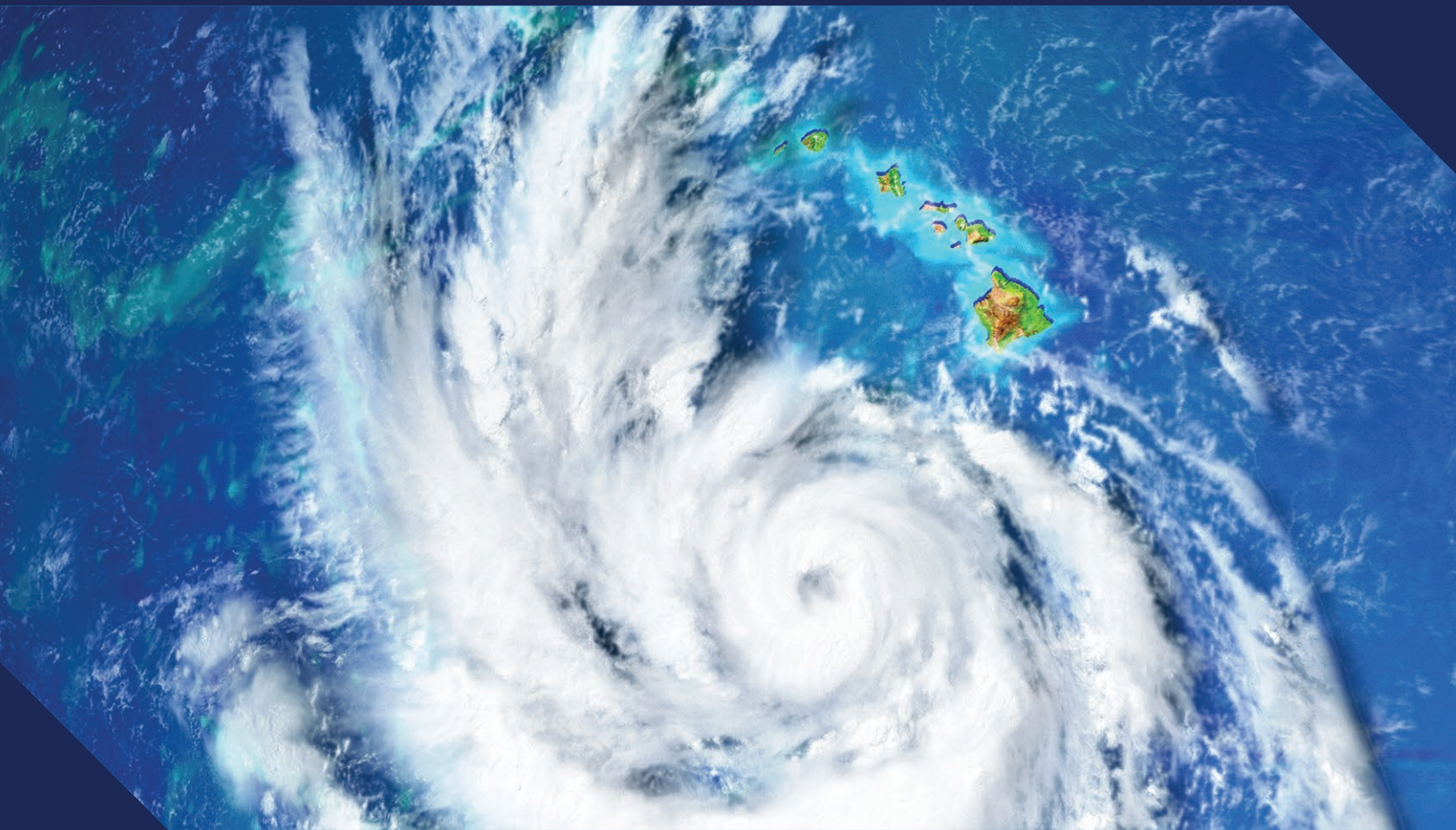


Disaster Preparedness is Good Business



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Disaster Preparedness Starts Now

Natural disasters and other external threats can happen at any moment and critically impact your business. In a report from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 40% of businesses do not reopen following a disaster. On top of that, another 25% fail within one year.

These alarming percentages are why it's important to have a plan that ensures your organization can keep essential functions running during a disaster and recover with as little downtime as possible.

Here are some proactive steps you can take to prepare your business for future threats and emergencies.

