

Running a business is unpredictable.

**Get ready for the unexpected!**

Ideas for increasing resilience



# Let's Get Ready!

Running a business is unpredictable - you never know what's around the next corner. But have you ever thought about what would happen if your business was involved in an emergency?

What would you do if your building was destroyed by fire?  
Or if you couldn't open up for a week because you were cut off by floods or snow?

Your business could fail because of something that's not your fault or that you can't control.

This booklet contains some ideas about how you might prepare for the unexpected – maybe discussing them with you staff will generate more. If you are interested in putting some other common sense precautions in place please visit [www.letsgetready.org.uk](http://www.letsgetready.org.uk) or call (01482) 393051.

We have lots of free information and templates and also have a team of business continuity specialists that can offer a tailored consultancy support.



▶ **Cross train and multi-skill your staff**

You can expect staff to be absent through illness. Can two people do every job? If you have the resources, aim to have four people capable of doing each critical role. Check they have access to appropriate network drives, applications and email accounts.

▶ **Where practicable, write procedure notes**

Procedure notes can be incredibly helpful if you have unexpected staff absence. Review which notes are available - perhaps in your most critical areas, or the areas with fewest staff. Could you pick the notes up and do the job?

▶ **Review your list of delegations / authorisations**

Who is authorised to sign payments, invoices, leave etc. when people are sick?

▶ **Horizon scan**

Nominate a few champions to keep their eye on things that might impact on your business, such as weather forecasts.

▶ **Develop a skills register**

Your staff will often have hidden talents that could be useful in a crisis. Do you know what they are?

▶ **Know where your staff live**

Is it helpful to know how many staff live within walking distance of work and who may struggle to attend in periods of severe weather or other disruptions.

▶ **Brief your staff**

Do staff know what activities are critical to your business? Would they know their role in a crisis if you were not there to tell them?

▶ **Think about staffing alternatives**

Consider whether employment agency staff could be brought in to help in a crisis, or staff borrowed from somewhere else or recently retired employees re-engaged.

## Information

► **Keep an emergency contact list**

Could you contact your key staff, suppliers and customers outside of office hours? Or other people you would need to contact quickly, like plumbers or electricians? Do you have key numbers pre-programmed into mobile phones? Get into the habit of regularly reviewing key contact numbers.

► **If you can't afford to lose it, copy it**

What pieces of paper, contracts, policies and other documents would you be stuck without? Take a physical copy and keep in an off-site location or scan and keep a back up off-site.

► **Make sure essential information is easily accessible**

Consider using shared drives, secure websites and intranets or cloud drives.

► **Check your insurance is appropriate for your business**

Photograph your equipment and keep an inventory to help with claims.

► **Clear your desk**

A clear desk policy can protect papers files left out on desks. Don't let filing for key activities build up.



## Equipment

▶ **Don't throw old equipment away**

Pressures on space usually mean that redundant equipment is disposed of. Consider whether it could be a useful back up first. How long would it take to replace your equipment if it was damaged now? Would that be fast enough? Could you borrow or rent an alternative from somewhere or do you need to keep a back up?

▶ **Split your stock, supplies and equipment**

Do you keep all your stock, supplies and equipment at the same site? What happens if it is affected by a fire or flood? Consider whether you could keep a proportion in another location.

▶ **Keep spare parts and consumables**

You don't want to be waiting for a delivery in a crisis for the equipment and machinery that you service. Make sure you keep an appropriate stock of spares and consumables.

▶ **Keep a grab bag**

Could you keep key equipment and information in a bag near the door that someone could grab if your workspace was evacuated?



## Workspace

### ► Know your flood risk

Visit the Environment Agency's website to check whether your workspace is at risk of flooding. Are there any other risks in the area that could disrupt your business?

### ► Check your premises

Are there any internal practises that could cause a disruption?

Is key stock or equipment kept on the ground floor in a flood risk area?

Are key files or electrical equipment stored near water pipers? How secure is your site?

### ► Find a backup

Where would you go if you couldn't access your workspace?

