



QUEENSLAND
TOURISM INDUSTRY
COUNCIL

The Voice of Tourism



EARTHCHECK

EARTHCHECK'S CRISISREADY

BUSINESS KIT

A GUIDE TO MANAGING YOUR RESPONSE

OCTOBER 2020 // [EARTHCHECK.ORG](https://earthcheck.org)

Disclaimer

This publication has been produced to provide a guide for people anticipating going into business and for business owners. It should not be regarded as an exhaustive presentation on the subject. Whilst EarthCheck believes this publication will be of assistance to its readers, it expressly disclaims all liability for errors or omissions of any kind whatsoever (whether negligent or otherwise) or for any loss, damage or other consequence which may arise from any person relying on the publication.

The publication is issued on the understanding that EarthCheck is not engaging in rendering any legal or other professional service. If legal or other expert assistance in relation to the subject matter is required, the advice of a competent professional should be sought.

Year of Publication 2020

RISK SUMMARY CHECKLIST

Measures	✓ or ✕	Actions taken
Have you got:		
A diverse base of visitor markets and a clear Business Plan ?		
A Risk Assessment looking at your most likely areas of risk exposure?		
An Emergency Plan - evacuation, first response and checklist?		
A Response Team who know their role?		
Related roles and responsibilities for the team responding to a crisis?		
A Go Pack , Evacuation Plan, Event Log and Key Contacts List?		
A plan for managing your media response ?		
A Recovery Plan looking at what you need to generate income?		
A clear understanding of what you will need in terms of cash flow and insurance ?		
A program to practice dealing with a crisis (not just evacuating)?		

Use this Kit in conjunction with your Business Continuity Plan Template.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. UNDERSTANDING CRISIS MANAGEMENT	- 6 -
1.1 The Four Phases of Crisis Management	- 7 -
1.2 Planning Your Business Continuity	- 9 -
2. RESPONSE PHASE	- 11 -
2.1 Early Warning	- 11 -
2.2 Immediate Response	- 12 -
2.2.1 STEP ONE: Assess the Situation	- 12 -
2.2.2 STEP TWO: Emergency Response	- 14 -
2.2.3 STEP THREE: Communicate	- 15 -
2.2.4 STEP FOUR: Evaluate	- 16 -
2.2.5 STEP FIVE: Re-Assess	- 17 -
2.3 Maintaining Control	- 18 -
2.3.1 Dealing with the Media	- 18 -
2.3.2 Develop your Messages	- 20 -
2.3.3 Press Releases	- 20 -
2.3.4 Frequently Asked Questions	- 21 -
3. RECOVERY PHASE	- 22 -
3.1 Assessing the Impact	- 22 -
3.2 Recovery Planning	- 22 -
3.3 Understanding your Legal Rights and Responsibilities	- 23 -
3.3.1 Insurance	- 23 -
3.3.2 Human Resources	- 24 -
3.4 Monitoring	- 25 -
3.4.1 Media and Communication	- 25 -
3.4.2 Debriefing	- 25 -
3.4.3 Maximising the Benefits	- 26 -
4. NEXT STEPS	- 27 -
APPENDIX 1: CRISIS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	- 29 -
APPENDIX 2: PREVENTION	- 30 -
APPENDIX 3: PREPAREDNESS	- 32 -
APPENDIX 4: GO-PACKCONTENTS	- 34 -
APPENDIX 5: TASKS TO BE COMPLETED	- 35 -

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Disaster Management Coordination in Queensland (Source: Queensland State Disaster Management Plan 2018)..... - 6 -

Figure 2. The PPRR risk management model, Source: Business Queensland..... - 7 -

Figure 3. Immediate Response Process - 12 -

Figure 4. Crisis Classification - 13 -

Figure 5. Contact Hierarchy..... - 16 -

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Natural Hazards in Queensland..... - 11 -

Table 2. Triggers and Implications..... - 13 -

1. UNDERSTANDING CRISIS MANAGEMENT

A 'crisis' is 'any situation that has the potential to affect long-term confidence in an organisation or a product, or which may interfere with its ability to continue operating normally. Each crisis is unique. In turn, not all crisis types lead to similar consequences, differing from one another in both the scope and extent of damage caused.

'Crisis Management' is knowing what to do and how to do it with a team that is practiced and ready. By planning and preparing before a crisis happens you can ensure that your business recovers quickly. This could be the difference between staying in business or closing your doors.

Depending on the size and severity of a crisis, effective management may require the collaboration of local, state and even national bodies. Figure 1 below identifies the key bodies involved in coordinating Crisis Management in Queensland, further information on who does what is included in Appendix 1 - Crisis Roles and Responsibilities.