40%

**of businesses do not
reopen following a
disaster.**

Source: FEMA

1 Assess your risks and make a plan

Identify what risks your company would be susceptible to in the event of a disaster and list the potential impact on operations should disaster strike. What types of disasters could impact your business? Are you in a flood zone? Will employees have difficulty getting to work? Will you have to temporarily relocate? Threats or hazards that are classified as probable and which could cause injury, property damage, business disruption or environmental impact should be addressed with a detailed plan of action to mitigate your vulnerabilities.

2 Review your insurance coverage

After you've completed a risk assessment, it's a good time to review your company's insurance coverage. Maybe your policy protects you from hurricane damage, but does it also account for other ensuing issues, such as flooding from heavy rain or fires from possible power surges? Consider inquiring about business interruption insurance with your agent as well.

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3 Develop a communications plan

When an emergency occurs, the need to communicate is often immediate. In the chaos that often accompanies an emergency, an existing communications plan can minimize panic and the spread of misinformation.

Understanding the audiences that your business will need to reach during an emergency is one of the first steps in the development of a crisis communications plan. Your audiences could include your employees, customers, vendors, community partners, news media, etc.

Existing contact information for each audience should be compiled and immediately accessible during an incident. Lists should be updated and secured regularly. Electronic lists can be hosted on a secure server for remote access. Hard copies of lists should also be available at alternate locations.

4 Protect your employees

While you want to keep your business open for as long as possible, you also have a responsibility (according to HIOSH and OSHA regulations) to keep your employees safe. After all, they are your company's most important asset. Employees should have enough time to safely get home.

To ensure that employees are familiar with emergency protocols, clarify responsibilities, reinforce knowledge and consider holding regular emergency preparedness exercises.

5 Review personnel policies

If you do have to temporarily close, can employees be assigned to work at alternate worksites if a primary worksite cannot be occupied? Will your employees still get paid for work missed? Will they have to use vacation or sick leave to cover their absence?

Will you have to reduce hours or communicate layoffs? Go over these issues with your HR representative and be sure to discuss topics such as FLSA and FMLA regulations, Disaster Unemployment Insurance, and COBRA benefits. Your contingency plan should also include cross training of key employees so they can take on critical responsibilities if need be.



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6 Secure your computer equipment and data

Losing years' worth of important company records would be devastating. Make sure any physical data backup, such as external drives, are in an alternate location (away from your computer or even your office) and preferably in a weatherproof safe. Cloud backups are another good option, but they rely on internet connection, which could be limited following a disaster. Label and document your equipment so you can safely remove and then replace it with minimal downtime. Install uninterruptible power supply (UPS) backups for your equipment in addition to standard battery backups. This will help enable shutdown options or stay up and running when the power goes out and assist you in case a generator or battery module malfunctions. If you maintain onsite servers, install and maintain fire suppression systems specifically designed for your equipment. Your office may have sprinklers, but server rooms need sophisticated options like inert or synthetic gas to prevent fire but not damage your equipment.

7 Line up secondary vendors

Due to Hawaii's size and location, it's likely that a major disaster will affect businesses statewide. If a core part of your operations relies on other local businesses, it's crucial to identify secondary suppliers and vendors, preferably out of state. Secure estimates or contracts, and have details worked out now to minimize downtime and get your business back on its feet faster.

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Pre-Threat Checklist

Preparation is the most important key to withstanding a disaster. This Pre-Threat Checklist is divided into four sections to help you start the process as soon as the threat is present.



ASSESS

- Evaluate status and needs of your assets which includes people, capital, documents, and operations
- Secure assets, keep in mind data, and equipment
- Ensure all necessary emergency equipment is on hand and serviceable
- Determine what the implications are for your remote workers and how their areas will be impacted
- Find out what local sheltering plans and evacuation procedures are for all areas where you have an employee presence

IMPLEMENT

- Create an emergency response team
- Define clear roles and responsibilities for each person
- Maintain an updated employee contact list that includes each employee's emergency contacts
- Establish a timeline for execution of your plan in relation to the disaster/threat arrival
- Develop an emergency communication plan
- Build custom notification templates ahead of time for specific disaster types to save time
- Conduct an employee awareness campaign
- Distribute appropriate disaster/hurricane preparedness handouts to employees such as our ["Emergency Preparedness eBook"](#)
- Update and distribute relevant company policies
- Have a central point of contact for all employees, and ensure you know where your staff are located
- Consider redirecting your phones lines to cell phones, an answering service, or to an employee who is in another state

