

You Need a Disaster Response Plan

Your business needs to be prepared for anything, so that it can survive even the most unexpected disaster. Though terrorism may not be top of mind, it is still a viable threat that you must consider, particularly if your manufacturing facility is in or near a big city. You also must consider more tangible, common risks, such as criminal activity or natural disasters. To protect your company against such threats that could strike at any time, it is important that you have effective security preparation and disaster response plans.

Without prior planning, you leave your company open to financial disaster, especially if you are forced to close operations for a period of time. In addition, without a proper plan to cope with a disaster situation, your company may face legal actions from clients, distributors or employees claiming negligence.

Security is Essential

Unfortunately, manufacturing firms are often the target of theft or vandalism crimes. In many cases, the best way to prepare for a potential security threat is to take preventive steps to secure your facility. Assess your current security level and make improvements where necessary. Though not all security threats can be avoided, some situations can be prevented with appropriate preparation.

- Advise management and employees to report any suspicious persons or activity in or around the building.
- Establish and follow visitor control procedures such as mandatory sign-ins, name badges, escorts, orientation, etc.
- Survey locks, fences, exterior lights and other physical security devices to ensure that they are in

place where needed and in proper operating condition. Establish a monthly inspection of your security perimeter and key protective features of your facility.

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- Pay special attention to areas where you are storing explosive, flammable or toxic chemicals or other hazardous materials. These areas should be properly secured and inventoried. Though it is necessary that employees handle some of these chemicals in their daily job on the production floor, limit the handling of these materials to essential personnel and ensure that everyone knows safe handling and storage procedures.
- Evaluate critical locations in your facility for proper security, including the electric, telephone and gas units, building entrances, transformers, and areas where raw materials or finished products are stored.
- If your facility has a security/fire alarm system, be sure it is operating properly and that key personnel know how to arm/disarm it.
- Make sure that fire suppression systems are regularly inspected and maintained. Also be sure that a sufficient number of trusted personnel

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know how to activate, operate and shut them down.

- Closed-circuit television can serve as an excellent crime deterrent, and when the system is equipped with a recorder it can help solve crimes.
- Review your procedures for issuing facility keys and access cards. At a minimum, keep lists of who has been issued keys/cards and have a procedure for handling a situation when a troubled employee is terminated without returning them.
- Discuss security with your local police force. Often, your local authorities and police force are very willing to provide information and support to businesses and industries.
- Have your local fire service conduct a pre-planned visit to your building. While there, they can identify potential hazards and plan fire suppression priorities.

Preparing for a Disaster Situation

It is often hard to imagine a terrorism threat or a large-scale natural disaster affecting your area, but it is vital that you have a plan in place to cope with these threats. A disaster of such magnitude, though unlikely, could be catastrophic for your business if you are not prepared.

- Be sure to discuss terrorism and applicable natural disaster cover with your rhg Insurance Brokers representative.
- Keep copies of insurance policies and other critical documents in a safe and accessible location (eg a fireproof safe).
- Evaluate which disasters are most likely to occur in your area, remembering to include the possibility for terrorist activity. Be sure you are prepared for all of the risks you identify.
- Develop a Disaster Recovery or Business Continuity Plan. If you already have one make sure that it is up to date. This entails preparing for

anything that disrupts your business operations and planning for a backup option. You may consider identifying backups for essential operations, personnel, communication methods and distribution channels. One of the most important considerations for a manufacturing firm is to have contingent plans for your supply chains. A disrupted supply chain can shut down your business, yet many manufacturing firms fail to plan for this potential problem.

- Review your policy for off-site backup of EDP records. Ideally these records should be backed up and transmitted or sent off-site on a daily basis.
- Have telephone call lists available (include mobile phone and pager numbers) for all key personnel so required staff members can be contacted during non-working hours from any location. Review procedures for notifying employees that your facility is closed. Remind employees that they should never attempt to enter areas that are closed by police or other emergency responders.
- Consider establishing an alternate method for your phone service if the switchboard becomes unusable (such as forwarding incoming calls to a mobile phone or remote number).
- Check available emergency supplies such as torches, batteries, emergency generators/fuel, patching materials such as plastic sheeting, duct tape, spare fire extinguishers, first aid kits, etc. If you anticipate that any personnel would stay at the facility during/following an emergency, consider stockpiling food and water for their use.