JAMESMOORE
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

READY FOR ANYTHING:
YOUR IT DISASTER SURVIVAL GUIDE

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Every business must be ready for anything.

Those that aren't may never fully recover from a disaster. But let's be honest—not all disasters are the same, and not every business faces the same risks.

That's why we've put together a quick, easy-to-follow disaster survival guide to help ensure your business can keep running, even if it's hit by one of the natural disasters we've outlined.

Now, while this guide is a great starting point, it's not a substitute for a thorough business continuity (BC) plan crafted with a certified BC consultant. But it will set you on the right path, making sure you've got the essentials covered for disaster recovery, even before you dive into a more comprehensive plan.

About James Moore Technology Services

Founded in 1995, James Moore Technology Services is Central Florida's go-to provider for complete IT solutions. We're passionate about helping businesses, nonprofits, and governments optimize their technology. When James Moore & Co. couldn't find the IT expertise they needed, we created it—and we've been solving IT challenges ever since.

Why choose us? Our team at James Moore Technology Services holds more certifications than most IT firms our size, ensuring top-notch technical expertise. We prioritize clear communication, speaking in plain English without confusing tech jargon. Our friendly, long-term professionals are dedicated to your success, providing personalized support. Plus, with 24/7/365 network monitoring, you can enjoy peace of mind and focus on growing your business.

Disaster #1: Building Fire

Fires in your office can range from minor incidents to complete destruction, and even a small mishap can have a huge impact on your business.

Picture this: a minor fire on one floor can lead to significant flooding on the floors below, affecting your technology and communication systems. Even a small fire can disrupt your operations. A major disaster might even force you to relocate temporarily or permanently.

Why It Matters

» **High risk:** With around 100,000 commercial fires annually in the U.S., businesses–especially those near restaurants or manufacturing facilities–need to be extra vigilant.

» **Unexpected damage:** Fires can cause unexpected damage to your equipment, potentially leading to short-circuits or equipment failure. Fortunately, building alarms often provide crucial minutes to shut down systems and evacuate safely.

How to Stay Ahead

1. **Backup everything:** Ensure continuous off-site backups for data, applications, and server images.

2. **Communication plans:** Set up call rerouting to alternative sites or mobile phones.

3. **Emergency website:** Have a ready-to-activate emergency posting on your website to keep everyone informed as events unfold.

Keep Your Team Productive

» **Temporary workspace:** Arrange in advance with nearby facilities like shared offices or hotels for immediate workspace.

» **Workspace alternatives:** Have provisions for next-day workspaces, whether in another company facility, a "cold site," or remote work setups.

» **Internal updates:** Maintain clear communication with your team about resource availability and recovery progress.

Maintain Your Processes

» **Business functions:** Ensure your continuity plan covers alternatives for answering phones, processing orders, issuing invoices, and other critical tasks.

Insurance Matters

» **Coverage:** Confirm that your insurance policy covers both the physical damage and the expenses related to business continuity, including remote work and other temporary.

Being prepared means not just having a plan but also taking proactive steps to safeguard your operations and your team.

If you need help setting up a robust disaster recovery strategy, let's talk!

Disaster #2: Hurricane or Coastal Storm

Hurricanes and coastal storms can bring more than just high winds and heavy rain–they can also cause flooding and bring along surging tides that inundate your area with saltwater.

What Could This Mean for Your Business?

These storms can impact your business in three key ways:

1. **Direct damage:** High winds, flooding, and debris can cause severe damage to your facility. Imagine tree limbs crashing through windows or roofs, or flooding wrecking your infrastructure.

2. **Extended downtime:** Power outages, road closures, and other disruptions could put your operations out of commission for days or even weeks.

3. **Regional impact:** These storms don't just affect your business. They can impact your customers, suppliers, and business partners–plus, they might affect the homes of your employees.

Risk Factors to Consider

Each year, the Gulf and Atlantic coasts face about a dozen named storms. Major events like Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy highlight the severe damage such storms can cause. With climate change potentially increasing the frequency and intensity of these storms, it's crucial to be prepared.

Why You Should Act Now

Even though storms often come with advance warning, their paths can be unpredictable. Don't let "false alarms" keep you from preparing. Here's how you can safeguard your business:

» **Workspace alternatives:** Have provisions for next-day workspaces, whether in another company facility, a "cold site," or remote work setups.

» **Plan for IT recovery:** Have a strategy to restore IT operations either in the cloud or at an inland site unaffected by the storm. Ensure key IT staff can work remotely if necessary.

» **Update your website:** Use your website to keep customers and partners informed about your storm preparations and recovery progress.

