

# Small Business Disaster Preparedness

To minimize the impact of disasters on employees, property, and operations, businesses must make preparations. They should create a plan, identify priorities, train employees, and review insurance coverage. Here are resources to help prepare for disasters and organize your response.

## TIPS TOP 10 PREPAREDNESS TIPS

1. Build a team to create your plan.
2. Gather critical documents and information needed for decision making.
3. Identify and prioritize critical operations and processes.
4. Identify hazards—the potential disruptions to your operations.
5. Keep it simple: Build your plan and create a grab and go case.
6. Create a communications strategy and plan to use post emergency. Maintain emergency contact lists for employees, vendors, suppliers, and other key people.
7. Recruit and train employee volunteers that can keep emergency supplies and take the preparedness message home.
8. Back up and store vital records and data off-site.
9. Take action to mitigate the potential impact on your equipment, buildings, facilities, inventory, and storage. Consider insurance and a generator.
10. Exercise, test, and update your plan. Keep it current.

Only 33% of small businesses have business interruption insurance.

*National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)*



## PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

For additional resources, visit our guide at: [www.uschamberfoundation.org/ccc](http://www.uschamberfoundation.org/ccc).

### Preparedness Guides

- Comprehensive business preparedness guide that uses real business stories.  
<http://bit.ly/1yN3up9>
- Guide to prepare and assist businesses affected by a disaster. <http://bit.ly/1BJoOS8>
- FEMA's Preparedness Planning for Your Business. <http://www.ready.gov/business>
- The American Red Cross' Ready Rating program provides a 123-question assessment to help businesses identify gaps and strengths and where to focus attention. [www.readyrating.org](http://www.readyrating.org)



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## Checklists—General

- Emergency Preparedness Checklist for Small Businesses from the American Red Cross: <http://bit.ly/1qPsrfp>.
- IOWA Business Emergency Preparedness Plan: <http://bit.ly/11e5XOn>.
- Business Disaster Planning Checklist – A quick list broken down into bullets of tips or questions: <http://bit.ly/1t4CoVZ>.
- Checklist focused on security issues: <http://bit.ly/1A8ABYw>.
- One page checklist to act upon as a disaster is approaching: <http://bit.ly/1u2sCDX>.

## Checklists—By Hazard

- Transportation and Utility Disruptions: <http://bit.ly/1BJp3Nf>
- Hurricane Preparedness: <http://bit.ly/1xQsPQM>
- Tornado Preparedness: <http://bit.ly/1xIYhzc>
- Flood Preparedness: <http://bit.ly/11l5rhm>
- Earthquake Preparedness: <http://bit.ly/1t4LS3G>

## Business Continuity Planning (BCP)

- This video from the IRS shows four business areas to consider for BCP.  
<http://1.usa.gov/1u2ABRs>
- Preparing for Disaster—Questions and tips to consider before a disaster happens.  
<http://bit.ly/1A8IKff>
- DRB Toolkit© (Disaster Resistant Business)—A step-by-step, fully customizable software tool to help all sizes and types of businesses build a disaster plan, train employees, run exercises, and prepare operations. <http://www.drbtoolkit.org> Use discount code: USChamber
- FEMA's IT Disaster Recovery Plan. <http://1.usa.gov/1bRoHXx>
- Planning and Responding to Workplace Emergencies – Fact sheet for protecting employees. <http://1.usa.gov/1vkVvrT>
- American Red Cross' Preparing Your Business for the Unthinkable.  
<http://rdcrss.org/1EVU0f3>



## INSURANCE

Insurance is not a tax. While often viewed as a costly necessity to be kept as low as possible, it is a risk management tool critical for all businesses. It can reduce the financial impact of accidents, fires, and other unplanned disruptions. It protects businesses from events out of their control and improves chances for survival. Here are some tips to keep your business running smoothly:

- Review your coverage, and design an insurance program that fits your business and risks. Determine adequate coverage. Bring in a professional to explain different types of available coverage to decide the best fit for your business.
- When disaster strikes, file a claim as soon as possible. Plan which on what items you will be required to provide (eg. photos of equipment pre- and post-disaster).

71% of small businesses say they are “very dependent” on 1 or 2 key people, but only 22% have “Key Person Insurance.”

*National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)*



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## COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYEES, SUPPLIERS, AND CUSTOMERS

During disasters, communication with employees, suppliers, customers, and the general public is essential. It is also one of the first to break or experience challenges. To plan for potential business interruptions, create a crisis communication strategy as part of your larger BCP. Here are some tips:

- Keep your emergency contact list current with every possible mode to reach each person (personal phone and cell number, email, address; family member's phone number and email; evacuation plan and contact; social media: Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- Consider an alert mechanism to keep your employees, customers, vendors, suppliers, and stakeholders informed and regularly updated in multiple ways (e.g., email, text messages). Test it regularly.
- Use existing social media platforms to communicate online (e.g., Facebook, Twitter).
- Have procedures in place to work with the media.
- Identify a spokesperson and backups to be the only public voice of your company.
- Create key messages and talking points specific to the intended audience (eg. employees, vendors, etc.).
- Update the communications strategy often. Train employees and provide to new hires with the communications strategy.
- Communicate often with customers to keep them informed of delays in delivery, alternatives, expectations, and any compensation. Be solution oriented.
- Monitor outside communications to determine what is working well and what is needed.

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## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

- If you don't have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), consider starting one, as it addresses reasons for productivity decline.
- Consider how your company can help employees and families access: medical care, food, housing, and other essentials.
- Those hit hardest may not have working phones or the ability to call area resources to find new housing, child care, a kennel, a rental car, or other necessary services. Plan to connect employees with resources.
- To provide any financial employee aid (eg. housing, emergency grants, advance on future wages).
- For a comprehensive guide to employee assistance, visit: <http://bit.ly/1qPqsrr>



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