



Disaster Recovery and the Small Business



You know the importance of having proper insurance if your business were closed down after a disaster, but what about a written disaster plan? Did you know that of all the businesses forced to close after a claim, 25 percent will never re-open? While having the proper insurance for business interruption is important, having a detailed plan is equally as important. A large business may hire consultants or risk managers to develop a catastrophe plan, but a small business might find this cost restrictive.

A good disaster recovery plan should include the following:

1. Analyze your company's critical workflows and determine if you can operate at a temporary location.
2. Find another facility at which you can operate. Consider entering into a reciprocity agreement with another business from which you can operate.
3. Organize a disaster response plan. Train employees and assign individual responsibilities.
4. Protect your EDP resources. Use offsite backup.
5. Prepare a list of important contacts including, not only emergency management agencies, but also major clients, financial institutions and suppliers.
6. Develop a notification strategy to limit loss of customers.
7. Stockpile those items you may need during an emergency such as power backup and communication tools.
8. Inspect your premises carefully and design disaster protection into your facility to reduce the impact of a disaster. Wind resistant and fire resistant construction can make a big difference in your ability to continue operations. Electrical surge protection is also important.
9. Put your plan in writing. Make sure each step is written out in clear and simple language, and where appropriate is understood by your employees.

While a comprehensive disaster plan will mitigate your loss following a catastrophe, you still need the appropriate insurance in place. Call you agent to discuss any questions you may have, and let them advise you about the insurance options available for business interruption insurance

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Slips and Falls

One of the most prevalent claims in a retail operation is when a customer falls. Slippery surfaces, improper footwear, inadequate hazard identification, insufficient training, inattentiveness, construction deficiencies, claimant physiology and fraud are among the many underlying reasons for slip and fall claims against home and commercial property owners. Typical causes of accidents on stairs are slippery surfaces, stair construction or design deficiencies, poor lighting, obstructions on the stairs and inattentiveness. Regardless the reason, an injury claim is probably not far behind.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reports that slip and fall accidents at the workplace account for:

- ✓ 95,000,000 days lost from work each year.
- ✓ Slip and fall is the number one cause of workplace accidents in restaurants, hotels and public buildings.
- ✓ Slip and fall accidents are the number one cause of workers' compensation claims.
- ✓ Thirty-five percent of work-related injuries are from slips and falls, and account for 65 percent of time lost from work.
- ✓ 300,000 of the 9,000,000 slip and fall accidents that occur result in disabling injuries.

Experts suggest that some common-sense steps can be taken to reduce slip and fall accidents:

- ✓ Use safe floor coverings.
- ✓ Control access to hazardous areas.
- ✓ Maintain proper housekeeping and maintenance.
- ✓ Regularly inspect surface areas paying special attention to housekeeping and lighting quickly correcting any deficiencies.
- ✓ All workers should wear proper footwear.

Through application of these simple suggestions, you may be able to reduce your exposure to slip and fall claims.



Defense Coverage

Oftentimes when agents speak to clients or prospective clients about their insurance protection, they fail to consider the devastating effects of a lengthy complicated legal battle. The general liability portion of your package provides this valuable defense coverage regardless of negligence.

There have been times when the legal bills to protect a policyholder easily exceeded any award, as well as incidences where the policyholder prevails and there is no award. Whether you prevail in your suit or lose, one thing that is certain is there is going to be a mounting legal bill for your defense.

The limit of coverage you select is ultimately your responsibility. The expense of increasing your liability coverage is usually only fractional and is generally a good bargain. Consider having an agent do your renewal quote with a higher limit of liability, or contact an agent for a mid-term quote.