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Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Plan To Stay In Business

Brilliant chemist and researcher, Louis Pasteur once said, "Luck favors the prepared." This advice is very true not only in our personal preparedness but also in business preparedness. Every business or other public organization (non-profits etc.) should have a disaster plan, also known as a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). A COOP details how the critical functions of an organization will be handled during any emergency or situation that may disrupt day-to-day operations, leaving office or production facilities damaged, inaccessible and or extremely understaffed.



Why Have A COOP?

Unexpected things happen. Pandemic, fire, extreme weather, flooding or earthquake can strike a community suddenly. It is estimated that 25% of businesses fail to reopen after a major disaster. A COOP addresses the issues that can lead to disaster related failure.



ASSESS . . .

- * Analyze your business process flow chart. Identify the operations that are critical to survival and recovery.
- * Examine emergency payroll and financial decision making procedures.
- * Look over the guidelines for the succession of management and consider the use of offsite staff.

IDENTIFY . . .

- * List all suppliers, shippers, businesses and other resources that are dealt with daily.
- * Find alternative sources for needed products and services. A disaster could strike an out of town supplier and still devastate a local business.
- * Locate different facilities that could accommodate the business if its primary location was inaccessible.

Risk Analysis

In business the three most important factors can be "Location, Location, Location." Unfortunately, in a disaster, the exact same factors can increase the risk. A business's proximity to fault lines, extreme weather events, floodplains and hazardous materials routes or storage sites must be considered. Compare these factors based on:

- * Frequency of event occurrence
- * Potential intensity and magnitude
- * Probable area affected
- * Speed of the event onset and its total potential duration

For more information on the hazards of Ada County go to:

<http://www.accem.org/hazards.html>

Let's Talk . . . How Will The Company Communicate?

Once a plan is activated, how will employees, clients and vendors be notified? A COOP must contain emergency contact lists and communications procedures. These lists and procedures should be tested annually to keep up with the changes in technology, employees, vendors etc.



Steps That Can Be Taken Today

Writing and practicing a COOP can seem like an overwhelming task. Dedicating staff to the project may be difficult for many businesses or organizations. There are a few steps that can be taken today:

- * Review the insurance policy to ensure it provides adequate coverage for the hazards of the area.
- * Video/photograph the business's facilities and other property to document possession and condition.
- * Store back ups of critical electronic records in a secure location outside of this area.

For more information on Business Preparedness go to: <http://www.accem.org/businessprep.html>



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