Being Prepared: Makes Good Business Sense

Imagine waking to find your organization impacted by a disaster—a flood, tornado, terrorist attack, or even power outage. No business or other private sector entity is invincible to the effects of a disaster, so it is crucial to take the necessary steps to get and stay prepared.

Building resiliency against the consequences of a full range of possible catastrophes is becoming the norm for many Americans. Any hazard can cause operational disruptions, such as unanticipated costs, data loss, impaired facilities, impacted business relationships, and even fatalities among employees. Private sector entities need attainable and comprehensive processes to better ensure continuity and recovery. PS-Prep™ can offer an organization several options toward preparedness, whether it's following best practice programs, aligning to a standard, or certifying to a standard.

PS-Prep™: Helping You Prepare to a Standard

Organizations can use a variety of activities to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to disruptions. PS-Prep™, a voluntary program, is designed to help private sector entities (including businesses, non-profit organizations, facilities, hospitals, stadiums, or educational institutions) prepare for and recover from the effects of any type of disruption (natural or manmade). PS-Prep™ provides a systemic approach to business continuity and recovery that will allow organizations to unify their preparedness activities under a DHS-adopted standard. When implemented, these standards provide policy, processes, procedures, performance measures, and quality-improvement practices that are updated regularly to ensure ongoing relevance. Once you prepare to a standard, you achieve uniformity and consistency across functional areas and departments that have responsibility for preparedness.

Standards Businesses Need to Know

No two organizations are the same; therefore, PS-Prep™ offers entities the opportunity to select a standard for continuity and recovery processes that will best meet their business needs The standards were developed by preparedness experts and approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has adopted the following three standards for PS-Prep™:

1. *Disaster and Emergency Management and Business Continuity {NFPA 1600: 2007/2010 editions}*
   This standard is for businesses seeking a holistic approach to preparedness; it addresses organization management, risk assessment, prevention, mitigation, resource management, response, continuity, and recovery.
2. *Organizational Resilience and Security Preparedness and Continuity Management {ASIS SPC.1-2009}*
   This standard is for businesses looking for the steps necessary to prevent, prepare for, and respond to disruptive incidents; it promotes survival and ensures organizational resilience.
3. *Business Continuity Management {BSI BS 25999}*
   This standard is for businesses desiring a plan to avoid business interruption; it provides a basis for understanding, developing, and implementing a business continuity plan.

How To Participate

Becoming prepared is an ongoing process of making improvements over time. You can start with learning best practices and incorporating processes that consider your critical operations. Then, continue to enhance your level of preparation by strengthening your internal processes with a management system, such as those provided by standards offered by PS-Prep™. Upon fulfilling the quality measures of your chosen standard, your organization could decide to obtain the most distinguished form of preparation—third-party certification.

Benefits of Certification

Organizations that find value in third-party validation of their preparedness efforts may choose to be certified to one of the standards provided by PS-Prep™. Certification places your organization among a prestigious business community, proactive in safeguarding your operations against unforeseen hazards.

Earning certification will enable a business to:
- **Develop a Plan of Action** for handling disruptions that is shared with employees and practiced through exercises.
- **Minimize Potential Impact to Essential Operations,** increasing entity's opportunity to continue to operate.
- **Protect Data and Information** to ensure decisions can continue to be made to facilitate organization recovery.
- **Increase Reliability** by proving your organization's ability to mitigate all-hazard conditions.
- **Protect Market Share and Minimize Financial Losses** by proactively planning and accounting for recovery resources before they are needed.
- **Gain Industry Recognition** by promoting preparedness with suppliers and clients alike.

First Steps to Preparedness

1. Evaluate the critical areas of your organization (equipment, employees, processes) and assess what the impacts to those areas would be if disrupted by a range of hazards (i.e. natural disaster, utility outage, flood, fire).
2. Take a candid look at procedures/best practices you have in place for handling those potential impacts.
3. Consider your organizational scope, missions, and internal resources, and choose the path best suited to your goals: self-assessment (best practices) or certification (third-party validation).
4. Assess how your current internal practices align with your chosen route of preparedness.
5. Develop a plan to continually maintain and strengthen your state of preparedness.