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Weathering the Storm

A Practice Leader's Guide to Disaster Preparedness

IS YOUR PRACTICE

PREPARED?

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What is Disaster Preparedness?

For any practice to survive a disaster, having a comprehensive disaster preparedness program in place before calamity strikes is key.

Disaster preparedness refers to a set of proactive measures that predict, prevent and mitigate the impact of a disaster. It should be viewed as an action plan that prepares your practice to withstand potential disasters or emergencies that may affect your practice operations.

It involves identifying potential risks, vulnerabilities and threats to help practice like yours effectively prevent, mitigate and respond to unexpected hazards.

A disaster preparedness plan enhances your readiness against disasters, both man-made and natural. It helps you minimize financial losses and ensures practice continuity by implementing preparedness plans and strategies.

As a practice owner, you want to secure your practice against various threats affecting normal practice operations. A disaster preparedness plan gives you the edge you need to protect your practice and stay ahead of competitors.

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Why Would You Need a Disaster Preparedness Program?

A disaster can quickly spiral into a practice-ending event if you don't have a disaster preparedness program.

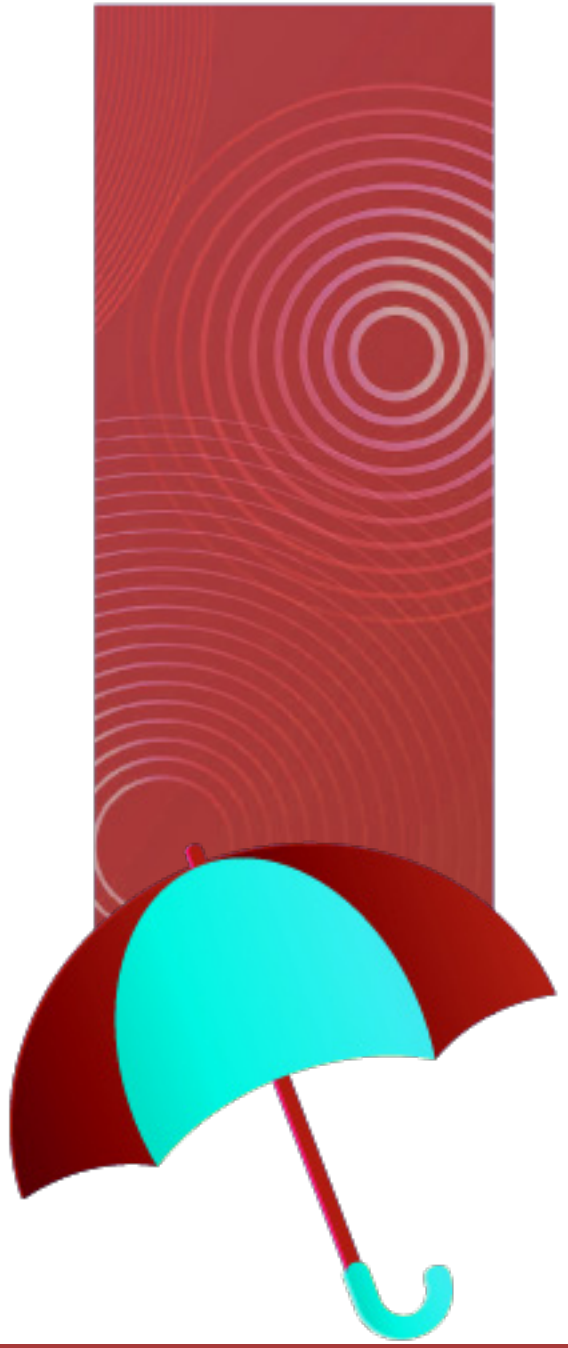
For practice owners like you, a disaster preparedness plan is an investment that ensures practice continuity, protects employees and assets, safeguards your reputation and ensures your practice complies with regulatory requirements.

However, as a practice leader, there's a lot that needs to be done to prepare your organization for disasters. Since every disaster is different, a disaster preparedness program helps you gauge its impact on your practice.