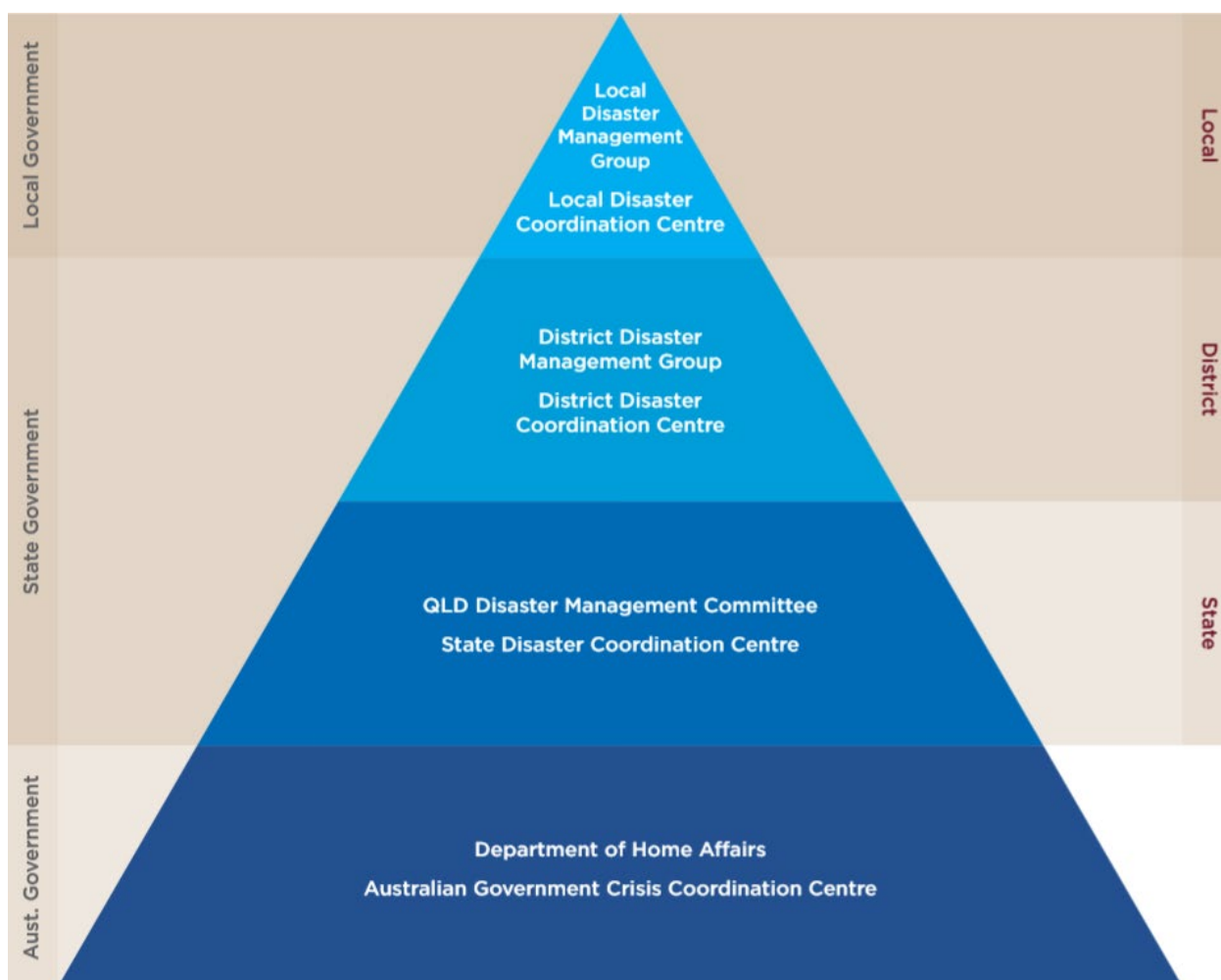


Figure 1. Disaster Management Coordination in Queensland (Source: Queensland State Disaster Management Plan 2018)

1.1 The Four Phases of Crisis Management

While it is impossible to predict every kind of incident that may threaten your business, it is possible to develop a basic plan to cover a range of crisis events. The Queensland Government encourages businesses to use a comprehensive approach which recognises the value of the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) model, as illustrated in **Error! Reference source not found.**, to assist you to build resilience in your business and minimise disruption should a crisis occur.



Figure 2. The PPRR risk management model, Source: Business Queensland

Remember...

Risk isn't static – changes in the environment and the community mean that new sources of risk will occur – so sources of risk must be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Communication and consultation are fundamental to risk management, a two-way process of internal and external communication and consultation must be established and maintained.

Not every action in a crisis is your responsibility – be sure you know who is doing what at a local, state and sometimes national level (see Figure 1 on page 3 of this kit).

Know and communicate to staff what triggers a crisis response and review risks they decide not to treat – priorities and circumstances may change

Only **practice makes perfect** - You should include a schedule for rehearsing, maintaining and reviewing your plans to ensure that they continue to meet your business needs.

Step 1: Prevention – Risk Management Planning

This step identifies and manages the likelihood and/or effects of risk associated with an incident. This involves identifying the risks that could impact your business and choosing the best ways of dealing with each. The questions you will need to ask yourself are:

- What could cause an impact?
- How serious would that impact be?
- What is the likelihood of this occurring?
- Can it be reduced or eliminated?



Step 2: Preparedness – Business Impact Analysis

This step identifies and prioritises the key activities of a business that may be adversely affected by any disruptions. The Business Impact Analysis will use the information in your Risk Management Plan to assess the identified risks and impacts in relation to critical activities of your business and determine basic recovery requirements. You need to identify:

- Your critical business activities?
- What would be the impact to your business in the event of a disruption?
- How long could your business survive without performing this activity?



Step 3: Response – Incident Response Planning

This step outlines immediate actions taken to respond to an incident in terms of containment, control and minimising impacts. This is to prepare you for a timely response to critical incidents and reduce the impact of those incidents on your business operations. It also prepares key personnel to provide and coordinate an effective response to ensure minimal disruption to business operations in the event of emergency. You will need to:

- Complete an Immediate Response Checklist and Evacuation Procedures
- Identify what you may need to pack
- Assign responsibilities to your staff



Step 4: Recovery – Recovery planning

This step outlines actions taken to recover from an incident in order to minimise disruption and recovery times. Recovery is the return to your pre-emergency condition. Performing your critical activities as soon as possible after a crisis event is your primary focus. The recovery process includes:

- Developing strategies to recover your business activities in the quickest possible time
- Identifying resources required to recover your operations
- Listing the persons who have responsibility for each task and the expected completion date

1.2 Planning Your Business Continuity

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority is the state's lead agency for disaster recovery and resilience. Queensland is the only state or territory in Australia with a dedicated Reconstruction Authority. The QRA works to make Queensland the most disaster resilient state in Australia and to assist government, businesses and the community mitigate risk and prepare for disaster.

DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows that every \$1 invested in disaster mitigation saves \$6 in recovery costs.

Source: National Institute of Building Sciences, 2019

A Business Continuity Plan template has been developed to guide you through the process of being prepared for a crisis.

Having a Business Continuity Plan will ensure the continuation of your business during and following any critical incident that results in disruption to your normal operational capability.

This Incident Response Kit forms just one part of your broader Business Continuity Plan. It is designed to assist specifically with the management of the crisis Response (step 3) and the early stages of Recovery (step 4). Please refer to Appendix 2 and 3 for further information on Prevention (step 1) and Preparedness (step 2).

Tips for Effective Business Continuity Plans

A Business Continuity Plan will look different for every business however, most good plans share some important features.

- The purpose and scope of the plan are stated at the beginning of the document
- All personnel with roles in the implementation of the plan are listed
- Risks to your business are identified and contingency plans documented
- The personnel who have the authority to invoke the plan and under what circumstances this should occur is documented
- Clear instructions for the crucial first hour after an incident are provided
- The critical business activities to be recovered and the timeframe and level of recovery needed is stated
- Contact numbers for staff, stakeholders and emergency services are recorded in one place in the plan
- A spokesperson for your business is identified.

CASE STUDY: Capricorn Caves

Having recently experienced a category 5 cyclone, bushfires and the death of the owner, Capricorn Caves are aware of how a crisis can have a significant impact on an organisation. However, by their management attending the EarthCheck CrisisReady workshop, they gained a deeper understanding of what risks are likely, their impact and severity and where priorities for response should sit.



Based on the identification of the risk, management prepared a bushfire go-kit. These go-kits mean that in a crisis the business can continue trading, from staff simply grabbing and going! Staff are also biannually trained in bushfire response, to ensure all are aware of the roles, responsibilities and processes involved in responding to bushfires. A combination of these measures also enabled the team to apply their knowledge to the context of a cyclone when there was no preparation and planning in place. Overall, this planning and preparedness made a significant difference in the team's recovery post-disaster.

