

Staying Open for Business After Disasters

A Blueprint for Small Business Survival

**Business and Industry Council for Emergency Planning
and Preparedness (BICEPP)**

Staying Open for Business After Disasters

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Why Plan For A Disaster?

Here is what a small business owner had to say following the Northridge earthquake of January 17, 1994:

"I almost cried. It was indescribable to see the walls caved in and everything you've worked on in shambles. It was a very difficult moment.

All of our computers were wiped out. Our files were overturned. We lost a great many hard copies and we lost most of our equipment.

I wasn't able to get to the office for a few hours because we had severe damage to our house also. Strangely enough the employees all came by to see the office. They all thought they were out of jobs but we opened up the next morning at a temporary location with temporary telephones.

Because of disaster planning we had a lot of information that helped a great deal."

In our modern and changing world it isn't really a question of "if" you will ever suffer from a disaster situation but "when" will it happen? New threats arise every day that could be the one your company will suffer from. Every company seems to live in some sort of a natural disaster area. Relocating will only change the nature of the natural threat.

So we must learn to prepare ourselves, our companies and our employees to withstand the disaster that will eventually happen to us. This booklet has been designed to provide a simple yet complete perspective of what a small business can do with a relatively little cost or time investment. Meet with your managers and employees and share the workload of this preparedness project. Everyone could be involved because everyone will be involved in the disaster.

This document is not intended to be a complete and all inclusive manual for disaster preparedness that will match what every company will need to recover. Each company is unique and different and has the individual responsibility and accountability to prepare and protect itself.

While every reasonable effort has been undertaken to insure the accuracy of this booklet, the sponsoring organization(s) assume no responsibility for completeness or changed information subsequent to the date of publication or liability for any action undertaken by any person utilizing information contained herein or liability for any injury or damage which occurs in connection with any emergency or disaster.

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Disaster Preparation and Recovery Planning Checklist

Tasks	Person(s) Assigned Responsibility	Date Accomplished
1. Emergency Phone Numbers Police, Fire, Paramedics Key Employees after hours 9-1-1 procedures		
2. Facility Information Critical Shutoff Valves (gas, water, power) Emergency Power Floor plans		
3. Life Safety Procedures Fire Earthquake Medical Flood Hazardous Materials Bomb Threat Other _____		
4. Evacuation Procedures		
5. Emergency Equipment and Supplies		
6. Emergency Communications (including emergency broadcast stations)		
7. Business Recovery Preparations		
8. Documentation of Property Assets		
9. Key Contacts Legal, Insurance, Customers, Vendors, Suppliers, Repair, Media (TV Radio, Newspaper) Alternate Worksite Contacts		
10. Dates for Future Review		

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Emergency Phone Numbers and Addresses

Contact Name	Phone Number	Address
Fire Department Direct Line Address		
Ambulance Direct Line		
Police Department Direct Line Address		
Hospital Name Direct Line Address		
Utilities Gas Electric Telephone Water Disposal		
Building Management		
Building Maintenance		
Security		
Key Employees After Hours		

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Facility Information

1. **Critical Shut Off Valves**
 - Know where the shut off switches are located for gas, electricity, water and any other special power source or utility you may have.
 - Have on hand and near the shut off valves the appropriate shutoff tools, wrenches, or keys.
 - Post at or near each shut off valve the directions for closing or turning off the valve.
 - Train alternates.
2. **Emergency Power**
 - Provide flashlights that can continuously fully charged or store extra batteries and rotate before expiration.
 - Work with your local power company or electrician to determine emergency power requirements that could include:
 - Power generators,
 - Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) System,
 - Emergency lighting capabilities,
 - Surge protection.
3. **Floor Plans**

Store copies of floor plans outside the office with easy access. These can be very useful when emergency services such as the Fire Department or Police need to know what is inside before entering a potentially dangerous environment.
4. **Security Issues**

Try to think of what would be needed to secure the office if . . .

 - . . . there was a fire.
 - . . . there was an earthquake.
 - . . . the front windows were knocked out.
 - . . . there was civil unrest.
 - . . . an armed intruder entered.
 - . . . something happened at night.

Then design your plans to circumvent the security threats where they are most needed.

