Ready Business was developed in consultation with the National Fire Protection Association.

These recommendations reflect the Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity Standard (NFPA 1600) developed by the National Fire Protection Association and endorsed by the America National Standards Institute, the 9/11 Commission, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

This common sense framework is designed to launch a process of learning about business preparedness.

Go to www.ready.gov for more specific information on these topics.

www.ready.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, DC 20472

FEMA R-10 / Catalog No. 11305-1

Prepare For Emergencies Now. Information For Businesses.

FEMA

www.ready.gov

Preparing Makes Good Business Sense.

How quickly your company is back in business following a disaster will depend on emergency planning done today. The regular occurrence of natural disasters, the occasional utility and technology outages, and the potential for terrorism demonstrate the importance of being prepared for many different types of emergencies. While recognizing that each situation is unique, your organization can be better prepared if it plans carefully, puts emergency procedures in place, and practices for the kinds of emergencies it could face.

This guide outlines common sense measures business owners and managers can take to start getting ready. A commitment to planning today will help support employees, customers, the community, the local economy and even our country. It also protects your business investment and gives your company a better chance for survival.

Every business should have a plan. Get ready now.

Business Continuity Planning: Bring together co-workers from all levels of your organization as a planning team. Consider the different types of disasters that could impact your company and the likelihood that they might occur. The risks faced by your organization will vary according to the size, location, and nature of your operations. Start by reviewing your business processes and identify operations critical to survival of your company.

Plan what you will do if your building is not accessible. Determine the staff, building, machinery, equipment, materials, supplies, computers, electronic information, vital records that are critical to keep the business operating. Document strategies to relocate to another facility, provide required resources, and restore critical business functions.

Make a list of your customers and plan on ways to serve them during and after a disaster. Also, identify key suppliers, shippers, contractors, other resources that you interact with on a regular basis. Assess the impact that a disaster could have on your suppliers and identify additional suppliers just in case.

Write a Crisis Communication Plan: Detail how your organization will communicate with employees, local authorities, suppliers, customers, the news media, and others during and after a disaster. Include information specific to the interests of customers, employees, company management, and others that may be affected by an interruption of your business.

Emergency Planning for Employees: Your employees and co-workers are your business' most valuable assets.

Provide emergency planning information to employees so they know what to do if there is an emergency. Include emergency information in newsletters, on your company intranet, in periodic employee emails, and on bulletin boards. Promote family disaster planning. Tools for developing a family disaster and communications plan can be found at www.ready.gov. Ask employees to provide emergency contact information so you can reach them after a disaster. Designate a telephone number at a location away from your primary facility where employees can call in and leave an "I'm okay" message and receive instructions. If you have employees with disabilities or special needs, ask them what assistance they would need.

Protecting Employees during an Emergency: When an emergency occurs, the safety of everyone within the facility is most important. Depending on the nature of the emergency, you may need to evacuate everyone from the building, shelter them-in-place within the building, or lockdown the building.

Make an Evacuation Plan: Some emergencies will require employees to leave the workplace quickly. The ability to evacuate workers, customers, and visitors quickly can save lives. A fire, chemical spill, bomb threat, or other hazard inside the building would require prompt evacuation. Make sure there is a warning system that everyone can hear and two ways out of every part of the building. Identify a location where everyone can gather outside the building to identify any missing persons. Develop an evacuation plan for all buildings. If your company is in a high-rise building or large multi-tenant building, coordinate planning with the building manager.

Make a Shelter-in-Place Plan There may be situations when it's best to shelter inside the building when there is a hazard outside. If you're located in areas where tornados are possible, identify protected space within the core of the building to shelter employees. There are other circumstances, such as a transportation accident that releases chemicals into the air, when everyone should shelter-in-place within the building. Sheltering in place requires shutdown of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and the closure of air intakes. This will minimize the amount of chemicals that could enter the building. Monitor news reports to obtain information and official instructions to evacuate the building after the chemicals pass.

Make a Lockdown Plan
In situations where an individual has gained access to a building with intent to harm employees, a lockdown warning should be broadcast and authorities notified. Employees should be instructed to immediately hide and remain silent until help arrives.

