Ready Business was developed in consultation with the following organizations:

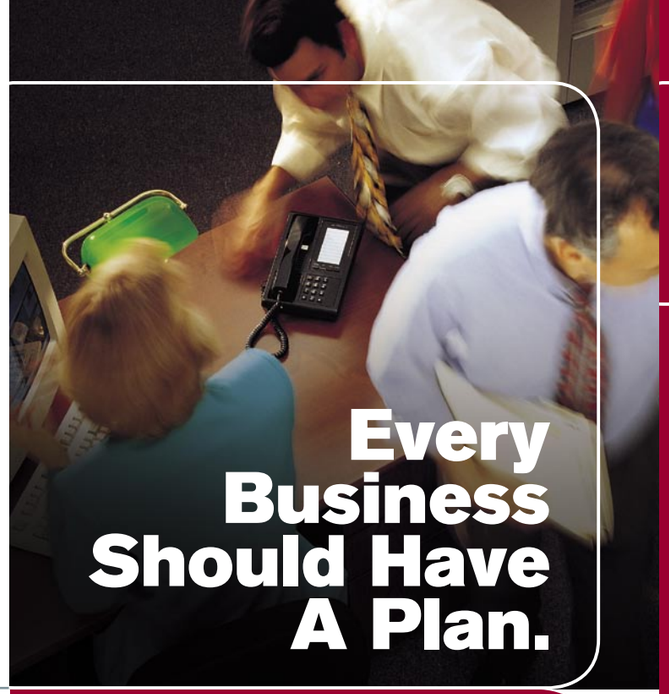
The 9/11 Public Discourse Project, ASIS International, Business Executives for National Security, The Business Roundtable, International Safety Equipment Association, International Security Management Association, National Association of Manufacturers, National Federation of Independent Business, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Small Business Administration, Society for Human Resource Management, U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

These recommendations reflect the Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity Standard (NFPA 1600) developed by the National Fire Protection Association and endorsed by the America National Standards Institute, the 9/11 Commission and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

This common sense framework is designed to launch a process of learning about business preparedness. For more information go to:

www.ready.gov

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



Every Business Should Have A Plan.

Homeland Security

www.ready.gov

Preparing Makes Good Business Sense.

How quickly your company can get back to business after a terrorist attack or tornado, a fire or flood often depends on emergency planning done today. While the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is working hard to prevent terrorist attacks, the regular occurrence of natural disasters demonstrates the importance of being prepared for any emergency. While recognizing that each situation is unique, your organization can be better prepared if it plans carefully, puts emergency procedures in place, and practices for all kinds of emergencies. This guide outlines common sense measures business owners and managers can take to start getting ready. A commitment to planning today will help support employees, customers, the community, the local economy and even the country. It also protects your business investment and gives your company a better chance for survival.

Every business should have a plan. Get ready now.

Plan to Stay in Business

Business continuity planning must account for both man-made and natural disasters. You should plan in advance to manage any emergency. Be prepared to assess the situation, use common sense and available resources to take care of yourself, your co-workers and your business' recovery.

Continuity Planning: Risk assessment can be a sophisticated area of expertise that ranges from self-assessment to an extensive engineering study. Your organization's risk needs will vary according to the specific industry, size, scope and location of your individual company. Start by reviewing your business process flow chart, if one exists, to identify operations critical to survival and recovery. Carefully assess your internal and external functions to determine which staff, materials, procedures and equipment are absolutely necessary to keep the business operating. You should also establish procedures for succession of management.

Include co-workers from all levels in planning and as active members of the emergency management team. Make a list of your most important customers and proactively plan ways to serve them during and after a disaster. Also identify key suppliers, shippers, resources and other businesses you must interact with on a daily basis. A disaster that shuts down a key supplier can be devastating to your business.

Plan what you will do if your building, plant or store is not accessible. Talk with your staff or co-workers and frequently review and practice what you intend to do during and after an emergency. Just as your business changes over time, so do your preparedness needs. Review and update your plans at least annually and inform your employees of the changes.

Emergency Planning for Employees: Your employees and co-workers are your business' most valuable asset. Two-way communication is central before, during and after a disaster. Include emergency information in newsletters, on your company intranet, in periodic employee emails and/or other communication tools. Designate an

out of town phone number where employees can leave an "I'm okay" message in a catastrophic disaster. If you have employees with disabilities or special needs, ask them what assistance, if any, they require.

Emergency Supplies: When preparing for emergency situations, it's best to think first about the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air and warmth. Encourage everyone to have a portable emergency supply kit customized to meet their personal needs, such as the inclusion of essential medications. Talk to your co-workers about what emergency supplies the company can feasibly provide, if any, and which ones individuals should consider keeping on hand. Recommended emergency supplies include: water, food, both a battery-powered radio and a NOAA weather radio with an alert function, extra batteries, a flashlight, first aid kit, whistle, wrench or pliers to turn off utilities, filter mask, plastic sheeting and duct tape in the event of airborne chemical hazards and moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.

