

Evaluate Your Veterinary Practice Disaster Plan

The self-assessment consists of a series of easy-to-answer questions designed to provide a "status check" of where your practice is right now in the disaster preparedness process. If you answer "no" to a question, you will be provided with further information that may be helpful in managing your efforts.

1. Have you fully identified how the following hazardous situations could impact your human resources, physical resources, and business continuity?

Types of Hazards:

Natural	Technological	Human-Caused
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Avalanche – Disease outbreak – Drought – Earthquake – Flood – Hurricane – Landslide/ Mudslide – Tornado – Tsunami – Volcanic eruption – Wildfire – Winter storm – Other: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dam/ levee break – HAZMAT issue – Mechanical failure in airplane or train resulting in crash or derailment – Nuclear meltdown – Power failure – Other: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Arson – Civil disturbance – Cyber attacks – School violence – Sabotage – Terrorist acts – Vehicular accidents – Other:

2. Have you reviewed your business insurance policies with your agent to assure that you have adequate coverage and limits?

Most businesses discover that they are not properly insured only after they suffer a loss. Lack of adequate insurance could be financially devastating. You should discuss the following with your insurance adviser to determine your individual needs:

- How will my property be valued?
- Does my policy cover the cost of required code upgrades?
- How much insurance am I required to carry to avoid becoming a co-insurer?
- What perils or causes of loss does my policy cover?
- What are my deductibles?
- What does my policy require me to do in case of a loss?
- What types of records and documentation will my insurance company want to see?
- To what extent am I covered for a loss due to interruption of power?
- Am I covered for lost income in the event of business interruption?

3. Do you know who to contact in case of a disaster?

A disaster contact list should be available for you and your employees. Here are suggestions of those who should be included on your list:

- ✓ all employees (include home phone numbers)
- ✓ local police department
- ✓ local fire department
- ✓ local office of emergency services
- ✓ local animal control department
- ✓ ambulance service
- ✓ hospital
- ✓ insurance company
- ✓ insurance agent
- ✓ telephone company
- ✓ gas company
- ✓ electric company
- ✓ fire and/or security alarm companies
- ✓ tenants (if any)
- ✓ building owner/manager
- ✓ key customers and suppliers
- ✓ local news media (TV, radio, newspaper)

4. Do your employees know what to do in the event of a disaster?

At a minimum, your employees should know how to report an emergency, how to safely evacuate the building, and how to protect themselves and others in an emergency. Meet with your employees at least once a year to review your disaster procedures. Consider designating one employee per shift to act as an emergency coordinator.

In preparing employees for disasters, you should do the following:

- ✓ Maintain a written disaster plan and review it with employees to make sure every person understands their role. The plan should include:
 - Personal safety considerations
 - Animal safety considerations
 - Evacuation priorities and procedures
 - Meeting locations
 - Business continuity plan (to keep your business operational after a disaster)
 - Communication plan (amongst employees and to pet owners/ clients.)

5. Do you know what disaster supplies you should have on hand?

Every veterinary practice should have basic emergency supplies on hand in case of a disaster. Here are some suggestions:

- ✓ Portable battery-operated radio with extra batteries
- ✓ NOAA weather radio with a warning alarm tone and battery backup
- ✓ First aid kit (human)
- ✓ Maps of the area
- ✓ Fire extinguishers
- ✓ Flashlights
- ✓ Replacement batteries
- ✓ Basic tool kit with gloves, clean-up rags, and other tools unique to your business
- ✓ Small supply of bottled water and nonperishable food
- ✓ Camera and film for documenting damage
- ✓ Tarps
- ✓ Rope/ tape
- ✓ Tools

Animal specific disaster supplies include:

- ✓ Handling equipment such as ropes, leashes, gloves
- ✓ Carriers/ crates and cages for cats, small breed dogs and large breed dogs
- ✓ Bowls
- ✓ Food and water (canned food works well)
- ✓ Can opener
- ✓ *Identification tags*
- ✓ Cat litter
- ✓ Plastic bags/ garbage bags
- ✓ Paper towels
- ✓ Newspaper
- ✓ Exam gloves
- ✓ Hand sanitizer
- ✓ Bucket
- ✓ A flat cart to move crates and supplies
- ✓ A method for transporting animals

6. Do you know what to do to protect your practice records in the event of a disaster?

Any records that are necessary to ensure the survival of your practice should be protected from any disaster. Back-up computer records regularly, and store tapes/disks at a secure off-site location. Records for most practices include payroll, accounting, personnel, production, inventory, suppliers, and client records (medical records).

Inventory lists of all computer hardware, software, machinery, and equipment should be kept up to date. Videotape or photographs provide a visual record. As with computer records, copies of videos and photos should be maintained off-site.

7. Do you know what to do if your practice is forced to relocate temporarily after a disaster?

A disaster may prevent you from returning to your facility for some time. Where would you relocate? In choosing a temporary location, there is much to consider, such as:

- ✓ How much building space do you need and how will you get it?
- ✓ How many employees will you need at various stages of your recovery?
- ✓ What equipment, supplies, and raw materials are needed?
- ✓ Can some or all operations be subcontracted on a temporary basis?

8. Do you review your disaster preparedness plan at least once a year?

Your plan should be reviewed and updated at least annually. All staff should be familiar with the plan and the roles and responsibilities in it.