Post-fire, Capricorn Caves were non-operational for four days. A massive clean-up was required to get the site functional again, however limited staff hours and wages had flow-on effects to the whole community.

During the fires, staff were able to evacuate staff, animals and guests in under five minutes. The go-pack was ready, risks were calculated and the communications plan in place. Although the cyclone was not explicitly prepared or planned for, consultation with their RTO provided substantial support with how they should respond.

There were five main take-aways from this case study. The first was to attend workshops on disaster management and take them seriously. Secondly, to look at the individual business and understand your risks; whether natural, death or other, find out where your vulnerabilities are and plan. The third was to work with your RTOs through your crisis, as they have a "bigger picture" regional understanding of the plan and disaster. This can be done by keeping the RTO updated about what the impact is and how you are going, as well as reaching out and letting them know what you need. Finally, making sure you have a Go-kit ready, prepacked with insurance and banking information, staff contact details, cash and anything else your business needs to continue trading.

2. RESPONSE PHASE

This kit will assist you to prepare an *Incident Response Plan* for your business. An *Incident Response Plan* identifies exactly what needs to happen in the event of a crisis including who to contact, areas of responsibility for your staff, how to record the sequence of events after the crisis and how to manage media and communication.

Your response to a crisis situation is a direct reflection of your level of preparedness, therefore you should have worked through the first two stages (Prevention and Preparedness) before completing this workbook. The Response step can be broken into three stages:

1. Early Warning – assessing the risks and preparation;
2. Immediate Response – the first hour after a crisis; and
3. Maintaining Control – the first 24-48 hours.

The timescale for each crisis is different, and in some cases, you will not have an Early Warning or preparation time, further reinforcing the need to prepare now! Following the response phase is the recovery phase.



This Kit includes a series of instructions to help assist you in completing your Incident Response Plan. The Incident Response Plan template is attached as a separate file (The Business Continuity Plan Template).

2.1 Early Warning

Improved scientific modelling and monitoring means that some natural disasters can be predicted several hours or days prior. While this is not the case in all crisis situations, an early warning can give you the necessary preparation time to significantly reduce the impacts on your business, your staff, and your customers. Table 1 below provides some examples of the types of natural hazards and risks you need to plan for.

Table 1. Natural Hazards in Queensland

Queensland Natural Hazards		
Meteorological	Geological	Biological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyclone • Riverine Flooding • Severe Weather Events • Coastal Inundation • Heat Wave • Bushfire • Tornado • East Coast Low • Storm Tide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earthquake • Landslip and/or debris flow • Erosion (with or without a disaster event) • Tsunami 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epidemic human disease, e.g. Chicken pox outbreak • Animal and plant disease, e.g. Foot and Mouth disease • Insect and vermin plague, e.g. Locust plague, rat infestation • Food and crop disease, e.g. Citrus canker • Emerging catastrophic disease, e.g. Avian influenza

Source: Queensland State Disaster Management Plan, 2018

During the Early Warning stage you will need to assess the type and level of response your organisation will take. This may change on an hourly basis so it is important to be flexible and stay informed. Factors which you should take into consideration when assessing your response should include the:

- Size, severity and nature of the crisis;
- Likelihood of the threat to the safety and security of those you are responsible for;
- Impact on multiple sites or businesses (including transport systems); and
- Impact on critical infrastructure and industry.

The Early Warning stage requires your business to open its communication channels to internal stakeholders including staff, customers and suppliers to advise them of the possible risks to allow contingencies to be developed. Depending on the severity, likelihood and possible impacts your response will move through five stages of risk response outlined in the following section.

2.2 Immediate Response

Your immediate response to a crisis situation is not the time to be deciding who needs to be communicated to and what information needs to be disseminated. These processes should be pre-determined through response planning. A five-step process for immediate crisis response have been formulated and while they are sequential, you will need to constantly monitor or assess the situation.



Figure 3. Immediate Response Process

RESPONSE EXERCISE #1: CRISIS RESPONSE (5 STEPS) AND CHECKLIST



Included in pages **2** and **3** of your Incident Response Plan template (in your Business Continuity Plan Template) are detailed a detailed **Five Step Process for Immediate Crisis Response** and a **Crisis Response Checklist** instruction sheet and checklist to be completed in the event of a crisis. These pages should be printed, laminated, and posted up around your business.

2.2.1 STEP ONE: Assess the Situation

In many cases staff will have only a few seconds to assess a crisis situation before having to respond. How well this is managed reflects their training, preparedness and the foundations of crisis and emergency management embedded in the company. The primary aim is to ensure that no-one else is exposed to unnecessary risks.

Tourism is particularly prone to external shocks, which by their nature are unpredictable and vary in severity. Classifying the level of crisis is an essential phase in the response process as it ensures the appropriate reactions are carried out effectively. Consequently, this enables you to be proactive in managing potential threats.

Figure 4 presents crisis classifications that have been established to ensure consistency in assessment of any sudden crisis situation. The criteria for these categories are broad because what may seem to be an incident or emergency when it first occurs may quickly escalate to a higher level. Definitions of the triggers and implications for each crisis classification are presented in Table 2.

