

# Emergency Plan: Business continuity - making it work

*Guidance note developed and shared by the Hampshire Solent 'Emergency Preparedness' Peer Development Group.*

Your Emergency Plan should detail what will happen in the event of an emergency, but what happens next? If you don't plan for business continuity you could survive a disaster but end up shutting your doors to the public forever.

## Legislation and guidance

Civil Contingencies Act 2004 – requires local authorities to provide general advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations in relation to business continuity management. For specific advice, local authorities are entitled to levy a charge.

British Standards Institute BS25999-1 Business Continuity Management – Code of Practice is the standard intended to be used by any organisation that wants an understanding of how to develop a Business Continuity Strategy.

Community Risk Registers can provide businesses with useful information on the risks in the local area. Community Risk Registers are available online.

## Steps to business continuity planning

### Step 1: Document key personnel

Make a list of all those people who perform key functions without which the organisation can't function. List the job titles and specific functions. Also think about who performs those roles when that person is on holiday or sick. These are your critical staff.

### Step 2: Identify who can work from home

Make a list of all staff who can operate from home. It would be a good idea to make sure that all your critical staff (see step 1) can do so.

### Step 3: Document external contacts

As well as your list of external suppliers/contractors, make a list of anyone you may need to contact in the next few days/weeks. This could include shop suppliers schools bookings contacts, Friends groups etc.

### Step 4: Document critical equipment

Make sure you have off site equipment such as laptops, printers etc. available. This also includes external hard disks that you should be keeping up to date on a weekly basis.

### **Step 5: Identify critical documentation**

Make sure you have copies (hard and/or electronic) of all documentation you would need to start again. As well as all your collections documentation, you'll also need things such as:

- Charity/ trust and company documentation
- Financial and partnership agreements
- Other legal papers inc. lease papers, tax returns etc.
- Utility bills
- Critical HR documents
- Contracts, suppliers etc.

### **Step 6: Identify contingency equipment options**

You may have already set up plans for an alternative centre of operation but have you considered needing to rent IT equipment, printers etc?

### **Step 7: Make a 'how to' list**

As well as listing who is responsible for what. Make a list in reverse e.g. if 'liaising with the governing body' is listed under the responsibilities of the Emergency Response Co-ordinator, list Emergency Response Co-ordinator under 'liaising with the governing body'. This may just throw up a few gaps in both areas of responsibility and jobs needing to be done.

### **Step 8: Work out what should happen when**

It's fine to know who's doing what but when should it happen? When do schools need to be rung, bills need to be paid, press releases sent? Use your 'how to' list to indicate a timescale. It's a good idea to aim for a full recovery time and steps along the way e.g. we aim to be fully operational in three months. At one week we aim to.....

### **Step 8: Test the plan**

Hold training sessions for all staff, trustees and volunteers. They're all on your list of people to call! It's no good if they battle through the elements to keep the place going in adversity, if they don't know what to do when they get there.

This could include table-top training with each session covering an imagined disaster and period that follows.

### **Step 9: Revise and evaluate the plan**

Use the training sessions to identify problems and gaps and revise the plan on a rolling basis, making sure to destroy out of date plans and keep everyone up to date with the most recent copies.

**Additional resources**

Benchmarking/checklist

Recommended table-top training sessions.