

12 STEPS FOR SURVIVAL



The Institute for Business & Home Safety has developed the **Open for Business**[®] toolkit to help small businesses and nonprofits reduce the potential for loss should disaster strike, and reopen quickly should they be forced to close.

Open for Business[®] includes a series of forms to help a business organize its critical information and review its essential operations, both of which lead to development of a continuity plan. Most people already have much of the information on hand. Many companies develop the plan with an employee team.



A program of the Institute for Business & Home Safety

The forms, and additional helpful information, are available online at www.ibhs.org. You can download a copy of the **Open for Business**[®] toolkit or you can receive one free copy by mail.

Before you start, you need to identify your risks—whether tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, freezing weather, earthquakes, or smaller problems such as loss of power—and what you can do to protect yourself, your business, and your property. You may want to install storm shutters or buy flood insurance, for examples. The toolkit includes a checklist to evaluate your risks and identify what you can do to protect your buildings, contents and inventory.

Then, you are ready to start your business continuity plan. Here are the main steps:

- ❖ First, record basic information:
 1. Employees, including owners
 2. Suppliers and vendors
 3. Key contacts
- ❖ Next, identify:
 4. Critical business functions (What do you have to keep doing to stay operating?)
 5. Possible alternate locations (Where could your business resume operations if you could not work from your existing location?)
- ❖ Then list what you would need to fulfill your critical business functions at that alternate location:
 6. Vital records
 7. Critical telephone numbers
 8. Critical supplies
 9. Equipment, machinery, and vehicles
- ❖ Identify the items your workers will need:
 10. Computer equipment and software
 11. Voice and data communications
 12. Miscellaneous resources such as office supplies



Open for Business[®] also offers additional help, including a disaster response checklist to help ensure the safety of your employees and customers.

Once your plan is complete, store it in paper and online copies. Some people keep an extra backup copy on a computer flash drive on a key chain. Experts recommend updating the plan at least once a year, perhaps on an anniversary date or before storm season. Your **Open for Business**[®] plan should become a living document that will help you and your business survive and thrive, even when the worst happens!