

Continuity of operations planning: How quickly your company can get back to business after a terrorist attack or tornado, fire or flood often depends on emergency planning done today. Start planning now to improve the likelihood that your company will survive and recover.

1. Carefully assess **how your company functions**, both internally and externally, to determine which staff, materials, procedures and equipment are absolutely necessary to keep the business operating.
 - Review your **business process flow chart** if one exists.
 - Identify **operations critical to survival** and recovery.
 - Include **emergency payroll, expedited financial decision-making and accounting systems** to track and document costs in the event of a disaster.
 - Establish procedures for **succession of management**. Include at least one person who is not at the company headquarters, if applicable.
2. Identify your **suppliers, shippers, resources and other businesses** you must interact with on a daily basis.
 - Develop **professional relationships** with **more than one** company to use in case your primary contractor cannot service your needs. A disaster that shuts down a key supplier can be devastating to your business.
 - **Create a contact list** for existing critical business contractors and others you plan to use in an emergency. Keep this list with other important documents on file, in your [emergency supply kit](#) and at an off-site location.
3. Plan what you will do if your **building, plant or store is not accessible**. This type of planning is often referred to as a continuity of operations plan, or COOP, and includes all facets of your business.
 - Consider if you can run the business from a different location or from your home.
 - Develop relationships with other companies to use their facilities in case a disaster makes your location unusable.
4. **Plan for payroll continuity.**
5. Decide **who should participate** in putting together your emergency plan.
 - Include co-workers from all levels in planning and as **active members** of the emergency management team.
 - Consider a **broad cross-section** of people from throughout your organization, but focus on those with expertise vital to daily **business functions**. These will likely include people with technical skills as well as managers and executives.
6. Define **crisis management procedures** and **individual responsibilities** in advance.
 - Make sure those involved know what they are supposed to do.
 - Train others in case you need back-up help.
7. Coordinate with others.
 - Meet with **other businesses in your building** or industrial complex.
 - Talk with first responders, emergency managers, community organizations and utility providers.
 - Plan with your suppliers, shippers and others you regularly do business with.
8. **Review your emergency plans annually.** Just as your business changes over time, so do your preparedness needs. When you hire new employees or when there are changes in how your company functions, you should update your plans and inform your people.