

# Disaster Recovery:

*6 Keys to Navigating  
The Unexpected.*

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## *6 Keys to Navigating the Unexpected*

### #1: CREATE A PLAN

Disasters can happen at any time. In addition to weather and other natural events, there are also fires, plumbing failures, civic disruptions, power failures, accidents, human errors, cyber attacks and other incidents that can negatively impact business operations.

The best way to prepare for any disaster is to CREATE A PLAN. List all of the things that could happen, how they would affect you, and the steps necessary to minimize losses of life, property, data and income.

List vendor, government agency, disaster assistance and essential contacts and secure hard copies; back up locally and in the cloud. Be ready to get cash on hand for incidentals and things like food, water and fuel.

### #2: ASSIGN ROLES

For business, use your organizational chart, centralize the point of contact for each department and assign each department head a second in command within each division. Families should have "leaders", with everyone made aware of these roles in case of disaster.

Take the time to ASSIGN ROLES to each employee or family member; in a time of disaster, no hands should go idle. Everyone becomes essential, even if not involved in restoration and recovery. To the extent that it is safe, it should be "all hands on deck", everyone ready to help.

Administrative, custodial and professional staff could form a "comfort chain" to ensure that food and water, bedding, accommodations and clerical needs are taken care of for those directly involved in the restoration work.

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### #3: PRACTICE DRILLS

When it comes to disaster preparedness, there can be no “set it and forget it”. Company and home business backups should be tested periodically, once per quarter or depending on company size. The Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) should be reviewed and updated annually.

Another way to keep top of mind awareness is by running PRACTICE DRILLS. Have meetings where you discuss different scenarios and play them out. Register for local disaster preparedness seminars if you can.

Examples: Run a fire drill at an unexpected time; take the staff on duty for a walk to tsunami escape paths; practice getting to safe meeting places; test backup systems; take a snack break that includes instructional videos.

### #4: TAKE ACTION

Preparing for the unexpected may also mean that no matter how much you plan, something “off the charts” happens that had never occurred before, or a someone is pressed to take on a role not previously assigned, and make what are known as “command decisions”.

It is important to empower everyone to TAKE ACTION without fear of scorn or punishment. It is always good to assume that everyone is doing their utmost to ensure not only the best for the business, but all others as well.

This is where proactively creating an atmosphere of trust and transparency, and encouraging moments of leadership among everyone will pay off. Each person should feel capable and ready to participate during the best of times.

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### #5: ALLOW SELF-CARE

It is obvious with family, but in business, staff members should know that you care about their well-being and that of their families and loved ones. It is easy for hearts and minds to be on what is going on at home, increasing mental strain.

We admire those who see to their duties, but it is important to ALLOW SELF-CARE. This includes being able to check in and take care of family members who are facing critical needs or life-threatening situations. This does not mean that you must allow the team to walk *en masse*.

Set the tone beforehand; allow everyone to work together. Each person has a role, and should also have a second to call on. Stressed employees are distracted, and distractions can be dangerous. Clear minds, clear direction and focus.

### #6: LESSONS LEARNED

Once the disaster has passed and assessments and reports are done, it is the best time to go over the Disaster Recover Plan to review how everyone managed their roles, and to check on any missteps along the way.

The ultimate test of your plan is an actual emergency, and time for LESSONS LEARNED. Shore up areas of concern, and don't spend time lamenting what did not go perfectly. What is most important is that everyone is well and whole, and that life and business get back on track.

Feel free to modify your company Disaster Recovery Plan process for home use, set safe meeting places, and ensure that vital files, records and data are secured. How we prepare makes the difference, for all of us.

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# Disaster Preparedness Resource List

## **Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA)**

[www.vitema.vi.gov](http://www.vitema.vi.gov) – Sign up here for the **Alert VI** Mass Notification System

Headquarters/St. Thomas  
(340) 774-2244

St. Croix  
Tel: (340) 773-2244

St. John  
(340) 774-2244

## **Office of the Governor – InformUSVI**

[www.informusvi.com](http://www.informusvi.com) – Official announcements for the territory

## **U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism – USVIUpdate**

[www.usviupdate.com](http://www.usviupdate.com) – Travel and recovery updates for visitors and residents

## **Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority (WAPA)**

[www.viwapa.vi](http://www.viwapa.vi) – Sign up here for **WAPA Alerts** system

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## **Ready.gov**

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) – Plan ahead for many types of disasters as a family

## **Ready.gov/Kids**

[www.ready.gov/kids](http://www.ready.gov/kids) - Activities for children and tools for parents & educators

## **Ready.gov/Make a Plan**

[www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan) – Seniors, persons with disabilities, finances and more...

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