



EMERGENCY SERVICES
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Business Continuity Guidebook



The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo would like to give credit to the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), as well as the Calgary Chamber of Commerce as the authors of the source material for this guide.



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WHAT IS BUSINESS CONTINUITY?

Business continuity is about understanding the risks your business could face, and developing strategies and plans to ensure continued operation during and after a disruption.

A business continuity plan will allow you to analyze and understand what products and services are critical to your business operations. It will introduce you to the risks and hazards to which your business may be vulnerable. Based on this information, you can develop strategies to ensure that your business can quickly recover and continue operating through any type of disruption.

Most importantly, a business continuity plan promotes a safe environment for your stakeholders, your employees, and your customers.

Business continuity is not only for disruptions – it makes a business a safer place to work and contributes to financial stability.



Top tip

Back up your data regularly and store copies in a secure off-site location.

BUT I HAVE BUSINESS INSURANCE...

Not all risks are insurable. Insurance companies may provide financial assistance but you remain out of business. A business continuity plan aims to keep your business running and makes it easier to resume operations after a disruption.

No matter how big your insurance payout is, it cannot help you retain your customers.

In the 2013 Alberta floods, an estimated 180,000 workers could not go to work.

Did you know?

Companies unable to resume operations within 10 days are not likely to survive.



Top tip

Practice fire safety and establish an evacuation plan.

WHY SHOULD MY BUSINESS HAVE A PLAN?

Being unable to provide your products and services to your customers can seriously hurt your business reputation. Stay open for business!

- Remain competitive by staying open for business.
- Reduce the financial losses you may incur.
- Identify the weaknesses within your business.
- Improve your dealings with banks, creditors, investors, and insurers by showcasing your appetite for business resilience.
- Protect staff and customers from harm.

While you are out of business, your competition is still operating.

Disasters big and small happen without warning. Having a plan in place before a disruption can make for a more effective response and faster recovery.

Use the Business Continuity Template available at rmwb.ca/bcp to create a plan for your business.

HOW TO DEVELOP A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN



Top tip

Review your insurance policies and know what your policy covers.

STEP ONE: ANALYZE YOUR BUSINESS

It is important to understand your business when developing a successful business continuity plan. Consider the following:

- What is the purpose of your business?
- What products and services do you provide?
- How do you provide your products and services?
- Do your service providers have business continuity plans in place?
- Who is involved? (e.g. employees, suppliers)
- What are the minimum resource requirements? (e.g. personnel, equipment, records)
- Who are your customers?

The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) predicts that Alberta will see a 10 percent increase in severe weather events by 2050.

According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, Alberta accounts for 67 percent of all insurance payouts due to a disaster in Canada.

Between 2009 and 2012, the average disaster payout in Alberta was \$1 billion a year.

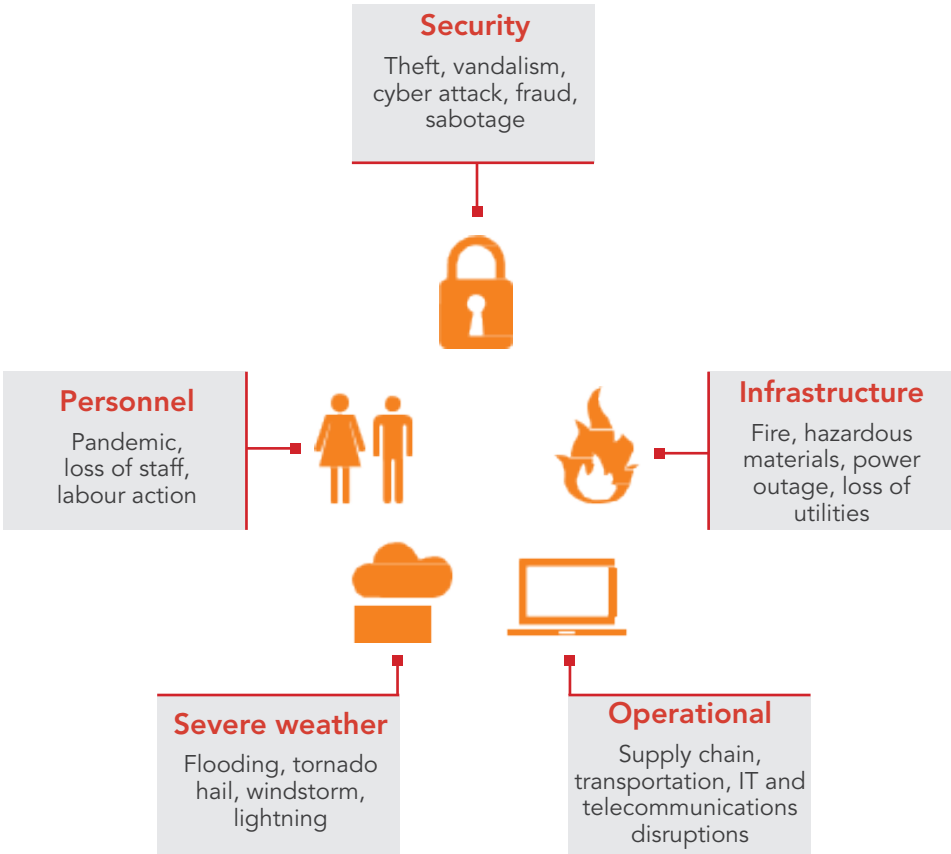
Top tip

In the event of a disruption, log the sequence of events. It will help you review the strengths and weaknesses of your plan post-disaster.

