Will your business survive a shake up?

A planning guide for emergencies

Business preparedness checklist

Here are some steps you should take to get ready for an emergency:

■ Be prepared
  Train staff in basic first aid and rescue techniques. Have a cabinet or wheelie-bin of emergency supplies:
  • Non perishable food
  • At least three days supply of stored water
  • First Aid supplies
  • Blankets
  • Rescue equipment – such as an axe and ropes
  Encourage staff to have their own emergency supplies and plans:
  • Personal supplies such as medications, walking shoes, warm clothes.
  • Family emergency plans

■ Know the hazards that might affect your business
  These may include earthquakes, floods, utility failure, high winds, and wildfire.

■ Identify your vulnerability
  Are you reliant on particular suppliers, utilities, contractors, staff, equipment or records?

■ Identify key products or services that you need to continue after an emergency

■ Identify what backup systems you need
  These may include a backup operating location, backup communications, staff succession plans for management.

■ Develop a plan of how staff will respond

■ Establish an emergency planning team and document your business continuity plan (BCP)

■ Communicate your plan to your staff and test it out!

Make sure you lead by example!
The best way to help your business after an emergency is to be prepared yourself.
An earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale occurs on the Wellington Fault approximately once every 500 years. The following impacts are based on a shallow 7.5 (10 kilometres deep) magnitude earthquake, which would intensify the ground shaking.

**Impact on the physical environment**

- Potential for a ‘surface fault rupture,’ (where the ground is visibly torn apart) could be as large as 75 kilometres long with a minimum displacement of five metres horizontally and one metre vertically.
- The violent horizontal and vertical movements could cause liquefaction and slumping in Wellington City and the Hutt Valley. Seiching in both the Wellington and Porirua harbours could inundate many roads and coastal settlements, particularly in Petone and the Wellington Wharf areas.
- Aftershocks would continue for many days, weeks and even months.
- Damage would be widespread through the Wellington Region as well as Nelson, Marlborough, Horowhenua and Manawatu.

**Impacts on the community and services**

**USAR (Urban Search and Rescue)**

USAR will be under immense pressure to survey all buildings for entrapments with approximately 20 percent of all buildings in the Wellington CBD vulnerable to collapse. Currently there are not enough resources to complete this as quickly as desired. Resources from outside the region will be necessary; however the movement of staff and equipment will be extremely difficult due to road closures and damage to airports.

**Treatment and movement of the injured**

The essential task of treating and moving the injured will prove difficult for emergency services due to the damage to buildings (debris) and roading infrastructure. Many emergency services vehicles may also be trapped at stations greatly reducing the resources available to treat and move injured people.

**Welfare**

Many families will not have enough (or any) food and water, and some may need shelter with approximately 50,000 people expected to be homeless in the Wellington region. Limited or no access in many areas will be a significant problem for welfare groups to overcome as this will inhibit families from receiving aid, as they will be unable to reach them.

**Health**

All hospitals are likely to experience some damage to fittings and equipment and will be operating at reduced capacity. All hospitals will be overwhelmed with casualties. Many hospitals will be compromised with difficulties with water supply and waste services. Medical supplies will be exhausted by the end of day one.

**Sanitation**

All cities and districts will have damage to treatment plants and the pipe networks within the CBD. Failure of water supplies means that sewage cannot flow. Determining the extent of the damage will take a substantial period of time, resulting in a lack of sewage collection and disposal in the cities. Sewage runoff would occur in some areas and could migrate into harbour areas. These issues may lead to disease outbreaks such as dysentery. Due to lack of resources and lack of road access, it is likely that the refuse and debris in Wellington city will not be able to be cleared for weeks.

**Restoration of Lifelines**

Many essential lifelines will not operate for a long period of time. Below is an estimate of the timeframes to restore lifelines based on the Kobe earthquake in 1995. It is important to note that Kobe had much greater access to resources compared to the Wellington Region; therefore it is likely to take longer than the estimates provided below:

- Water: 91 days to restore bulk lines
- Refuse services – 35 days to restore 80%
- Sewage inoperable – 135 days to restore
- Roads and bridges – 12-18 months
- Electricity: 7 days to restore 80% of the network.
- Telephones: 25% outage – 15 days to restore 80% of the damaged network.
- Gas: 80% failure – 85 days to restore (it may take years to re-connect every customer)
- Railway and buses: 5 to 8 months (major routes).

**What does this mean for you?**

It is essential that your organisation, you and your family have enough provisions (food and water) to last for at least three days. You will not be able to drive into and around the cities or many suburbs due to lack of road access, which also means that emergency services and welfare agencies will find it very difficult to access you should you need them. It is possible that you will be without running water for at least two months, and the sewage system may not be operating for at least four months. Medical supplies will be exhausted by the end of day one.

Overall, to minimise the impact on your business/organisation and you and your family, you must be prepared to take care of yourselves as emergency and welfare services do not have the capacity to do this for you.