

# Establishing a business continuity plan

Creating a business continuity plan now will help prepare you and your employees for a crisis situation.

Losses and down time can be minimized by systematically assessing and repairing the building and building systems/equipment before resuming operations.

Take the time now to assess how your business functions, both internally and externally, to determine which staff, materials, procedures, and equipment are absolutely necessary to keep the business operating.

Answer these questions:

1. Which operations are critical to the survival and recovery of your business?
2. How will you handle payroll? Do you have emergency payroll plans in place?
3. Who will make financial and accounting decisions to track costs?

4. What is your management succession plan?
5. Which employees have skills necessary to provide key business functions?
6. If your current location is not accessible, do you have an alternate facility available?
7. How will you expedite repairs and replacement of destroyed inventory?
8. Should you consider downsizing your operations while a portion of your business is not operational?
9. How will you communicate with your customers?

Visit [JewelersMutual.com](http://JewelersMutual.com) to download a copy of our **Business Continuity Plan template**.

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## Data and records

Store the following materials in a safe place, away from your business:

- Back-up files for everything on your computer. Back up your computer system using storage media or an online service on a regular basis.
- A copy of your latest physical inventory and year-to-date printouts of sales, purchases, etc.
- A vendor list with complete mail, telephone, and e-mail information. An updated list of merchandise on memo and the vendor(s).
- An inventory of your business personal property (showcases, desks, chairs, computers, equipment, etc.), including a video of your store contents.
- Security information, including the name, phone, and address of your alarm service and vendor for safes or vaults.
- Insurance information, including the name, phone, and address of your agent and insurance carrier, and a copy of your insurance policies.
- A list of employees' phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses.
- A list of businesses that provide essential services, such as your accountant, attorney, payroll vendor, and bank officer.
- A list of official emergency centers.
- Current income tax records, including tax returns for the last two years.
- Monthly or quarterly sales tax returns for at least the last two years.
- Insurance information.
- Information about a cleaning service, contractor, and realtor. If your building has been damaged, you may require a cleaning service and a contractor. In some instances, you may need to immediately relocate and will need a realtor's help. Having this information handy can speed the process.
- Your business's customer list with phone numbers and addresses. This should include a separate list of customers who have entrusted you with their jewelry for repair or consignment or have merchandise on layaway.
- Contacts for the shipping companies that serve your business. You will need to contact them immediately to provide alternative delivery instructions.

Once you have established a business continuity plan, review and update it once a year.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov) is an excellent website that provides detailed guidelines for continuity planning.

Visit <http://www.ready.gov/business> for more information.



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