

Safety and Preparedness are Good Investments

A business preparedness plan should include measures to protect staff, property, data and inventory from emergencies and disasters. It is important to plan ahead and practice for an emergency situation so your business and staff are prepared. Having a business preparedness plan in place is not only an investment for your business' future but also an investment in your staff's well-being.



The Plan

- If you already have a business preparedness plan, it is important to assess it to ensure that procedures, protocols and contacts are current and training is occurring on an ongoing basis. If you do not have a plan in place, use these questions to initiate your planning process: is our security team prepared to respond to emergencies, can our business continue to operate if our current location is not accessible and do our employees know what to do in an emergency?
- A preparedness manual should be created for security and management personnel to follow and should include evacuation plans, back-up working locations, communications procedures, supplies to stock, equipment to ready, and contractor and local authority contact information.
- Review what natural and man-made disasters could potentially harm your area. An "it will never happen here" attitude is foolish as any business or community is susceptible to the unexpected.
- After assessing possible disasters, consult with your insurance agent to review your policies to make sure you are covered. Remember that most policies do not cover earthquake or flood damage.

Know What is in Your Plan

- › Practicing your plan often helps to prepare everyone involved. Conduct walk through drills and practice evacuations often because as your business and employees change, so should your preparedness plan. You should also evaluate your plan regularly to make sure it does not have any previously unidentified deficiencies.
- › Preparation should account for situations that disrupt telephone and internet communication.
- › Create an emergency guide that is easily accessible or given to each staff member. The guide should include a list of important phone numbers for all staff, evacuation routes, a location of where to meet if they need to evacuate or cannot enter the building and business contingency plans.
- › Emergency supplies should be kept on hand for each staff member in case they need to stay in a confined area for a long period of time. The supply kit should contain three days' worth of food and water, flashlights with batteries, a first aid kit and blankets. Other items can be added as necessary for your business.

Remember that not all emergencies become disasters—the difference is in how effectively people respond. While we do not know what tomorrow may bring, and emergencies can happen in an instant, it is always best to be prepared.

For more information on business preparedness plans...

American Red Cross:

<http://www.redcross.org/www.files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/PrepYourBusfortheUnthinkable.pdf>

Disaster Safety:

www.disastersafety.org