

Disaster Recovery Planning - Have You FORGOTTEN...??

In preparing for disaster recovery, most organizations follow variants of the basic steps listed below:

- provide top-management guidelines,
- identify serious risks,
- prioritize the operations to be maintained and how to maintain them,
- assign the disaster team,
- take a complete inventory,
- document the plan,
- train employees,
- test the plan,
- review with all employees.

As we have worked with organizations ranging from Retailers to Banks to Dairies, we have found that even following the basic steps, there are "small but crucial" points which are often overlooked, and simply "add insult to injury" when disaster occurs.

We provide a list of them here in the hope that it may help to lessen the disaster's impact.

- Do you have an alternate person with full authority for disaster recovery, in the event that the usual person in charge is not available?
- Do the Fire and Police departments servicing each of your locations have the phone number of both your person in charge and your alternate?
- Do you keep your backups where you can always get to them (not in a timed vault, etc.)?
- Have you tested that you can actually read and restore your computer and PC backup files?
- Do your alarms work without power (do they have battery back-up)?
- Are your safes fireproof or only "tool-resistant"?
- Do you have a binder off-site with a copy of every form you use, and the phone number of where you get them?
- Do you have the after-hours contact numbers for your insurance agents?
- Do you have at least one telephone at each location which works when your central PBX loses power or breaks?
- Is your payroll function cross-trained - often for reasons of privacy it is not.
- Are your personnel records safe from fire - typically they are among the files which are not.
- Do you know the street addresses of your local radio stations, in the event that telephones are not working and you must get there in person to submit announcements.
- Are your telephone and electrical service "rooms" protected from "falling" water - most are not, and represent a major cause of disaster downtime.
- Does someone have a list of all employees' voice-mail passwords - in order to retrieve messages when an employee is suddenly ill or incapacitated.
- Do each of your locations have "emergency cabinets," containing at least: candles, matches, flashlights with extra batteries, a radio with extra batteries, coins for vending machines, and a first-aid kit?

- Do all your locations have at least one exit which can be used without a key - in some industries up to 30% of sites literally "lock in" their employees after public hours are over.