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Fire Safety Checklist

- 1. Provide adequate number of fire extinguishers and service them at least once annually.
- 2. Train employees how to use fire extinguishers.
- 3. Train employees how to respond when fire occurs.
- 4. Ensure that exit signs are readily visible and well lit.
- 5. Ensure there are enough exits to facilitate a prompt escape, if needed.
- 6. Post emergency evacuation plan.
- 7. Keep aisles, stairwells and exits clear - DO NOT block with furniture or other obstacles.
- 8. Store materials no closer to the ceiling than 36 inches (in a non-sprinklered room) or 18 inches (in a sprinklered room).
- 9. Ensure that electrical outlets are not overloaded.
- 10. Provide safety ashtrays in areas where smoking is allowed.
- 11. Store hazardous chemicals properly and locate them away from sources such as gas pilot lights.
- 12. Keep work areas free of refuse.

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Earthquake Safety Checklist

- 1. Train employees in earthquake awareness and preparedness.
- 2. Establish interior and exterior assembly areas and inform all employees of their locations and how to get there from at least two routes.
- 3. Store earthquake supplies and equipment including light search and rescue equipment, medical, food and water in case employees need to stay overnight due to freeway and road closures or other unsafe conditions which may exist between the workplace and home (see supplies section).
- 4. Train employees in First Aid, CPR and Blood Borne Pathogen procedures and ensure first aid supplies are available for their use.
- 5. Pre-establish communications systems and test equipment periodically.
- 6. Select "buddies" for people with disabilities and brief them on what to do to assist their partner.
- 7. Be aware that earthquakes can generate other types of emergencies such as fires, floods, first aid problems and hazardous material spills.
- 8. Strap down file cabinets, computers, shelves and other heavy or valuable objects to keep them from moving around or falling on employees

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Hurricane Safety Checklist

- 1. Obtain a radio or television to receive weather reports.
- 2. Establish facility shut down procedures.
- 3. Establish early warning and evacuation procedures.
- 4. Plan to assist employees who may need transportation.
- 5. Make plans for communicating with employees before and after a hurricane.
- 6. Make plans to protect outside equipment, structures and windows.
- 7. Prepare to protect, back up or move your vital records (both data and paper records).
- 8. If a warning is issued, a hurricane is possible within 24 to 36 hours.
- 9. Give employees enough time to get home to protect their homes and families.
- 10. Listen to weather reports and prepare to evacuate.
- 11. If a watch is issued, a hurricane will hit land within 24 hours.
- 12. If an evacuation order is issued, leave immediately.

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Flood Safety Checklist

Broken Water Pipes:

- 1. Shut off water valve, if safe to do so.
- 2. Shut off power, if that poses a threat.
- 3. Contact local water and power company.
- 4. Contact local Fire Department who may be able to assist with pumps and shut off, etc.
- 5. Notify building management, if applicable.

Rain Storm Damage:

- 1. If a warning issued, move furniture, materials and equipment away from endangered areas, i.e., away from doors, windows and ground level or basement areas.
- 2. Shut down equipment that may be affected by flooding such as electrical grounding.
- 3. Prevent explosions from extinguished pilot lights by turning off the gas altogether.
- 4. Monitor situation via media and stay in contact with local officials, if possible.
- 5. If evacuation is not possible, move to the safest area within the building and take emergency equipment with you (fire extinguisher, radio, first aid supplies and other provisions).

After Flooding:

- 1. Inspect property to determine loss.
- 2. Watch out for live electrical wires.
- 3. Pump water out gradually to minimize further structural damage (1/3 of the water each day for three days).
- 4. Supervise the clean up work.
- 5. Dry out the premises and furnishings. Mold, bacteria and mildew growth needs to be removed even from ductwork.
- 6. Secure property.

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Medical Safety Checklist

- 1. Ensure that first aid kits are fully stocked and in visible and accessible locations.
- 2. Train employee volunteers in First Aid, CPR and Blood Borne Pathogen procedures. Keep certification current.
- 3. Post emergency phone numbers.
- 4. Post the location of the nearest medical care facility with map and directions.
- 5. In extreme disaster situations the establishment of a triage center and even a morgue may be necessary to deal with employee injuries.
- 6. If you suspect the drinking water may have been contaminated, shut it off. Alternate water sources could include storing clean water on the premises for emergencies or providing purifying equipment, chemicals or boiling options.

