-ins/ vandalism are independent of size, and are the same whether you run a large business employing many staff or a family corner shop. The effects are potentially devastating.

Planning for the continuity of your business in an emergency is essential.

Start now - you never know what tomorrow can bring.

### Would your business survive a crisis?

Every year 1 in 5 businesses face a major disruption to their services

1 in 10 of these businesses will cease trading.

If your premises were to suffer a fire, how would you maintain your essential business functions?

# What Is A Business Continuity Plan?

What would happen if your business were involved in a major incident?

Everyone hopes that they will not be affected by a major incident or disaster. If we are affected we hope that “someone, somewhere” will know what to do. We know that any serious incident will be dealt with initially by the emergency services but do we know what will happen next?

- How will we be kept informed?
- How will we get back to business?
- How will operations be affected?

This is where Business Continuity Planning (BCP) comes in. Any number of events can bring businesses grinding to a halt and the purpose of Business Continuity Planning is to ensure that we can respond sensibly, as a company and as individuals.

Put simply, business continuity is about anticipating the crises that could affect a firm and planning for them.

A BCP will identify all the requirements, which are essential to keeping your business running, and will include processes to keep disruption to customers and employees to a minimum. It is all about ensuring that we can manage a crisis effectively.

The information contained in this booklet aims to assist your business in producing a Business Continuity Plan and to provide sources of further information for your future use.



## Why Should I Use a Business Continuity Plan?



A Business Continuity Plan is all part of creating a business with the flexibility to prosper in an ever-changing world and be strong enough to survive should a disaster strike. The ability to withstand an incident like a flood or fire, and to re-open for “business as usual” is critical.

Protecting the future of a business, whatever the size, has to be the number one priority for every business. The smaller your business, the more important it is to have a contingency plan in place. Any incident, no matter how small, is capable of impacting your business and affecting profitability. Even a sole trader is advised to have systems in place to be able to continue their work in case of theft, flooding, fire, IT and utility failures.



- Experience shows that businesses are far more likely to survive a disaster if they have thought about it in advance, and planned accordingly
- Banks, investors, insurers, customers and suppliers will take a company that has a business continuity plan much more seriously
- Business Continuity Plans build employee confidence. Employees will appreciate the fact that the business is doing all it can to protect their safety and place of work



## What Type of Incidents Should I Plan For?



**Severe weather** - for example, flooding caused by heavy rain, or wind damage following a storm. If your business is in a remote location you may be more susceptible to this type of disruption.

**Theft or vandalism** - theft of computer equipment, for example, could be very detrimental. Similarly, vandalism of machinery or vehicles could be not only be costly but also pose health and safety issues.

**Fire** - few other situations have such potential to physically destroy a business.

**Loss of utility** - loss of power or water could have serious consequences. What would you do if you suffered a loss of heat and light or couldn't use IT or telecoms systems or operate other key machinery or equipment?

**IT system failure** - computer viruses, attacks by hackers or system failures could affect employees' ability to work effectively.



**Disruption to fuel supplies** - would you be able to operate company vehicles in the event of a fuel crisis, would your staff still be able to get to their workplace, would your suppliers be able to deliver goods to you?

Depending on your business' specific circumstances, there are many possible events that might affect your ability to operate.

**Malicious attack** - although this is less likely for small businesses it may be worth considering the risk of malicious incident (e.g. animal rights groups) depending on the nature of your business. If you're based in a large city you may suffer the effects of an attack on a neighboring or shared building.

**Disasters affecting suppliers** - how would you source alternative supplies?

**Disasters affecting customers** - will insurance or customer guarantees offset a client's ability to take your goods or services?

## 5 Step Guide to Business Continuity Planning



You will find that it is quick, easy and inexpensive to create a Business Continuity Plan. This is a basic five-step guide to get you started on business continuity planning.

**Step 1:** Analyze your business

**Step 2:** Access the risks

**Step 3:** Develop your strategy

**Step 4:** Develop your plan

**Step 5:** Rehearse your plan

## 1. Understand your business and what makes it tick

- What is the purpose of your business?
- How is that achieved?
- What are your products/services?
- Who is involved in your business (internal & external)?
- What deadlines do you work around?



## 2. Assess the risks to your business

- What could affect your business (internal & external)?
  - Power cuts
  - Fire
  - Flood/Water leak
  - Theft/break-in



## 3. Develop your strategy to deal with those risks

A strategy will protect your business by identifying:

- What needs to be done
- How actions will be done
- Who needs to perform these actions
- Why the actions are needed
- Where actions should be performed

#### 4. Develop your plan

The plan can be as simple as you want- the simpler it is, the more flexible it will be

i.e. if there has been a fire- what do you need to do first, do you need to connect telephones first to contact customers, does this need to be done at an alternative site, do all of your staff need to relocate to this alternative site- or can some of them work from home?

Contact numbers, resources, procedures would be set out in this plan.



#### 5. Test and update your plan

It is essential to update your plan on a regular basis and each time something changes, for example, changes in supplier contact details. Remember to inform your employees that things have changed.

It is also essential that the plan is tested. Involve all of your staff and familiarizes them with their roles and what to expect.





## Top Ten Tips for Business Continuity

- 1

Plan for the effects of an incident, not the cause. At the time of a crisis what happens may well be more important than what caused it.
- 2

Remember that prevention is better than cure.
- 3

Test systems, exercise plans and rehearse the people involved on a regular basis. Maintain the plans- keep them up to date, build in a regular review of your plan.
- 4

Back up data regularly and store copies off site in a secure place. Practice restoring the data in an IT system outside your own to ensure that it works.
- 5

Ensure that important paper documents, such as contracts and employee information are protected. Make copies and use fire resistant and waterproof storage.
- 6

Keep a list of contact details for your staff, customers and suppliers off-site so that you can contact them if you do not have access to your usual premises. Review regularly.
- 7

Be clear about what your insurances cover and what they don't. Keep copies of the relevant policies off-site so that you know immediately what to do in the event of an incident.
- 8

Have an emergency pack which will include your business recovery plan, key telephone numbers, as well as a first aid kit, flashlight, spare keys, cash, and stationery.
- 9

Make arrangements for a temporary base- you may not be able to operate out of your existing premises for weeks or even months.
- 10

Make an inventory of equipment, materials, products and any other assets to give you an overview of the business. This will make it easier to work out losses and identify gaps in core resources after an incident.