



HURRICANE SEASON: IS YOUR BUSINESS READY?

According to University of Texas research, only **6%** of companies survive catastrophic data loss, while **43% never reopen** and **51% close** within two years. After witnessing Hurricane Ike, it is important to make sure your business has an effective disaster plan in place. Below are some key components of a disaster preparedness plan:



1 Record Keeping and Data Backups

First, determine the critical components of your business. Keep detailed notes on everything you do and what your business relies on. This includes electricity, phones, the Internet – and especially your data. Then make contingency plans for every component. A separate full backup of your critical data should be performed before your business closes in response to an impending threat. It is crucial at this time that a copy of your backups be moved to a secure location an appropriate distance away in order to avoid the possibility that a hurricane would affect both locations. The difference between a backup and a “good” backup can save your business, so *be sure to test your backups for verification*.

2 Turn Off Your Computers

Before a disaster, your computers should be shut down properly and unplugged from the wall outlet. Do the same for the monitor and all peripherals such as printers, scanners and speakers. Move the computer and peripherals away from windows and doors towards the center of the room. The equipment should be supported securely at least two feet from the floor and covered with plastic sheeting. To ensure that there is no possible fire when power is restored, it is probably best to turn off all circuit breakers.

3 Computer Storage

If you can access your data, you can restart your business faster, especially if you have to work from another location. In a disaster, you’ll receive insurance or federal funds much more quickly if you have well-documented records. Your data should be stored in a secure central location so that your employees can operate no matter where they’re located. This allows you to keep track of employee activities, retain customers and receive quicker assistance.

4 Power and Alternative Supplies

Remember, a disaster elsewhere can turn into a disaster for you if your critical vendors become unavailable. Develop a list of suppliers in other parts of the country – or world – for back up. For each vital piece of business equipment, purchase auxiliary generators. For data, you can purchase inexpensive backup power supplies to give you about a half hour of extra power for computers.

5 Employee Safety

In a disaster, the most important thing is physical safety. Keep flashlights and fresh batteries on hand. Develop evacuation plans; know how to exit your building in the dark or in a fire. Keep a supply of fresh water in case you have to stay in your office or store for hours. And most importantly, get names and numbers from every employee so that you can contact them before or after a disaster.

Want to learn how we can help prevent your business from a disaster? Visit our [Web site](#) or contact us directly 832.204.4909.

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