STEP TWO:

ASSESS THE RISKS

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is exposed to different types of risks such as natural hazards, human-caused hazards, and technological hazards. The following are risks and hazards to which your business may be vulnerable. Assess the risks and imagine how they could affect your ability to continue operating.



Various risks and hazards have different severities and likelihood of occurring, and therefore it is important to understand the hazards to which your business is vulnerable.

STEP THREE:

DEVELOP STRATEGIES

Now that you know the risks your business may be vulnerable to, evaluate possible strategies. Many strategies are easy and cost-effective to implement. Such strategies may involve a simple phone call to another supplier or developing mutual aid agreement with other businesses. The following are some business continuity strategies that you may consider:

Consider the worst case scenario when developing your strategies.

- Cross-training of staff
- Borrowing equipment from another business
- Keeping old equipment as a back-up
- Identifying alternative suppliers
- Storing important data and documents in a safe location
- Succession planning
- Off-site inventory of goods
- Uninterruptible power supply (UPS)
- Alternative work location
- Establish work-from-home protocols
- Promote personal and family preparedness
- Discuss with your employees how they will communicate with you or report to work in the event of a disruption

Top tip

Protect vital paper documents by storing them in fire resistant and waterproof storage.

TOP TIP

A company is only as good as its employees. The old adage applies to your business continuity plan. Encourage all employees to assemble a 72-hour emergency preparedness kit at home. This kit is a collection of items they may need in the event of a disaster, which should include:



- Bottled water
- Non-perishable food
- First Aid kit
- Prescription medication
- Wind-up flashlight and radio
- External battery pack or wind-up cellphone charger
- Warm clothes and blankets or sleeping bags
- Important documents and information
- Cash in small bills and coins
- If applicable, stock your kit with baby supplies and items for your pet
- Non-power consuming entertainment for children and adults

In the event of a disaster, employees may be unable to report to work as they are responding to their own family's needs. Encourage your employees to have a personal family plan and a 72-hour emergency preparedness kit.

STEP FOUR:

MAKE A PLAN

You have now gained a better understanding of potential risks to your business and the appropriate strategies to address them. It's time to put this knowledge together and make a plan. Your plan should have step-by-step instructions on what to do in the event of an emergency.

If your business suffers a fire, what are your priorities? How will you account for your employees and ensure they are all safe? Who do you have to contact first? What resources and supplies do you require to continue operating? It is essential that you have these details beforehand to ensure a proper and timely response.

Use the Business Continuity Template available at rmwb.ca/bcp to create a plan for your business.

STEP FIVE:

EXERCISE YOUR PLAN

It is essential to exercise your plan on a regular basis. Staff should be involved during the exercise to become familiar with their roles and what is expected of them during an emergency.

In the business world, things are constantly changing. It is important to update and maintain your plan on a regular basis. Exercising your plan will give you insight on the strengths and weaknesses of your business continuity plan.

STEP SIX:

REVIEW YOUR PLAN

Finally, it is essential to review your plan on a regular basis to ensure that it remains accurate and up-to-date. Create a plan review cycle so your business continuity plan remains a living document.

STAY INFORMED: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

MUNICIPAL

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo website | rmwb.ca

In the event of an emergency, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo website will have up-to-date information.

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Facebook | facebook.com/rmwoodbuffalo

Receive the latest Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo updates on Facebook.

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Twitter | [@RMWoodBuffalo](https://twitter.com/RMWoodBuffalo)

Receive the latest Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo updates on Twitter.

PULSE: Wood Buffalo | 780-743-7000

PULSE: Wood Buffalo is a 24/7 Call Line that provides 'real person' support for all inquiries, requests and complaints. Please note that this number does not replace 911.

PROVINCIAL

Alberta Emergency Alert @AB_EmergAlert | emergencyalert.alberta.ca

Alberta Emergency Alerts are issued to warn people about potential risks to their health and safety.

FEDERAL

Public Safety Canada @Safety_Canada | publicsafety.gc.ca

Public Safety Canada works to keep Canadians safe from risks such as natural disasters, crime and terrorism.

IN AN EMERGENCY, DIAL 911

For more information on business continuity planning, go to:

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

rmwb.ca/bcp

Alberta Emergency Management Agency

aema.alberta.ca

Public Safety Canada

publicsafety.gc.ca



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OF WOOD BUFFALO