Keep Your Team Ready

Storms can disrupt entire regions for extended periods. Make sure your business continuity plan includes:

» **Alternative facilities:** Arrange for a temporary inland facility and housing for employees whose homes are affected.

» **Internal communication:** Keep your team updated on resources and recovery status.

» **Third-party support:** Ensure you have backup plans for shipping, mail processing, and other essential services.

Maintain Business Continuity

Prepare to assist your customers and partners through the crisis:

» **Communicate early:** Reach out to local/regional customers and suppliers with alternative contact numbers and updates.

» **Set policies:** Establish guidelines for order processing, invoicing, and service visits affected by the storm.

» **Collaborate with partners:** Where feasible, have supply-chain partners help serve your customers directly.

Insurance Check

Ensure your insurance policy covers all aspects of business continuity, not just damage and outage impacts. Confirm the specifics with your insurer to avoid confusion when a storm hits.

Stay ahead of the storm—contact us today to ensure your IT and business continuity plans are in place and up-to-date.
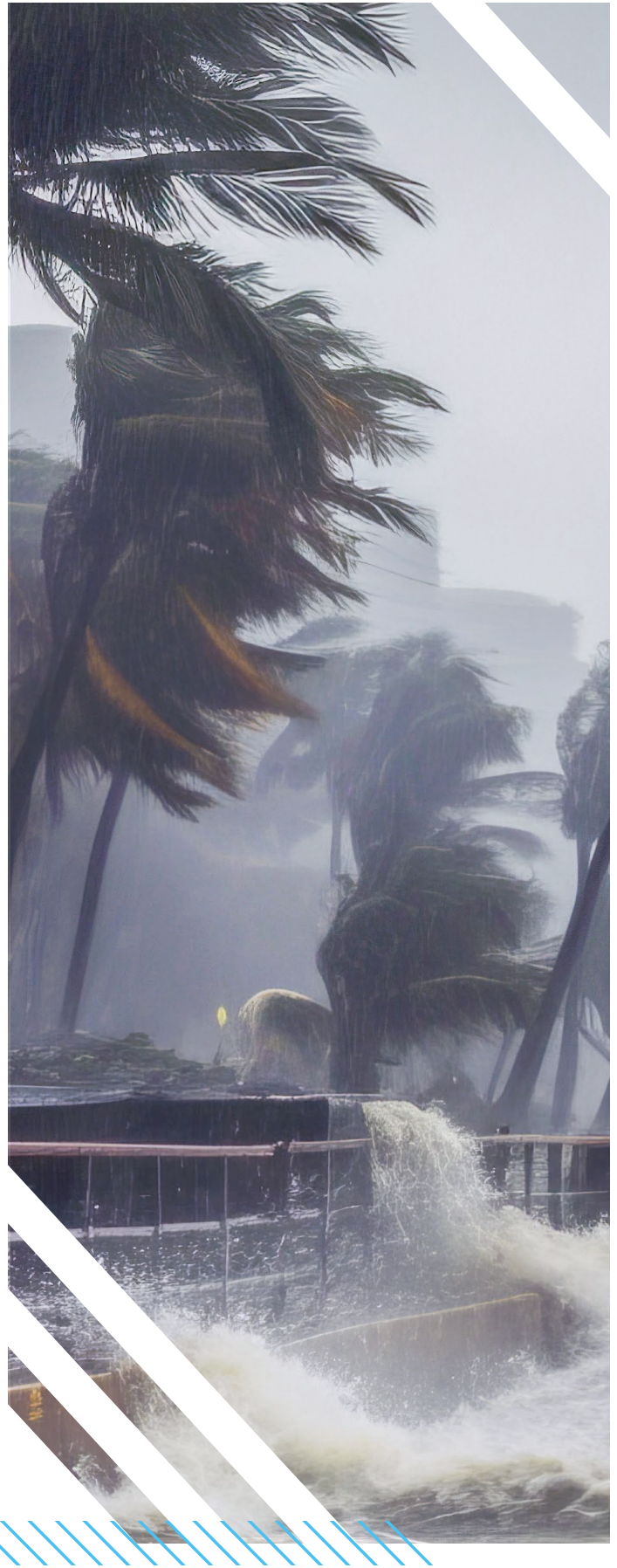
Disaster #3: Flood

Floods, whether from heavy rains or overflowing rivers, can disrupt your business operations significantly. Here's how you can stay ahead of the impact and keep your business running smoothly:

Potential Impact

Floods can wreak havoc, especially on businesses with equipment in basements or ground floors. Beyond the immediate damage, you might face power outages, loss of communications, and road closures that hinder employee commutes.