Let's discuss how various disasters can hurt your practice:

Natural disasters
Hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes and wildfires are all disasters that damage your IT infrastructure and disrupt communications and power supplies, leading to data loss, downtime and revenue loss. Natural disasters can also cause injuries and fatalities if employees are present at the workplace during a disaster.

Health threats
Health hazards, such as the flu and other severe illnesses that can spread fast, can significantly impact your employees, customers, practice partners and suppliers.



Cyberattacks
Phishing, malware and ransomware are cyberattacks that can hurt your practice in multiple ways. Cyberattacks compromise your IT systems and data, leading to downtime and financial loss. You lose customer trust and may face compliance woes, including heavy fines for failing to detect and stop a breach.

Power outages
Practice may face power outages due to a grid or equipment failure. Natural disasters can also cause power outages. This disrupts IT operations, leading to downtime, data loss and revenue loss.

Equipment failures
Equipment failures are a common occurrence. Server crashes, network and hardware malfunctions are equipment failures that cause IT disruptions, leading to data loss, downtime and revenue loss.

Human-caused hazards
Human-caused hazards like conflict and violence, accidental fires and spills, epidemics and biological hazards have wide-ranging consequences for practice operations.

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Potential Practice Impacts of Unexpected Incidents & Disasters

Unexpected incidents and disasters can have severe consequences for your practice. They can disrupt operations, damage assets, harm employees and cause reputational damage. Let's dive into how disasters, both natural and man-made, have the potential to impact your practice.

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Risk to employee safety
Unexpected incidents and disasters can compromise the safety of your employees. Natural calamities and even man-made incidents cause injuries, health issues and even loss of life.

Physical damage to buildings, equipment, inventory and infrastructure
Disasters can destroy your practice premises, equipment, inventory and vital infrastructure, necessitating extensive repairs or replacements for practice continuity.

Data loss or breach
Data loss or breaches caused by a cyberattack can compromise sensitive customer information and lead to legal and financial consequences.

Practice interruptions, downtime and closures
Disasters disrupt practice operations, causing significant downtime, interruptions and potential closures. This, in turn, can impact your revenue generation and customer satisfaction.

Financial losses and increased expenses
Natural calamities and man-made threats cause heavy financial strain on practice.Practice affected by disasters face financial losses due to revenue decline, increased repair expenses and raw materials costs. Sometimes the cost of disaster recovery is too much for small practice to bear, forcing some of them to close shop.

Reputational damage
Mishandling incidents and disasters can lead to reputational damage, loss of customer trust and negative public perception. practice that have effective crisis management and transparent communication gain customer trust even during a disaster.

Some Benefits of Disaster Preparedness in IT Security

Disaster preparedness in IT security is crucial for practice. Here are some of the key benefits for practice:

Ensures practice continuity
Disaster preparedness for IT security helps ensure an organization's critical systems and data are available and secure during and after a disaster. practice can minimize downtime and swiftly recover from unexpected incidents.

Protects against data loss
By creating regular backups and securing them in a safe location, you can protect your practice against data loss from a disaster or cyberattack.

Reduces recovery time
A strong disaster preparedness program reduces the recovery time after a disaster or cyberattack.

Limits unexpected expenses
By implementing a robust disaster preparedness plan, you can avoid financial losses associated with recovery efforts, legal liabilities, reputational damage and potential regulatory fines.

Avoids reputational damage
A disaster preparedness plan can help you avoid the reputational damage that often leads to lost customers and revenue loss resulting from an unexpected incident.

Improves compliance
Disaster preparedness measures can help an organization comply with industry and regulatory standards for IT security.

