

If the lights went
out

would you
● be left
**in the
dark?**

Business
Continuity in
Emergencies

If the lights went out, would you still be open for business?

If the worst happened, could your business continue operating?

In an emergency such as fire or flood, you could be up and running again sooner than you think – with a business continuity plan.

What is business continuity?

Business continuity is the process of planning so that your business or organisation can cope with the unexpected – and so when faced with disruption or disaster you can carry on or resume operations with minimum delay.

Why have a business continuity plan?

The strongest motivator should be the survival of your business. For service or voluntary organisations it will be ensuring they will be able to meet their obligations to the community.

Adopting the attitude 'it will not happen to me' is not a sensible option. Most of us have life insurance to protect our families, and while many will have insurance against various risks to their business it is unlikely that insurance will cover all of the costs or problems from a significant incident.

- One in five businesses suffers a major disruption every year.
- More than 50 per cent of companies who do not have a business continuity plan are hit by a disaster and go out of business within 12 months.

How much will it cost?

A simple plan for an average business should not cost very much. It will take a modest amount of your time, but should not be a major expense.

Would you be left in the dark?

If your business is heavily dependent upon technology or in a vulnerable location for flooding then the expense is likely to be greater. However, many of the basic essentials of business continuity are very simple and cheap.

How do I ensure that my business is prepared?

Listed are a number of web sites and actions to help you prepare a plan. The plan need not be complex, and many of the actions are simple and effective.

Simple measures could include:

- **Make a full list of all organisations and individuals you deal with including staff, suppliers, utilities, customers, professional associations, insurers. The list should include all details and contact information and be kept up to date with copies held at work and at least one other safe location.**
- **If you use databases and other computer-based applications back them up regularly and keep the back up copies in at least one other safe location.**
- **Make sure your computer systems are password protected, and regularly changed.**
- **Make sure your premises are properly secured to cut the risk of theft and damage.**
- **Make a fire evacuation plan, and ensure good fire protection measures are in place to minimise the impact of a fire.**
- **If at risk of flooding make a flood protection plan, putting suitable precautions in place.**
- **If reliant upon suppliers, identify alternatives, and preferably buy from more than one where possible.**

This list is not exhaustive but should help your initial considerations.

Sources of advice and information

The Ten Minute Assessment and The Basic Five Step Guide to Preparing a Business Continuity Plan for various size businesses

www.londonprepared.gov.uk

Booklets – Expecting the Unexpected, and Secure in the Knowledge are available on

www.london-first.co.uk

Other useful sources:

Small Business Service

www.sbs.gov.uk

Business Continuity Institute

www.thebci.org

Continuity Central

www.continuitycentral.com

Financial Sector Continuity

www.fsc.gov.uk

Flood planning guide – Environment Agency

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Your local police for leaflets and information on crime prevention

www.hampshire.police.uk or

www.sussex.police.uk

Your local fire service for leaflets and information on fire prevention, precautions, and legal obligations

www.hantsfire.gov.uk or www.westsussex.gov.uk

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