

**Prepare.
Respond.
Recover.**

A guide to disaster
readiness for
business.



Australia Post

Contents.

Prepare. Respond. Recover. 3

Resources to help you prepare for a disaster or emergency. 4

Prepare. 5

Prepare yourself and your family. 5

Prepare your business. 6

Physical location and inventory. 6

Access to technology. 6

Customer and employee communications. 6

Packaging supplies. 6

Respond. 7

Anticipate. Identify. Manage. (AIM) 7

Communicate with employees and customers. 7

Activate your emergency management plan. 7

Connect with support services and organisations. 7

Recover. 8

Activate your recovery plan. 8

Reconnect with employees and customers. 8

Get your business back on track. 8

Prepare. Respond. Recover.

An overview

For businesses, being prepared for disasters and emergencies, and knowing how to rebound, is important on many levels. Businesses are not only run and owned by individuals, but they're also responsible for employees and are an intrinsic part of a community. How a business readies itself for, responds during, and recovers after a disaster, can have a dramatic and positive impact on a community as a whole.



1 in 3 Australians will experience an emergency or the threat of an emergency in their lifetime.¹



65% of people will experience a traumatic event in their lifetime.² (vehicle accident, violent assault, workplace accident)



More than **1 in 5** families will be impacted by an insurable event in their working lives.³



More than **80%** of people affected will recover well without prolonged distress and without the event significantly impacting on their mental health⁴ after an emergency.



1. Reser, J, Bradley, G, Glendon, A, Ellul, M, Callaghan, R 2012, Public Risk Perceptions, Understandings, and Responses to Climate Change and Natural Disasters in Australia and Great Britain

2. Kelly, S and Vu, Q N (2010) Understanding the Social and Economic Cost of Underinsurance The Lifewise/NATSEM Report

3. Mark van Ommeren, Shekhar Saxena, & Benedetto Saraceno, (2005), Mental and social health during and after acute emergencies: emerging consensus? Bulletin of the World Health Organisation 2005; 83:pp71-76.

4. Australian Centre for Post Traumatic Mental Health (2007) Acute Stress Disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: a Practitioner's Guide

Resources to help you prepare for a disaster or emergency.

This list of resources provides a number of actions to explore and consider to help your business prepare, respond, and recover when faced with a disaster or emergency.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list of resources and actions to consider, and is not intended to be specific advice for your business.

Prepare.

Prepare your personal [REDi plan](#) from Australian Red Cross – this can help you identify and consider what you and your loved ones may need when faced with a disaster or emergency.

Download Australian Red Cross' [Emergency Pack List](#). A great resource to help you start thinking about important items to pack such as food, medical supplies, clothing, copies of important documents etc.

Visit the [Government's Business.gov.au website](#) and consider completing an [emergency management plan](#) for your business. Their [template](#) includes a business continuity plan, an emergency action plan and a recovery plan.

Visit Australian Red Cross' website for additional resources such as preparedness plans for [people with chronic illness](#) or [physical disability](#), [people who have just moved](#), [kids](#) and [older people](#).

Download Australian Red Cross' [Get Prepared app](#).

Follow ABC Emergency and official Police, Fire and SES social media accounts on Twitter or Facebook for reliable sources of information on disasters and emergencies.

Respond.

Visit the [Government's Healthdirect website](#) to learn more about how to support the mental health of yourself, your family and your employees during a disaster using the Anticipate. Identify. Manage (AIM) three-step approach.

If you require [identification verification and document renewal services](#), head to your local Post Office.

Access much needed funds and cash disbursements via the Post Office using our Bank@Post* service; you can also make withdrawals and check your bank account balance from 80 banking institutions.

Communicate with your employees; consider sharing resources for disaster response with them to aid their recovery.

Recover.

Consider seeking free mental health coaching through [Beyond Blue's NewAccess for Small Business Owners program](#).

Apply for a free [12-month Mail Redirection](#)# available for victims of natural disaster.

Communicate with your customers via SMS, email, social media or your website to update them on details such as impacts to your business, if you've needed to pause orders, when orders can recommence etc.

* Bank@Post is an agency service provided by Australia Post on behalf of over 80 financial institutions. Bank@Post is available at participating Post Offices. Services available are cash withdrawals, deposits and balance inquiries. Consult your financial institution for terms and conditions of the Bank@Post service. Limits apply.

This offering is available for eligible customers only. Terms & Conditions apply. For more information, please visit auspost.com.au/receiving/manage-your-mail/redirect-hold-mail/redirect-mail/free-mail-redirection-and-po-boxes.

Prepare.