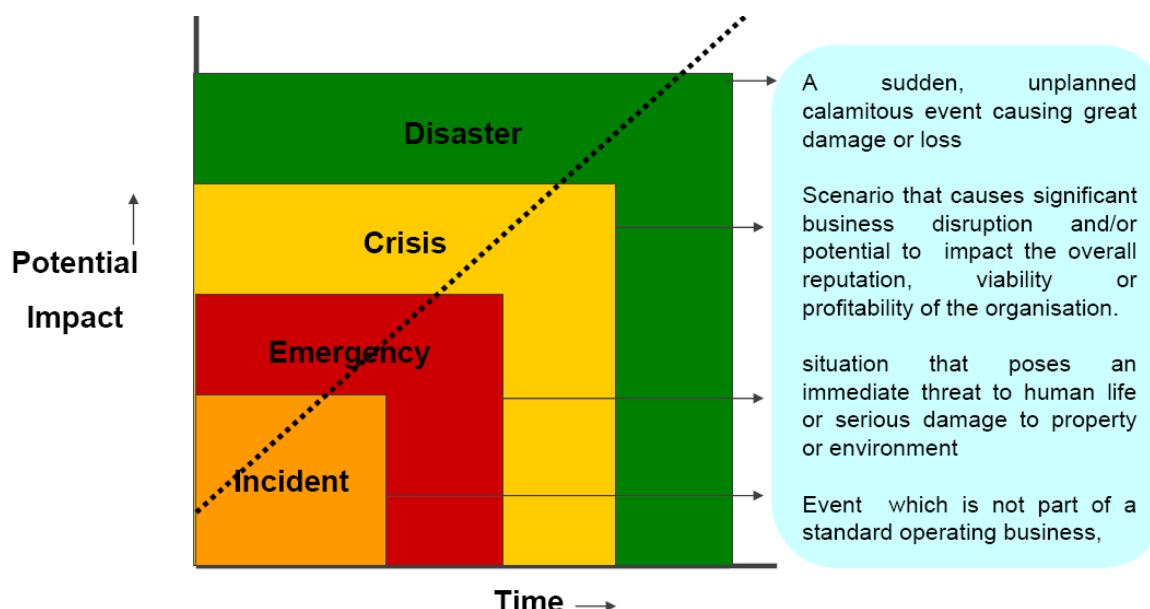


Figure 4. Crisis Classification

Table 2. Triggers and Implications

Event	Trigger	Implication
Incident	<i>Not part of a standard operating business e.g. Loss of power</i>	Handled by responsible on-duty personnel
Emergency	<i>Poses an immediate threat to human life or serious damage to property or environment e.g. Hailstorm</i>	Handled by the personnel who responded, with support from other employees (incl. off-site)
Crisis	<i>Significant business disruption and/or potential to impact the overall reputation, viability or profitability of the organisation e.g. Cyclone (category 1-2)</i>	Requires additional resources and people beyond the regular staff possible including outside vendors or consultants
Disaster	<i>Sudden, unplanned calamitous event causing great damage or loss e.g. Cyclone Category 3+, flood, bush fire, storm surge</i>	Situation will impact an extended area, over an extended period, requiring dedicated management effort . Business will have to be curtailed or discontinued and employees diverted from normal duties. Some employees may have to be let go, supplies halted, etc.

RESPONSE EXERCISE #2: TRIGGERS AND IMPLICATIONS



Refer to the **Triggers and Implications Table** on **page 4** of your Business Continuity Plan Template. Fill in the implications column as they refer to your business.

2.2.2 STEP TWO: Emergency Response

Once all reasonable risks are minimised, staff can begin an emergency response situation. This includes but is not limited to:

- Providing emergency first aid on-site;
- Contacting emergency services (000); and
- Evacuating the premises, emergency shut-down and taking the Go-Pack.

Key Questions

- *Depending on the type and severity of the crisis, do your staff know who to contact?*
- *Have you got an evacuation or emergency shut-down procedure?*
- *Do you have a **Go-Pack**?*

Your Emergency Response procedures should be documented in an Evacuation Plan, stored in a place accessible to all staff and visible to your patrons. These not only need to be clearly displayed but tested and practiced on a regular basis. It is also important to:

- Make sure key documents are stored safely and securely both on and off-site (off-site storage could be online or in an external storage space).
- Ensure documents are updated regularly and that current lists (such as customers) are available immediately.
- Remember that cash/credit cards may be needed for emergency expenditure.

WHAT IS A GO-PACK?

If you need to evacuate your site or premises, a Go-Pack is an emergency kit that can be easily carried off-site and contains key

RESPONSE EXERCISE #3: GO-PACK CONTENTS LIST

Bundaberg Rum's Battle Box –Bundaberg rum put a unique twist on their go-kit based on their operational needs. Their emergency pack is a battle box. Its content includes skeleton keys for all the alcohol stores, pens, paper, staplers, paper-clips – everything you need for a mobile office. The Battle Box comes not only with everything required to keep the business running, but also the locations to decamp to. Primary and secondary locations are pre-defined so if the Battle Box is required, the team know exactly where they have to go. They base their locations of historical disasters and an understanding of where the impact is likely to be felt. Make sure you adjust the content of your go-kit to match the needs of your business too!



You should prepare a Go-Pack that is available either onsite or off-site (e.g. online). Appendix 4 provides recommendations on what your Go-Pack could include. Once you have decided what will go into your Go-Pack, fill in the **Go-Pack Contents List (page 5)** in your Business Continuity Plan Template.

2.2.3 STEP THREE: Communicate

A two-way process of internal and external communication and consultation must be established and maintained between decision-makers and stakeholders so that different views and areas of expertise are considered.

It is important that in the event of a crisis contact details for key internal and external stakeholders are not lost. A contact list should be kept up to date and used in case of an emergency. This list should not be limited to staff (and their next of kin) and clients, but should include suppliers, emergency personal, service providers and many others. You should review your contact list every 3 months, at a minimum, to ensure it remains up to date. Copies of this contact list should be kept in your Go-Pack and off site also.

RESPONSE EXERCISE #4: KEY CONTACT LISTS



The Business Continuity Plan Template includes two templates to be completed:

- **Contact List – Internal (page 6)**
- **Contact List – External (page 7)**

1. Clear Roles and Responsibilities (plus contingencies)

It is important that staff at the coalface of a crisis know exactly what their responsibilities are and who they should contact in the first instance. In addition, key staff and stakeholders in your business (whether they be on site or not) should have pre- allocated roles and responsibilities to ensure no confusion exists about the tasks that need to be completed and no tasks are forgotten. In a small organisation, one person may have multiple roles.

The roles and responsibilities template in the Business Continuity Plan Template allows you to assign responsibility for completion of tasks to designated 'roles' (e.g. Crisis Response Officer, Communication Officer, etc.). These roles should be allocated to staff members and back-up staff assigned to step-in if they are absent.

RESPONSE EXERCISE #5: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Complete the **Roles and Responsibilities Template (page 8)** in the Business Continuity Plan Template. Provided in Appendix 5 is a list of the different tasks that you may like to allocate to staff. You should customise this table and the responsibilities to suit your business's needs and structure.

The staff members involved in this process should be given a copy of this table in order to understand their roles and task assignment and to allow them to undertake any pre-emergency planning.

2. Using a Contact Tree

Your contact hierarchy maps the network of people that need to be contacted in the event of an emergency. It is a visual representation of who contacts who in the event of a crisis. The contact hierarchy should also illustrate procedures for reporting back to a central location. This way the process for communication is managed and controlled. Figure 4 below is an example contact hierarchy.

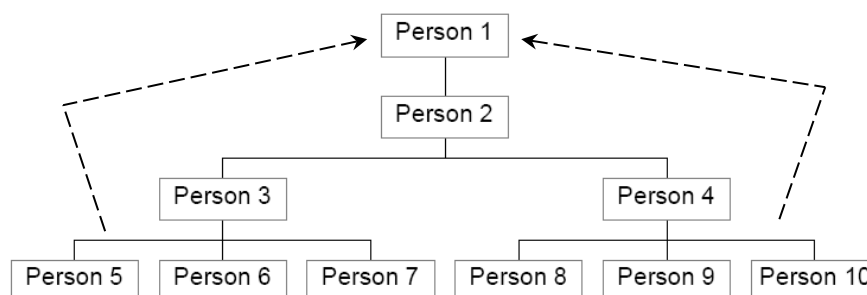


Figure 5. Contact Hierarchy

RESPONSE EXERCISE #6: CONTACT HIERARCHY



Once key contacts have been identified and roles and responsibilities allocated, draw a **Contact Hierarchy (page 10)** into the Business Continuity Plan Template. You may choose to use people's names or positions.