Warning System: Identify a system to warn everyone to take protective action. Make sure the fire alarm system works to warn everyone to evacuate. Identify a public address or other system to warn everyone to shelter-in-place or lockdown. Train multiple employees so they know how to use these systems. Be sure the telephone numbers for fire, police, and emergency medical services are posted at every telephone.

Identify ways to receive warnings of severe weather and other emergencies. This may include free text, social media, and email alerts. Determine ways to monitor television or radio news reports for information and to obtain official instructions as they become available.

Emergency Supplies: When preparing for emergencies, identify the supplies that you need to have on hand. Go to Ready.gov/build-kit for a recommended list of emergency supplies. Reach out to local emergency management officials who can assist you and help address your needs along with the rest of your community.

Providing for your co-workers' well-being is recognized as one of the best ways to assure your company's recovery. That means communicating regularly with employees before, during and after an incident. Use newsletters, intranets, staff meetings and other internal communications tools to communicate emergency plans and procedures. Use informal communication, such as coffee break discussions or short staff briefings, which been shown to be highly effective for all types and sizes of organizations.

Promote Family and Individual Preparedness: Create a culture of preparedness. If individuals and their families are prepared, your company and your coworkers will be better prepared for an emergency. Encourage your employees and their families to get an emergency supplies kit, prepare a family emergency plan, and stay informed about different threats and their appropriate responses. Go to www.ready.gov for more information or print out and distribute copies of "Preparing Makes Sense" brochures to your workers.

Support Employee Health After a Disaster: In a community disaster it is possible that your staff will need time to ensure the well-being of their family members, You may also want to consider offering professional counselors to help co-workers address their fears and anxieties.

Talk with your staff or co-workers and frequently review and practice what you intend to do during and after an emergency. Just as your business changes over time, so do your preparedness needs. Review and update your plans at least annually and inform your employees of the changes.

In addition to emergency planning and communicating with employees, there are steps you can take to safeguard your company and secure your physical assets.

Review Insurance Coverage: Inadequate insurance coverage can lead to a major financial loss if your business is damaged, or operations are interrupted for a period of time. Check with your insurance agent, broker, or underwriter and discuss your insurance coverage. Ask for guidance to determine whether you are fully insured for property damage. If you your business could be damaged by flood or earthquake, verify that you have appropriate coverage. Evaluate your business interruption coverage to determine what your policy covers and what is not covered. Check out Ready.gov/business for a form that you can use to evaluate your insurance program.

Prepare for Utility Disruptions: Businesses require water, electricity, natural gas or heating oil, telecommunications, sewerage, and other utilities. You should plan ahead for extended disruptions during and after a disaster. Evaluate options such as portable generators for backup power and strategies to deal with interruptions of other utilities.

Secure and Protect Your Buildings: There are many things you can do in advance to help protect your physical assets. Install smoke alarms, fire detectors, and fire sprinklers to enhance fire safety. Evaluate physical security to ensure the perimeter of the building is secure. Secure valuable equipment, materials, computer rooms, and building utility systems to prevent unauthorized access. Document the locations and operation of building systems, and train staff so they know how to shut down systems or implement shelter-in-place.

Improve Cyber Security: Protecting your electronic data and information technology systems may require specialized expertise, but even the smallest business can be better prepared. Protect networked computers with firewalls, install anti-virus software, and keep it up-to-date. Instruct employees not to open email from unknown sources. Enforce the use of strong passwords and require them to be changed periodically. Back up your computer data off-site. Subscribe to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security National Cyber Alert System, www.us-cert.gov, to receive free, timely alerts.

Practice the Plan with Co-workers: Frequently practice what you intend to do during a disaster. Conduct regularly scheduled education and training sessions to provide co-workers with information, identify needs and develop preparedness skills. Include disaster training in new employee orientation programs. Practice emergency procedures, such as evacuation drills, with all employees.

The planning team should conduct periodic tabletop exercises using a hypothetical disaster to understand what resources would be impacted, how assets could be preserved, how employees could be protected, and how recovery could be hastened. Weaknesses in the plan should be noted and the plan revised to include needed improvements. Review plans periodically to identify changes required by new operations or new information about threats.

Inspect, test, and maintain fire detection, suppression, and life safety systems including standby generators. Make sure that all resources required for your emergency and business continuity plans are ready in case an emergency occurs.

www.ready.gov