Would the location be capable of receiving customers, deliveries or anything else you rely on? Could you make use of cafés or hotels with wifi?

### ► Know the Key Holders

Could you access your building outside of normal office hours if needed?

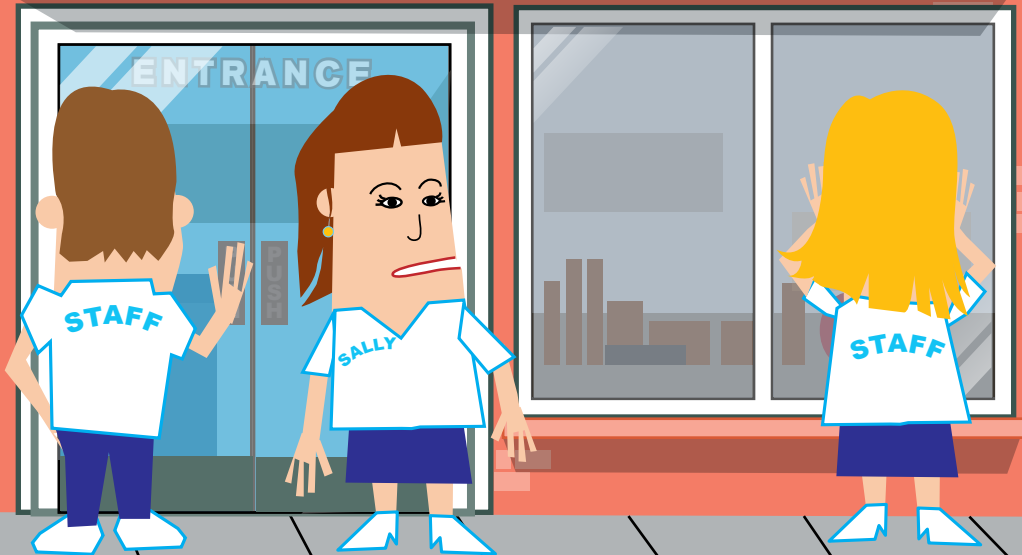
Could you get into work in the morning if the main key holder didn't turn up?

Who has codes for the alarm system?

### ► Workspace for your crisis team

A team or individual will need to manage the response to a crisis, make sure they have somewhere to work from and the resources they need.

## BOB'S SPORTING GOODS



► **Back up your key files to a secure device**

How much electronic information you could afford to lose? Make sure this matches your back-up schedule. Check what information is kept on personal hard drives as this usually won't be backed-up.

► **Consider laptops**

Staff working from home can be an important contingency measure and laptops help with this. If laptops are already issued, check staff routinely take them home on an evening. If you have VPN, encourage staff to test it regularly.

► **Consider generic emails**

Could critical information sit in the email box of a member of staff who is off-sick? Review email delegations or think about generic email addresses. Also think about shared electronic diaries.

► **Consider portable chargers**

If you are likely to be glued to your phone during a crisis, consider portable battery backs so that you can continue talking when you are away from an electricity socket. Keep additional laptop and mobile phone chargers to hand.

► **Tell your staff how to record information manually**

If you rely on computers for capturing data, such as customer information and orders, think about how you would continue to function during an ICT outage. Keep hard copy forms in an accessible place to staff and tell them how to use them.

► **Consider teleconferencing**

Pay as you go teleconferencing can be a great alternative to face to face meetings in a crisis and can be called very quickly. Think about how you might use text alerts or social media to notify staff quickly of an incident.

► **Consider whether a Password Manager could be useful to keep track of all the key passwords your business uses**



## Third Party Suppliers and Customers

- ▶ **Ask your suppliers how resilient they are**

If you rely heavily on another business, ask them what would happen if they were affected by a disruption. Think about adding a business continuity requirement in any future contracts.

- ▶ **Notify your key customers of a disruption**

Know in advance who your key customers are and how to contact them. Be prepared to tell them of a disruption to your business as soon as possible. Consider having a pre-prepared email ready.