Preparing yourself and your business for the impact of a disaster or emergency is key to knowing how to respond during an event, and how to put the pieces back together once the situation has subsided. But where do you start this process, and where can you go for help?

As a business owner, you not only have to think about preparing yourself; you have to think about your infrastructure, your employees and your customers. This can seem overwhelming at times, potentially compounding the anxiety of the months leading up to Australia's disaster season.

To help make this a less stressful time for individuals and businesses, our partner, Australian Red Cross, has a range of resources and tools you can use to help you prepare.

Their disaster preparedness guide – [Emergencies Happen: Protect What Matters Most](#) - is a good place to start and can help you create your personal [RediPlan](#). Once you've completed this, you'll be in a good position to consider ways to prepare your business for a disaster or emergency.



Prepare yourself and your family.

According to Australian Red Cross, there are four key steps to helping yourself and your family prepare ahead of a disaster or emergency.

Step 1. Get in the know

Understand the hazards or emergencies you're likely to face; learn how to manage your stress; find out who can help; know where to get information in an emergency.

Step 2. Get Connected

Decide on meeting places with members of your household; connect with people and organisations in your community who could help you.

Step 3: Get organised

Purchase or update your insurance policies; store important documents in a safe place; plan to secure pets and/or livestock.

Step 4: Get packing

Identify and pack items into an emergency survival kit, such as food, medical supplies, clothing, etc.

Visit Australian Red Cross' website for resources to help you be prepared, including:

- Your personal [REDi plan](#)
- [Emergency Pack List](#)
- Downloading the [Get Prepared app](#)



Did you know?

The ABC is the official emergency broadcaster. It will provide essential up to date information including advice from authorities and support available.

You can find your radio frequency [here](#).

Those who received preparedness advice from Australian Red Cross either directly via preparedness sessions or the Get Ready app are more likely to report having felt in control of their actions during the emergency.⁵

Additional resources from Australian Red Cross to help you get prepared.

[Preparedness for people with a chronic illness](#)

[Preparedness for people with a physical disability](#)

[Preparedness for people who have just moved](#)

[Get Ready Kids](#)

5. Understanding preparedness and recovery. A survey of people's preparedness and recovery experience for emergencies Australian Red Cross, 2021



Prepare your business.

Getting your business prepared for a natural disaster or emergency involves thinking about an enormous number of factors and planning for a range of contingencies. Natural disasters and emergencies can often strike without warning.

According to [business.gov.au](https://www.business.gov.au), there are 8 steps you can take to prepare your business and your staff for a disaster or emergency:

1. [Take out insurance for your business](#)
2. Choose a suitable business location
3. [Back up and secure your data](#)
4. Prepare your emergency contacts
5. Review your evacuation procedures
6. Create an emergency kit
7. Set up an emergency action team and communicate
8. Rehearse your [emergency management plan](#)

The Australian Government's [emergency management plan](#) will help guide your business before, during, and after a disaster or emergency.

There are three key elements to their emergency management plan:

A continuity plan

Helps you prepare your business for an emergency by identifying risks to critical areas and how to best protect them.

The emergency action plan

Helps you and your staff know what to do during an emergency situation.

The recovery plan

Guides your business recovery after an emergency.

You can download their emergency management plan template [here](#).

Stay in touch, and in business.

Depending on the type of business you run, there are some important questions you should consider asking yourself as you look to prepare your business ahead of disaster or emergency.



Physical location and inventory.

- Where is your stock stored?
- If your stock becomes inaccessible, can you order more, and have it delivered elsewhere?
- If your electronic systems are down to check inventory, what is the best way for you to monitor stock in versus stock out?



Access to technology.

- Do you have a backup power source or know where alternative power sources could be available to you?
- If you can't access your own devices, do you know where you can access a backup device?
- Do you have important information backed up? e.g. hosted online to ensure valuable information and intellectual property isn't lost.
- In the case that the internet is down, what is your contingency plan?



Customer and employee communications.

- Do you have messaging ready to go on your website or to your customers waiting for orders that there may be delays due to a disaster?



Packaging supplies.

- Do you have backup packaging or postage supplies available?
- Are you familiar with Australia Post's [packaging range](#) if you do need to use alternative packaging from the Post Office?
- Where is your [nearest Post Office](#)? What packaging do they stock?

The answers to these questions can help to inform your emergency management plan and can help you focus on the fundamentals, ensuring your business is as prepared as possible in the event of a disaster.

Find out about Australia Post's disaster recovery services and partnerships [here](#).

Key Business Resources.

