Is your business prepared for disaster? Step #5: Know your information technology.



Almost all businesses depend on access to computers and the internet, which makes them critical to include in your disaster preparedness plan. But just how well do you know your information technology?

If your company uses technology to conduct business, communicate with customers, or retrieve important information, find out how to keep yourself covered.

How to protect your hardware

- If you have advance notice of a disaster, such as a severe storm, shut down and unplug all computer hardware to avoid serious damage due to power fluctuations.
- Consider elevating your equipment in case of flooding or moving it off-site.
- Have your employees take their laptops home each day so they can work off-site.
- Make arrangements with IT vendors to replace damaged hardware and software and/or set up hardware and software at a recovery location.
- Request written estimates for the rental or purchase of equipment, shipping costs, and delivery times.

How to protect your data and software

- Keep a backup copy of your computer's operating system, boot files, critical software, and operations manuals.
- Determine which data and records are vital to perform critical business functions. Back up this data on one or more types of media. Some examples of critical data include:
    - Payroll files
    - Tax information
    - Accounting files
    - Production records
    - Computer and internet logins and passwords

- Keep one backup copy of your data on-site for smaller emergencies, like a failed hard drive. Keep a second copy in an off-site location for larger disasters.
- When possible, keep hard copies of critical files off-site.

For your convenience, we've created a printable IT form to help you know your information technology. Use it to list computer equipment, hardware and software, vital records, and any backup processes you need to fulfill your critical business functions. Be sure to add a new form when new hardware or software is acquired. To make sure you stay on top of this, we recommend reviewing your forms every six months.

Information Technology Form

Use this form to list computer equipment, hardware and software, vital records and your backup processes that you will need to fulfill your critical business functions. Duplicate the form for each item or record.

Updated:

Next review date:

Record type

☐ Computer equipment/hardware ☐ Computer software ☐ Vital records

General item information

Item name:

Version/model number:

Serial/customer number:

Registered username:

Purchase/lease price: $ Purchase/lease date:

Quantity (equipment) or number of licenses (software):

License numbers:

Technical support number:

Primary supplier/vendor:

Alternate supplier/vendor:

Business use information

Name of business function vital record supports:

Type of media:

Is it backed up?: How often is it backed up?:

Type of media for backup:

Where is it stored?:

Can the record be recreated?:

Notes:

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And to be even more prepared for a disaster, see the rest of our series: know your risks, know your operations, know your employees, know your contacts, and know your finances.

Frankly speaking, the best businesses are prepared for the worst, and our Disaster Preparedness

Guide has you covered. When you want extra support or have questions, our local, independent agents are here for you. Talk to one today.

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