

Business Continuity Plan template

This template is provided as a general guide only and is designed to help organisations document their arrangements for responding to and recovering from unexpected disruptions.

Organisations should amend this template to reflect their own activities, risks, systems, and procedures. This template does not constitute legal, regulatory, or professional advice, and organisations should seek appropriate advice where necessary.

It is the responsibility of each organisation to ensure its business continuity plan (BCP) is suitable for its needs and is regularly reviewed, updated, and tested.

What to consider before drafting your BCP:

You need to evaluate your business, and think carefully about what you do, which aspects are the most critical for you to maintain, what risks you might face, and how you might cope if they occurred.

When planning for business continuity and drafting your BCP, it may be helpful to break things down into four headings:

1. The nature of your business:

- What products and/or services does your business produce or deliver?
- What key resources do you need to deliver the product or service?
 - Internal (for example staff, telephones, vehicles etc.).
 - External (for example web hosts, customers, suppliers etc.).
- Which are your most important goods or services?

2. The risks your business faces:

- What risks could impact on your business? Again, these could be:
 - Internal (for example power cuts, staff absence etc.).
 - External (for example failure of key supplier, pandemic, weather).
- Some key risks generally include (but are not limited to):
 - Unavailability of premises, often as a result of:
 - Flooding (risk may be higher in certain areas).
 - Fire.
 - Terrorism.
 - Unavailability of services, often as a result of:
 - Interruption to energy supply.
 - Loss of website.
 - Cyber-attacks on key IT systems.
 - Issues with telephones.
 - Unavailability of staff, often as a result of:
 - Severe weather (for example heavy snow).
 - Extensive illnesses (for example COVID-19).
 - Business-specific issues
 - You need to identify and add risks that are specific to your business.

3. Any possible prevention measures you could take:

In relation to the identified risks, you should consider what steps might help prevent them. These may appear obvious but it is worth giving them some thought, as to do you have them, if not, how might you source them etc. as per the below examples:

- Flooding: Sandbags, flood alerts/warnings etc.
- Fire: Staff training, fire alarms, fire extinguishers etc.
- Snow: Weather warnings, grit, shovels, de-icer etc.
- IT issues: Back-up server, anti-virus software etc.

4. The solutions and plans you will activate should the need arise.

The BCP is generally all about considering what you do if the identified risks cannot be prevented. It is about what you can/will do to deal with any such issues. You need to consider what contingency plans you have in place for each eventuality, again as per the below examples:

- Unavailability of premises: Alternative premises? Working from home? Outsourcing?
- Unavailability of services: Alternative providers? Electricity generator?
- Unavailability of staff: Working from home? Suitably trained temporary or redeployed staff?

Introduction

This is the business continuity plan for:

Dated:

Document owner:

Version number:

Next review date:

Who this plan should be distributed to

Include the name, position, and whether the plan has been shared.

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1. Staff contact list

List staff contact details - include the below details for each:

- Name
- Position
- Office, mobile, and home phone
- Work and personal email addresses

Only information necessary for business continuity purposes should be retained, and personal data should be appropriately protected and access controlled.

2. Business services and/or products

Insert all of the services and/or products your business offers.

3. Business priorities

Arrange all of the services and/or products your business offers in priority order. Number 1 will be the aspect of your business which it is most important to try to maintain. It could be beneficial to consider:

- Which activities are most critical to customers.
- How long those activities can be disrupted before causing harm.
- Any vulnerable customers who may be disproportionately affected.

4. Decision-makers

Insert names of decision-makers, including who they must consult (if any). Provide alternatives if a decision-maker is unavailable. Insert details of which decision-maker is responsible for which aspect of the BCP.

5. Loss of premises

Insert specific details of what you have planned to do	
Action	Process
Establish the current process	Ascertain: What happened and when? Have emergency services been informed or are they on-site? If not, have the emergency services been notified? If evacuated, ensure all staff have left the building. If evacuated, take a roll call of staff at assembly point. Nominate an "Incident Manager". Is there access to the premises? Whole or part access? Are IT systems, telephones and services still running? Who else has been informed (staff/suppliers /customers)?
Decide whether to invoke BCP	In the light of the above, consider whether the BCP needs to be invoked: How quickly will the business be able to re-enter the affected workspace? Can staff work from home? If the decision is to relocate to alternative accommodation, alert the site – (contact details in table below). If a decision is made not to invoke the plan, continue to monitor the situation.
Communication	If evacuation is necessary, follow site evacuation plan taking into account staff, customer and visitor safety. Keep staff informed at assembly points until a decision has been made about whether the building is likely to become available again soon. Out of Hours: if the disruption occurs outside office hours, staff communication will be co-ordinated by the designated staff member. Inform staff that the BCP is being invoked OR put staff on standby OR invoke agreed manual systems to ensure that the service can continue to operate. Insert details of who needs to be informed of next stages.
Decision-makers	Insert names of decision-makers, including who they must consult (if any). Provide alternative decision-makers if a decision-maker is unavailable. Cross-refer to section 4.
Communicators	Insert names of staff members responsible for communication with staff, clients, suppliers, alternative service providers etc.
Alternative accommodation provider	Insert address
Alternative location provider	Insert address
Contact name	Insert details
Contact number	Insert number
Staff to be relocated	Insert names of relevant staff to move to new premises
Equipment to be relocated	Insert details of relevant equipment to move to new premises