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REVIEW

- Review all existing contracts, policies, and agreements for mentions of specific disaster response such as hurricane response and recovery
- Protect/relocate vital records including your insurance policies. Be sure your assets are protected. Consider augmenting assets with insurance
- Videotape/photograph interior and exterior of building for insurance purposes
- Review your critical vendors and supply chain as well as evaluate their emergency response plans
- Review employee certifications and skills (ie. CPR, EMT, etc.) and offer regular training or recertification opportunities



PROTECT

- Ensure that your office infrastructure and network is prepared for the disaster/storm
- Determine what measures should be taken to ensure business continuity for employees that are working remotely
- Backup all data on servers and personal computers
- Turn off all non-critical devices such as server monitors and workstations
- Check the integrity of the power supplies
- Inspect and make repairs to drains, gutters and flashing
- Anchor all roof-mounted equipment such as HVAC units and exhaust vents
- Install windstorm shutters/plywood over windows and doors
- During a storm event, take the following steps so that items outdoors will not blow away or cause damage:
 - Remove all loose debris
 - Anchor or relocate all nonessential equipment to a safe indoor location
 - Secure storage of flammable liquid drums, or move them to a sheltered area
 - Anchor all portable buildings (e.g., trailers) to the ground
 - Secure large cranes and other heavy equipment
 - Make sure outdoor signs are properly braced
 - Secure all windows, doors, and outdoor objects/equipment

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PROTECT (CONT.)

- Repair and fill above-ground tanks
- Fill fuel tanks or generators, fire pumps, and all company-owned vehicles. Move vehicles to a secure area
- Remove as many goods as possible from the floor or ship them out of the facility
- Shut off natural gas supply in order to minimize fire loss
- Disconnect the main electrical feeds to the facility, if possible, to prevent a potential fire caused by short-circuiting of damaged equipment



MONITOR

- Monitor local news and inform employees about latest developments of the threat
- Adjust evacuation plans based on the latest health and safety guidelines from local officials
- Stay up to date on the progress via radio, TV or official government websites



MISCELLANEOUS

- Have cash on hand for possible post-disaster needs
- Evaluate impacts on clients and customer service
- Ensure remote access to your company's website so you can provide updates



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During a Threat Checklist

Once the threat is upon your business, the best thing for you to do is execute your emergency plan, monitor the threat, keep in contact with your team and above else, stay safe.



EXECUTE

- Activate response teams and ensure they have proper supplies and equipment
- Secure site location(s)
- Monitor the threat via local media outlets or government websites
- If possible, patrol the property and watch for roof leaks, pipe breakage, fire or structural damage. However, personnel should remain in a place that has been identified as safe from wind and flood
- Constantly monitor any equipment that must remain online
- Shut down electrical power to sites
- During power failure, turn off electrical switches to prevent reactivation before necessary checks are completed



COMMUNICATE

- Activate communication channels with employees. This could be as simple as a group text chat
- Provide regular updates on the threat or emergency's progress and your actions:
 - Office closures
 - People impacted
 - Evacuation routes
 - System outages

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Post-Threat Checklist

Following a disaster it's understandable to feel overwhelmed and unsure what to do first. The steps outlined below can help get you started.



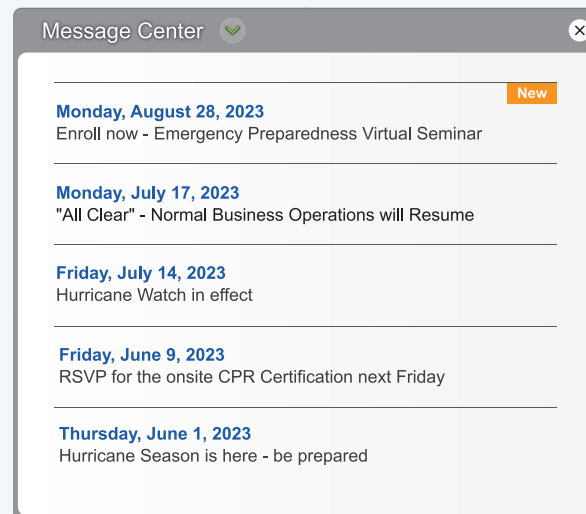
ASSESS

- Survey for safety hazards and damage, such as live wires, leaking gas, flammable liquids, or structural damage. Do not enter structures unless it is declared safe.
- Prioritize repair and recovery efforts
- Continue monitoring radio, TV or local government websites
- Watch for closed roads. Do not cross barricaded or flooded roadways



COMMUNICATE

- Communicate with employees and direct them to a one stop location for the latest updates from your company. This could be your website or through your intranet.
- Relay important information including:
 - Office closures
 - "All Clear" Messages
 - People impacted
 - Relief information
- Determine employee availability and designate assignments



Our HR Symphony digital platform provides employees a centralized location for updates.

