

San Luis Obispo City Fire Department

Business Continuity and Emergency Planning Toolkit



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About this toolkit...

Businesses' are vital to our city's and community's economy and provides critical services to local residents. According to the Institute of Business and Home Safety, up to 25 percent of small and medium-sized businesses fail within three years of experiencing a major emergency.

It is important that businesses are prepared for emergencies. While many large organizations have in-house emergency planners and business continuity professionals, many of our community's businesses are small and cannot afford a disaster planning staff.

The Continuity Planning Toolkit was created to aid you to develop a continuity plan for your business by taking five simple steps:

1. Assess the Hazards that could affect your organization.

- Identify the hazards most likely to affect your organization and plan for those first.
- Consider the potential impacts of all hazards when developing emergency plans, such as whether your facility is vulnerable to flooding, or how a power outage might affect your organization's ability to do business or provide services.
- For more information about hazards in our communities, visit:
www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Office-of-Emergency-Services.aspx

2. Plan to Stay Open.

- How quickly your company or organization can resume normal operations after a fire, flood, or other emergency depends on emergency planning done today.
- Start by putting together a Business Continuity Plan or a Continuity of Operations Plan, which outlines how you will preserve or restore critical functions.
- Just as your organization changes over time, so do your preparedness needs.
- When you hire new employees or when there are changes in how your organization functions, you should update your plans and inform your people.

3. Talk to Your People.

- One of the best methods to ensure your organization's recovery is to provide for your employees well-being.
- Communicate regularly with employees before, during, and after an incident.

4. Protect your Investment.

- In addition to protecting your employees, it is important to safeguard your organization's physical assets.

5. Know how to Respond.

- Almost every business or organization is required by law to have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
- The EAP details how your business will address life safety issues in an emergency.
- If fire extinguishers are required or provided in your workplace, and if anyone will be evacuating during a fire or other emergency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires you to have an EAP.
- Please check with your legal counsel to make sure your business complies with government regulations.

Step One: Assess the Hazards that Could Affect your Organization

- Identify the most likely potential emergencies (internal and external).
- Determine how each would affect your organization's operations.

An important part of writing a continuity plan is to assess the hazards that could interrupt your operations and then create a flexible plan that addresses these hazards. When thinking about hazards, consider:

Historical: What types of emergencies have occurred in your community, at your facility or nearby? (Some examples include fires, floods, transportation, accidents and power outages that last three days or longer.)

Geographic: What can happen as a result of your location? (Some examples include proximity to flood-prone areas, hazardous material production and storage or major transportation routes.)

Human Factors: Are employees trained to work safely? Do they know what to do in an emergency? Human-caused emergencies can result from poor training and supervision, carelessness, substance abuse, fatigue, or outright malice (for instance, theft or cyber-crime).

Structural: What types of emergencies could result from the design or construction of the facility? Consider the physical construction of the office, lighting, evacuation routes and exits.

Step Two: Plan to Stay Open

1. Set up a planning team.

Planning should not be done in a vacuum. Developing a plan as a team will help to ensure that all critical functions are considered. Include coworkers from all levels in planning, but focus on those with expertise vital to daily business functions. Human resources personnel, information technology specialists, and facility management staff, as well as executives are critical to the planning process.

2. Identify who is in charge.

It is important to know who is in charge during an emergency and to communicate that to everyone in the organization. It is also important to establish procedures for succession of management, if the individual in charge is not available. You should choose someone who is likely to be on-site and at least one person who is off-site.

3. Examine your operations and business activities.

Carefully review your internal and external operations to identify what is critical to survival and recovery. Depending on your organization, your plan should also outline the critical services you provide to others. Payroll, financial decision making, and accounting are necessary for tracking costs in the event of a disaster.

4. Ensuring Access to Important Records.

Keep copies of important records you may need to rebuild in a waterproof, fireproof, portable container.

Store a second set of the following records at an off-site location:

- Building plans
- Insurance policies
- Employee contact and identification information
- Bank account records
- Tax records (three years' for insurance purposes)
- Supplier and shipping contact lists
- Backups of computer data
- Emergency or law enforcement contact information
- Other priority documents

5. Identify an alternate location.

Plan what you will do if your physical space is not accessible. Consider whether you can run the organization from a different location or from your home. Develop mutual-aid relationships with other companies to share facilities in case a disaster makes your location unusable.

Next, you need to determine which staff, facilities, materials, equipment, records, contacts, procedures, and contacts, are necessary to keep the organization operating.

You should make a list of your most important customers, clients, and consumers and plan ways to communicate with them during and after a disaster.

