

Developing a Plan...

Weather plays its part in causing more frequent disruption than any other event to business in the UK, when combined with a severe economic downturn, where the loss of a day's business can be felt even more acutely than in normal conditions, some simple steps can help protect your business against the worst.

We recommend a simple realistic and workable plan taking the following steps:

Step 1: Think about what's required to keep your business going (use the self-assessment overleaf).

Step 2: Work out options and available budget to avoid, mitigate or deal swiftly with any disruption.

Step 3: Formalise the thinking so you can communicate it to others.

Step 4: Write a simple plan that sets out what you and others will need to do when faced by disruption. You won't have time to read large volumes should a crisis arise, so two sides of A4-sized paper is enough.

Step 5: Test the plan; ideally by working through a scenario, such as flooding, to see whether there are any gaps or assumptions you're making that might be unrealistic.

Step 6: Keep the plan up to date with any changes to your business and make sure new staff are made aware of what's expected of them on joining. Test the planning and thinking at least once a year.

If you get stuck, ask for help; it's available from a number of sources and in some cases it's free!

Business Continuity Institute: www.thebci.org

Preparing for a flood

In March 2011, government departments, agencies, emergency responders and communities will be involved in one of the biggest emergency exercises to take place in England and Wales. It will test the country's response to groundwater, surface water, reservoir, river and coastal flooding. The likelihood of flooding is very real, especially for people and families who live in areas of high risk.

Local businesses can also join in by thinking about their business continuity should a flood affect their premises, IT connections or workforce. Some will look to add to their existing business continuity plan while others may look to start one from scratch. Either way, businesses are being encouraged to plan for disruptions like flooding so they are in a position to recover as quickly as possible.

For more general information on the exercise please visit our website:

www.exercisewatermark.co.uk

For more information on flooding visit:

Flood Forum www.floodforum.org.uk

Flood Plan UK www.floodplanuk.org

Floodline: 0845 988 1188 (24 hour service) or Type Talk 0845 602 6340

A Business Continuity Survival Guide



**Fighting back the tide:
protecting your
business against
flooding**

exercise
Watermark



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Self-Assessment: When you're faced with a major disruption - who and what are you relying upon?

Customers

Businesses need to provide assurance that they can operate in all circumstances. Business Continuity Management (BCM) provides an opportunity to promote a well managed business and may offer a competitive advantage over other suppliers.

01. Have you got a plan to reduce the risk and impact of a major incident that ensures continuity of supply to your customer?
02. Have you considered the impact to your business of losing a major customer or sales channel?
03. Have you considered an independent audit to certify your BCM arrangements and prove you are prepared?

Suppliers

Reliance on a single provider can increase your risk exposure. It is therefore important to understand how they would recover from disruption and where you would feature in their priorities.

04. Are you reliant on a single supplier to provide you with a key service or product? Have you quantified the impact to your business if they failed?
05. Have you assessed the time it would take to establish an alternative supplier in the event of a supply disruption?
06. Have you asked your key suppliers about their business continuity capabilities?
07. Have you recently assessed the financial health of your suppliers? Your suppliers may be planning changes that affect you.

Staff

People play a key role in recovering from a major disruption. Aside from a duty of care to staff, if you cater for your staff's needs, then they can concentrate on keeping you in business when you need them most.

08. Do your staff contracts provide the flexibility to change working hours, location or role when dealing with a major disruption?
09. Do you have up-to-date staff contact details that provide more than one method of contact e.g. home and mobile?
10. Have you made staff aware of the company's business continuity plans and the action they need to take if their site or office became inaccessible?
11. Do you have staff with individual skills or knowledge? If so, have you thought how you would manage if they could not get to work or left the company? (include yourself in this question).

IT/Telecoms

The failure of IT and telecommunication systems is a frequent disruption experienced by companies and many have invested funds to mitigate the risk and impact of failure.

12. Have you prioritised your systems and ensured that all data is backed up and accessible off-site?
13. Have you considered alternative options to a dedicated IT infrastructure e.g. hosted facilities or web-based systems?
14. Do you use mobile broadband technologies and/or Virtual Private Network technologies to access office-based information?
15. Do you have UPS or generator back up to deal with power failure?
16. Where are your IT systems and generators located? Are they at risk of flooding?

Site/Office

Many disruptions can lead to a loss of site or office access and some companies have arrangements in place to move to a temporary site during this disruption.

17. Have you considered and identified alternative site or office options? You might want to consider reciprocal arrangements with customers and suppliers.
18. If you have had to close any of your sites or offices have you updated your plans accordingly?
19. Have you established dialogue with your local police and fire services to gain advice or guidance in how to deal effectively with emergencies? Note—also check with your local council for details on Local Resilience Forums.

Reputation

You have invested significant time and money in developing your reputation, so handling a crisis competently and with confidence is important.

20. Have you considered all situations where negative stories could emerge?
21. Have you prepared your messages to reflect the likely situations and need to communicate with all stakeholders in a controlled manner?
22. Are your senior spokespeople trained to deal with an intrusive media?