

A preliminary disaster checklist

The following checklist will get you started thinking about ways to prepare your newspaper and your employees for responding in emergencies.

Know your disaster(s)

YES NO

- I have made a list of all possible disasters that might affect my paper. (Include tornado, flood, bomb, fire, sabotage, lawsuit, computer system failure, employee death or disability, other types.)
- I have ranked the list of disasters from most likely to least likely.
- I have evaluated what areas of my operation would need to be restored first if a disaster strikes my whole paper, or just a portion of my business.

How will you respond?

YES NO

- I have made decisions on what to do if the paper avoids a direct disaster, but the disaster involves my town, subscribers, advertisers, employees, a family member, independent contractors, or our key suppliers.
- I have made a list of steps to take if one of these “contingent” disasters affects my newspaper.
- I have made a list of key employees we depend on for the basic newspaper function and what the key responsibilities of those employees are in order to get the newspaper published.
- Employees know what to do if the newspaper is spared but disaster strikes their own home or family.
- Employees know whether they can take vacation or sick leave for disaster-related absences.
- I have considered what to do if an employee or a family member is killed or disabled by a disaster.
- I have set priorities on what lines of business (i.e. print shop, office supplies, book store, tag agency, etc.) the newspaper will operate in the wake of a disaster.

Insurance, interruptions and loss

YES NO

- My insurance agent has reviewed my policy and operation(s) during the last year.
- My policy is tailored to specific needs of my newspaper; not a general policy.
- I know where my insurance policies are located, and keep them in a safe place.
- I have reviewed the list of my equipment and understand what is covered by insurance.
- I have replacement cost insurance, including incidental costs.
- I have business interruption coverage, and know the length and limits of that coverage.
- I am certain my insurance policy covers all the risks that I listed above.
- I have determined some items are minor and not worth covering through insurance.

Getting back to business

YES NO

- I have thought about exactly how long it would take to restore my paper to normal operation after each type of disaster.
- I have made a list of which newspapers or businesses I will call on to help with critical functions.
- I have a list of their names, numbers, and critical functions they are to perform.
- I have documented my newspaper’s technical configurations and a list of critical software.
- I have a list of necessary “non-publishing” software, such as accounting and circulation.
- I have a list of the exact number and type of machines I need.
- I have a list of alternate phone numbers to use in case of a disaster.
- I know where to get internet access and email for me and my staff.
- The staff knows where to assemble if the newspaper equipment or offices are unusable.
- If I print other newspapers, I know where I would send my customers and know what to tell them so they help my customers immediately.
- We have established a plan if I am printed elsewhere and my printer has the disaster.
- We know what to tell carriers, post office workers, convenience store distributors and others in case of changes to the delivery of the newspaper.

Backups and emergency responders

YES NO

- I have a list of all vital records pertaining to my newspaper.
- I have made a detailed, room-by-room inventory list of everything at the newspaper.
- My inventory also has descriptions and model numbers of all pieces of equipment and software.
- I have a copy of the layout of my paper, list of addresses and phone numbers of key personnel.
- I have backed up all my computer information and a plan to regularly back up that information.
- I know if I there is “third party property” at my newspaper office and included it in my inventory list.
- I store the back up information and a copy of all vital records in a safe and secure place.
- Local emergency personnel (i.e. fire, EMS, police) have toured my paper in the past year to familiarize their personnel with our building, hazards, exits, etc.
- Local police, fire and medical personnel know us, will vouch for us, and won’t shut us out when other media arrive on the scene.