

Business Continuity Management

Business Continuity Management is a procedure that is set in place in the event of any kind of disruption or incident. It ensures that the organisation and delivery of service in the public and private sector can survive challenges and threats by identifying the critical processes and plans to prepare and protect essential businesses which serve the community.

- **80% of businesses affected by a major incident close within a month**
- **90% of businesses that lose data from a disaster are forced to shut within two years**
- **58% of UK organisations were disrupted by September 11th. 12% of these were seriously disrupted.**
- **Almost 1 in 5 businesses suffer a major disruption every year.**

Emergency Planning can offer advice and support. You must make your own plans and preparations, you know your business and the political processes. All advice is free of charge and we can give you details of websites and publications offering further and more specialist advice, although for specific advice and assistance there may be a charge.

Why we need Business Continuity

Without effective business continuity planning an incident could result in:

- **A complete failure of your business**
- **Loss of income**
- **Loss of reputation / customers**
- **Financial, legal and regulatory penalties**
- **Human resources issues**
- **Insurance premiums may be affected**

An effective plan should be in place and staff should be aware of it and it should be reviewed on a regular and continual basis. It is wise to test your plans too.

Business Continuity Process

- **Understand your business and its key objectives**
- **Identify key activities and staff working in these areas**
- **Identify potential threats**
- **Assess internal and external risks**
- **Calculate the impact**
- **Review the results**
- **Make plans to reduce the threat or the impact**
- **Make sure staff are trained**
- **Test the plan**
- **Audit the results**
- **Implement any changes required.**

Examples of Business Continuity Risks

Your continuity plan should cover the following questions.

- **Have you considered financial, legal or regulatory penalties that could be imposed if you fail to provide a critical service which you are contracted to do?**
- **Consider how each of your critical services could continue during a prolonged power loss – how would you be affected by a power loss of 24 hours or more**
- **Which of your critical services would be jeopardised if your building was evacuated for a week with all access denied?**
- **What services would be impacted if access were denied for a month?**
- **How many staff would be needed to continue to cover critical tasks and how would you accommodate them?**
- **Have you an alternative space in which to work effectively? Can staff work from home?**
- **Do you need access to any services that are not available at a temporary site?**
- **Do you use special software, stationary (ie forms)? How long can you manage without such equipment and how long would it take to replace such items?**

Planning Method

To review the plans that are currently in place, if any, first prioritise the order of criticality of services. Start the review with the most critical services and work through all services that require a Business Continuity Plan.

If you do not yet have any plans in place, begin by prioritising, then listing the key services you offer. Prepare and document alternative arrangements so that each of these priority services could continue in all circumstances, including prolonged power failure, lack of access to office buildings, loss of key staff through accident or illness etc.

Stage One

- **Identify and prioritise critical services**
- **List all known risks**
- **Plot each identified risk on a graph of impact X likelihood using a 1-5 measurement**
- **Decide how much risk you can prevent or reduce and how much your business can take. Plan for the remainder.**

Stage Two

- **Prepare a generic plan of actions to enable you to continue each of your priority services which also details specific actions for different types of risk and different services**

Stage Three

- **Discuss your plan with all relevant staff, including the staff involved with key services, cover all training needs.**
- **Simulate a theoretical disaster and test your plan.**

Business Continuity Planning is equally significant for small companies as it is for large companies. Building in Business Continuity and making it part of the way that you run your business, rather than having to *Firefight* an emergency, helps you to achieve business as usual in the event of an incident.