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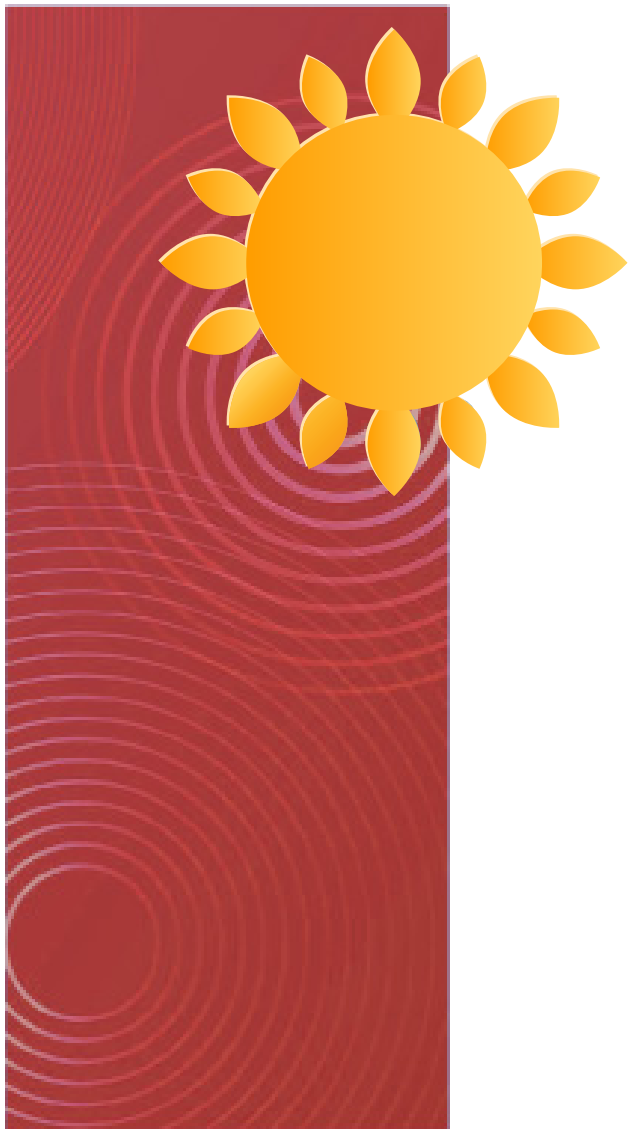
5 Components of a Comprehensive Disaster Preparedness Program

A comprehensive disaster preparedness program is vital for practice like yours to mitigate risks, ensure practice continuity, prioritize employee safety and maintain their reputation. However, many organizations don't have the knowledge or expertise to build a solid disaster preparedness plan. These simple steps can quickly get you started. You can additionally consider taking the help of an experienced IT service provider to develop a robust plan without burning a hole in your pocket.



1/Build a team

- Build a dedicated team led by a program coordinator. While the program coordinator will lead the overall disaster management program, you can assign additional roles and responsibilities to other team members.
- Define clear, achievable objectives for the program, including policies, regulations, budget, schedule, resources and evaluation.

2 /Planning

- Identify threats, hazards and potential disruptions to practice operations and IT infrastructure by conducting a thorough risk assessment process.
- Conduct a practice impact analysis to help identify critical processes and impacts from disruptions.
- Identify ways to prevent, reduce and mitigate risks to your practice.

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3 / *Develop an implementation strategy*

- Identify practice-critical resources and assets.
- Develop a plan of action to respond to disruptions, resume practice operations and manage communications.
- Develop an emergency response plan that ensures employee safety and protects your practice property.
- Develop a detailed practice continuity plan that can identify, counter and minimize risk from potential threats and ensure practice process continuity.
- Create an IT disaster recovery plan with a clear strategy to quickly restore hardware (servers, desktops, laptops etc), software and data.
- Develop a crisis communication plan that lays down procedures with clear objectives, processes and strategies to communicate to your employees, customers and suppliers.
- Build an incident management system with clear protocols to restore regular operations and resolve incidents during unplanned nterruptions.
- Conduct regular training to improve disaster preparedness among your employees.

4 / *Testing and exercises*

- Evaluate your practice's preparedness plan to test its effectiveness and find gaps.
- Carry out routine exercises to assess employee disaster readiness.

5 / *Improve preparedness program*

- Test and review your preparedness program.
- Identify and fix the gaps.

IS YOUR PRACTICE PREPARED?

Don't let a disaster stop your Practice from growing.
Contact us today to develop a disaster preparedness program that helps you weather the storm.

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