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REBUILD

- Draft the rebuild process, and deploy resources to start the process
- Begin salvaging as soon as possible to prevent further damage:
 - Cover broken windows and torn roofs immediately
 - Separate damaged goods, but beware of accumulating too much combustible debris inside a building
- Clean roof drains and remove debris from roof to prevent drainage problems
- Contact contractors to start repairs. Make sure safety systems are fully implemented before work can begin
- Coordinate 24-hour security
- Move equipment, data, and operations back to secure and safe location(s)
- Provide employees status updates on recovery process
- Notify insurance and begin claims process as needed

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Best Practices for Emergency Preparedness Communications

When developing your plan to communicate to with your company during an emergency, it's best to assess your operations and determine which channels will be most effective to address peoples' needs.

1

PREPARE

Identify the individual or team of individuals in your company that will be responsible for keeping your employees, clients and customers updated.

Prepare an emergency notification plan with roles for each individual on your team that will be sending updates and messages to employees. As a part of your plan, create templates for messages that can be easily copied and pasted for any type of disaster.

Be sure your company is consistently maintaining a roster with contact information and emergency contacts for each employee. If you need to communicate with clients or customers, be prepared to use different methods of communication to ensure they are informed.

Having all of this prepared in advance will ensure you're able to maintain communication with your employees before, during and after a disaster.

2

COORDINATE & PLAN

Be sure to coordinate with everyone involved in the emergency notification plan. Review the plan regularly, update as needed and have regular drills. You want each person to understand their role and responsibility for the safety and continuity of your organization's business.

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3

SIMPLIFY

Consider message length – be as brief as possible and make sure that messages remain professional and neutral in tone. You want recipients to get the most out of your messages in the least amount of time.

4

REACH

Think about the channels you may have to get your message out to a broad/varied audience quickly. Utilize all the tools that are at your disposal: email, phone, text, your website, social media, news media, intranet, intercom systems, or any messaging software you have available. Be prepared to respond from an off-site location if your main location system is not accessible.

With the power of the internet and social media, your employees can be a vital channel for sharing information. Since you cannot control what may be shared on social media, your HR's role should be to offer employees accurate and timely information that they can disperse to their own online networks.

5

CUSTOMIZE

Communications are not one size fits all. Prepare resources in advance of the disaster and make it readily available prior to the threat arrival to prepare and ease the worries of your audience. Resources for employees might include our eBook resource – [Emergency Preparedness for Employees](#), team rosters/management emergency numbers, and other safety guidance from local authorities. For your customers – this might mean sharing safety resources, or closure/opening information, or alternative service options during the disaster.

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Business Continuity with simplicityHR by ALTRES

Disasters and other external threats can happen at any moment and critically impact your business. No matter the disaster that you may face, it helps to have a team of experienced professionals to help you navigate through it. Our team at simplicityHR by ALTRES helps to provide a first line of defense for potential business interruptions.



HOW WE'VE PREPARED

Our team has made considerable preparations to maintain exceptional service for our clients during any natural disasters and potential business interruptions.



Onsite back-up power generators



Quadruple redundancy with remote locations in-state and out-of-state outside facilities



Year-round education and training for emergency preparedness, first aid certification, CPR/AED certification, PPE usage and stress management



Our proprietary cloud-based HR technology, HR Symphony® provides 24/7 online and mobile access to your Employee File Cabinet, Message Center, and Scheduling



24/7 Risk and Safety hotline

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Appendix/Resources

[Emergency Preparedness eBook for Employees](#)

[Emergency Communication Sample Notices](#)

[Sample Press Notification](#)

Hawaii Emergency Management Resources

[Preparedness Planning for your Business – Ready.gov](#)

[Guides for preparing an Emergency Plan and a Continuity of Operations Plan \(COOP\)](#)

[Sign up for Emergency Alerts – County by County resources](#)

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