

DATE: March 15, 2012
TO: WITC/OSHA Safety Day Participants
FROM: Chris Straight, Senior Planner, WCWRPC
RE: Follow-up on Business Continuity Planning Presentation

DRCV (www.disasterreadychippewavalley.org)

Visit the DRCV website for downloadable versions of the Business Continuity Plan Template and Guide. The video I mentioned is available at the home page. Registration form and agenda for the April 12th DRCV workshop can be found here. We're going through a website change, so we'll be adding additional materials and links in the near future. Also, drop me an e-mail if you've any questions or want to be added to the DRCV e-mail list (chris@wccwrpc.org or disasterreadycv@gmail.com)

Agility Disaster Recovery Service (www2.agilityrecovery.com)

I mentioned Agility during the presentation. I cannot personally advocate on their behalf or attest to their effectiveness, but it does demonstrate that there are interesting, more advanced recovery solutions available should you need them.

Certified Disaster Continuity Planners

There are a number of certification programs for disaster continuity planning. One of the more well known is DRI International (www.drii.org), but others exist. I've not participated in one of these programs to date due to budget constraints. Some organizations preparing a continuity plan may wish to train/certify their own staff member. Or, there are private consultants available who can assist.

ICS (Incident Command System)

As we discussed, this is the standardize system (i.e., command & control, "lingo", organizational structure,) which the public-sector uses to manage an emergency event. Those in your business who will be interfacing with the public sector may want a basic introduction to ICS. Two web-based ICS training programs are available at the FEMA website which provides an introduction – ICS 100b & 200b <http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp> If you want a broader understanding of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), you might want to also check out ICS 700a. There are some additional web courses at the above website, including one on public information systems which could be of value to your spokesperson/public information officer (PIO).

For more advanced courses, I suggest you contact your county emergency manager. Focused ICS courses (e.g., PIO training, ICS for Executives) and hazard event exercises are periodically held in region.

Emergency “Grab and Go” Box

One suggestion I made, even if you don’t have time to pull together a full continuity plan, is to create a “to-go kit”, “grab and go box”, “bug-out box”, or evacuation kit for your business. You may even want a second, back-up box stored in your trunk or kept offsite.

The concept grew out of the household evacuation kits promoted by many southern states in case of a hurricane, which often include essential items such as water, flashlight, blankets, and first aid kit.

An internet search will yield some different ideas for what you could include in your business “grab and go” box. But some items which immediately come to mind include:

- Your emergency plan(s)
- Your business continuity plan
- Key documents referenced in the above plans
- Emergency contact numbers and employee contact information
- Architectural drawings, important maps, engineering information
- A DVD with narrated video inventory of your facility and equipment
- Information on special equipment, hazardous materials, or unique aspects of your business which may be of value to responders, insurance providers, or your recovery team.

Update your kit periodically. A lockable, fire-resistant box might be preferred. Make sure your emergency or continuity plan identifies who is responsible for maintaining and grabbing the box (and who keeps any keys).

If An Event Does Occur....

Safety first, but DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT! Take pictures and/or video. Keep track of all expenses, time, volunteer contributions, etc. If it is flooding, use a measuring stick in your pictures to show depth in the pictures. Adequate documentation is typically a pre-requisite for disaster assistance or for future mitigation grant funding.

Call your insurance agent right away. And unless a Presidential Disaster Declaration is given, public funding may not be available to help; regardless, a declaration usually takes time.

And, remember, depending on the type of damages and event, you may need to wait until inspections are completed and a “re-occupancy” permit is obtain before you can re-occupy your property.