Disaster Preparedness – Are You Ready?

Despite the enormous devastation occurring in New Zealand and Japan, the National Research Council released a new report this morning stating that Americans are not ready. That’s really no surprise, is it? The report indicates we’ve been lulled into a false sense of security. Even that statement is shocking given the bizarre and destructive weather experienced throughout the US this winter. It’s time to take the time to prepare for whatever disaster your location may experience.

Here are a few disasters to consider ensuring you’re properly prepared for:

- Earthquake
- Floods
- Winter storms/blizzards
- Hurricanes
- Gale-force winds
- Volcano
- Wildfires
- Tsunami
- Tornado
- Thunderstorm and Lightening
- Fire
- Extreme Heat
- Pandemic
- Radiation
- Terrorism

Further considerations may include:

- Develop a disaster communication plan with family and friends.
  With whom do you need to communicate? Do you have a critical contact outside the disaster area that can notify other family and friends in the event there is an interruption of cell service in the disaster area? Social media is proving to be a vital form of communication. Do critical contacts follow you on social media? Can you access your social media sites via mobile communications?
• Prepare for disasters at home, work, school, or on the road.  
Don’t get caught on the road with your earthquake preparedness kit at home! I know it’s tedious preparing two kits. How do I know? I’ve done it! Yet you can never be over-prepared when disaster strikes.

• Provide for employees (and clients) should a disaster occur during work hours. 
As discovered in Japan, the earthquake occurred during work hours. With transportation disrupted, employees found themselves unable to return to their homes. What do you need to ensure your employees are well-cared for should they need to seek shelter at work for 3–4 days? What will you need to provide for clients who may be on the premise?

• Arrange for continuation of services provided by your company to your clients. 
Do you have clients that rely on your company’s services in areas not affected by a local disasters? What system have you established to provide ongoing service to clients in need? Is it redundant?

• Build a cash reserve. 
As we learned during the economic meltdown of 2008, companies lacking cash reserve quickly find themselves unprepared and out of business. Don’t let that happen to you. Start today to build a cash reserve that can carry you at least six (6) months.

• Make certain you’re properly insured.

• Protect your future.

• Establish your disaster relief procedure.
FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) is a good place to start. You can find information specific to disaster preparedness for your area at http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/.

Don’t rely on anyone else to look after you in the event of a disaster. Do your part to protect yourself, your employees, your clients, and your business.

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