

Having a Disaster Recovery Plan

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 have prompted many organizations to review their plans for handling many types of emergencies. Being prepared for any type of natural or man-made disaster makes good business sense. Here are some ideas to consider for handling an emergency that make good common sense.

Important Files

- Store a copy of all computer operating system and important files off site.
- Back up critical data on a regular basis and rotate storage disks (floppies, CDs, tapes) to an off site location.
- Be sure to keep a list of computer passwords. With many programs having a "remember this password" feature, it is often easy to lose track of all the passwords (and IDs) you use.
- For important financial records, like balance sheets, income statements and tax returns, keep a copy in a secure location.
- Be sure to keep copies of critical contracts, licenses and operating agreements off site. You may want to update the off site materials quarterly.

Physical Assets

- Keep a regularly updated inventory of all your firm's equipment and other fixed assets. This should include information such as identification numbers, costs and locations.
- Make sure your physical assets are adequately insured.

Supplies

Keep a supply of usual office supplies off site in case you can't reach your business location. This includes stationery, envelopes, business cards and often used brochures.

Useful Information

Keep a file of contacts, phone numbers and email addresses off site. Backing up your contact management software files can be easily handled. Using a hand held device makes this easy and convenient. In an emergency, being able to contact employees, vendors and customers is critical. Be sure to include pager and cell phone numbers.

Communication Plan

Be sure to have a plan on how to contact critical parties. Specific people should be assigned to handle specific contacts - employees, vendors, customers and others. You may also want to have a designated media contact. In the confusion of a disaster, it is critical that accurate and consistent information is made available.

Summary

Common sense, a well thought-out plan and remaining calm are some of the key ingredients of dealing with an emergency. Make sure you and your business are ready for whatever the future holds.