

COULD YOUR BUSINESS SURVIVE A CRISIS?



A guide to Business Continuity Planning for businesses in the Epping Forest District

Epping Forest District Council

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



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Would your business survive a crisis?

On the 11th December 2005 a massive explosion and fire broke out at the Buncefield Oil Storage Depot in Hertfordshire. The explosion was the largest ever seen in peacetime Europe and had profound and widespread effects on individuals, public services, and the business community.

The effects included :

- Over 400 businesses affected
- 25,000 staff affected
- £70 million cost to local firms
- Lost premises, stock and data
- 79 people made redundant



But a crisis doesn't have to be on the scale of the Buncefield incident to devastate your business.

Imagine the following situation. It is 8.30am and you are driving to work. About 250 metres from your premises you are stopped by a Police Officer.

The Officer informs you that the area has been sealed off due to a fire in your neighbours' premises. The presence of acetylene cylinders in his workshop has meant that a 250-metre cordon surrounding his workshop has been put in place. You will not be able to access your premises for the next 24-48 hours.





What impact will this have on your business?

Do you have any staff and if so how will you contact them?

Do you have important deadlines you have to meet today?

Where will you operate your business from over the next few days?

How will you inform your customers / clients about the situation?

This situation **could** and **does** happen to businesses of any size and nature.



A fire in 2006 at an industrial estate north of Essex affected 78 businesses in the area; 4 of these went out of business immediately and half of the remaining have not been able to relocate anywhere.

*This booklet is aimed at small to medium sized business and will assist you in preparing your own business continuity arrangements. The information is relevant to you no matter what size business you have, whether or not you employ staff and whatever type of business you operate - **Don't become a statistic.***

So what can you do to ensure your business survives a crisis like this?

Business Continuity is about anticipating the crises that could affect your business and planning for the effects of them. A Business Continuity plan will identify all the requirements for keeping your business running and will include processes to allow you to keep the disruption to your staff and customers to a minimum.

Why should you have a BC plan?

A business continuity plan is part of creating a business that can adapt to unpredictable and changing business environments. It will allow you to withstand a disaster like a fire and to protect the future of your business.

Experience shows that businesses that have pre-planned for crises are more likely to survive than those who haven't. Insurers, banks, suppliers and customers will all take you more seriously if you have a business continuity plan in place.

The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 has placed a requirement on Category 1 responders (such as the emergency services, local authorities, the health service, the environment agency) to maintain business continuity plans to ensure that they can continue providing services even if they are affected by a crisis. The CCA also requires local authorities to provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary agencies about Business Continuity planning.

The information in this booklet aims to assist you in preparing your own business continuity arrangements.



How do you start business continuity planning?



This 5-step cycle will get you started on Business Continuity Planning:

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS

The first step of your business continuity plan is to think about the parts of your business that are crucial in keeping it going during and following a crisis.

- (a) What is the purpose of your business?
- (b) What are your products and/or services?
- (c) What functions are 'key' to your business and what could you not afford to have disrupted?
- (d) Where is your business most vulnerable to disruption?
- (e) Who are your suppliers and customers?



STEP 2 – ASSESS THE RISKS

What are the most likely and greatest risks to your business?

Consider the following incidents and ask yourself:

Could this affect my business?

If so how would it affect my business?

- Severe Weather
- Theft or Vandalism
- Fire
- Flood

- Loss of Utilities - electricity, telephones etc.
- IT Systems Failure
- Disruption of Fuel Supplies
- Restricted Access to Premises
- Illness of Key Staff
- Outbreak of Disease or Infection
- Malicious Attack
- Disasters Affecting Suppliers
- Disasters Affecting Customers
- Bomb/Terrorism threat



If you are prepared for the worst-case scenario, then you will probably be able to deal with incidents of a lesser scale.

STEP 3 – DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY

Your strategy will help you to deal with the risks you have identified:

(a) What is your appetite for risk?

For each risk you need to decide, will you:

- accept the risk and change nothing?
- reduce the risk by making arrangements to mitigate their effects?



- or transfer the risk e.g. through a good insurance policy?



(b) What needs to be done to reduce or transfer the risks facing your business?

- Consider how you can protect your property if it is at risk of flooding. The Environment Agency website offers advice on products available to protect properties www.environment-agency.gov.uk/.
- Check your insurance cover to ensure it covers you for all the risks you have identified.
- Consider finding an alternative location to work from if you are denied access to your premises.
- Back up your key data and store it in a separate location to your main site.
- Keep important phone numbers and details of your insurance, staff, customers and suppliers accessible at all times.



