**Basic Emergency Management – Things to consider**

While you can seldom *prevent* rare disasters, being *as* *prepared as possible* to respond to any crisis can help protect your business. Many times, even a little bit of forethought and preparation can make all the difference in providing safety to your staff and ensuring your business survives.

1. Assign Responsibility for Managing a Crisis

* You as the owner will likely be in charge if your business is small. If your business is large enough, nominate someone well-suited to crisis management who can be your advisor and lead a crisis-management team.
* When possible it is preferable to separate the management of a crisis from executive decision-making. An owner or senior manager may have their hands full making important business decisions quite apart from counting staff, liaising with fire marshals or leading an evacuation.

1. Identify Threats to Your Business

* Consider your location
  + Region (risk of earthquake, tsunami, flood, severe weather, forest/urban fire, landslide)
  + Closeness (railway, major road, river, waterfront, manufacture/storage of dangerous goods where human-mistake issues increase risk)
* Nature of your business:
  + Increased exposure to natural events
  + Increased exposure to human-mistake events
* Consider each threat by asking:
  + How likely is the event to occur? (Beware events that are unlikely to occur but could wipe you out if they did)
  + How vulnerable are you?
  + What would be the impact on your business?

1. Reduce the Risk Identified (where possible)

* Fire
  + Install/upgrade fire safety equipment
  + Move flammable materials away from potential sources of fire
  + Review/replace old electrical wiring
* Flood
  + Relocate electronic equipment away from regularly flooded areas (basements)
  + Relocate hard copies of important documents away from areas that may flood
* Earthquake/Tsunami
  + Install tie-downs for equipment, files etc.
  + Reposition equipment or furniture to minimize risk of injury
  + Have transportation for quick movement to higher ground if seaside
* General
  + Security
    - Install/upgrade security system
    - Safeguard/backup data systems
  + Equipment failure
    - Maintenance contracts (automatic roll-overs not recommended but update as needed)
    - Consider replacing unreliable equipment
  + Insurance
    - Review with your broker what is needed for your particular business
      * “Key Man”
      * Life insurance for principal staff
      * Business continuity/interruption
      * Property and Casualty (P&C)

1. Prepare an Emergency Plan

Document essential procedures and reference lists:

* Evacuation procedures
  + Reviewed and practised every 6 months
    - Alternate exits
    - Two reporting areas in two separate locations
  + Procedure for reporting present/missing:
  + Note: Especially in remote communities, provide all employees with instructions on how to prepare a [personal emergency plan and “kit”](https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/yprprdnssgd/index-en.aspx)
* Contact list emergency numbers
  + Home/cell/mobile
  + Crisis management leader/team
  + Major clients/customers/suppliers
  + Banks/Merchant services
  + Insurance broker
  + Provincial/Municipal Emergency Preparedness Agency
  + Network of outside resources able to assist in a crisis
* Essential operations or functions that must be recovered in order of priority
* Vital records/contracts critical to business operations
  + Paper copy – keep duplicates in a safe place such as a lock box
  + Electronic copy – Keep backed up on a memory stick that’s ready to go; for additional protection, consider using a cloud computing service to store vital data

1. Practice & Test your Plan (*at least* once a year)

* Without planning and practice, simply having a plan down on paper could lead to a false expectation that you, your family and staff are safe