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Hazardous Materials Safety Checklist

Actions to take BEFORE a problem occurs:

- 1. Identify type, use and storage locations of hazardous materials.
- 2. Use seismic restraint, supports and anchors on equipment, shelving, containers and tanks storing hazardous materials.
- 3. Inform all employees of the danger and post decontamination instructions.
- 4. Develop procedures for immediate cessation of processes which could threaten the employee's general health and safety if interrupted by an earthquake.
- 5. Develop procedures for removing, neutralizing and containing hazardous materials.
- 6. List agencies with telephone numbers prepared to deal with neutralization and disposing of these materials.
- 7. Inform local Fire Departments of storage sites for hazardous materials.
- 8. Coordinate planning effort with local Fire Department and other authorities.

IF A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RELEASE OCCURS:

- 1. Leave the danger area immediately.
- 2. Confine the area by closing doors and windows if possible.
- 3. Shut off ignition sources if spill is flammable.
- 4. Restrict access to danger area until emergency personnel arrive.
- 5. Call 9-1-1 and other emergency responders.
- 6. Remove clothing and shoes from exposed individuals - store clothing in plastic or metal containers for proper disposal.
- 7. If chemical could be activated by water - DON'T use water to wash but follow the special decontamination procedures.
- 8. If chemical cannot be activated by water - wash entire body thoroughly, flush eyes well (do not contaminate non-exposed eye), if exposed.
- 9. Seek medical care immediately.

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Bomb Threat Action Plan

Keep Calm!

Do Not Touch Anything!

Do not use "radio" communications!

Try to obtain as much of the following information as possible:

Exact time of call: _____

Exact wording of caller _____

ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

When is the bomb going to explode? _____

Where is the bomb right now? _____

What does the bomb look like? _____

What kind of bomb is it? _____

What will cause it to explode? _____

Was the bomb mail or carried into the building? _____

Why was the bomb put there? _____

Where are you calling from? _____

What is your address? _____

What is your name? _____

TAKE NOTE OF:

Is caller male or female? _____

Is caller adult or adolescent? _____

Caller's voice characteristics (circle any that apply):

Accent Angry Broken Calm Crying Deep Disguised

Excited Giggling Lisp Loud Nasal Normal Rapid

Sincere Slow Slurred Squeaky Stressed Stutter

Does the caller have a foreign accent? _____

Is the voice familiar, whom did it sound like? _____

Were there background noises? _____

Phone number the call was received at _____

AFTER CALL ENDS, IMMEDIATELY CONTACT BUILDING SECURITY, YOUR MANAGER AND YOUR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICE.

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Evacuation Procedures

This is where a little planning can be worth its weight in gold. Being able to evacuate employees and deal with emergency first aid situations is at the root of providing a safe work environment for employees. Here is a simple organization that will meet these objectives.

1. Designate an Emergency Activities Director and alternate(s) for each company office whose responsibility it is to oversee drills and actual emergency situations.
2. Organize your office into evacuation areas and assign employees to serve as Evacuation Captains and alternate(s). Provide training to these volunteers in evacuation, first-aid, CPR, fire extinguisher use and blood borne pathogens.

Evacuation Captains should do the following:

1. Determine in advance the nearest exit to your evacuation area and the route you will follow to reach that exit in the event of an emergency. Also, establish an alternate route to be used in the event your first route is blocked or unsafe to use. Periodically (twice annually) train employees in each evacuation area on what they are expected to do during an evacuation test or an actual emergency.
2. Determine which employees have disabilities and what they will need to successfully evacuate. Assign a "buddy" to them and make sure evacuation procedures are clearly known by both the disabled employee and the assigned "buddy". (See the following section on disability evacuation.)
3. Designate and train an alternate(s) to provide backup in the absence of the Evacuation Captain.
4. During an evacuation test or actual emergency the Captain should be the last to leave the building after sweeping the assigned area to ensure employees are evacuated. Once outside the building, the Captain should take role to ensure all employees from the evacuation area assigned are present and accounted for.
5. Report to the Emergency Activity Director the results of the role call and status of the employees assigned.

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Evacuation Procedures

(Continued)

Employees should do the following:

DO NOT EVACUATE unless told to do so or danger is immanent, then follow instructions by Evacuation Captains and Emergency personnel.

Remember - *only if safe to do so* - should you secure sensitive documents and negotiable instruments.