STEP 4 – DEVELOP YOUR PLAN

Once you have established what is important to the survival of your business and what the risks are, you can write the plan.

The plan should focus on the most vital aspects of your business and address the weakest links in your organisation. It should include worst-case scenarios and their likelihood, and identify ways of minimising the risks.

Your plan should include things like contact numbers, layouts of your premises, lists of immediate actions to take after a disruptive event and details of what resources you have.

STEP 5 – REHERSAL AND STAFF TRAINING

Once the plan has been agreed and written, carry out a simulated test to ensure that it works; this will also expose any flaws and ensure that those involved understand their roles and responsibilities.

It is important to keep your plan up to date. Make sure you update any changes in contact details etc.



START NOW!

You never know what tomorrow can bring, take steps now to ensure that your business survives in a crisis.

The following pages of this booklet detail some top tips for Business Continuity planning, some prompt questions to get you thinking about your plan and a template to help you write a Business Continuity Plan.



Ten Top Tips for Business Continuity

1 Plan for the effects of an incident not the cause.

2 Back up data regularly and store copies off site in a secure place. Practise restoring the data in an IT system outside your own to ensure it works.

3 Ensure that important paper documents, such as contracts and employee information, are protected. Make copies and use fire resistant and waterproof storage containers.

4 Keep a list of contact details for your staff, customers and suppliers off site so that you can contact them in the event of an incident. Also keep a list of emergency contacts for staff.

5 Be clear about what your insurance policies cover and what they don't. Keep copies of the relevant policies off site so that you know immediately what to do in the event of an incident.

6 Identify your business critical activities and set out the tasks needed to restore them and resume trading off site. Identify the core resources that support your critical activities and consider how you would source replacements.

7 Have an emergency pack which will include your business recovery plan, as well as a first aid kit, mobile telephone, and masks to protect against dust, spare keys, cash, stationery etc.

8 Make an inventory of equipment, materials, products and any other assets to give you an overview of the business. This will make it easier to work out losses and identify gaps in core resources after an incident.

9 Make arrangements for a temporary base - you may not be able to operate out of your existing premises for weeks or even months. Remember any site must comply with health and safety rules.

10 Test the business continuity plan and rehearse the people who will be involved in implementing the plan. Review and maintain the plan on a regular basis to keep the information up-to-date.

The 10 Minute Checklist

This checklist will provide you with an assessment of your business and your preparedness for incidents that could affect your business. This information will help you develop your business continuity plan.

	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
<u>Initial Assessment:</u>			
Do you have a business continuity plan (BCP)?			
If yes, have you tested your plan within the last 12 months?			
Do you have a policy for when to activate your plan?			
Do you regularly review your plan?			
Have your staff been trained in activating your plan?			
Has the idea of Business Continuity planning been approved by the board/owner/partners?			
Is there someone in your organisation who will have responsibility for looking after a BCP?			
Is the plan documented clearly and easily accessible?			
<u>General Assessment:</u>			
Have you made a list of all key contacts' telephone numbers?			
Have you got a list of all employees' telephone numbers?			
Do you have vital computer information stored on back up disks held off premises?			
Have you familiarised yourself and your staff with the location of the mains switches and shut off valves (i.e. for electricity, gas and water)?			

	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
<u>General Assessment:</u>			
Have you checked that all plumbing is in working order?			
Do you check the heating and air conditioning is working on a regular basis?			
Have you prepared an emergency pack?			
<u>If you have prepared a pack have you included the following essential items:</u>			
Business recovery plan			
List of employees with contact details			
Details of IT providers			
Contact details for clients and suppliers			
Building site plan			
Spare keys			
Computer back up tapes/discs			
First aid kit			
Stationery			
<u>If you haven't already, you might also want to include these useful items:</u>			
Torch			
Megaphone			
Spare batteries			
Tape			
Message pads and flip charts			
Coloured pens and pencils			
Mobile telephones (with credit)			
Dust and toxic fume masks			

	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
<u>If you haven't already, you might also want to include these useful items:</u>			
Disposable cameras			
Petty cash and/or credit card (staff may need emergency funds)			
<u>What do you do on a day-to-day basis?</u>			
Do you carry out end of day inspections? i.e. to check everybody has left			
Do you make sure that all appliances are switched off?			
Do you check that all doors and windows are locked?			
Do you have a clear desk policy?			
<u>Building Facilities:</u>			
Do you have evacuation procedures for your building?			
Are the fire exits clearly marked?			
Do you regularly practice fire drills?			
Do you have a primary and secondary evacuation points?			
Do you have a plan to your building?			
Does your building(s) require 24-hour 7-day access?			
Do you have fire safety procedures in place?			
Do you have generator backup systems in place?			
Do you have an alternative building to use in an emergency?			

