

Disaster Recovery & Emergency Planning

Description

Are you prepared in the event of a Disaster?

Answer these top 5 questions and you will have the beginnings of a Disaster Recovery & Emergency Plan!

1. What do you need in order to keep your business going?

!The Fire Marshall has given you and your staff only 15 minutes to get inside your office and get what you need and after that you will not be able go inside again until there is a determination of the cause of the fire by the Fire Marshall. What do you grab in order to continue your business operations?

2. Who do you need to assist you in a disaster? !Who's on your team?

!You have been given only 15 minutes to get in and out of your office, who do you need with you to help? How many people do you need? Who is on your disaster recovery team?

- The team should be representative of the office departments in your company
- Need a list of disaster recovery team members and contact information
- Task each team member with a list of the office departments and the essential office items needed in order to continue operations.

3. Who do you call? !Ghost Busters?

- 1st call should be to your Insurance Company
- 2nd call to your IT provider and hopefully they can meet you at the site
- 3rd call to your disaster recovery team to meet you at the site
- 4th call is to your employees
- Need a list of Insurance companies and copies of policies
- Need a list of clients and contact information
- Need a list of all vendors and contact information
- Need a list of all employees and contact information

4. What is your Plan B? !Are you prepared for Business Continuity?

!Do you have a backup of your most recent office activity? Can you operate immediately and seamlessly in the event of a disaster so that you don't lose business or revenues? How would you do this? What is your plan?

- Creation of your operations Plan B is essential to business continuity
- Determine the location for your intermediary company operations
- Determine the essential needs, such as internet, phone, location
- Determine the back-up computers and printers needed to operate

- Cloud storage for company files and company contact information
- Cloud storage for accounts receivable, payable and payroll
- Daily IT back-ups of all office computers and systems that is stored off-site

5. What inventory office items need to be replaced?

Can you give the Insurance Company a complete list of what needs to be replaced? Do you have a complete and detailed inventory of everything in your office? Does your company insurance policy give you replacement value or depreciation value?

- Review your company insurance policy details to ensure that in the event of a disaster you will receive replacement value for your office contents.
- Need a current complete list of all computer hardware and software.
- Need a current complete list of all office equipment with serial numbers.
- Need a complete list of all leased equipment with serial numbers and copies of contracts.
- Need a detailed list and description of all office furniture and office supplies.

Things to consider and helpful tips:

- How do you store paper files in your office? Do you have open storage shelving or metal filing cabinets? Open storage systems are open to fire and water damage, whereas metal filing cabinets can better withstand fire and water damage.
- Cloud storage options should be evaluated for accounts payable, receivable and payroll.
- Cloud storage and scanning options should be evaluated for all company files
- Make sure to elevate any and all office equipment and computers off the floor.
- Do you have a current back-up of all settlement and/or title work files?
- Do you have a back-up of all settlements and recordings?
- Store all office payables and receivables in a safe and secure location, preferably a locked metal filing cabinet.
- All receivable payments should be stamped and deposited on a daily/regular basis. This will help to avoid losses in the event of disaster.

What do you need? *the Basics:*

1. You will need an inventory of office computer equipment, phones, furniture, and supplies, basically a complete and very detailed inventory of everything in your office. Ask yourself, if you lost everything, what would need to be replaced?
2. You will need serial numbers for your office equipment, printers, computer hardware and software products.
3. You will need a security system equipped with fire and alarm capabilities. This will need to be checked and maintained on a yearly basis.
4. You will need an emergency exit plan and emergency exit diagrams posted in multiple locations within your office.
5. You will need fire extinguishers in prime locations in your office and these need to be checked and maintained on a yearly basis.
6. You will need to keep a file for the Fire Department yearly inspections, which should contain certificates of satisfactory completion of items 3-5 above.

It is so very important to take the time now to plan-ahead and be prepared in the event of a disaster. Disasters can occur unexpectedly and come in many forms such as fire, flood, tornado's and hurricanes, to name just a few. If you are a victim of any of these types of events, you must contend with structural, water and/or fire damage. It can be overwhelming, especially if you are not prepared in advance.



Julie Ann Rutledge is President of Land Title Research Inc., and a graduate of James Madison University. Julie developed the Virginia Certified Title Examiner classroom course in 2012 and is the instructor for the VLTA Virginia Certified Title Examiner (VCTE) Course. Julie then developed the online VCTE Course, which was launched in 2016.

Julie has been a member and volunteer of the VLTA since 1996. She has served on the VLTA *Examiner* Magazine Editorial Board since 1997, serving as columnist of *The Abstract View & Title Tips & Trivia* for the *Examiner*. Julie served as the Editor-in-Chief for two years from 2012 through 2014. Julie was elected to the VLTA Board of Directors 2015 through June 2018 to serve as the Director and Editor of the VLTA *Examiner* Magazine. Elected in 2018, Julie currently serves as the Treasurer of the VLTA.

Julie Ann Rutledge was appointed to the Stafford County Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) in 1992, serving through 2006 and was elected as Chairman of the Stafford County BZA for three years. She graduated from the Virginia Board of Zoning Appeals Certification Program conducted by VA Tech in 2000. After graduating, Julie was called upon to be an assistant instructor for the Virginia Board of Zoning Appeals Certification Program for three terms.

Category

1. Members

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