- a. Walk, don't run; keep noise to a minimum.
- b. Do not use elevators
- c. Remove high heel shoes to avoid tripping
- d. Do not push or crowd, use handrails in stairwells and stay to the right.
- e. Follow instructions from Emergency Personnel. Move to your evacuation point unless otherwise instructed. Check doors for heat before opening.
- f. Assist people with disabilities if they are present

If there is no fire in the area but the alarm has sounded, wait at your evacuation point until you have been instructed it is safe to return.

If relocating outside of the building:

- a. Move away from the building - quickly.
- b. Watch for falling glass, etc.
- c. Stay with your Evacuation Captain who will keep track of employees from your area.
- d. Do not talk to the press. If asked any questions, refer them to the company spokesperson or public affairs.
- e. If relocated away from the building do not return until you are instructed it is safe to return

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Evacuation Procedures

(Continued)

Evacuating Employees with Disabilities

Non-Ambulatory Persons

Always consult the person as to his/her preference with regard to:

1. Ways of removing from the wheelchair. Wheelchairs should not be used in stairwells, if at all possible.
2. The number of people needed for assistance.
3. Whether to extend or move extremities when lifting because of pain, catheter leg bag, spasticity, braces, etc.
4. Whether a seat cushion or pad should be brought along with him/her if he/she is removed from the chair.
5. Being carried forward or backward on a flight of stairs
6. After-care if removed from the wheelchair (i.e., stretcher, chair with cushion pad, car seat, or paramedic's assistance).

Visually Impaired Persons

Tell the person the nature of the emergency and offer to guide him/her. As you walk, tell the person where you are and advise of any obstacles. When you have reached safety, orient the person to where he/she is and ask if any further assistance is needed. Don't leave them alone.

