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INSURANCE GROUP

Continuity of Operations Planning

How quickly a company can get back to business after an emergency, such as a terrorist attack, tornado, fire, or flood, often depends on pre-emergency planning. Management needs to start planning now to improve the likelihood that the company will survive and recover.

1. Carefully assess how the company functions, both internally and externally, to determine which staff, materials, procedures, and equipment are absolutely necessary to keep the business operating.

    • Review the business process flow chart, if one exists.

    • Identify operations critical to survival and recovery.

    • Include emergency payroll, expedited financial decision-making, and accounting systems to track and document costs in the event of a disaster.

    • Establish procedures for succession of management - include at least one person who is not at the company headquarters, if applicable.

2. Identify suppliers, shippers, resources, and other businesses the company interacts with on a daily basis.

    • A disaster that shuts down a key supplier can be devastating to the business - develop professional relationships with more than one company to use in case the primary contractor cannot service needs.

    • Create a contact list for existing critical business contractors and others that would be used in an emergency - keep this list with other important documents on file in an emergency supply kit and at an off-site location.

3. Plan what to do if the building, plant, or store is not accessible - this type of planning is often referred to as a continuity of operations plan and includes all facets of the business.

    • Consider if the business can be run from a different location.

• Develop relationships with other companies to use their facilities in case a disaster makes the location unusable.

4. Plan for payroll continuity.

5. Decide who should participate in putting together an emergency plan.

    • Include employees from all levels in planning and as active members of the emergency management team.

    • Consider a broad cross-section of employees from throughout the organization, but focus on those with expertise vital to daily business functions - these will likely include people with technical skills, as well as managers and executives.

6. Define crisis management procedures and individual responsibilities in advance.

    • Make sure those involved know what they are supposed to do.

    • Train others in case back-up help is needed.

7. Coordinate with others.

    • Meet with other businesses in the building or industrial complex.

    • Talk with first responders, emergency managers, community organizations, and utility providers.

    • Develop plans with suppliers, shippers, and others that the company regularly does business with.

    • Share plans and encourage other businesses to set in motion their own continuity planning and offer to help others.

8. Just as business changes over time, so do preparedness needs - review emergency plans annually.

9. When new employees are hired, or when there are changes in how the company functions, update plans and inform employees.