Checklist: Prepare Your Business for the Unexpected

If disaster struck, how easily could you get your business back up and running? Use this checklist to see how ready you are.

If you think the chances of a disaster interrupting your business are remote, consider that nearly **one in four** small and midsize companies has experienced a natural disaster or other emergency in the past two years.*

Having a plan can help you **get an upper hand** if a catastrophe occurs. Go through the following five steps to see how prepared you are. At the end of each section, jot down information you may need to assemble your plan.

1. Review your insurance coverage

Look for ways to enhance your protection. Pay attention to disasters common in your area, such as fires or floods. Coverage should include:

- Inventory
- Critical documents and data
- Business interruption (to cover income loss during a disaster)
- Equipment
- Liability for employee injuries
- Extra expenses (such as for renting a facility or equipment)

List the types of insurance you have and policy numbers here:

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**The 2012 AT&T Business Continuity Survey was conducted online among a representative sample of 381 principals, CIOs and IT directors at companies with up to 500 employees in the United States by Bredin Inc. between May 10 and May 17, 2012. The survey had a margin of error of +/-5 percentage points at the 90% level of confidence.*

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2. Safeguard important documents

Make sure your critical paperwork is stored and scanned as digital copies. Documents should include:

- Tax returns and financial statements
- Lease or mortgage papers
- Vendor, client, and staff records
- Insurance policies and photos
- Articles of incorporation
- Loan documents

Do you have other key documents unique to your business? List them here:

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_____
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3. Gather key contact information

Maintain a current list of important contact details. Include account numbers where applicable. Contacts should include:

- Staff members
- Customers and vendors
- Fire and police departments
- Insurance companies
- Utility providers
- Bank and credit card firms
- Internet service provider
- Technical support

List other key contacts and their account information here:

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4. Protect your business data

Take stock of your software and procedures to promote remote communications and safeguard your digital files. Actions should include:

- Password-protect critical files on your onsite servers
- Use your mobile phones to communicate if landlines go down
- Arrange for 24/7 technical support to address any IT issues
- List usernames and passwords so you can access files remotely
- Use a remote backup service to help improve data security
- Enable your staff to use email and access files and documents offsite

List all usernames and passwords here:

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_____
_____
_____
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5. Assemble your business continuity plan

Gather input from key employees and formulate what you will do in case of a disaster. Points should include:

- Designate an emergency management team
- Identify an alternate office space or temporary work location
- Provide instructions for assessing damage at the work site
- Assign staff duties, such as contacting customers or vendors
- List other supply sources in case vendors' facilities are damaged
- List instructions to test the procedures at least once a year

Begin mapping out your plan here:

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