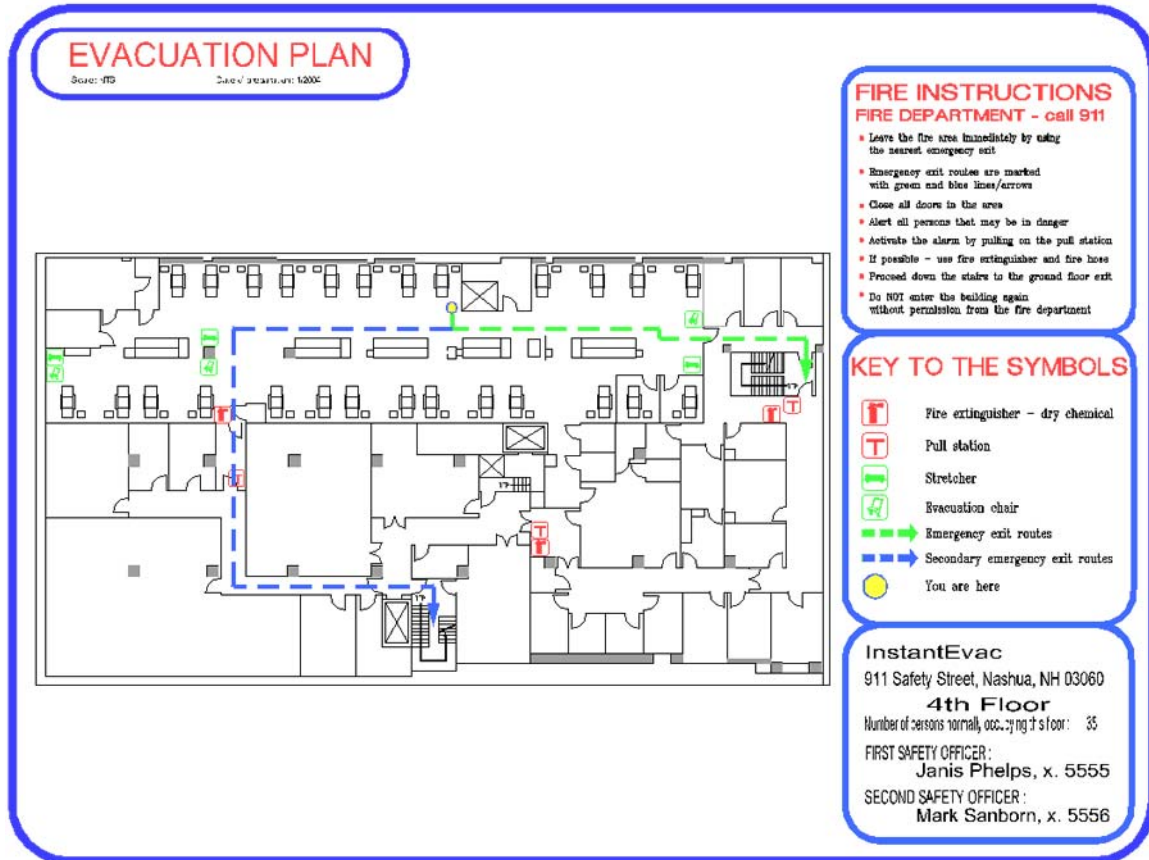
Hearing Impaired Persons

Persons with hearing impairment may not perceive emergency alarms. Two methods of warning are:

1. Writing a note telling what the emergency is and the nearest evacuation route.
2. Turning the light off and on to gain attention. Then indicating through gestures or in writing what is happening and what to do.

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Sample Evacuation Route Map



Sample from www.instantevac.com

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Sample Equipment and Supply List

Tools and Equipment

Fire extinguishers
Hard hats
Safety goggles
Heavy all-purpose gloves
Dust masks
Whistles (to summon help)
Crowbar
Hatchet
Flashlights with batteries (10 to 20 year shelf life recommended)
Light sticks (yellow or green 12-hour or 30 minute high intensity)
Power-failure lights
Battery/Solar AM/FM radio with crank or extra batteries
Cellular phones
Rope
Nylon cord
Duct tape
Masking tape
Clipboard with pad and floor plans
Lumber or china marker to mark areas that have already been searched
Hand tools (utility shut-off wrenches, channel locks, vise-grips, screwdrivers, razor knife, etc.)
Emergency blankets
Emergency generators and fuel

Sanitation

Plastic bags (to line toilets) with tie wraps
Plastic bags (large 2 mil. or thicker to collect full small bags) with tie wraps
Portable toilet
Toilet chemical
Bucket (placed under portable toilet bag)
Toilet paper
Pre-moistened baby wipes
Waterless hand wash gel
Privacy shelter

Survival

Water for 72 hours (1/2 gallon per person per day minimum)
Food for 72 hours (extended shelf life for adults, young children, elderly and pets)
Essential medication and glasses
Cash

Note: Store supplies in structurally safe and accessible locations. Have supplies clearly identified in easily transportable containers

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Sample First Aid Kit

First Aid book
Latex Gloves
AIDS barrier (for CPR)
Antiseptic (Betadine, Clinidine, Providine)
Antiseptic swab sticks
Alcohol preps
Wash & dry towelettes
Band-Aids
Butterfly closures
Large bandages
Gauze rolls
Gauze pads (various sizes)
Triangular bandages
Elastic bandages
Adhesive tape
Scissors and tweezers
Tongue depressors (fringe splints)
Forehead thermometer
Aspirin and non-aspirin pain relievers
Anti-diarrhea tablets
Cold packs
Purified boxed water w/straw (cleansing wounds)
Orange 2 mil or thicker trash bags (medical wastes)

Note: First aid Kit should address large and small wounds, infection and protection for the first aid provider.

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Emergency Communication

Communication resources are vitally important during any emergency and sometimes the most difficult to obtain. Here are some tips on how to use the telephone during an emergency.