Finally, develop emergency plans with key suppliers, shippers, resources, and other vendors you depend on to operate. Cultivate relationships with more than one company in case your primary contractor cannot meet your needs. Let contractors know which supplies are critical to your activities.

6. Plan for employees with special needs.

Be sure to include people with disabilities in emergency planning. Ask about communication difficulties, physical limitations, equipment instructions, and medication procedures. Address their needs at each step of the planning process.

Identify people willing to help coworkers with disabilities and be sure they are able to handle the job. This is particularly important if someone needs to be lifted or carried.

Plan how you will alert people who cannot hear an alarm or may not understand instructions.

Practice your plan to ensure employees with disabilities and their helpers know what is expected of them.

7. Write a plan.

Once you read through this toolkit and completed the steps outlined, it is important to document your plan in writing so that it can be easily communicated to others and reviewed when needed.

Appendix A to this Toolkit provides you a plan template that you can use to develop your plan.

Step Three: Talk to Your People

1. Prepare your Staff.

Your employees and coworkers are your most valuable asset and they will need support, direction, and communication during an emergency. Some questions that may be asked of you include:

- What staff will be necessary in an emergency?
- How long will you continue to pay those that are not essential or cannot come to work?
- How will they travel to work during an emergency if, for example, public transportation is not running?
- Will you allow your employees to telecommute or work from home during an emergency?
- How will you track staff time?
- How will you accommodate employees who are distressed as a result of the emergency or who are afraid to come to work?

It is also important to encourage your coworkers and employees to prepare themselves and their families for an emergency. This includes developing a household emergency plan, assembling an evacuation go-kit, and creating a home emergency supply kit.

To obtain more information on being ready for emergencies, visit: <http://www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/fire-department/community-emergency-disaster-preparedness>

You should also consider placing emergency preparedness information in newsletters and on your organization's intranet as well as including disaster training in new employee orientations.

2. Train your staff and practice your plan.

It is important to build emergency preparedness into the culture of your organization. Once you have a plan, you need to train your staff. Talk with your staff frequently and practice what you intend to do during and after an emergency at least once a year.

Evaluate and revise your plan based on lessons learned or changes in the organization.

3. Set-up a communications network.

Set up a telephone calling tree, an e-mail alert, or a call-in voice recording to communicate with employees during an emergency.

Designate a phone number for employees to leave an "I'm okay" message in case of a catastrophic disaster.

4. Support employee health after a disaster.

Emergencies happen in spite of everyone's best efforts to prevent them, so learn about what people need to help them recover after a disaster. Getting back to work is important to personal recovery. Workplace routines facilitate recovery by providing employees an opportunity to be active and restore social contact.

5. Train your Staff and Practice your Plan

- Encourage adequate food, rest, and recreation.
- Allow employees time at home to care for their families.
- Reestablish routines as soon as possible.
- Create opportunities for breaks where coworkers can talk openly about their feelings.
- Sharing with others can speed personal recovery.
- Suggest counseling to help coworkers address their fears and anxieties.

Step Four: Protect Your Investment

1. Obtain adequate insurance coverage and understand your policies.

In addition to protecting your employees, it is important to safeguard your organization's physical assets.

Insurance is a non-negotiable cost of doing business. Inadequate coverage can lead to major financial loss if your organization is damaged, destroyed, or interrupted for an extended period of time. Insurance policies vary so check with your agent or provider about physical losses, flood coverage, and business interruption.

- Understand what your policy covers. Find out if the payments will cover replacement costs of vital equipment. Know the deductibles.
- Consider applying for additional coverage if you feel exposed to specific dangers like floods.
- Consider how you will pay creditors and employees.
- Keep in mind the high cost of rental equipment, temporary workers, and data recovery that accompany disaster recovery.
- Find out what records your insurance provider will want to see after an emergency and store them with your protected documents.

2. Prepare for utility disruptions.

Organizations of all kinds depend on electricity, gas, telecommunications, sewers, and other utilities to operate. You should plan ahead for extended disruptions of these services during and after a disaster.

- Carefully examine which utilities are vital to your organization's day-to-day operation.
- Speak with service providers about potential alternatives, such as portable generators, to power vital operations.

3. Make fire safety a part of your plan.

Fire is the most common of all disasters in the Arroyo Grande area. Each year fires claim lives and cause thousands of dollars in damage across the city. There are ways to protect your employees and your business:

- Have your office, plant, or facility inspected to ensure compliance with fire codes and regulations.
- Install smoke alarms, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers.
- Discuss who will alert the fire department and how they will do it.
- Plan and practice how to evacuate in a fire.