Risk Factors

Flooding costs U.S. businesses around $8 billion annually. Areas with a high probability of flooding are particularly vulnerable. For accurate flood risk information, check the FEMA Flood Map Service Center.

Warning Times

Alerts from the National Weather Service–flood advisory, watch, and warning–can give you a crucial head start. Plan ahead when you receive these alerts.

» **Workspace alternatives:** Have provisions for next-day workspaces, whether in another company facility, a "cold site," or remote work setups.

» **Internal updates:** Maintain clear communication with your team about resource availability and recovery progress.

Technology Safeguards

Protect your equipment and data with these steps:

» Elevate computers and equipment to avoid water damage.

» Increase the frequency of off-site backups for data and applications.

» Set up an alternative worksite with necessary connectivity and equipment.

» Keep your website updated with emergency information and recovery status.

Team Safety

Ensure your team's safety by:

» Avoiding any commutes through flood-prone areas.

» Arranging for remote work or alternative facilities well outside the flood zone.

» Quickly evacuating if employees are on-site during a warning.

Process Continuity

Be ready to manage disruptions with:

» Proactive communication with customers and suppliers about potential impacts.

» Alternative plans for service continuity, including working with supply-chain partners if needed.

Insurance Considerations

Review your flood insurance policy to ensure it covers all potential losses. You may need specialized coverage from a separate underwriter to fully protect your business.

For more detailed guidance and to ensure your IT and business continuity plans are up to date, reach out to James Moore Technology Services.

Let's make sure you're prepared, no matter what comes your way!

Disaster #4: Tornado or Extreme Storm

Powerful weather events like tornadoes and extreme storms can be incredibly unpredictable and destructive causing significant damage to your business, so it's crucial to be prepared. Let's walk you through what you need to know to keep your operations and people safe.

What You're Up Against

Tornadoes are intense funnels of wind that can exceed 100 MPH, typically traveling a few miles before dissipating. While they often pass quickly, they can cause severe damage in a short time. Even if your building takes a direct hit, the broader regional infrastructure might remain functional, which is why it's important to prepare for all scenarios.

Why It Matters

Around 1,000 tornadoes form in the U.S. every year, with most occurring in "Tornado Alley." However, no area is completely immune, and even areas outside the Great Plains can be at risk. Tornadoes can form with little warning, often giving just 15 minutes of advance notice. That's why your business needs a solid plan in place.

Keeping Your Technology Safe

If your business is in the path of a tornado, you'll need to be ready for the worst-case scenario: complete destruction of your technology infrastructure. Here's what we recommend:

» Keep all data, applications, and server images backed up off-site.

» Have failover IT infrastructure ready in the cloud or at an alternate location.

» Ensure voice and fax call switching capabilities are available on demand, like through a hosted PBX service.

» Use your website to keep customers informed about disaster impact and recovery progress.

Technology Safeguards

Protect your equipment and data with these steps:

» Elevate computers and equipment to avoid water damage.

» Increase the frequency of off-site backups for data and applications.

» Set up an alternative worksite with necessary connectivity and equipment.

» Keep your website updated with emergency information and recovery status.

Protecting Your People

Your team's safety is the top priority. Here's how to ensure they're prepared:

» Designate a tornado shelter in your building—an interior room on the lowest floor, away from windows and debris. Make sure everyone knows where it is.

» Prepare a tornado survival kit with essentials like food, water, flashlights, and batteries.

» If tornado conditions are predicted, consider having your team work from home if possible.

» Assign staff to monitor weather alerts and make sure everyone knows what to do when a tornado is imminent.

Maintaining Business Processes

Tornadoes can disrupt everything. Be ready to carry out essential processes from an alternate location:

» Have a plan for answering phones, processing orders, and handling other day-to-day tasks if your facility is damaged.

» Communicate proactively with customers and suppliers about any potential disruptions and the steps you're taking to minimize them.

» Consider how your business can assist the community in the aftermath, even if you're not directly affected.

Insurance Check-Up

Make sure your commercial property insurance covers structural damage from tornadoes. Business interruption insurance is also vital to cover recovery costs and lost earnings while you get back on your feet. Be cautious of "anti-concurrent causation" clauses that could limit your coverage.

Preparing for a tornado means more than just having a plan–it requires proactive steps to protect your business and your people.

At James Moore Technology Services, we're here to help you stay ready for anything.

Disaster #5: Earthquake, Landslide or Avalanche

Unpredictable seismic events that nature can throw your way, including earthquakes, landslides and avalanches, can catch any business off guard causing direct and indirect damage that disrupts your operations.

