

Emergency Preparedness Checklist for Human Resources

This checklist includes considerations for HR in planning for emergencies. A multidisciplinary emergency planning team should be established within the organization to include members of the HR department.

Employee Safety Training Topics

- Types of hazards and emergencies
- Evacuation procedures
- Shelter-in-place locations
- Lockdown procedures
- First aid supplies
- Automated external defibrillators (AEDs)
- Assistance for employees with disabilities
- Communication methods
- Emergency response team members and contact information
- Staffing expectations—essential employees, offsite work, layoffs

HRIS/Employee Records

- Maintain electronic records for all employee information.
- Ensure that electronic files are backed up and maintained at an offsite location.
- Confirm offsite access to electronic files for HR and management.

Payroll

- For outsourced payroll, confirm that the payroll processing organization has offsite data storage and a continuity plan should the payroll company's processing location be impacted.

___ For in-house payroll, determine how payroll will be processed in the event that the payroll office is not accessible.

___ Determine how live checks will be distributed to employees in the event the office is closed.

___ Determine how direct deposit will be processed if the bank is impacted by disaster.

Benefits

___ Maintain current contact information for all benefit plans and administrators.

___ Determine how eligibility data will get to the administrator in the event the HR department is closed.

___ Determine how payments will get to vendors for monthly premiums or funding for benefit plans.

___ Determine how 401(k) hardship withdrawal requests will be processed.

___ Ensure that an EAP service is available for impacted employees (knowing that a local service may be strapped at the time).

Communications (Before, During and After Crisis)

Before:

___ Establish companywide communication systems to keep employees informed, including how to communicate if an area is affected by major power outages.

___ Ensure managers maintain a contact list of personal phone numbers and e-mail addresses for department employees, and identify a staff person to be responsible for updating company intranet with critical status updates for employees.

___ Require managers to develop a contact process to inform and/or locate department employees in the event of a disaster. Establish a combined organizational plan.

During:

___ Establish who will ensure all employees are located and accounted for and provide emergency response teams with information on missing employees.

___ Determine who will contact family members and how, as warranted.

_____ Determine how to keep key employees informed of operational needs, and who should share relevant information with all employees.

After:

_____ Provide employees with appropriate EAP information for counseling or other assistance.

_____ Ensure a process for ongoing communications to keep employees informed of status updates and responsibilities.

Recruiting

_____ Maintain a backup of the applicant database.

_____ Determine a means to communicate with applicants to provide status updates.

_____ Determine an alternate recruiting method if not able to return to the office for a period of time.

Compliance/Legal

_____ Determine employee pay and benefit obligations should business operations cease.

_____ Ensure that legal documents in electronic format are properly backed up and paper records are stored in a manner to limit damage and/or loss.

_____ Maintain current contact information for state and federal agencies in the event that required filings are delayed.