



White Paper:

10 Disaster Preparedness Tips for Businesses

1. Take Care of Employees

- ☐ Have a basic emergency supply kit ready.
- ☐ Make sure everyone knows your evacuation procedures.
- ☐ Plan where to meet and whom to contact after an evacuation.

2. Identify Assets Most Critical to your Business

- ☐ Which data do your customers need the most?
- ☐ Which systems and applications are essential to your day-to-day operations?
- ☐ How long can your business wait while you recover from a failure or disaster?

3. Determine what your Business is Most at Risk For

- ☐ Understand what an hour or day of IT downtime could cost your business and what could cause downtime.
- ☐ Know the elevation of your office to decide whether you're at risk of flooding.
- ☐ Conduct an earthquake and fire safety evaluation.

4. Evaluate the Solution(s) you Have in Place

- ☐ Can you virtualize your entire IT infrastructure off-site?
- ☐ Can your disaster recovery solution be centrally managed?
- ☐ Do you have a dependable solution that automatically backs up your most recent files?

5. Evaluate your Solution Provider

- ☐ Do they offer a single, simple solution to protect your business information and eliminate IT downtime?
- ☐ Do they have a disaster preparedness plan of their own so that they can help you during a disaster?
- ☐ Is their solution built on reliable hardware and software? Are they dependent on other vendors?

6. Write a Recovery Plan

- ☐ Clearly define and document the steps needed to recover your network and ensure employee safety.
- ☐ Post recovery steps around the office for employees to see.

7. Regularly Test your Recovery Plan

- ☐ Review your plan documentation on a quarterly basis with department heads.
- ☐ Make sure department heads review disaster recovery procedures with their teams.
- ☐ Conduct live tests at least twice per year.

8. Document the Details of Your Test

- ☐ What went well and what did not?
- ☐ How can you improve procedures that did not go well?

9. Regularly Update Plan as Company Evolves

- ☐ Is your plan still relevant to the business?
- ☐ Have any company changes been made that could impact your disaster preparedness plan?
- ☐ Are all of the people that have been assigned specific disaster recovery tasks still with the company?
- ☐ What happens if someone is unreachable? Do you have backups for key roles?

10. Stay Informed and Communicate with Others

- ☐ Stay current on weather forecasts in your area.
- ☐ Make sure all other businesses in your network also have a disaster preparedness plan.
- ☐ Decide how you will communicate with partners and customers, and listen to local authorities for updates.

How IT Providers Used the Cloud to Weather the Storm

With damage estimated at \$60 billion, Sandy is the second costliest hurricane on record in the United States. Countless businesses lost revenue while waiting for power to return or floods to subside. But many others were prepared, thanks to the IT professionals who made sure they had the right technology in place to weather any storm. Here are a few of the positive stories to come out of this disaster.

Spinning Up VMs to Avoid Downtime

As Hurricane Sandy hit the East Coast the night of October 29, a financial asset management business in Manhattan saw their servers going down as the flood waters from New York Harbor rose. But their Connecticut-based IT service provider had prepared them for such an event, and spun up a virtual version of the business' entire infrastructure in the cloud. This gave the asset management firm's clients uninterrupted access to services, even through the storm.

Also in the storm's wake, an IT service provider in New Jersey did a cloud-based failover for one of their clients, another asset management company. Since the IT provider had technology in place to replicate the firm's data, applications and systems in the cloud, the business was able to continue without loss of productivity or revenue. These financial businesses were subject to industry regulations for the backup and recovery of client data, and had their reputation hanging in the balance. So the IT provider's quick work with the right technology proved to be a priceless lifeline.

In addition to the above examples, dozens of IT providers in Sandy's path used the latest technology to spin up virtual offices, restore deleted files and recover damaged servers for their customers in many types of industries. Their heroism is not only in knowing what to do during an emergency, but preparing well in advance with technology that delivers real business protection when needed.

Not All Backup is Created Equal

Sadly, not all businesses had the right systems in place to protect and restore their information and systems during Sandy's onslaught. More than 57 percent of businesses in North America still rely on tape backup, which is costly, highly prone to error and calls for cumbersome manual intervention. Tape-reliant businesses on the East Coast will likely spend weeks piecing together their data and getting their IT systems fully back online. Some may never recover.

However, as we can see with businesses that were well prepared for Sandy, those with the right technology in place have no reason to fear. In each case referenced above, the IT provider used the same technology deployed by Apex Technology Management.