



Your Business Continuity Plan

Plan into Action!

In developing a Business Continuity Plan (BCP), organizations analyze risks originating from potential disasters including fire, pandemic, tornadoes, severe weather or even earthquakes. More than likely you have planned for major events such as these and your lists and action plans are at the ready.

But what about less dramatic exposures such as power outages, road closures, incoming service interruptions or even labour interruptions? Interruptions caused by your suppliers, billing, other service providers, contractors or employees can have a significant impact to your operations. Using labour interruptions as an example these seven questions should be explored:

Business Continuity Planning	A Labour Interruption Scenario – Applying Your Plan
Are you “impact tolerant?”	
<p>In order to get to the point of being impact/risk tolerant your company must prepare by evaluating the risks, assessing probability of each occurring, evaluating your business processes, developing and implementing contingency plans, communicating your plan, practicing your plan and keeping it up-to-date.</p>	<p>A plan must be in place to address how your organization would continue to operate during a labour interruption. If after doing the analysis to create your plan you believe your organization understands and could accept the effects or impacts of a labour interruption, then your company is tolerant for that exposure. Areas to consider to which you may or may not be tolerant: customer services including billing and emergency repairs.</p>
Have you mitigated points of failure?	
<p>As you evaluate your operations and processes, you must assess each step in detail and identify key staff and processes to recognize and flag possible points of failure. To ensure and maintain the desired level of continuity for your operations, decisions must be made on plans and procedures to be implemented and put in place to either minimize or eliminate an operational failure. If your contingency plans are in place they must be re-evaluated and tested regularly. You cannot assume you are ready.</p>	<p>Your pre-labour interruption contingency planning and preparedness validation will determine how little or how greatly your operations and customers would be impacted if and when a labour interruption actually occurred. Create back-up or alternative plans for identified critical failure points.</p>
Are you and your staff prepared for business interruptions?	
<p>Your BCP should define the roles and responsibilities of all participants when the plan is implemented. As well, you must keep the plan up-to-date as things change, reflecting current staffing, business processes and operational requirements. Prepare staff through testing and communications to all of those affected or involved. Perform cross training to ensure continuity among staff.</p>	<p>The time to prepare is before a labour interruption occurs - not in the midst of a crisis. Your staff should know their role in response to a labour interruption. Think through under what circumstances it would be necessary to notify customers, and how they might be most effectively notified. How will customers be billed? Consider how customers who currently pay in person at your facility, will pay their bills in the event they have difficulty accessing your premises?</p>

<i>Is your business continuity plan documented and approved?</i>	
The steps to be taken to ensure your business continues as close to normal as possible should be discussed, approved by senior management, and documented for ongoing review. Proper documentation of your BCP provides a reference platform of clarity for staff, customers and suppliers.	You cannot assume everyone automatically knows what to do in the event of a business interruption. Everyone should know his or her roles and responsibilities and know how to share the plan quickly with those that will need to access it.
<i>Has your plan been reviewed with staff and suppliers?</i>	
Review your BCP with your staff to ensure understanding, acceptability and to clarify expectations. This review will: ensure all aspects are understood; highlight potential training requirements; and allow for ongoing review of the plan. Ensure suppliers and outside service providers and contractors are aware of your plan as well.	Staffs' knowledge of what to do, where to go and how to respond in the event of a labour interruption can be key to maintaining ongoing staff relations. Your plan should consider relationships between all employee groups and departments; all employees will need to continue to work together as a corporate entity after any labour interruption is concluded. Working relationships between individuals or departments can affect your efficiencies and operations.
<i>Is your plan current and regularly tested?</i>	
Does your BCP actually reflect your current business processes, levels of risk tolerance, mitigation procedures, recovery processes, staff roles and responsibilities, and notification lists? If not, your plan is not current. Have you tested and verified that the procedures and steps documented in the BCP all work as specified and planned within the timeframe required? If not, how can you be assured you can meet your business and customer expectations? At least annually (or more often if significant new processes, operations or changes occur) your plan should be tested and reviewed.	The time to test and evaluate your plan is well in advance of a labour interruption. Testing of your plan should validate the recovery procedures and the minimum timeframe to recover or continue operations in the event of an interruption.
<i>Does your Business Continuity Plan ensure timely continuation or resumption of critical business functions?</i>	
Do the actions as outlined in your plan ensure steps are taken to get or keep your operations functioning in a timely manner to meet customers' needs and company sustainability?	A labour interruption may not affect your critical business functions to the same degree as severe weather or natural disasters. In the event of a labour interruption, the time it takes to respond to emergencies or acknowledge customer requests may be viewed as nothing more than an inconvenience by your customers, providing your prioritization system is functioning as planned.



MEARIE is Here to Help

On the topic of Business Continuity Planning, MEARIE offers resources:

- Plan to attend the pre-conference workshop on BCP, planned for June 19, in advance of The MEARIE Conference - visit www.mearie.ca/mearie-conference to register
- MEARIE ClearRisk Manager - an interactive, online risk management planning application (more details below)
- A soon to be released Business Continuity Planning Guide from MEARIE

Business Continuity Planning & ClearRisk Manager

For help with developing, reviewing or updating your BCP, MEARIE offers [ClearRisk Manager](#). ClearRisk is an interactive, online risk management planning application. MEARIE has set up your organization's basic Risk Management Plan, which includes Business Continuity Planning.

The Business Continuity Plan section of ClearRisk provides tips, planning guides, and templates for all aspects of planning, implementation and testing of your plan. Use the resources provided as the basis for the development/review of your plan.

Some of the topics include:

- Overview of Business Continuity Planning
- The Business Continuity Planning Process
- Business Continuity Planning – Developing a Plan
- Business Continuity Planning – Business Impact Analysis
- Business Risk Management and Risk Consequences
- Emergency Response Planning

Sample forms include:

- Recovery Location form
- Critical Phone Number Form
- Vital Business Records Form
- Critical Business Function Form

To gain access to your organization's secure ClearRisk risk plans, you need to login; for information on how to login, please contact [Gary Durie](#).



The
MEARIE
Conference
2013

June 19-21, 2013
at the JW Marriott, The Rosseau Muskoka

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Gary Durie, Manager, Risk Management
& Underwriting Services
905.265.5355 | 1.800.668.9979
3700 Steeles Ave West, Suite 1100
Vaughan, Ontario L4L 8K8
gdurie@mearie.ca | mearie.ca