Business.gov.au
[Preparing your business for an emergency](#)

[Develop an emergency management plan](#)

Business Victoria
[Emergency planning](#)

South Australia Business Hub
[Preparing your emergency plan](#)

Get Ready Queensland
[Protect your business](#)

Business Tasmania
[Preparing your business for natural disaster](#)

Respond.

No one can ever be completely sure how they'll respond during a natural disaster, no matter how prepared you might be.

Your preparation efforts and emergency action plan - if you've created one - come into play at this stage of a disaster. It's also a time when your mental resilience is tested and highlights the need to prepare yourself mentally for an emergency or natural disaster.



Anticipate. Identify. Manage. (AIM)

The Australian Psychological Society has developed a three-step approach to mental health preparedness, which is outlined on the Government's [Healthdirect](#) website:

- Anticipate that you will feel worried or anxious and remember these are normal responses to a possible life-threatening situation.
- Identify the specific physical feelings associated with anxiety and whether you are having any frightening thoughts that are adding to the fear.
- Manage your responses using controlled breathing and self-talk to stay as calm as possible so you can focus on the practical tasks that need your attention.



Communicate with employees and customers.

- Keep employees updated via SMS or email, providing links to relevant websites for updates.
- Contact customers via SMS or email to update them on any disruption to orders or services.
- Update your website to reflect changed open hours, delivery options and delivery timings to communicate any interruptions or delays to your business.



Activate your emergency management plan.

The Australian Government's emergency management plan includes:

- Communication methods
- Emergency contacts
- Emergency procedures
- Emergency kit
- Emergency team roles and responsibilities



Connect with support services and organisations.

- Access Government services and information via Disaster Assist.
- Visit Australian Red Cross for assistance in responding to a disaster.
- Get in touch with Australia Post about our disaster assistance services, including:
 - Bank@Post* for access to cash, make withdrawals and check your account balance
 - Identification verification and document renewal services, at your local Post Office.
 - Decipha for document digitisation services
 - Free 12-month Mail Redirection# for disaster impacted individuals.



* Bank@Post is an agency service provided by Australia Post on behalf of over 80 financial institutions. Bank@Post is available at participating Post Offices. Services available are cash withdrawals, deposits and balance inquiries. Consult your financial institution for terms and conditions of the Bank@Post service. Limits apply.

This offering is available for eligible customers only. Terms & Conditions apply. For more information, please visit auspost.com.au/receiving/manage-your-mail/redirect-hold-mail/redirect-mail/free-mail-redirection-and-po-boxes.

Recover.

Once the immediate impact of a natural disaster or emergency has passed, it's time to start getting your business back on its feet.

From activating your business continuity plan, to accessing support and assistance, to reconnecting with employees and customers, this is the opportunity to take advantage of the resources you have to revive your business and get back on track.



Activate your recovery plan.

The Australian Government's recovery plan recommends the following:

- Assess the impact on your business, such as damage to documents, stock and/or assets.
- Complete a [business impact assessment](#).
- Reach out to the organisations or people that will be essential to the recovery of your business.
- List any insurance policies you have claimed for and record discussions you have with insurers about your claims.
- Complete a market assessment based on your assessment of the damage to your business, surrounding area and customer base, and list any areas of your market that have changed.



Reconnect with employees and customers.

- Inform employees of the state of your business and any operational changes.
- Consider activating your post-disaster [marketing strategy](#) located within your emergency disaster plan. This could include:
 - When you'll reopen
 - If you've relocated
 - When you can take new orders
 - When you'll be able to start deliveries again.
- Provide support and recovery resources to disaster-affected employees and/or customers.



Get your business back on track.

- Use available [Government resources](#) and [Government grants](#) for small business to assist in your recovery.
- Access Australian Red Cross' disaster [recovery advice and support](#).
- Explore workplace resources for employers, employees, managers and small business at [Heads Up](#), developed by Beyond Blue.
- Get six free and confidential mental health coaching sessions via [Beyond Blue's New Access program](#).
- Talk to Australia Post about our disaster relief services.
- Celebrate your recovery with a special offer, event or promotion.



About Australia Post

Being as prepared as possible can help make a natural disaster or emergency less stressful, give you more control, and help reduce the impact on you and your business. By working together, we can help make it easier for your business to connect with customers, employees and the community in the wake of a disaster or emergency.

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to know more, please contact your Australia Post Account Manager.

If you don't have an Account Manager, please call 13 11 18 and one of our friendly staff will assist you.

This guide is provided for general information purposes only and is not intended to be specific advice for your business.



Australia Post acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate, live and gather as employees, and recognises their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.