



12 Steps Towards Business Continuity

Step 1: Create a Planning Team

Businesses and organizations should discuss the importance of creating a planning team and who should be included. Consider establishing a chain of command in order to maintain leadership during any type of operational interruption.

Step 2: Communication

Maintaining reliable communications with employees, key personnel, customers, vendors and first responders can minimize confusion during any type of event. Options and solutions for a communications plan should be discussed.

Step 3: Identify Risks and Hazards

Learn what risks and hazards are most likely to affect or impact your business or organization. How should you plan against specific types of interruptions? Have your planning team discuss these risks and categorize each risk by probability (i.e. least likely to occur to most likely to occur) as well as by impact severity (i.e. least to most severe).

Step 4: Identify Internal/External Resources and Capabilities

Each business or organization has internal and external resources that can be utilized for emergency response and recovery. Planning teams should identify what resources and capabilities are immediately available during an emergency or disaster and how to access others as necessary.

Step 5: Perform a Vulnerability Assessment

Once your resources have been identified, categorize them in terms of importance (most to least). Identify the vulnerabilities or potential threats to each resource. Plan to mitigate the most serious vulnerabilities for the most valuable resources and work your way down as necessary.

Step 6: Determine Essential Business Functions

Your bottom line could depend on how quickly you are able to resume normal business operations—but what needs to be operating first? Planning teams should on the most essential business functions in order to determine the “who and the what” of business continuation.

Step 7: Human Resources

The human resources within your organization are your most valuable assets. Planning teams should evaluate employees’ emergency preparedness and determine what actions needs to be taken to ensure their readiness.

Step 8: Develop Workplace Evacuation and Sheltering Plans

Training employees in an evacuation or fire drill plan prepares them to respond properly during an emergency event. Assigning responsibility to assist customers, clients or patients out of the facility increases exit efficiency. Ask the following questions: Where should they go? What should they take? How long should they plan to stay away? Is it safer to shelter in place?

Step 9: Workplace Emergency Supply Items

Emergencies are unpredictable and could happen during working hours. Is your workplace prepared with necessary supplies to sustain occupants for 8-12 hours if necessary? Planning teams should develop supply lists of practical emergency kits for the office and vehicle for employees.

Step 10: Review Insurance Coverage

Would your insurance claim benefit be enough to keep you in business? Each month businesses pay a premium, confident that their coverage will be sufficient in case of an emergency. Identify alternative types of insurance to cover possible gaps.

Step 11: Locate and Protect Vital Records

Could you provide vital documents or records upon request to an insurance provider, banker, or tax accountant? Determine and locate the types of records that are vital to the survival of a business or organization. Make copies and store in a safe, secure place.

Step 12: Data Protection, Storage and Recovery

A major cause of business interruption is human error. Power failure, a facility fire, loss of data, etc. all could be the cause. What should your business or organization do to protect, store and recover vital records and safeguard their cyber system? Determine redundant storage capabilities.