Keep copies of important records such as site maps, building plans, insurance policies, employee contact and identification information, bank account records, supplier and shipping contact lists, computer backups, emergency or law enforcement contact information and other priority documents in a waterproof, fireproof portable container. Store a second set of records at an off-site location.

Planning to Stay or Go: Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the disaster, the first important decision after an incident occurs is whether to shelter-in-place or evacuate. You should understand and plan for both possibilities in advance by developing clear, well-thought-out plans.

In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should monitor television or radio news reports for information or official instructions as they become available.

Make an Evacuation Plan: Some disasters will require employees to leave the workplace quickly. The ability to evacuate workers, customers and visitors effectively can save lives. If your business operates out of more than one location, establish evacuation procedures for each individual building. If your company is in a high-rise building, an industrial park, or even a small strip mall, it is important to coordinate and practice with other tenants or businesses to avoid confusion and potential gridlock.

Make a Shelter-in-Place Plan: There may be situations when it's best to stay where you are to avoid any uncertainty outside. There are other circumstances, such as during a tornado or chemical incident, when specifically how and where you take shelter is a matter of survival. You should understand the differences and plan for all possibilities.

Go to **www.ready.gov** for more specific information on these topics as well as when and how to "seal-the-room" for protection from chemical contamination and steps to take for fire safety and medical emergencies.

Talk to Your People

Providing for your co-workers' well-being is recognized as one of the best ways to assure your company's recovery. That means communicating regularly with employees before, during and after an incident. Use newsletters, intranets, staff meetings and other internal communications tools to communicate emergency plans and procedures.

Practice the Plan with Co-workers: Frequently practice what you intend to do during a disaster. Conduct regularly scheduled education and training seminars to provide co-workers with information, identify needs and develop preparedness skills. Include disaster training in new employee orientation programs.

Promote Family and Individual Preparedness: If individuals and families are prepared, your company and your co-workers are better positioned in an emergency situation. Encourage your employees and their families to: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan and be informed about different threats and their appropriate responses. Go to **www.ready.gov** for more information or print out and distribute copies of **"Preparing Makes Sense"** brochures to your workers.

Write a Crisis Communication Plan: Detail how your organization plans to communicate with employees, local authorities, customers and others during and after a disaster. Include relevant information for employees, top company executives, the general public and your customers as well as local, state and federal authorities.

Support Employee Health After a Disaster: It is possible that your staff will need time to ensure the well-being of their family members, but getting back to work is important to the personal recovery of people who have experienced disasters. Workplace routines facilitate recovery by providing an opportunity to be active and to restore social contact. Re-establish routines, when possible. You may also want to consider offering professional counselors to help co-workers address their fears and anxieties.

Protect Your Investment

In addition to emergency planning and communicating with employees, there are steps you can take to safeguard your company and secure your physical assets.

Review Insurance Coverage: Inadequate insurance coverage can lead to major financial loss if your business is damaged, destroyed or simply interrupted for a period of time. Insurance policies vary, so check with your agent or provider about things such as physical losses, flood coverage and business interruption. Understand what your policy covers and what it does not.

Prepare for Utility Disruptions: Businesses are often dependent on electricity, gas, telecommunications, sewer and other utilities. You should plan ahead for extended disruptions during and after a disaster. Speak with service providers about potential alternatives and identify back-up options such as portable generators to power the vital aspects of your business in an emergency.

Secure Facilities, Buildings and Plants: While there is no way to predict what will happen or what your business' circumstances will be, there are things you can do in advance to help protect your physical assets. Install fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and detectors in appropriate places. Secure ingress and egress and plan for mail safety. Plan what you will do if your building, plant or store is not usable. Secure valuable equipment. And make sure your building's Heating, Ventilating and Air-conditioning (HVAC) system is working properly and is well-maintained. You should also determine if you can feasibly upgrade the building's filtration system as a means of protection from biological and some other airborne threats.

Improve Cyber Security: Protecting your data and information technology systems may require specialized expertise, but even the smallest business can be better prepared. Use anti-virus software and keep it up-to-date. Don't open email from unknown sources. Use hard-to-guess passwords. Protect your computer from Internet intruders by using firewalls. Back up your computer data and download security protection updates known as patches regularly. Subscribe to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security National Cyber Alert System, **www.us-cert.gov**, to receive free, timely alerts.

An investment in planning today will not only help protect your business investment and your livelihood, but will also support your employees, customers and stakeholders, the community, the local economy and even the country. Get ready now.

www.ready.gov