Let's walk through how you can stay prepared and keep your business resilient.

What's at Stake?

When the ground shakes, the impact on your business can be profound. Earthquakes can damage your facilities, cause equipment to fall and break, and even result in fires or flooding from broken water mains.

Landslides and avalanches can further complicate things by cutting off roads, utilities, and access to your business. Even if you're not in a high-risk area, smaller tremors can still create significant challenges.

Why You Should Act Now

Earthquakes can strike with little to no warning, giving you only seconds to respond. While some events, like slow-moving mudslides, may give you more time to prepare, it's essential to have a plan in place well in advance.

The unpredictable nature of these disasters makes proactive preparation crucial.

Safeguarding Your Technology

For businesses in earthquake zones, continuous off-site backups are just the beginning. We recommend:

» **Seismic-resistant data centers:** Use racks and enclosures designed to withstand mild seismic activity, protecting your sensitive equipment from excessive shaking.

» **Failover power supplies:** Ensure you have backup power to keep your systems running during an outage or to allow for a safe shutdown.

» **Wireless network failover:** Maintain connectivity even if your local fiber network is disrupted.

Prioritizing Team Safety

Your employees' safety is paramount during an earthquake or related disaster. Here's how you can prepare:

» **Establish safe spots:** Identify sturdy places within your office where employees can take cover, like under a strong desk or against an interior wall, away from windows or tall furniture.

» **Employee training:** Make sure your team knows the drill—stay put during the shaking, be prepared for aftershocks, and use stairs instead of elevators.

» **Fire awareness:** Post-earthquake fires are a significant hazard. Ensure everyone knows where fire extinguishers are located and how to use them.

Maintaining Your Operations

Earthquakes can have uneven effects, damaging some buildings while sparing others nearby. To keep your business running:

» **Alternative work solutions:** Have plans for employees to work from home or a failover facility far enough away from the affected area.

» **Damage assessment and recovery:** Use a predefined checklist to assess any damage and start remediation right away.

» **Customer and supplier communication:** Keep open lines of communication to update your clients and partners on your status and recovery progress.
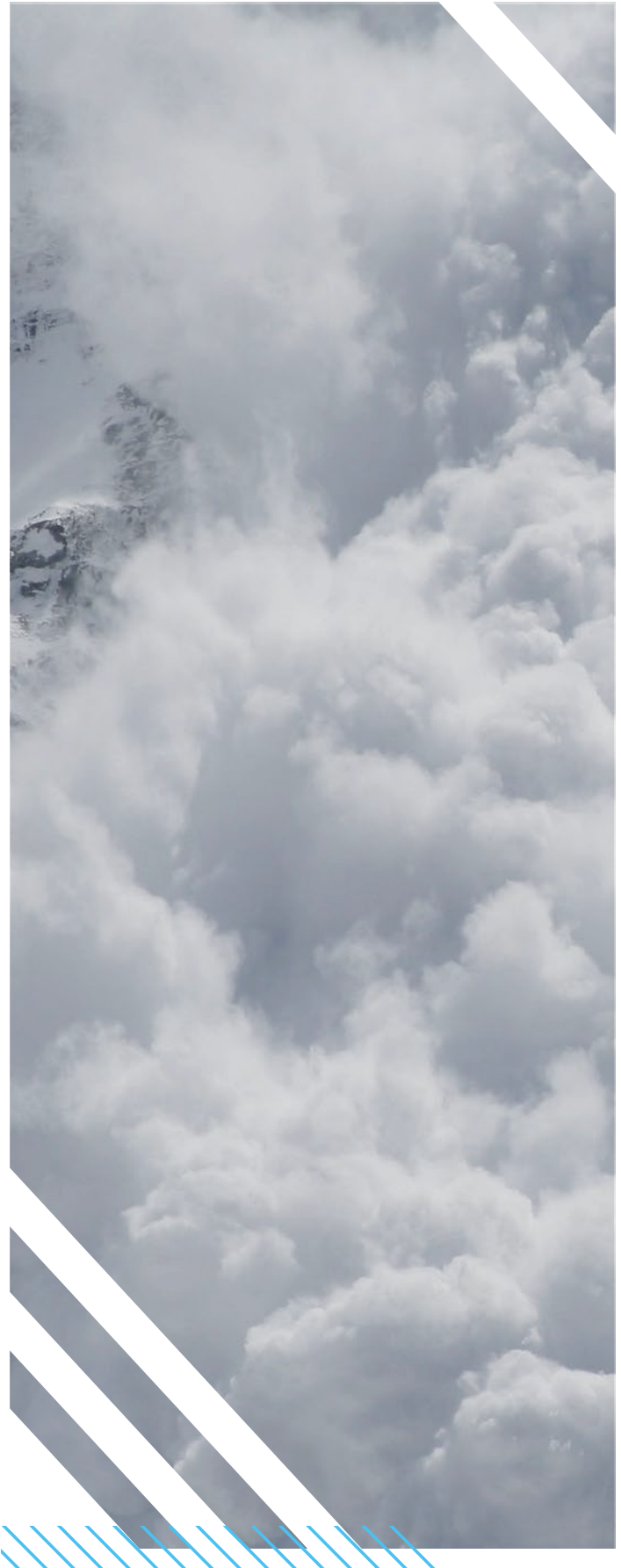
Understanding Your Insurance

