

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING SELF ASSESSMENT



Every business is at risk of disruption. The risks come in many forms. Some, like severe weather, river flooding, fuel shortages and flu pandemic are usually preceded by warnings whereas short notice events, such as fires, utilities and technology failures, give less time to think. A quick response is usually required but in a predetermined way.

The impacts of disruption, which threaten the resources on which businesses depend, are far outnumbered by the types of events that may cause them. Businesses need to have a clear understanding of the minimum resource requirements to deliver the essential parts of the business and how long they have to recover. They need to be able to prioritise, redeploy assets, and to know how and who to ask for help.

Business continuity is about improving resilience to disruption from localised or widespread incidents so that businesses can continue without interruption or be recovered in minimum time. Such planning might avoid:

- Failure of your business
- Loss of reputation or customers
- Financial, legal and regulatory penalties
- Human resource issues
- An impact on insurance premiums

80% of businesses without a business continuity plan that are hit by a major incident either never re-open or close within 18 months.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The next stage is to write a Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The information gathered when completing this checklist will help to identify areas to be addressed in your plan.

A business continuity plan combines all the information from the checklist to give an overview of how your business responds to a crisis at every level of the organisation. It outlines the responsibilities and actions of your staff and highlights the risks most likely to affect the business. By testing the plan, staff can become familiar with what may be required and give input to improvements that may benefit the business. Regularly reviewing your plan will ensure that changes to staff, suppliers or external factors can be included. A plan is a living document and needs to be regularly reviewed and tested.


- Step 1. Analyse your business
- Step 2. Assess the risks
- Step 3. Develop your Strategy
- Step 4. Review your plan
- Step 5. Train your staff

Having a business continuity plan strengthens the business and can make it more productive by identifying weaknesses in the organisation and areas for improvement. Many customers will only deal with a business which has a robust business continuity plan. By ensuring that your key customers and suppliers have business continuity plans of their own you are protecting your business. Remember a business that has planned for a crisis is more likely to survive than a business who says 'it won't happen to me'.

In Oxfordshire in 2007 and 2014 severe flooding left many businesses needing to activate their business continuity plans. Every year local businesses are denied access to their premises due to fire, flood, police incidents, etc.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT


Reducing the risk of fire to your business can begin by having a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment of your premises. This is a legal duty which should be undertaken by a responsible person under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Details can be found here:

 communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw/aboutguides/

There are many sources of information to help you with the planning process and some links to useful sites are included below:

WEBSITES

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

 oxfordshire.gov.uk

 oxfordshire.gov.uk/emergencyplanning

THAMES VALLEY LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM

 thamesvalleylrf.org.uk/

COMMUNITY RISK REGISTER

 thamesvalleylrf.org.uk/useful-links/publications/risk-register.ashx

BUSINESS CONTINUITY INSTITUTE

 thebci.org/

LOCATION

Is your business part of a complex, is it near an industrial estate, on a flood plain, etc.?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Have you considered the types of risk that might occur due to the actions / operations of other businesses located nearby?, i.e. risk of pollution, etc.			
Have you thought about risks associated with the environment?, i.e. water, climate?			
Do you have regular contact with neighbouring businesses?, i.e. local business forum?			
Do you have contact details for the local businesses in your area?			

INSURANCE

Premiums may be reduced if you can demonstrate robust business continuity plans.

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do you have sufficient insurance to pay for disruption to business?, i.e. cost of repairs, hire of temporary staff, lease of temporary accommodation and equipment?			
Do you have copies of insurance details in more than one location to enable you to contact them immediately disruption occurs?			
Can you reduce your premiums by having a plan or putting any measures in place to reduce the risk of disruption such as flood barriers?			

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PACK

It is worth considering assembling a crash pack to hold items needed in a crisis. It should contain enough information and equipment to start the recovery process for your business. It needs to be easily accessible and ideally replicated in an off-site location.

EMERGENCY CRASH PACK

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Business recovery plan				First aid kit			
Fire procedure				Mobile phones with credit			
Employee contact details				Camera & spare batteries			
Key suppliers contact details				Torch			
Contact details for key customers				Dust masks			
Site plan				Tape measure			
Back up disks / sticks etc.				Whiteboard & pens			
Laptop				Spare keys for buildings & vehicles			
Fire plans and contact details for the emergency services				Stationery including message pads, pens, pencils			
Contact details for key services i.e. IT, phones, power etc.				Megaphone if your business covers a large site			

This list is an example of items that may be useful; depending on your business you will need to vary the contents of your crash pack.

CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO HAVE A PLAN?

Nearly 1 in 5 businesses suffer disruption each year.

Business continuity provides a planned response and puts in place measures to reduce interruption and minimise losses.

If you don't have a business continuity plan a short 10 minute assessment will help to outline issues you need to consider to enable you to prepare for an emergency that may disrupt your business. If you do have a plan then it may help you to identify any issues that haven't previously been considered.

The Local Authority has a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to promote business continuity, seen as a way of improving resilience within the community.