2.2.4 STEP FOUR: Evaluate

1. Response Checklist

The pressure of responding to a crisis can often mean that important actions are overlooked. To assist you in this critical time a Response Checklist has been developed to help to ensure you have completed the necessary tasks in the immediate response. A copy of the Crisis Response Checklist is included in the front of the Business Continuity Plan Template, you should review the checklist and add additional questions relevant to your business.

RESPONSE EXERCISE #7: RESPONSE CHECKLIST



A copy of the **Crisis Response Checklist (page 3)** is included in the Business Continuity Plan Template included in this workbook. Review the checklist and add additional questions you would find beneficial in a crisis.

2. Event log

An event log should be used on the day of the crisis to record all actions. This log will be useful in the recovery phase to trace back on who completed different tasks in case further follow up or clarification is required.

RESPONSE EXERCISE #8: EVENT LOG



A copy of the **Event Log Template (page 11)** is included in the Business Continuity Plan Template. The template records information regarding the decision and actions in

the period immediately following the critical event or incident. Review the event log and make any changes you see necessary.

2.2.5 STEP FIVE: Re-Assess

Having made initial contact with key contacts and ensured key tasks are being completed, it is important to obtain feedback from both from your key stakeholders in the response process and external sources. Obtaining feedback will ensure you remain in control of the situation and can alter your response as the conditions change and new information comes to light.

CASE STUDY: Binna Burra

On the 8 September 2019, a bushfire destroyed most of the heritage listed building at Binna Burra Lodge.

Before the event, all disaster management policies and procedures were up to date, regular emergency drills conducted, and three senior managers had recently completed a refresher training course in a fire safety program.



By lunchtime on Friday 6 September 2019, the fire status change to 'act and alert' so staff started the pre-evacuation procedures. By approximately 4pm, the fire status changed to 'emergency warning', so senior staff made the decision to conduct a voluntary evacuation of the lodge. Staff effectively followed their emergency plan. In the early hours on Sunday morning, Binna Burra Lodge was hit by fire, destroying most of the heritage listed buildings.

Following the event, Binna Burra Lodge created a recovery framework outlining the internal reconstruction council which runs parallel to the Queensland Government Recovery Taskforce, which is detailed in the Full Version.

The key insights from this case study of Binna Burra Lodge are as follows: have multiple trained fire wardens; have multi-skilled, cross-trained staff; have an easily accessible go-to kit; not to let business get in way of early evacuation; pre-determine single spokesperson; be able to operate remotely; pivot communication and website post-event; consider forward booking & distribution channel partners; build relationships with key stakeholders pre-disaster; and, understand staffing responsibilities.

The future vision for Binna Burra Lodge is to 'reset, reimagine and recreate'. Fires will create new views, new tracks, attract new people and therefore lends a need for its future to be reimaged

2.3 Maintaining Control

The first 24 hours are a vital time for effective two-way communication. Extensive tourism and business industry experience illustrates that good communication is essential for rapid crisis recovery. Lack of information or incorrect information at a time of public uncertainty or confusion can have long term negative effects on consumer confidence. Once the immediate response is underway it is time to begin external communication. Before you engage in any communication externally be sure you can answer the following questions:

WHAT happened and where?

WHEN did this happen?

WHO is involved?

HOW did it happen?

WHAT is currently being done?

When collecting the data consider the following:

- Do you have **all** the facts (to the best of your knowledge)?
- What **other information** do you need to put the event into perspective?
- Has the situation been **confirmed**?
- Was your information source(s) **credible**?
- Is information **consistent** from several sources?

In some cases, the media may be alerted to the situation before these facts can be determined. Even if you do not have all the information yet, it is important to notify your appointed 'spokesperson' to provide the media with a statement indicating that the situation is under investigation and that as soon as more information is available it will be provided.

2.3.1 Dealing with the Media

Ineffective and unprofessional communication with the media can exacerbate the crisis for tourism businesses, but responsible management can facilitate the recovery process. Operators should remember to work with the media, not against them: so the media should be managed, rather than controlled. Further, cooperation is always preferable to confrontation, and most importantly, the media is the communication medium to the wider community and prospective visitors. Provided below are guidelines for dealings with the media:

DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately 25% of all news stories involve disasters or crises of some sort.

EFFECTIVE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

- Fully explains the true extent of the crisis
- Puts the issue into perspective
- Reassures the observers about the appropriate measures taken to control and address the situation.

- ✓ **Designate a spokesperson** - Information to the media should be provided by an authoritative source: a suitably trained, senior official, with additional trained spokespeople also available as a crisis may extend over many days
 - *Who would be an appropriate as spokespersons for your business?* _____
 - *Will they require training?* _____
- ✓ **Be honest and transparent** - Don't try to cover up mistakes, mislead or withhold critical information. The media will uncover the facts and may make you look dishonest or inept. When information is not available, say so, and promise to respond when the facts are established. Avoid speculation and generalisations by not releasing information or commenting on any matter not in your control. If you say things that may result in other agencies being contacted, warn them of impending calls.
- ✓ **Do not impose a news blackout** - Always return media calls. Failure to provide information to the media will force the media to seek alternative news sources which may not always communicate the truth.
- ✓ **Organise your media response & act fast**- Establish a dedicated room and website and begin once you are ready to answer the five key questions: who, what, where, when, and why? Also, consider establishing a dedicated call-in phone line that will offer information to media or others.
- ✓ **Remember the victims in your media response**- Every crisis has its victims and many people will be receptive to your comments. Be sensitive and don't play the blame game.
- ✓ **Challenge untrue statements** - Monitor media reports and correct inaccuracies before they can be repeated. Use the media to highlight positive aspects by working positive details into news releases.
- ✓ **Put the crisis into context** - Use maps to demonstrate that the crisis is limited to a specific area.
- ✓ **Monitor what is being done** - Participate in inter-agency meetings to brief them on your situation and to identify the progress of response and recovery activities. Keep staff up-to-date on the crisis, it can prevent incorrect information being spread.
- ✓ **Listen to the media** - During crisis time, you may learn a great deal from the media that can be useful to you in further dealing with the crisis. Your media officer should liaise regularly with the media liaison officers appointed by other organisations. If you acquire new information regarding the crisis, just ask.
- ✓ **Coordinate with disaster management agencies to arrange media access** - Try to help organise media access to the area through disaster management agencies.