	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
Personnel:			
Do you have an up to date and regularly reviewed job description and hierarchy chart for your company? (include temporary and contract workers)			
Do you have staff personal information on file i.e. communication with next of kin (include temporary and contract workers)			
Do you and your staff know what to do in an incident?			
Do you know where to go for advice/information?			
Do your staff know who is in charge in the time of a crisis?			
Have your staff been given specific roles to do in the event of a crisis?			
Have you thought about dealing with people issues – relocation arrangements, etc.			
Do you have members of staff with first aid or medical training?			
Do you have any staff trained in evacuation?			
Do you have any particular staff with critical and unique skills?			
Security:			
Is there a security system installed?			
Do you have a security policy?			
Do you give any advice or training on security?			
Do you check references fully?			
Are contractors checked fully (i.e. company as well as each individual)?			
Do you regularly check the integrity of external fences and doors?			

	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
Paper and Electronic Documents:			
Do you copy/backup your information?			
Do you store your paper documents in reinforced containers?			
Have these plans been reviewed within the last 12 months?			
Do you have copies of your files and accounts at a separate location?			
Is someone responsible for the upkeep of your files and accounts?			
Company Equipment:			
Do you have someone accountable for the assets of your company?			
Do you have control over the movement of your company equipment?			
Have you completed a recent inventory of your company equipment?			
IT:			
Are your IT systems critical to the running of your business?			
Do you have a tested IT disaster recovery plan?			
Is your computer anti virus software up to date?			
Are computer errors and logs adequately monitored?			
Are documented IT security policies and procedures in place?			
Are all computer users fully aware of e-mail and internet usage policies?			
Do you know how many platforms/servers/applications or operating systems support critical business functions?			

	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
<u>IT:</u>			
Is your company system part of a larger network?			
Do you know how long it would take to recover IT functions?			
<u>Suppliers:</u>			
Do your key suppliers have a business continuity plan?			
<u>Customers:</u>			
Do you have the correct contact details for all your customers?			
Do you have any key customers who you will need to be in constant contact with during a crisis?			
Would it affect your business if one of your key customers went out of business?			
Do your customers require that you have a BCP?			
Do your customers have a BCP?			
<u>Location:</u>			
Have you thought about the types of risk that might occur due to the actions/operations of other businesses near to you? i.e. sewage works and risk of pollution.			
Have you thought about the types of risk associated with environment? Eg. Water, climate, forestry etc.			
<u>Insurance:</u>			
Do you have sufficient insurance to pay for disruption to business, cost of repairs, hiring temporary employees, leasing temporary accommodation and equipment?			
Do you have your insurance company's details in order to contact them immediately at the time of the incident?			

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN



Organisation Details

This business continuity plan outlines how we will continue operating if the business is affected by a major incident.



Signed
Position in Company



Plan Review Date

Incident Checklist

This information will help you complete necessary tasks in the immediate, often confusing aftermath of an incident.

Overall responsibility in any incident is:

Immediate Actions:

(e.g. Evacuate staff from the building? Call the emergency services? Alert key staff?)

Actions after the first hour:

(e.g. What are the immediate business needs? Move to an alternative site? Advise staff what to do / where to go etc)

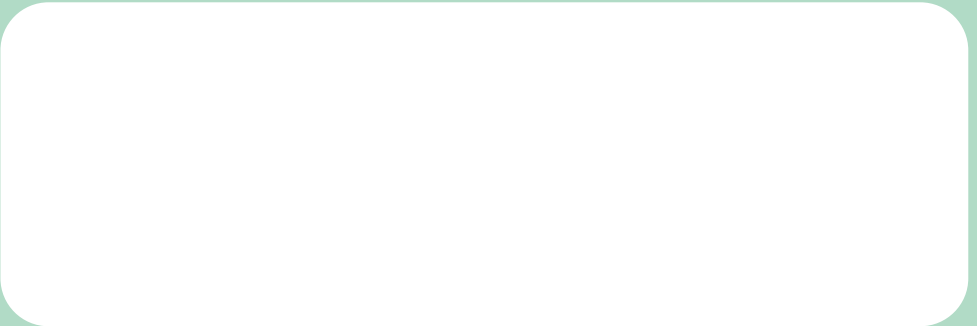
Information about your premises

This information may be needed by the emergency services in the initial aftermath of an incident.

