Kent Resilience Forum offers useful information to businesses concerning steps to take to be prepared for emergencies.

Business Continuity Planning

Business continuity (BC) encompasses planning and preparation to ensure that an organisation can continue to operate in case of serious incidents or disasters, and is able to recover to an operational state within a reasonably short period.

Did you know?

20% of companies will suffer fire, flood, power failures, terrorism, hardware or software disaster.

Of those without a business continuity plan:

80% will fail in just over a year

43% will not even reopen

93% that experience a significant data loss are out of business within five year.

Preparing your business:

1. Get Suitable Insurance

Make sure you are covered before an emergency has even occurred

What does your insurance really cover?

2. Risk Assessment

What are the hazards and threats that could potentially disrupt your business?

What is the likelihood that such events could happen and what would the impact be on your business?

3. Create Your Business Continuity Plan With Five Stages

Analyse your business

The first step towards developing a Business Continuity Plan is a really good look at what your business does and what resources you need to do it.

Use our helpful templates and guides to create a Business Impact Analysis and a Critical Requirements Analysis

Design your plan

Once you have understood your business and its vulnerabilities you need to look at some ways to protect yourself. Your plan could include the following:

Out of hours contact details for staff, customers and suppliers

Prepare a communications plan - who will you contact in an emergency and what will you say

Document procedures - prepare 'how to guides' so staff can follow steps to complete each other's activities

Agreed relocation options - if you can't access your premises, where else can you go

Remote access to ICT / cloud-based technology - can you access your computer network from different locations

Secure offsite data storage - back up your computer systems and store back up tapes in fireproof cabinets in another location

Alternative suppliers - where will you get your equipment if a supplier stops trading

Download this checklist to assist you with your business continuity planning: <u>Be Ready business continuity checklist</u>

Implement your plan

Once you have worked out what you need to do the next step is to do it. You will need to work out what is affordable and practical. Bear in mind that some things will be very straightforward to implement, whereas others may take longer to put in place.

Train your staff

Do all your staff know what the business continuity plan is? Do they know what actions they would take in a business continuity incident?

Validate your plans and train your staff

It is all well and good having plans, but how do you know they work? The best way to do this is to test them. This will also help to make sure that your staff understand their roles within the plans.