- ✓ **Avoid antagonizing the media** - A short tone at a press conference, during a phone call, or elsewhere can affect your future relationship with an individual or other media who may hear the conversation.
- ✓ **Give credit to other agencies, groups or individuals** working on the crisis, including your own staff.

RESPONSE EXERCISE #9: BRIEFING STAFF



It is important to brief your staff on how to manage the media in a crisis. While you will have appointed a media spokesperson, the media may approach various employees for a comment. The Business Continuity Plan Template includes a **Communication Template** to be distributed to your staff (**page 12**). Complete the **Media Communication Memo** (**page 13**) and distribute to your staff as soon as possible.

2.3.2 Develop your Messages

Once the crisis level has been assessed and factual information confirmed, it is time to begin planning a response strategy for communicating critical information and for responding to potential questions for each audience. During this step, the Crisis Communications Team should:

- Develop a script for conveying key information points.
- Develop or refer to a list of questions that could be asked by a variety of audiences (families, media, partner, organizations) about the crisis.
- Modify pre-scripted messages, or develop new messages.
- Identify the best methods for delivery of key messages.
- Monitor crisis and update messages based on the crisis.

RESPONSE EXERCISE #10: MESSAGES MAP



The Business Continuity Plan Template includes a **Messages Map** (**page 14**) which records key messages for communication following the crisis. Once completed, this Messages Map should be distributed to key stakeholders to ensure consistent messages are being delivered externally.

2.3.3 Press Releases

A press release is a useful way of getting information about your operation to the public, including staff, clients and suppliers.

You should use your press releases to not only communicate what has happened, but what you plan to do to respond. The press should also be used to communicate 'good news' stories and seek support if needed.

RESPONSE EXERCISE #11: PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE



A copy of the **Press Release Template (pages 15 and 16)** is included in the Business Continuity Plan Template. The template records the information that should be included in a press release.

2.3.4 Frequently Asked Questions

A copy of Frequently Asked Questions is included in the Incident Response Plan. The template provides a list of frequently asked questions for you to prepare answers to prior to talking to the media.

RESPONSE EXERCISE #12: FREQUENTLY ASKED MEDIA QUESTIONS



In the event of a crisis, prepare responses to these **Frequently Asked Media Questions (pages 17 to 19)** in the Business Continuity Plan Template.

CASE STUDY: Equine Influenza Outbreak

Equine Influenza in New South Wales and Queensland resulted in a significant multi-million-dollar impact on the horse racing industry with the Spring racing carnivals, breeding season and associated tourism aspects affected. In addition, the broader equine work, trade and pleasure activities have also suffered from losses in gambling revenue and stallion servicing fees, affecting the whole economy (Herald Sun, 2007).



A huge response with approximately 2000 staff was undertaken to control and eradicate the disease. There were more than 20 control and vaccination centres established across NSW and more than 63,000 horses were vaccinated in NSW during the outbreak. The NSW Government implemented a whole-of-Government response including Rural Lands Protection Boards, NSW Police, RTA, State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service and NSW Health.

The Equine Influenza affected not only the racing industry, it had a dramatic impact on tourism events, accommodation, and farm-stays. According to a study by the AHIC total association, business and community economic losses were \$522 Million or \$29 million per week between August and December 2007(AHIC Equine Influenza Follow-up Economic Impact Study).

3. RECOVERY PHASE

Recovery is the return to your pre-emergency condition. The primary focus is performing your critical activities, as soon as possible, after a critical incident. No two crises will ever be the same, so each crisis recovery process will generate different problems requiring a range of knowledge and skills and, above all, the willingness and ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Successful recovery relies on:

- Understanding the context and the residual effects;
- Recognising complexity and existing damage to property and infrastructure;
- Using community-led approaches;
- Ensuring coordination of all activities and knowledge of on-going disruption to services;
- Employing effective communication, personnel, equipment, and measures for the recovery operation; and
- Acknowledging and building capacity.

While the recovery phase can take years depending on the crisis, there are immediate steps that should be completed. These include:

- Assessing the impact
- Activating your *Recovery Plan*
- Understanding your legal rights and responsibilities
- Monitoring incident and recovery.

3.1 Assessing the Impact

The impacts of a crisis can be far reaching from physical impacts to social and economic impacts. There are several organisations that can help you to assess the impacts and plan your first steps including your insurer. You should identify in advance the organisations that can assist you and ensure you have their contact details on your external stakeholder contact list.

Community support is required to return operations to normal, so community agencies and organisation should be a part of the crisis recovery team.

3.2 Recovery Planning

Planning for recovery is integral to emergency preparation and mitigation actions may often be initiated as part of recovery. In developing your recovery plan, you should consider:

- Overall recovery objectives;
- Priority areas of action;
- Current and future needs of your staff and clients; and
- Available sources of assistance.

While specific recovery structures may be developed by the Queensland government during an event, it is important your business can also look after itself. A Recovery Plan should be prepared which

identifies your critical business activities, recovery actions, resource requirements, recovery time objectives and who is responsible for the tasks.

RECOVERY EXERCISE #1: RECOVERY PLAN



Templated **Recovery Plan (Business Issues) (pages 21 and 22)** and **Recovery Plan (Regional Issues) (pages 23 and 24)** forms are included in the Business Continuity Plan Template. Complete both Recovery Plan tables with the intention of supporting recovery in 'worst case' scenarios. It can then be modified according to the degree of loss to your business.

First and foremost, operators should ask themselves two important questions:

- How has the crisis affected my tourism business?
- What has to be done to return operations to normal?

3.3 Understanding your Legal Rights and Responsibilities

3.3.1 Insurance

When an incident occurs, it is important that you report the event as soon as is safe and be completely honest about the circumstances surrounding the claim. Dishonesty could result in an investigation and a delay in payment of your claim, or in it being refused. In making a claim you should:

1. **Produce all documents** or records supporting your claim.
2. **Cooperate** with the insurer and the people they employ to help assess the claim, such as investigators or doctors.
3. If you make a claim, the maximum an insurer will pay you is the amount of money, or '**sum insured**', in your contract. It is your responsibility to ensure the 'sum insured' covers everything.
4. **Be aware of the insurers' obligations.** That is, after you have submitted a claim on your policy, general insurers must:
 - i. Acknowledge within 15 business days that they have received your claim.
 - ii. Keep you informed of the progress of your claim.
 - iii. Advise you within a reasonable period whether or not your claim has been accepted or rejected.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2019, 5.2% of complaints to the Financial Complaints Authority were related to Business Insurance. Complaints include delay in claims handling, claim amount, denial of claim through exclusions or conditions, denial and service quality.

In the first instance, insurance agencies will require the following information when making a claim:

- Your policy number and/or name, address and contact phone numbers;
- Information about where and when the incident occurred, and a verbal description of how it happened (events following, during and after);

- Details of any Police involvement - this may be a Police report number or the details of the Officer and Station a report was made to;
- Details of any other persons involved in the incident (if applicable);
- Detailed description of the accident including time and place; and
- Details of any witnesses to the incident.

