

News Release



How would your business cope if an emergency evacuation was needed, a staff syndicate quit their jobs after winning the National Lottery jackpot, or it suffered a serious flood?

(Photographs courtesy of Newcastle City Council and the Environment Agency)

Don't let a crisis ruin your business

Up to 80 per cent of businesses affected by a major incident which do not have a business continuity plan either never re-open or close within 18 months.

From 15th May 2006 local authorities have a legal responsibility to promote business continuity. This duty is part of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) which requires local authorities to provide business continuity advice and assistance to companies and voluntary groups to help better prepare them to respond to and continue to function in the event of an emergency.

The Act encourages local authorities to build stronger links with the business sector in order to reduce the economic impact that emergencies have on local communities. The aim of the legislation is to make organisations more resilient to disruption, interruption or loss of service by providing them with the necessary advice and information that will enable them to continue to operate at a time of internal and external emergencies.

Some of the advice relates to businesses considering the following issues: What would happen if your business had no electricity for 24 hours? Or the building you operate from was evacuated and subsequently access was denied for a week? What if half your staff were unable to work because they had the flu? If you don't know then your business or organisation could be at risk.

In the Northumberland and Tyne and Wear areas the Local Authorities are encouraging businesses and voluntary organisations to embrace business continuity management as 'good business practice'

Good advice, helpful web-site information, leaflets, access to relevant publications and appropriate contact details will be made available by all local authorities from May 15th 2006.

"The local authorities in Tyne and Wear and Northumberland are committed to help build and sustain resilient communities. It is particularly important that the impact of an emergency on the commercial and voluntary community is kept to a minimum. This will lessen the economic and social impact of emergencies and speed up recovery. Evidence suggests that up to 80 per cent of businesses affected by a major incident which do not have a business continuity plan either never re-open or close within 18 months.

The sources of advice and information which the local authorities are today establishing will raise business continuity awareness in the community, and help organisations to help themselves in case of an incident"

Brian Hesler, Chair, Northumbria Local Resilience Forum