

Develop a continuity plan



Once the immediate threat has passed, your profitability and the survival of your business depends on getting things back to normal as soon as possible.

Your business continuity plan follows on from your emergency plan. Its purpose is to identify what needs to be done to 'bounce back' quickly.

In the case of an influenza pandemic, you may need to consider business continuity over a period of two to three months, with possible staff absences of up to 50 per cent during that period.

Identify how your business operates

What things are essential to your business functioning properly?

Ask questions like:

- Who are my key people?
- What things must be done for my business to operate?
- Are there computer systems, documents or records that I could not do without?
- Does my business rely on particular suppliers?

The businesses that bounce back after an incident are the ones that have prepared and put practical plans in place.



Work out how your business can continue

- Once you know the critical things that make your business work, you need to think about how you can get them going again or how you could go forward without them.

This might involve:

- Developing relationships with more than one business or supplier, so that if one is affected by an incident your business can continue as usual.
- Having backup processes in place for key business documents and information. Consider keeping copies of invoices, customer records, bank account details and insurance policies that are vital to your business. Locate this information at a second site and update it regularly.
- Plan for disruptions to electricity, gas, water, sewerage and telecommunications systems. Are backup systems available? Are there alternatives that can be used?
- Be prepared for broken machinery, damaged equipment and computer systems. Know who can fix them and have their contact details at hand.
- Think about having another site you could operate your business from.

Make checklists

- Good checklists can help you work out the most important actions that need to be taken.