6. Loss of IT/data/services

Insert specific details of what you have planned to do	
Action	Process
Establish the current process	What happened and when? Which systems and/or services are affected? Nominate an "Incident Manager". How serious is it? What is the estimated duration of the problem? Who else has been informed (staff/ suppliers / customers)?
Decide whether to invoke BCP	In the light of the above, consider whether the BCP needs to be invoked: How long will systems be unavailable? Are the systems affected required to support the business priorities? If the decision is made not to invoke the plan, continue to monitor the situation.
Communication	Inform staff that the BCP is being invoked OR put staff on standby OR invoke agreed manual systems to ensure that the service can continue to operate. Inform others who need to be informed, if any. Insert details including contact details of alternative service providers, clients, and suppliers etc.
Decision-makers	Insert names of decision-makers, including who they must consult (if any). Provide alternative decision-makers if a decision-maker is unavailable. Cross-refer to section 4.
Communicators	Insert names of staff members responsible for communication with staff, clients, suppliers, alternative service providers etc.
Alternative service provider	Insert names, for example; electricity, gas, water, telephony, web hosting etc.
Contact name	Insert details
Contact number	Insert number
Staff to be relocated	Insert names of relevant staff to move to new premises
Equipment to be relocated	Insert details of relevant equipment to move to new premises

7. Loss of staff

Insert specific details of what you have planned to do	
Action	Process
Establish the current process	What happened and when? Who and how many are affected? Have emergency services been informed or are they on-site? If not, have the emergency services been notified? Nominate an "Incident Manager". Which systems and/or services are affected? How serious is it? What is the estimated duration of the problem? Who else has been informed (staff/suppliers/customers)?
Decide whether to invoke BCP	In the light of the above, consider whether the BCP needs to be invoked: How many staff are affected? How long will staff be unavailable? Are they required to support the business priorities? If the decision is made not to invoke the plan, continue to monitor the situation.
Communication	Inform staff that the BCP is being invoked OR put staff on standby OR invoke agreed manual systems to ensure that the service can continue to operate. Inform others who need to be informed if any.
Decision-makers	Insert names of decision-makers, including who they must consult (if any). Provide alternative decision-makers if a decision-maker is unavailable. Cross-refer to section 4.
Communicators	Insert names of staff members responsible for communication with staff, clients, suppliers, alternative service providers etc.
Staff to be relocated	Insert names of relevant staff to move to new premises
Equipment to be relocated	Insert details of relevant equipment to move to new premises

8. Business-specific issues

Insert specific details of what you have planned to do	
Action	Process
Establish the current process	What happened and when? Who and how many are affected? Have emergency services been informed or are they on-site (if relevant)? If not, where relevant, have the emergency services been notified? Nominate an "Incident Manager". Which systems and/or services are affected? How serious is it? What is the estimated duration of the problem? Who else has been informed (staff/suppliers/customers)?
Decide whether to invoke BCP	In the light of the above, consider whether the BCP needs to be invoked: How long will resources be unavailable? Are the affected resources required to support the business priorities? If the decision is made not to invoke the plan, continue to monitor the situation.
Communication	Inform staff that the BCP is being invoked OR put staff on standby OR invoke agreed manual systems to ensure that the service can continue to operate. Inform others who need to be informed if any.
Decision-makers	Insert names of decision-makers, including who they must consult (if any). Provide alternative decision-makers if a decision-maker is unavailable. Cross-refer to section 4.
Communicators	Insert names of staff members responsible for communication with staff, clients, suppliers, alternative service providers etc.
Alternative resource provider	Insert details
Contact name	Insert details
Contact number	Insert number
Equipment to be relocated	Insert details of relevant equipment to move to new premises

9. Communication with staff

The line manager for the business or the designated staff member will keep staff up to date by the following methods:

- Telephoning staff and passing on essential information.
- Mobile phone text cascade of information if appropriate.
- Insert any additional methods.

10. Staff welfare

Ensure that staff are monitored more closely to ensure that their welfare is maintained (e.g. regular breaks due to increased intensity or pressure of work, additional support if their normal duties change, acknowledgement of increased travel times to/from work etc.). Managers who suspect that staff members have suffered undue stress or even trauma from the business disruption must consider providing assistance for those staff that have been affected.

Insert comments if needed.

11. Media/public information

In the event of a major disruption to the business the communications lead must be contacted to inform them of what has happened and the estimated length of the disruption and possible impacts of the disruption. It will be their responsibility to communicate with the media (local and national) should this prove necessary. No other staff should communicate with the media without express authorisation from their line manager or the communications lead.

Insert comments if needed.

12. Other useful numbers

Business	Contact name	Telephone number	Reason
Insert business name	Insert contact name	Insert number	Insert reason

13. Review

Review contact lists every six months and review the whole plan annually.	
Reviewed by	Date
Insert details	DD/MM/YYYY

14. Test

Test the Business Continuity Plan communication system every six months. You may consider testing wider scenarios, such as cyber incidents, loss of premises, supplier failures and staff shortages, and document lessons learned.	
Reviewed by	Date
Insert details	DD/MM/YYYY

15. Action and decision log

Action	Decision
Insert details	Insert details