

# 7 WAYS MANUFACTURERS CAN IMPROVE RESPONSIVENESS TO A NATURAL DISASTER



Recently, the Southern California region was struck with a series of devastating wildfires. For business owners in the region, this presented some serious challenges in safety as well as productivity and security throughout the week, and gave many an occasion to test their preparedness and emergency plans.

Here are some broad guidelines to improve your preparedness should you face a natural disaster:

1. **Have different plans prepared for different types of emergencies:** Different disruptions will present different levels of impact on your surrounding community, other businesses, and emergency response teams, so be sure you plan accordingly.

2. **Know your evacuation plan:** Of course, the safety of your employees is of utmost importance. Before disaster strikes, have an emergency evacuation plan prepared, know safety precautions for exiting the building, evaluate how to get messages on the status of the emergency to employees, and identify a location of a common safe place.
3. **Be prepared in advance with a plan to ensure the safety of vital documents and materials:** Before an emergency hits, ensure that your system has real-time redundancy and that the rebuild or restoration of all computers and laptops will be quick and easy – leverage cloud-based offsite storage options to help with this transition. Prepare a list of which materials or machines, if any, should be evacuated (if possible), and ensure that your managers know those priorities as well.
4. **Know your insurance policy:** You should ensure that, in addition to the employees and buildings themselves, that you have insurance for your machinery, equipment, and any other large expenses housed in your building.
5. **Be prepared with alternative back-up locations for operations:** In the event that you lose a building during an emergency, you should be prepared with alternative locations for your operations – and the corresponding processes to make it happen. If necessary, be prepared with selected temp agencies that might be able to help you fill vacancies should any of your employees have

difficulty making it to your new or temporary location. Establish the capability to enable employees to work remotely before disaster strikes to make this option viable in time of emergency.

6. **Be prepared with an emergency budget:** The bigger your safety net, the less likely you are to face major setbacks following an emergency. If you have sufficient emergency savings and insurance, you may be able to afford a backup location, new equipment, accommodations for employees, and temporary extra help without too much of a delay.
7. **Maintain open communications with your customers:** It is important to have open communications at all times with everyone in your supply chain until your operations can resume. If possible, leave yourself wiggle room in your supply chain so that you might have time to get your operations up and running again without too much of a setback in your deliveries.

Remember that a natural disaster can impact you not only if your facilities or employees should be at risk, but if any of your supplier production or distribution locations are impacted. While there is no way to avoid these disruptions, their impact can certainly be minimized with appropriate advanced planning.

Source: <http://www.aprison.com/blog/2014/06/7-ways-manufacturers-can-improve-responsiveness-to-a-natural-disaster/>