An effective plan can make your business more attractive to customers as many now require suppliers to have a business continuity plan. The planning process may improve your business. Having a business continuity plan may also reduce your insurance premiums.

Help us to help you by completing the 10 minute self-assessment below to see if your business is prepared for an emergency.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY – 10 MINUTE ASSESSMENT

The aim of this assessment is to highlight issues you need to consider to help prepare for an emergency that may disrupt your business.

What do you do on a day to day basis?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Have you considered the impact of direct risks on your business? (IT failure, equipment failure, loss of power, fire, staff absence, supply chain failure etc.)			
Have you considered the impact of external risks? (Theft, flood, fire from a neighbouring property, denial of access to your property)			

PERSONNEL

People are the greatest asset and investment to most businesses. During a crisis staff may need to lead or carry out many of the tasks required. Involving them in the planning and testing of the plan can strengthen your business.

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do you have a list of employees' telephone numbers?			
Do you have a list of key contacts telephone numbers?			
Do you have up to date job descriptions and a hierarchy chart for your business including temporary and contract workers?			
Do you have staff personal information, i.e. next of kin for all staff including temporary or contract workers?			
Are these details held in more than one secure location (preferably one off site)?			

PERSONNEL DURING A DISRUPTION

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do your staff know who is in charge during a crisis and how to contact them in a crisis?			
Do your staff know what to do in an incident; have you shared the plan?			
Have your staff been assigned specific roles in the event of disruption?			
Do you have an out of hours contact procedure for staff and key contacts?			
Do you have staff with first aid or medical training?			
Do you have alternative working arrangements - work from home, second premises etc.?			
Do you have specific staff with critical skills; do other staff know how to carry out these skills?			
Are these details held in more than one secure location (preferably one off site)?			

BUILDINGS

Buildings are usually the greatest physical asset of any business.

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do you have a fire risk assessment?			
Do you have a floor / site plan for your building?			
Are the plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems checked on a regular basis?			
Do you carry out end of day checks after everybody has left?			
Do you ensure that all appliances are turned off?			
Do you check that all doors and windows are locked?			

BUILDING FACILITIES DURING A DISRUPTION

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do you have a list of key contacts for building / equipment maintenance - electricity, gas, water, telephones, lift, etc.?			
Are you and your staff familiar with the location of mains switches and valves?			
Do you have fire safety procedures and do you have regular fire drills?			
Do you have an evacuation procedure for your building and are your staff trained and familiar with it?			
Do you have primary and secondary evacuation points?			
Do you have generator backups?			
Do you have an alternative location you could use during a crisis?			

COMPANY EQUIPMENT

Many businesses rely on specialist equipment or vehicles.

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do you have someone who is accountable for assets in your business?			
Do you have controls over the movement of company equipment?			
Do you have a regular inventory of your equipment?			
Do you have current maintenance contracts for your equipment?			

SECURITY

Internal and external security is important. Theft, malicious damage, etc. can all affect the ability of your business to function. Simple measures can be put in place to improve security and awareness.

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do you have a security system installed?			
Do you have a security policy?			
Do you have an entry and exit procedure policy for staff / visitors / customers / contractors?			
Are contractors fully checked (company as well as each individual)?			
Do you check references fully?			
Do you regularly check the integrity of external fences, gates and doors?			
Does anyone else have access to your property / site?			

PAPER DOCUMENTS

As with electronic data it is important to protect data held in hard copy. This data is vulnerable to fire, flood, theft, loss, etc.

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do you copy, scan or back-up your information?			
Do you store paper copies in fire and flood-proof lockable containers?			
Do you have copies at an off-site location?			
Is someone responsible for the upkeep of your files & accounts?			
Do you have a clear desk policy?			

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT is central to many businesses and threats to computers and systems are well known. It is important that staff are informed of any dangers and any systems to protect your IT.

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Is IT critical to your business?			
Do you regularly back-up your information?			
Do you hold a copy of the back-up off site?			
Do you have IT maintenance staff or maintenance contracts?			
Do you have and have you tested an IT disaster recovery plan?			
Is your antivirus software up to date?			
Are computer errors and logs monitored?			
Are there IT security policies and procedures in place?			
Are all staff aware of email and internet usage policies? Are mobile phones and devices included?			
Do you know how many platforms / servers / applications or operating systems support critical business functions?			
Is your system part of a larger network?			
Do you know how long it would take to recover IT functions?			
Are laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones password encrypted?			

SUPPLIERS & CUSTOMERS

A business can be affected by events out of its control: disruption to suppliers or customers could affect your business.

Assessing the risk and putting procedures in place could minimise the effect of disruptions. Good communications with your suppliers / customers will enable you to respond better in a crisis.

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do you have the correct contact details for your suppliers and customers?			
Are these details held in more than one location, preferably one off-site?			
Do you see your key suppliers and customers business continuity plans? (They may require you to have a plan)			
Do their plans require you to reduce or increase your business in response to their crisis?			
Do you have key customers that you would need to be in constant contact with during a crisis?			
If one of your key suppliers or customers went out of business would it affect your business?			