- 1. Emergency Calls Only** After a disaster strikes, there is usually a high volume of telephone calls. It is important that you limit phone calls to emergency use only. Do not call "9-1-1" or the police for information about a disaster. Listen to your radio or television for information.
- 2. Blocking** In cases of extreme congestion of the telephone network, the local phone company and/or long distance carriers may institute blocking. Blocking prevents overloading the system by diverting some calls to recordings allowing other calls to complete.
- 3. To Place An Emergency Call:**
 - a. Make sure the receivers of all extension phones are on the switch hook cradle.
 - b. Stay on the line. You may not hear dial tone immediately; the delay could be as long as a minute or more.
 - c. Do not repeatedly depress the switch hook, as this will further delay your call. It is a priority system based upon who is first in line.
 - d. If you receive a "fast busy" or "all circuits are busy" recording, hang up and try again.
 - e. If physical damage occurs in your equipment or facilities or your wiring, it may not be possible to complete your call.
- 4. Out-of-Area Contact** It may be easier to call out of the disaster area during emergencies. Select a relative or friend out of the immediate area to act as a clearinghouse of information. Once contact is made, have this person relay messages to other friends and relatives outside the disaster area to reduce calling in and out of the affected area. You might also be able to gain access to the telephone network by using a credit card or calling card.
- 5. Establish An Emergency 800 Number** For use in the event of a disaster situation. Employees should have the Emergency Instructions. If there is a regional disaster that has caused congestion on the telephone network, it is expected that employees may not immediately be able to call the emergency 800 number. Eventually, however, the telephone network will become available allowing employees to call for instructions and check-in. Employees are expected to check-in as soon as possible considering the local and regional situation
- 6. Dealing with the Media** If the media shows up at your disaster and starts making unsolicited interviews with employees or bystanders you could have another disaster on top of the one you already have. Designate a media spokesperson for your company and train employees to refer inquiries to that one source.

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Emergency Broadcast Stations (EBS)

County	Radio Stations	TV Stations

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Business Recovery Preparations

If one company is prepared to recover their business following a disaster situation they can continue to focus on their "primary mission objectives." If another company is not prepared, the focus will be directed away from their primary mission objectives to that of survival. Who, then, will have the competitive edge?

- 1. Determine the essential or critical functions that are necessary for your business and list them in order of their priority.
- 2. Identify the personnel needed to maintain the essential or critical functions.
- 3. Determine and store equipment and supplies needed for continuing critical functions. Especially the unique or hard to get equipment and supplies.
- 4. Determine how your phones are going to be answered. Arrangement can be made with your local phone company or long distance carriers to forward your lines to an alternate call center.
- 5. Duplicate and store computer data, vital records, photos, financial and legal documents, plans, customer lists, etc., in offsite (away from the office) storage locations.
- 6. Employees will be the most valuable resource in any recovery effort. Consider making plans to protect them with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other such support program.
- 7. Develop call-up or phone tree procedures for contacting employees.
- 8. Identify alternate worksite(s) where employees could go if they cannot get to the business safely.
- 9. Establish mutual aid agreements with neighboring organizations for temporary relocation of business.
- 10. Develop communication plan for the essential and non-essential employees.
- 11. Review your insurance policies annually and determine if you are adequately covered for the percent value of your insured property. You should also determine if you would benefit from business interruption, extra expense or payroll replacement insurance coverages.
- 12. Establish agreements with vendors to facilitate inventory replacement of essential supplies and equipment.
- 13. Establish vendor contracts for cleanup, salvage and restoration.

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Documentation of Property Assets

Documentation procedures help establish what happened and are vital for Insurance and legal reasons. Documentation begins BEFORE the disaster or emergency with the gathering of information into one place and having duplicate copies created and located offsite.

Recommendations for effective documentation before an emergency strikes:

- 1. Maintain current asset records to include age of equipment or furniture, costs, serial numbers, model numbers, etc.
- 2. Photograph major equipment and facilities using videos where appropriate.
- 3. Check with attorney, accountant and Insurance agents as to what information should be gathered and duplicated.
- 4. Document damage as required by disaster assistance programs and taxes

During and after the emergency:

- 1. Keep a log of critical events to jog your memory of the sequence of events and who did what, when, why and how.
- 2. Photograph and videotape damaged facilities and equipment BEFORE cleanup.
- 3. Keep track of ALL expenditures and why they were made. This includes keeping receipts, purchase orders, repairs made, police and fire reports, labor and equipment rates to define the scope of work for outside contractors, etc.
- 4. Maintain lists of equipment purchased with serial numbers, model numbers and costs.
- 5. Call your local Office of Emergency Services, the Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Administration for information on disaster assistance loans and programs.

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Sample Key Contacts List

Contact Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Fire			
Police			
Attorney			
Board-up Service			
Building Safety Department			
Insurance			
Doctor (s)			
Electrical Contractor			
Engineer - Civil			
Engineer - Structural			
Glaziers			
Pharmacy			
Plumber			
Psychologist			
Media (Radio, TV, Newspapers)			
American Red Cross			
Weather Bureau			
Religious Affiliation			

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Credits

This booklet was originally developed in 1993 by:

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