Description of your premises:



Evacuation Points:



Critical Systems

This information will identify the essential areas of your business and will aid the recovery of key business areas.



Business Recovery

This information will guide and prioritise the recovery of critical business areas.

Work Recovery Areas:

(In order of priority)

A large, empty white rounded rectangular box with a soft drop shadow, intended for listing work recovery areas in order of priority.

Off Site Recovery Location / Alternative Premises:

(Details of location and how to access)

A large, empty white rounded rectangular box with a soft drop shadow, intended for providing details of an off-site recovery location or alternative premises.

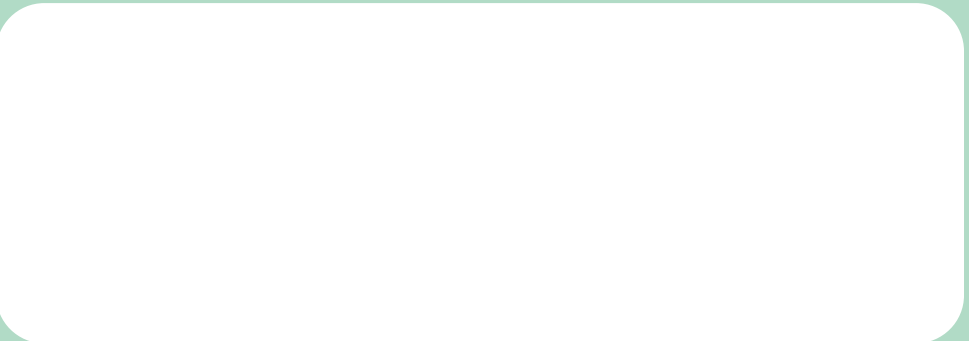
Back Up Information / Equipment:

(Details of items and how to access – e.g. IT equipment, critical paper records, emergency pack)



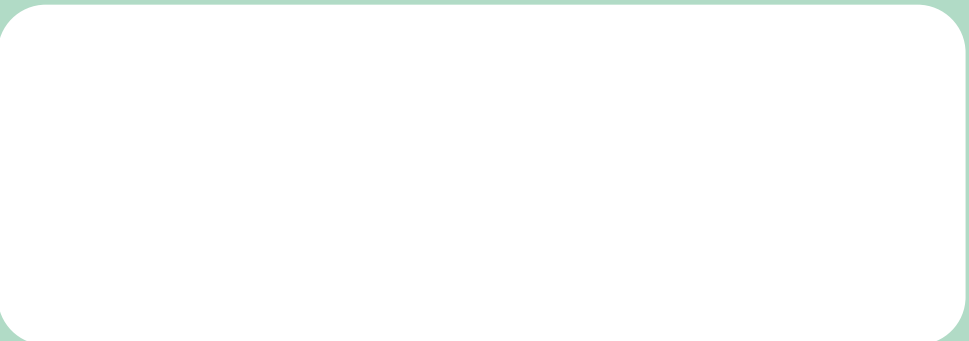
Technology Recovery:

(Inventory of software and hardware, details of backed up data etc)



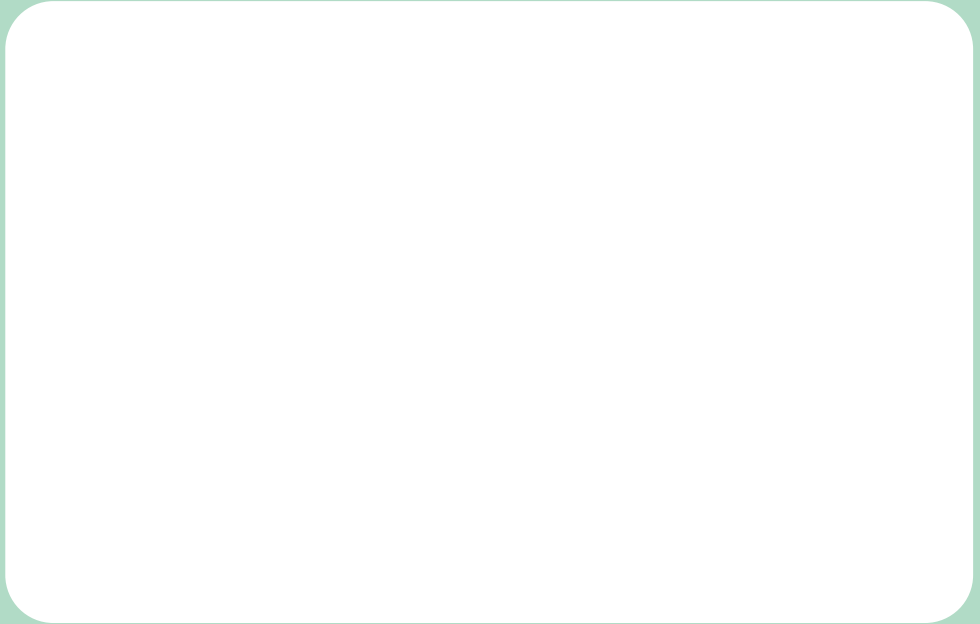
Telecommunications Recovery:

(Details of provider and account; details of how to access your telephone system remotely; details of alternative communications etc)



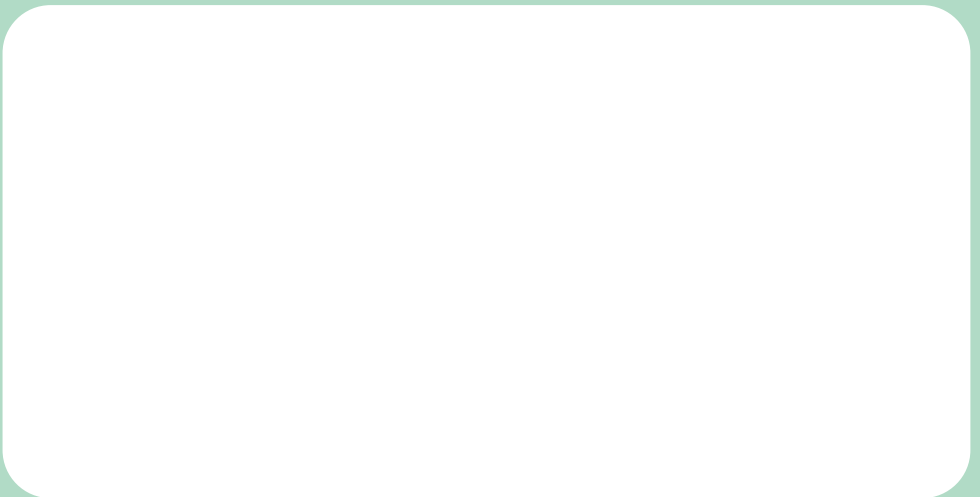
Utilities Recovery:

(List of utility providers and account details; generators etc)

A large, empty white rounded rectangular box intended for listing utility providers, account details, and generators.

Equipment Recovery:

(Details of key business equipment; how to access alternatives etc)

A large, empty white rounded rectangular box intended for providing details of key business equipment and how to access alternatives.

Essential Contacts

This section will detail all essential contact details and will need to be kept regularly updated.


Staff Contact Details:



Key Supplier Contact Details:



Key Customer Contact Details:



Insurance Company Contacts and Details:



INITIAL RECOVERY LOG

Maintaining this log will provide a record of all events, actions and decisions taken. It should include the names of those instructed, timings and actions taken.

Date	Time	Information/decisions/instructions/actions	Initials

Further Information

Epping Forest District Council cannot write or test business continuity plans, however we are happy to provide advice and guidance to businesses in the District. Further information about business continuity can also be found at the following websites.

Epping Forest District Council

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council_services/emergency_planning/advice_for_businesses.asp

Essex Resilience Forum

www.essexresilience.info

Business Continuity Institute

www.thebci.org

Small Business Service

www.sbs.gov.uk

Department for Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

www.berr.gov.uk

MI5 (Security Advice for Businesses)

www.mi5.gov.uk

UK Resilience – Communicating Risk, A Toolkit

www.ukresilience.info/preparedness/risk/communicatingrisk.pdf

Business Link for London (Independent advice and information for small businesses)

www.businesslink4london.com/

Business Continuity – City of London

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/

London Prepared

www.londonprepared.gov.uk

Preparing for Emergencies-BC Advice

www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk/bcadvice/index.shtm

Disclaimer

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*Flood picture on page 2 used by permission
of Epping Forest Guardian*

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