Earthquake insurance often comes with high deductibles and may require you to make structural upgrades to your building.

It's important to review your policy closely and ensure you have the right coverage to protect your business.

Take Action Today

Preparedness goes beyond having a plan—it's about taking active steps to protect your business and your people. If you need expert guidance on building a comprehensive disaster recovery strategy, reach out to us at James Moore Technology Services.

We're here to help you stay resilient, no matter what challenges come your way.

Disaster #6: Human Error, AKA "Hurricane Humanity"

People make mistakes—it's part of being human. Whether it's pulling the wrong plug, clicking on a malicious link, or syncing unauthorized apps to the network, these errors can lead to significant disruptions.

From accidentally deleting critical files to botching a major systems upgrade, human error is a risk that can't be ignored.

Potential Impact

» Loss of essential files, accounts, or servers

» Complete shutdown of critical systems

Risk Factors

» According to the Uptime Institute, 70% of data center issues stem from human error.

» Every business is at risk unless fully staffed by robots with flawless error controls.

Warning Signs

» Unfortunately, human error often comes without any warning, making preparation essential.

Technology Security Measures

1. **Implement point-in-time backups:** Ensure that your data, applications, and systems can be restored to their pre-error state with minimal downtime.

2. **Use secure systems:** Adopt solutions that minimize the risk of human errors, such as automated processes and clear user protocols.

Employee Training

» **Conduct regular training:** Ensure your team knows how to respond to various scenarios, from malware attacks to accidental data deletion.

» **Highlight high-risk situations:** Tailor training to your industry's specific risks and reinforce best practices to prevent errors.

Operational Resilience

» **Prepare for continuity:** Ensure your IT systems have the necessary failover mechanisms to maintain operations, even in the face of human error.

» **Develop response protocols:** Establish clear steps for recovering from errors to minimize downtime and disruption.

Insurance Considerations

While insurance for human errors is hard to find, having robust backup and recovery strategies is your best defense.

Let's work together to create a robust strategy that keeps your business resilient and ready for anything.

7 ADDITIONAL KEY PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY

At James Moore Technology Services, we know that business continuity isn't just a plan–it's a commitment to staying resilient no matter what comes your way.

Here are seven key principles to keep in mind:

1. **Involve your team:** Your business continuity (BC) plan will only work if everyone understands it. Regularly communicate your plan to your employees and encourage their input. They often have valuable insights into how your business might be impacted by a disaster.

2. **Keep your customers informed:** Your customers are the heart of your business, especially during challenging times. Use alerts on your website, email broadcasts, social media, and even text messages to keep them updated. This level of communication not only shows you care but can also strengthen customer loyalty.

3. **Work with your suppliers:** Businesses don't operate in a vacuum. Collaborate with your suppliers and partners to create a more resilient network. This teamwork ensures that everyone is prepared and protected against potential disruptions.

4. **Test and update your plan regularly:** A BC plan isn't something you set and forget. Test it periodically to make sure it works in real-life situations. As your business grows and evolves, make sure your plan evolves with it.

5. **Stay compliant:** Regulations can play a big role in how you prepare for disasters. Make sure your plan aligns with any relevant mandates, such as OSHA guidelines for workplace safety. Compliance isn't just about ticking boxes–it's about ensuring your business is truly prepared.

6. **Review your insurance coverage:** Insurance policies can be complex, and it's crucial to know exactly what's covered. Make sure your policy includes all aspects of disaster recovery, not just the immediate damage. Consider additional coverage like contingent business interruption insurance to protect against indirect impacts.

7. **Backup data–and more:** It's not enough to just back up your files. In a disaster, you need to run your applications on-demand from virtual machines backed up in the cloud. This ensures that your critical systems are up and running when you need them most.

Contact

Book a consultation today to explore how our IT managed services can provide you with enterprise-grade security, tailored to your needs and budget.

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