Encourage Your Employees to Develop Household Emergency Plans

As you develop your contingency plan, encourage your employees to develop a household emergency plan. When an employee has adequately prepared their household for an emergency and are confident during the emergency that their family’s needs are being met, the employee may return to work earlier than planned. When it comes to family, peace of mind is everything.

Additional Resources to Help You Prepare

Ready.gov (www.ready.gov)
Business continuity planning information, brochures and sample plans. Also offers an emergency preparedness guide for individuals.

Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov/)
Offers training, recovery assistance, disaster fact sheets.

Local Emergency Management Offices

Emergency management encompasses the entire Prince William County, and many departments and agencies working together to ensure the safety of County residents and employees. The following departments provide emergency management services, and can provide safety tips, precautions and preparation guidelines:

- Fire & Rescue Department (www.pwcgov.org/fire)
- Emergency Management & Preparedness
- Police Department (www.pwcgov.org/police)
- Prince William Health District
- Public Safety Communications

You can visit these departments on the Prince William County website (www.pwcgov.org) under Public Safety and Protection.
The driving force for businesses, large or small, is development — growing one’s business. Another driving force is lost revenue, yet many businesses tend to either overlook or ignore this factor when creating a business development plan. Lost revenue greatly impacts a business on all organizational levels. Any number of events can contribute to a loss in revenue. Should disaster strike, inadequate preparedness and training are major contributors of revenue loss. When analyzing risks, you should consider factors which include:

**Emergency Preparedness** - procedures and steps taken before an interruption to business.

**Disaster Recovery** - steps taken to restore business functions so that some level of services can be offered.

**Business Continuity** - restoration planning, completing the full circle to get your organization back to where it was before an interruption.

The ultimate goal is the same - to get an organization back up and running in the event of an interruption. However, a business continuity plan is an effort to ensure continuity of essential business functions across a wide range of emergencies and events. It compels businesses to identify and focus on those functions that are truly critical to the continuation of operations throughout the emergency. The plan provides businesses the capability to recover quickly while minimizing disruptions in service.

The basic elements of a viable business continuity plan are:

♦ **Essential functions**
♦ **Orders of succession**
♦ **Delegations of authority**
♦ **Alternate facilities**
♦ **Interoperable communications**
♦ **Vital files, databases and records**
♦ **Human capital**
♦ **Tests, training, and exercises**
♦ **Devolution of control**

A brief description of the basic elements are listed below:

**Essential functions**
Functions that absolutely must continue throughout the emergency in order for the business to survive.

**Orders of succession**
Provisions for the assumption of senior leadership positions when the incumbents are unable or unavailable to execute their duties.

**Delegations of authority**
Specify who is authorized to make decisions or act on behalf of the business manager, a department head, or other key individuals. They should be predetermined, documented in writing, and should state explicitly what authorities are delegated to whom.

**Alternate facilities**
Facilities, other than a business’s primary facilities, where essential functions can be carried out safely.

**Interoperable communications**
Communications that provides the capability to continue to perform essential functions, in conjunction with suppliers, customers, and employees.

**Vital files, records and databases**
Electronic and hardcopy documents, references, and records needed to support essential functions during an emergency.

**Human capital**
The sum of the talent, energy, knowledge, and enthusiasm that your employees invest in their work.

**Tests, training, and exercises**
Periodic tests, training, and exercises ensure that a business’s COOP plans are capable of supporting the continued execution of its essential functions.

**Devolution of control**
The capability to transfer legal authority and responsibility for essential functions from a primary operating staff and facilities to other employees at alternate facilities.

**Reconstitution**
The process by which business’s employees resume normal agency operations from the original or a replacement primary operating facility.

To formulate a continuity of operations plan designed to meet the needs of your business, visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at [http://www.fema.gov/government/coop/index.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/government/coop/index.shtm) to obtain a Continuity of Operations Template and Instructions.