



BUSINESS CONTINUITY: Make Plans Instead of Excuses!

Business disasters come in all shapes and sizes. Business owners should take steps now to give themselves a better chance to reopen quickly. Without a business continuity plan, more than one in four businesses forced to shut down because of a disaster never reopens.



TURN EXCUSES INTO ACTION

Businesses have lots of excuses for not having a business continuity plan, including the most common “we thought it would never happen to us.” The following are common misperceptions about business continuity planning:

- Creating a plan takes too much time
- Creating a plan takes too much money
- We thought we had no risks
- We had more important things to think about
- We thought our Internet technology was fine
- We thought we could deal with a crisis when it happened
- We thought we were too small to need a plan
- We couldn't find the right solution
- We already backed up our data and thought that was the same as business continuity
- We didn't know where to go for help

If any of these sound familiar, it's time to stop making excuses and start making plans. While there are quite a number of business continuity solutions available, a good place to start is with the free, easy-to-use [Open for Business® toolkit](#) created by the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS). Open for Business takes business owners step-by-step through the planning process in order to create a plan that helps them to:

- ✓ focus on the risks that are most likely to disrupt their business operations;
- ✓ identify the activities that are essential for staying in business and recovering quickly; and
- ✓ create an easy-to-use recovery plan tailored to specific needs.

ABCs OF WHY CONTINUITY PLANNING IS IMPORTANT

There are many good reasons for businesses to plan for the unexpected, most importantly protection and preserving the bottom line. To keep it simple, remember the ABCs:

- **A**void Market Share Loss – With a business continuity plan, your business will have a better chance of remaining competitive and minimizing the loss of revenue and customers. A solid and tested plan boosts customer confidence. When your customers know you have plans in place to provide continued delivery of goods and services during a crisis, they are less likely to flee to competitors if a disaster threatens your area.



Build a business continuity plan using the free, easy-to-use IBHS [Open for Business® toolkit](#).

- **Brand Protection** – Having a plan allows you to demonstrate that your business is committed and prepared to protect your employees, clients and their assets at all times. This demonstrates a proactive attitude and can enhance employee morale and public opinion about your business. With increased confidence in your business' ability to operate during unexpected circumstances, your positive reputation grows with customers, staff, partners and investors.
- **Communications** – Having a business continuity plan will improve communication within your organization and with customers, suppliers, vendors, and key stakeholders. This is a helpful way to improve daily operations, not only in the event of disaster.



Building communication between employees is not only helpful when developing a business continuity plan, it will also improve daily operations.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

IBHS has released a new version of Open for Business intended especially for small businesses. This streamlined tool, called OFB-EZ, translates professional business continuity concepts into common business language, through an eight step process. Here's how businesses can make it happen:

1. Know Your Risks
2. Know Your Operations
3. Know Your Employees
4. Know Your Suppliers, Vendors, Key Customers, and Key Contacts
5. Know Your Information Technology
6. Know Your Finances
7. Know When to Update and Test Your Plan
8. Know Where to Go for Help

GET STARTED NOW

Business continuity planning is vital to survival and should not be put off indefinitely as you focus on today's challenges. It's important to devote enough time and attention to planning for the future, even when that future may involve events that are unpleasant to think about and, hopefully, not likely to happen. Open for Business recognizes this and is designed to help you gather information, improve communication, and develop operational contingencies that will be useful today as well as tomorrow. So, stop making excuses and start making plans!

Visit DisasterSafety.org/OFB-EZ to download the free business continuity tool and begin your planning process today.