4. Plan to secure your facility and equipment.

While you cannot always predict what will happen, here are some steps you can take to help protect your assets:

- Secure entrances and exits.
- Plan for mail safety.
- Identify which production equipment, such as machinery, computers, or custom parts, is necessary to keep the business running.
- Conduct a room-by-room walk-through to determine what needs to be secured
- Attach equipment and cabinets to walls or other stable locations
- Elevate equipment off the floor to avoid electrical hazards in the event of flooding
- Plan how to transport, replace, or repair vital equipment if it is damaged or destroyed.
- Store extra supplies, materials, and equipment for use in an emergency.

If you own your building, create a site map that indicates utility shutoffs, water hydrants, water main valves, water lines, gas main valves, gas lines, electrical cutoffs, electrical substations, storm drains, sewer lines, floor plans, alarm systems, fire extinguishers, fire suppression

systems, exits, stairways, designated escape routes, restricted areas, hazardous materials (cleaning supplies and chemicals) and high-value items.

5. Protect the air.

In some emergencies hazardous particles may be released into the air, such as during a chemical release. A building can provide a good barrier between contaminated air outside and people inside.

Take a close look at your building's heating, ventilating, and air conditioning.

(HVAC) system and know how to shut it down in the event of an emergency involving contaminated air.

6. Improve Cyber Security.

Protecting your data and information technology systems may not require experts.

- Use antivirus software and keep it up to date.
- Do not open e-mail from unknown sources.
- Back up your data and store it somewhere safe.
- Subscribe to the Department of Homeland Security National Cyber Alert System, www.us-cert.gov, to receive free, timely alerts on new threats and learn how to better protect yourself in cyberspace.

Step Five: Know How to Respond

1. Know when to Shelter-in-Place and when to Evacuate.

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the disaster, the first important decision after an incident occurs may be whether to stay where you are (shelter-in-place) or to leave (evacuate). You should understand and plan for both possibilities in advance

2. Develop an Emergency Action Plan.

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) should include:

- Means of alerting employees to an emergency or an evacuation.
- Methods of reporting fires and other emergencies to local officials.
- Evacuation plans and emergency escape route assignments.
- Procedures for employees who stay behind to operate critical operations before they evacuate.
- Procedures to account for all employees after an evacuation is completed.

- Rescue and medical duties for employees who can perform them.
- Names or job titles of people who can be contacted for further information or explanation of the plan:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

3. Evacuation.

Some emergencies, such as a building fire, will require employees to leave the workplace quickly. The ability to evacuate workers and customers effectively can save lives.

- Decide in advance who in the building has the authority to order an evacuation. Create a chain of command so that others are authorized to act in case the designated person is not available.
- Identify who will shut down critical operations and lock the doors
- Develop a system for knowing who is in your building.
- Determine who will assist persons with disabilities.
- Designate an assembly site. Pick one location near your facility and another in a nearby area in case you have to move farther away. Make sure to account for all workers and customers as they arrive at the designated site.
- Assemble an office Go Bag, a pre-assembled package of essential personal supplies, copies of important documents and contracts and a CD or USB flash drive with documents, plans, and contact information saved.

4. Shelter-in-Place.

There may be situations, such as a tornado or chemical release, when going outdoors may be dangerous. Leaving the area may take too long or put you in harm's way. In such a case, it is safer to stay indoors.

Build an office emergency Shelter-In-Place Kit and include items such as three days of water and food for all employees, a battery-powered radio and extra batteries, flashlights, and a first aid kit.

If local authorities believe that outside air has been contaminated, you may be instructed to stay inside until it is safe. Direct your staff, customers, clients, and consumers to a room with as few windows and doors as possible. An above-ground location is best because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if windows are closed. Lock doors and close windows and air vents. Turn off fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems. Seal all

windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Monitor radio and television for updates from emergency officials.

Putting All the Steps Together

Step One: Assess the hazards that could affect your organization.

- Identify the most likely potential emergencies (internal and external)
- Determine how each potential emergency would affect your organization's operations

Step Two: Plan to Stay Open.

- Set up a planning team
- Identify who is in charge
- Examine your operations and business activities
- Identify an alternate location
- Plan for employees with special needs
- Write a plan

Step Three: Talk to Your People.

- Prepare your staff
- Train you staff and practice your plan
- Sign-up to receive emergency alerts
- Set-up a communications network
- Support employee health after a disaster

Step Four: Protect your Investment.

- Obtain adequate insurance coverage and understand your policies
- Prepare for utility disruptions
- Make fire safety a part of your plan
- Plan to secure your facility and equipment
- Protect the air
- Improve Cyber Security

Step Five: Know how to respond.

