Is your business prepared for disaster? Step #2: Know your operations.

Your ability to respond quickly to a business disruption could mean the difference between survival and closure. To determine the maximum amount of time your business could afford to stay closed after a disaster occurs, you need to know your operations. First, identify your key business functions and processes … and then decide how long you can go without being able to perform them.

Do you know the ins and outs of your operation? While thinking it through, consider the following:

- What is my main product or service?
- How do I produce this product or service?
- What are the things that could most likely impact my ability to do business?
- What risks, such as economic, market, or operational risks, could potentially disrupt my business, and how do I mitigate them?
- If my business was impacted, who would I need to call? How would I reach them? Explore Step #4: Know your customers, contacts, suppliers, and vendors.
- What other business functions and processes do I perform to run my overall business? Consider functions in all areas: Accounting/Finance, Production/Service Delivery, Sales/Marketing, Customer Service, Human Resources, Administration, Information Technology, and Purchasing.
- Which of these functions and processes involve legal, contractual, regulatory, or financial obligations?
- Can the function be performed offsite? What equipment is needed?
- How much downtime can I tolerate for each function?
- What are the consequences if the function cannot be performed?
- Can my business survive without a specific function?

If you can't answer every question, we recommend listing all your business functions, then filling out a separate form for each one.

Business Function Form

Use this form to identify what business functions are critical to your business' survival. Duplicate the form for each business function.

Updated:

Next review date:

Business function:

Priority: ☐ Extremely High ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

Employee in charge:

Timeframe or deadline:

Money lost (or fines imposed) if not done:

Obligation: ☐ None ☐ Legal ☐ Contractual ☐ Regulatory ☐ Financial

Who performs this function?
(list all who apply)

Employees:

Suppliers/vendors:

Key contacts:

Who helps perform this function?
(list all who apply)

Employees:

Suppliers/vendors:

Key contacts:

What is needed to perform this function?
(list all that apply)

Equipment:

Special reports/supplies:

Dependencies:

Who uses the output from this function?
(list all who apply)

Employees:

Suppliers/vendors:

Key contacts:

(For additional space, use the Notes area below)

Completing the function:

Brief description of how to complete this function:

Workaround methods:

Notes:

Complete our business function form.

Using our printable business function form, rate each with a priority level of Extremely High, High, Medium, or Low, and consider any possible workarounds or backups for each function. You should also think through and note any temporary processes that could be implemented until a permanent solution is available. Document detailed procedures for these workarounds and processes, including any additional resources needed.

Inform key team members.

After you've done a thorough audit of your operations, it's important to share that information with key team members. Should you step down, be away, or experience an emergency, giving someone else access to this information keeps your business on a better path.

Review and revise your form regularly.

To keep your plan relevant, review your business functions and processes every six months. Make updates as your business grows and evolves. Keep an updated form with any changes and inform the key team members you've identified of these changes.

Frankly speaking, the best businesses are prepared for the worst, and our Disaster Preparedness Guide has you covered. Whether you know your operations or want help identifying them, our local, independent agents are here for you. Talk to one today.