

Keep Trading – Checklist

Introduction

This is one of a number of documents to help owners and managers in small and medium sized businesses who want to think about how to protect their businesses from disruptions, small or large, natural or man-made. They can be seen as a practical introduction to managing business continuity, or how to 'keep trading' when trouble strikes.

The [Ready Scotland](#) website provides further information and links for those wishing to go further and for firms with more complex needs, such as larger businesses.

Keep Trading – Checklist

The *Checklist* (this document) is a two page list of hazards that might affect small businesses and questions to ask about your ability to get back to business as normal.

Keep Trading – Discussion Briefing

The *Discussion Briefing* is intended to help owners and managers of small and medium sized businesses discuss with colleagues how to protect their businesses from disruptions: how to 'keep trading'.

Keep Trading – Discussion Record Sheets

The *Discussion Record Sheets* are forms to record the outcomes of meetings based on the *Keep Trading – Discussion Briefing*. They can be used as the basis of a draft business continuity plan.

What Could Go Wrong? Some Risks that may Disrupt your Business

Buildings:

- Denial of access to premises / site (short term) or their destruction (all or part)

Staff:

- Loss of key staff with specialist abilities, due to unexpected illness or resignations
- Large-scale staff absence, whether temporary or long-term, due to illness or transport disruption
- Threats to staff safety

Utility loss:

- Mains electricity;
- Mains water and sewerage;
- Telephones – landlines / mobile
- Computer systems, internet or network access, e-mail, website failure
- Disruption to road/rail/air transport system affecting staff and supplies/products
- Oil and fuel shortages

Natural and man made disasters:

- Flooding
- Storm / severe weather
- Fire

Production process

- Failure of major suppliers (or purchaser)
- Key equipment failure
- Product defects

Legal and criminal

- Crime, vandalism, theft, identity theft / cyber crime
- Changes to regulations, breach of regulations
- criminal acts internal to your business
- Bomb / terrorism threat

Information

- Loss of financial records, contractual documents, other data
- Loss of diary and contacts lists
- Loss of undocumented knowledge held by staff
- Electronic data and/or hard copy documents

Some of these risks may be more important to you than others, because they are more likely or would have a bigger impact. It is recommended that you make a more specific assessment of the risks your business faces and plan how you would respond if they occurred. There is more information on the [Ready Scotland](#) website to help with this

Questions to ask about your ability to Keep Trading after a Disruption

Your priorities during and after a serious disruption depend a lot on the type of business you have and your local circumstances. These general questions are intended to help you and your staff to start thinking about what you would do.

Immediate actions – do your staff know

- How to evacuate from their workplace
- What to do in case of fire
- How to give basic first aid
- How to operate equipment and machines safely
- How to report potential hazards

Back up data – do you have up to date, off-site backups of:

- Accounts and financial data, bank and insurance policy details
- Contracts
- Correspondence / e-mail / diary
- Contacts, phone numbers
- Procedures – ‘how to’ instructions about specific tasks so that others can deputise effectively

Have you actually tested restoring data to see whether it works?

Communications – have you arrangement for emergency communications with:

- Staff
- Public
- Suppliers / purchasers
- Emergency services

Would these work if you had lost access to your premises or your IT systems had failed?

Managing the response

- Do you know who would lead your emergency/recover response (and who would deputize if they were unavailable)
- Have they discussed and planned this with others who would be asked to help?
- Have they practiced this with those who would be asked to help?

Recovery priorities

- Have you thought through what must be restarted first after a disruption?
- What other work would you be willing to sacrifice for this?
- What do you need to keep your most important processes going or get them restarted? - Staff, premises, equipment, information, emergency funding, special authority, replacement stock, raw materials, specialist “repair” skills.

More information is available on the [Ready Scotland](#) website.