Remember...

Usually there are two separate parts to your policy – terms and conditions, and the policy schedule or conditions. To properly understand your insurance cover, make sure you read the policy terms and the schedule together.

3.3.2 Human Resources

In planning for recovery, you need to find out what your employees are entitled to if there is a business closure due to circumstances outside of your control (for example, a natural disaster). If the employment contract/letter, Award or Agreement does not mention anything, then you can stand employees down unpaid for as long as they cannot usefully be employed - as set out in both the Queensland *Industrial Relations Act* and the *Fair Work Australia Act*.

In preparing for a crisis you should:

- Prepare an employee list with contact details and hourly rate of pay. This should be stored in your **Go-Pack**;
- Conduct drills and test evacuation and response plans for gaps;
- Identify key skills and roles for business continuity (for example, payroll, banking); and
- Investigate your employer obligations by reading your employment contracts/letters, Award(s) or Agreement(s), if you are unsure contact:
 - Wageline Queensland (www.wageline.qld.gov.au ph. 1300 369 945)
 - Fair Work Australia (www.fwa.gov.au ph. 1300 799 675)

In the event of a crisis you should:

1. **Contact staff** as soon as possible after the event.
2. **Initiate payroll processes**. I.e. will staff be unpaid, use their Annual Leave, or are you obligated to pay them during the closure?
3. **Consider how to retain key employees** to ensure their skills and knowledge stay with your business. For example, you may choose to give valued employees first opportunity at paid work during clean-up period to ensure they do not need to seek work elsewhere
4. **Recognise the achievements of your team**. Facing adversity connects people and strengthens their relationships as they overcome challenges together. Acknowledge the importance of that achievement to you and the business.

3.4 Monitoring

In the event of a crisis, you should work with relevant agencies, community leaders and media to ensure a consistent approach is being adopted and the informed decisions are being made. Be sure to not only monitor your own business recovery, but also the restoration of other business operations and learn from their wins and mistakes.

RECOVERY EXERCISE #2: INCIDENT RECOVERY CHECKLIST



An **Incident Recovery Checklist** (pages 25 and 26) is included in the Business Continuity Plan Template. This checklist should be used to help guide the recovery process. Update this checklist to suit your own business.

Further, your crisis management team should monitor and evaluate community perceptions and reactions to the crisis to identify and address any community concerns. The public may have misinterpreted actions taken, or may be angry about perceived inaction during the crisis, and any misconceptions need to be addressed as they may have negative effects upon community support and the return to normal tourism operations

3.4.1 Media and Communication

Promotion, advertising and marketing post-crisis is an important part of the recovery process. Rebuilding a damaged or negative tourism image must be primarily founded on sensitivity and understanding. It requires strategic and effective management of media coverage and visitors' perceptions.

Industry and government solidarity and marketing alliances can help present a consistent message and reduce the individual financial burden of destination promotion and re-branding. Extensive experience suggests that incentive and value adding (e.g. bonus nights, upgrades, tours, or meals) prove more sustainable than heavy discounting in the long term.

3.4.2 Debriefing

Debriefings should be conducted following any crisis response or exercise to analyse the management and outcomes of the crisis and to gain the information necessary to improve plans, procedures, and the training of personnel.

Lessons from debriefing processes must be identified and acted upon to ensure the continual improvement of crisis management capabilities, and these lessons should be shared with other tourism businesses and tourism organisations so that the wider industry can benefit.

Following debriefing, the planning committee should:

- Analyse debriefing discussions and outcomes;
- Identify planning, training and operational needs;
- Identify timelines and allocate responsibilities;
- Revise and update the crisis management plan, as required;
- Organise additional training for personnel as necessary; and

- Test and evaluate revised plans and procedures and personnel.

Where possible, debriefing should take place within a few weeks of the crisis itself while events are still clear in people's minds.

3.4.3 Maximising the Benefits

Identifying how the lessons identified during debriefing processes can be shared with the wider tourism community so that everyone can benefit from the experiences of others.

Options to achieve this include:

- Debriefing reports sent to tourism organisations for dissemination;
- Personnel to contribute as guest speakers at other tourism training sessions/workshops/seminars;
- A tourism newsletter dedicated to crisis and disaster information and lessons; and
- Networking opportunities at workshops, etc.

CASE STUDY: Sunlander Train Crash

On January 1, 2009 a truck driver was killed and six passengers seriously injured when the Sunlander train carrying 127 people collided with the vehicle just 5 km north of Innisfail. The impact derailed two locomotives, two baggage cars and four passenger carriages.



According to passengers the crash response by QR and emergency services staff was "excellent". However, as with all disaster situations some improvements have been recommended with regards to the treatment of passengers. While QR ensured that passenger safety and wellbeing was always a priority following the crisis, passengers had to wait up to 2½ hours at the site without sufficient sun protection and some were left with severe sunburn.

Since the accident, Queensland Rail (QR) has spent approximately \$10 million on improvements to rail crossings throughout North Queensland. Passengers on the Sunlander were given refunds or a free trip as compensation, costing the company approximately \$25,000.

4. NEXT STEPS

1. Complete your **homework exercises**.
2. Form your **Crisis Response Team** – ensure they have their contacts and responsibility cards.
3. Put together your '**Go-Pack**' and put up your crisis response **instructions** in a place clearly visible to staff.
4. If you have access to the CrisisReady app, finish all menu items of the App along the way and remember to enter any changes that may occur in the future.
5. Prepare / review your Crisis Management Plan or **Business Continuity Plan** – visit www.business.qld.gov.au for further assistance.
6. **Rehearse, maintain and regularly review!** (Rehearsal, Maintenance and Review Table, page 27 of Business Continuity Plan Template)

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: CRISIS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

State Government agencies and organisations have designated responsibilities in disasters which reflect their legislated and/or technical capability and authority with respect to hazards, functions and/or activities of disaster management.

For a list of all these specific roles and responsibilities, please follow [this link](#) to the Queensland State Disaster Management Plan and navigate to page 72.

APPENDIX 2: PREVENTION

The Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) risk management process is ultimately designed to prevent risk. It provides a generic framework for organisations in the identification, analysis, assessment, treatment and monitoring of things that may have an adverse effect on your business. Phase 1 of the PPRR framework is concerned with identifying the sources of risk to the tourism destination or operator, including those which pose a threat to the safety and security of visitors and employees and seeking to reduce its impact. After identifying potential hazards, the best method of dealing with each should be selected.

Various means should be used to identify all sources of risk, including:

- Brainstorming ideas with personnel
- Checking historical records
- Consulting experts
- Using scenario analysis.

