



Emergency Communications Plan

Align your business continuity planning with your business telecoms

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Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) are vital for organisations to quickly become operational again when an incident or disaster strikes. Not to be confused with Disaster Recovery Plans - which focus on recovering from an incident - your BCP is a contingency plan designed to ensure that critical business operations are back up and running quickly, while long term measures are put in place.

Business telecommunications are essential to any successful BCP but are often overlooked as business leaders focus on other IT networks and systems. However, without basic communications such as phone lines, it can be almost impossible to put into action your strategy for getting other systems back up and operational.

Use this template to ensure that your business telecoms are firmly part of your business continuity plans:

Identify all key members of staff	<i>Make a list of the employees and senior management who are essential for daily operations and their deputies when away. Collect contact information for these people, including business phone (ext.), home, mobile, business email, personnel email and any other way of contacting them.</i>
Redirects	<i>Identify what numbers to set up redirects to if business phones or other communications are down.</i>
Remote working	<i>Explore opportunities for key staff members to work from home in an emergency. Do you have the systems in place to support this, is this part of your telephony system?</i>
Create a directory of external contacts	<i>List contact information for all essential suppliers, contractors, and service providers.</i>
List all communications equipment	<i>Create an inventory of all your communications equipment (phones, PCs, laptops, mobile devices, fax machines etc.)</i>
Assess back up processes	<i>Make sure that there are robust back up processes in place for critical data relating to communications. The frequency of backups should be aligned with the importance of data to business operations.</i>
Safekeeping of critical data	<i>Your ability to enact disaster recovery and business continuity plans may depend on having access to certain data such as logins. For example, what information will you need to have to redirect phone calls to alternative numbers? This information must be kept securely and be accessible to key members of staff in an emergency.</i>
Identify alternative supplies	<i>If you are unable to access essential equipment such as phones or equipment, for example if your premises is out-of-bounds for some time, you may need to rent or purchase replacements. Have a list of suppliers that can meet your requirements at short notice.</i>
Explore different scenarios	<i>Different incidences will require a different response; make sure you've considered all possible scenarios. For example, connectivity issues,</i>



	<i>localised power outages (both affecting your business only and also affecting a wider area), your building being inaccessible because of fire, flooding etc., equipment being permanently destroyed vs. temporarily unavailable etc.</i>
Create your Business Continuity Plan	<i>As with your critical data, ensure all the relevant information is kept in one document and that it is circulated to key members of staff. Also keep extra copies at a secure offsite location.</i>
Test the plan	<i>A Business Continuity Plan is worthless if you do not test it thoroughly. Testing will identify any flaws and ensure that key members of staff know what the procedures are.</i>
Review regularly	<i>Changes to your organisation, such as migrating your business telephony from ISDN to SIP, moving to new premises, expansion etc. will have an impact on your Business Continuity Plan. Schedule regular reviews and always review and test after any significant changes.</i>

To talk to our team about how cloud telephony can be utilised as a part of a business telephony continuity plan, please get in touch. Call **0800 054 2576**

