



7 Mistakes Organizations Make in Preparing for Disasters

When a disaster strikes, it is too late to determine what to do. Organizations need to have a well thought out plan that will serve as a roadmap designed to provide guidance for responding to and recovering from a wide range of manmade and natural hazards.

Here are seven common mistakes made by organizations when preparing for a disaster.

1. **Not having an updated Disaster Recovery Plan**

Having a Disaster Response and Recovery Plan is essential in an organization successfully overcoming the impact of a significant incident or disaster. This plan needs to be based on a current Business Impact Analysis and Risk Analysis. The Disaster Recovery Plan should account for events that range from localized incidents to regionwide catastrophic disasters.

2. **The Team is not sufficiently trained**

Once you have a Disaster Response and Recovery Plan, it is critical that the entire team is trained on what is expected of them. This includes training on the plan itself and all its supporting tasks such first aid, CPR, data recovery, building evacuation, etc.

3. **The Disaster Recovery Plan has not been tested**

Having an updated plan and conducting training is not enough. Regular testing of the Disaster Response and Recovery Plan and the associated supporting tasks is critical in determining whether your plans and procedures will actually work will real life.

4. **Over reliance on a small number of Team Members**

In many organizations, the Disaster Response and Recovery Plan has only been read by a few team members. All too often, a small number of people are assigned all the tasks called for in the plan. This can lead to single points of failure should those critical team members be absent or incapacitated. Companies should delegate the tasks associated with the Disaster Response and Recovery Plan across the workforce and encourage cross training and avoid any single points of failure.

5. **Lack of Senior Leader buy in**

Without the support of senior leadership, any Disaster Response and Recovery Plan is doomed to failure. The leaders at all levels of the organization must support the plan with sufficient resources and funding. These leaders must lead by example by attending training, actively participating in the planning process and instilling a sense of importance of this effort among the team.



6. Not planning for long term recovery

Many Disaster Response and Recovery Plans focus on short term goals. Often there is little thought on what the long-term interrelated impacts of a disaster in the wider community could be and how those impacts may affect a organization's operations.

7. Not learning from past events

Conducting an After Action Review process after every time the disaster exercise or real world event is critical in determining whether the plan is effective and in what ways it can be improved. By reviewing what went well and what did not, an organization will go a long way in improving their ability overcome the challenges of a future event.

To learn more on how Meridian Strategic Services, Inc. can help your organization through this critical planning process, please visit us at www.meridianstrategicserv.com.