Managers should perform a survey of their organisation's internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats (a SWOT analysis). Based on the SWOT the business can evaluate the likely impact on the organisation of a particular type of crisis and work out how to reduce the possibility of it occurring.

A crisis management-led SWOT analysis should include a special look at the following:

- Existing crisis management and control programmes
- Hazards within the organisation, its buildings, policies and processes
- Potential socio-political, economic, technological or environmental crises
- Existing relationships with the media, the public and emergency services.

Other questions to ask include:

- What could cause an impact?
- How serious would that impact be?
- What is the likelihood of this occurring?
- Can it be reduced or eliminated?

A crisis management-led SWOT analysis will identify potential problem areas that would otherwise go unnoticed in regular business analyses. Furthermore, an analysis of this kind will uncover various potential crisis situations and lay out the resources available or required to manage those risks. Once the survey and analysis programme has been implemented, it must be evaluated and kept up-to-date.

Useful Resources:

A Business Continuity Plan template has been developed by the Queensland Government to guide you through the process of being prepared for a crisis.

[Click here](#) to download the Business Continuity Plan template.

The Queensland Government, through Business Queensland, also maintain a comprehensive web portal on [Business Continuity Planning](#) and all elements of Risk Management. This site will provide further information on how to prevent managing risks in your business.

1. London Resilience (2019), [Business Continuity Planning Advice for Businesses with 50-250 employees](#)
2. Queensland Government (2019), [Preparing your business for natural disasters](#)
3. Australian Government & Tourism Australia, [Don't Risk it! A guide to assist tourism businesses to prepare, respond and recover from a crisis](#)

APPENDIX 3: PREPAREDNESS

In the event that a crisis cannot be avoided, it is important a business is prepared. “Being ready” involves more than just making plans and running an occasional drill. Organisations need to evaluate their crisis exposure and develop strategic, tactical and communication plans. Managers must regularly audit the plans, conduct crisis response management exercises and acquire crisis management skills. Managers and staff need to be psychologically and physiologically prepared for the impact and stresses that crisis events may impose upon them.

Don't just prepare your staff for a crisis, but your customers as well!

Remember...

Consider not only the implications of a crisis on your immediate surrounds, but also other elements of your business that may not be right in front of you (e.g. a shuttle bus on its way to pick up guests, Charter Boats out at sea, staff on their way to work, etc.)

The whole chain of command must become part of the crisis management readiness programme, as it in turn becomes a part of the organisation's culture. This can be achieved in several ways:

- Make a senior executive directly responsible for crisis management issues
- Draw up a timetable for reporting on crisis management issues
- Include all employees in the presentation process
- Make crisis management issues part of the overall strategic planning process
- Communicate crisis management policy and procedure to all stakeholders.

In preparing for a crisis, a business should conduct a Business Impact Analysis. A Business Impact Analysis involves assessing areas of a company's operations (critical activities) that are crucial to running business and determine basic recovery requirements. Critical activities may be defined as primary business functions that must continue in order to support your business

As part of your Business Impact Analysis you should assign Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) to each function. The RTO is the time from which you declare a crisis/disaster to the time that the critical business functions must be fully operational in order to avoid serious financial loss.

A Business Impact Analysis of your business should consider:

- Your critical business activities
- Where your business is most vulnerable
- What the impact to your business would be in the event of a disruption
- What would be the worst for your business
- Establish your breakeven point and how long your business could continue to function at reduced/minimum capacity / and what level that is
- How long could your business survive without performing this activity?

- How much you can afford to lose if you are unable to run your business for days/ weeks/ months?

Information Back-up and Off-Site Storage

A key step in preparing for a crisis is to ensure you have off-site storage of all company files. This can be through an online back-up solution service, such as an encrypted and secure service that will provide a business with access to your computer files from any remote location.

An alternative to using an online back-up solution is to save your files regularly to an external hard drive and store this drive off-site. This hard drive should be kept in your 'Go-Pack' or in an easily accessible location that is away from the business. This is a more affordable option however, very labour intensive.

It is important that your company develops back-up procedures and restoration procedures and responsible personnel should be interviewed to ensure procedures are adhered to. The procedures should be included in your 'Go-Pack' to assist in re-establishing your business in a timely manner.

At a minimum, it should become habit for a business to keep up-to-date hard copy records of existing and expected customers. This will mean that in an event of a crisis all persons can be accounted for and upcoming customers can be contacted.

APPENDIX 4: GO-PACKCONTENTS

Documents:

- Business Continuity Plan – your plan to recover your business or organisation in the event of a critical incident.
- List of employees with contact details –mobile numbers and e-mail addresses. You may also wish to include next-of-kin contact details.
- Listing of current and expected visitors/clients with contact phone numbers.
- Supplier details with contact details – numbers and/or emails. Include online distributors.
- Contact details for emergency services.
- Contact details for utility companies.
- Building site and engineering plans and drawings (this could help in a salvage effort), including location of gas, electricity and water shut off points.
- Evacuation plan.
- Latest stock and equipment inventory.
- Insurance company details.
- Financial and banking information.
- Product lists and specifications.
- Formulas and trade secrets.
- Local authority contact details.
- Headed stationery and company seals and documents.
- Document back up and restoration procedures.

Equipment:

- Computer back-up protocols.
- Spare keys/security codes for property, vehicles and other.
- Radio and spare batteries.
- Torch and spare batteries.
- Hazard and cordon tape.
- Message pads and flip chart.
- Marker pens (for temporary signs).
- General stationery (pens, paper, paperclips, staples etc).
- Mobile telephone with credit available, plus portable charger (pre-charged).
- Dust and toxic fume masks.
- Disposable camera (useful for recording evidence in an insurance claim).

This list is not exhaustive, and you should customise it to suit your business.

APPENDIX 5: TASKS TO BE COMPLETED

Included below is a list of tasks that will need to be completed in the immediate period after a crisis. These tasks should be allocated to staff in your business.

- Disaster site management
- Client / external stakeholder communication
- Media communication
- Contingency / logistics planning
- Staff communication
- Risk reduction planning - stop suppliers, staff and customers arriving
- Assess risk severity and identify the best course of action
- Coordinate disaster response with local disaster agencies
- Identify critical activities affected and trigger your recovery action plan
- Understand your legal risks and implications
- Keep updated information flowing



EARTHCHECK

EarthCheck is the world's leading business advisory group specialising in sustainability and destination management for the travel and tourism industry. EarthCheck's holistic approach to responsible tourism and its world leading science enables destinations and operators to benchmark and certify their performance with confidence and surety.

Through its Total Tourism Management™ platform, EarthCheck works in partnership with clients to help plan for the future and guide the design, construction and operation of smart buildings and the responsible management of tourism destinations.



WWW.EARTHCHECK.ORG