- Know when to Shelter-in-Place and when to evacuate
- Develop an Emergency Action Plan

Appendix A: Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness Plan Template

Sample Emergency Plan

Sample Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness Plan

PLAN TO STAY IN BUSINESS

Business Name
Address
City, State
Telephone Number

The following person is our primary crisis manager and will serve as the company spokesperson in an emergency.

Primary Emergency Contact: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Alternative Number: _____

E-mail: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Dial 9-1-1 in an Emergency

Non-Emergency Police/Fire: _____

Insurance Provider: _____

If this location is not accessible we will operate from location below:

Business Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____

Telephone Number: _____

If the person is unable to manage the crisis, the person below will succeed in management:

Secondary Emergency Contact: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Alternative Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Sample Emergency Plan

Sample Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness Plan

BE INFORMED

The following natural and man-made disasters could impact our business.

- o _____
- o _____
- o _____
- o _____

EMERGENCY PLANNING TEAM

The following people will participate in emergency planning and crisis management.

- o _____
- o _____
- o _____
- o _____

WE PLAN TO COORDINATE WITH OTHERS

The following people from neighboring businesses and our building management will participate on our emergency planning team.

- o _____
- o _____
- o _____

OUR CRITICAL OPERATIONS

The following is a prioritized list of our critical operations, staff and procedures we need to recover from a disaster.

1. Operation Staff in Charge Action Plan
2. Sample Emergency Plan
3. Sample Business Continuity and Disaster Preparedness Plan

SUPPLIERS AND CONTRACTORS

Company Name: _____
Street Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____
Contact Name: _____ Account Number: _____
Materials/Service Provided: _____

If this company experiences a disaster, we will obtain supplies/materials from the following:

Company Name: _____
Street Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____
Contact Name: _____ Account Number: _____
Materials/Service Provided: _____

If this company experiences a disaster, we will obtain supplies/materials from the following:

Company Name: _____
Street Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____
Contact Name: _____ Account Number: _____
Materials/Service Provided: _____

Sample Emergency Plan

Sample Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness Plan

EVACUATION PLAN FOR _____ LOCATION

(Insert address)

- o We have developed these plans in collaboration with neighboring businesses and building owners to avoid confusion or gridlock.
- o We have located, copied and posted building and site maps.
- o Exits are clearly marked.
- o We will practice evacuation procedures ____ times a year.

If we must leave the workplace quickly:

1. Warning System: _____

We will test the warning system and record results ____ times a year.

2. Assembly Site: _____

3. Assembly Site Manager & Alternate: _____

a. Responsibilities Include: _____

4. Shut Down Manager & Alternate: _____

a. Responsibilities Include: _____

5. _____ is responsible for issuing all clear.

Sample Emergency Plan

Sample Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness Plan

SHELTER-IN-PLACE PLAN FOR _____ LOCATION

(Insert address)

- o We have talked to co-workers about which emergency supplies, if any, the company will provide in the shelter location and which supplies individuals might consider keeping in a portable kit personalized for individual needs.
- o We will practice shelter procedures ____ times a year.

If we must take shelter quickly

1. Warning System: _____
We will test the warning system and record results ____ times a year.
2. Storm Shelter Location: _____
3. "Seal the Room" Shelter Location _____
4. Shelter Manager & Alternate: _____
 - a. Responsibilities Include: _____
5. Shut Down Manager & Alternate: _____
 - a. Responsibilities Include: _____
6. _____ is responsible for issuing all clear.

Sample Emergency Plan

Sample Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness Plan

COMMUNICATIONS

We will communicate our emergency plans with co-workers in the following way:

In the event of a disaster we will communicate with employees in the following way:

CYBER SECURITY

1. To protect our computer hardware, we will: _____
2. To protect our computer software, we will: _____
3. If our computers are destroyed, we will use back-up computers at the following location:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

RECORDS BACK-UP

_____ is responsible for backing up our critical records including payroll and accounting systems.

Back-up records including a copy of this plan, site maps, insurance policies, bank account records and computer back ups are stored onsite _____.

Another set of back-up records is stored at the following off-site location: _____.

If our accounting and payroll records are destroyed, we will provide for continuity in the following ways:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Sample Emergency Plan

Sample Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness Plan

EMPLOYEE EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

The following is a list of our co-workers and their individual emergency contact information:

ANNUAL REVIEW

We will review and update this Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness plan in

_____.

For additional Business Emergency Preparedness information, visit

www.fivecitiesfireauthority.org

www.fema.gov/business

www.calema.ca.gov, link to Preparedness

or contact

San Luis Fire Department
(805) 781-7380

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