

Business Sector

Preparing Your Business for Severe Weather

Every business has many challenges to overcome to ensure business continuity in the event of severe weather. *Preparation is key to minimising disruption* during such events. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Forfás have prepared a practical checklist for the business sector which will outline key issues to address as part of business continuity planning for, and in response to, severe weather events. The Checklist is available in the document <https://dbej.gov.ie/en/Publications/Business-Continuity-Planning-in-Severe-Weather.html>

Practical considerations on how a severe weather event can affect operations include:

1. Impact on Place of Business

- Consider how various severe weather scenarios can affect the place of work i.e. the site and buildings.
 - Is the location at risk of flooding?
 - Are access points liable to difficulties e.g. access roads positioned on a slope at risk of ice?
 - Are water pipes insulated (including in and around vacant buildings)? Ensure that the business has information and contact details regarding key services including local authorities.
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- Review insurance cover and contact insurance advisors in relation to any concern a business may have.

2. Impact on Employees

- Consider the potential impact because of employees being unable to attend the place of work.
- Consider how alternative work practices could minimise disruption e.g. teleworking, shift-work and consider how the Human Resource Management practices in the business can cater for disruption.
- Consider what measures need to be put in place to ensure employee safety across the place of work.
- Ensure the business has up-to-date employee contact details and a communications plan.
- Ensure that management responsibility is clearly assigned for planning and making preparations; and identify business critical roles and develop plans for ensuring continuity.

3. Impact on Customers

- Consider how customers may be impacted upon.
- Consider the business impact because of lower custom.
- Consider alternative means to serving customers and what strategies can be employed to minimise disruption e.g. online commerce.
- Have in place a communications plan for customers.
- Consider how customer safety can be assured within the public areas of the business.

- Assess how surrounding pavements and access points can be cleared in the event of snow and ice and prepare for suitable equipment being available.

4. Impact on Suppliers

- Consider the impact of a disruption to supplies and review stockpiles.
- Liaise with key suppliers and assess their preparedness in the event of severe weather affecting their businesses.
- Consider especially time-sensitive supplies.
- Consider alternative transportation routes and logistics channels.
- Consider safety of suppliers of goods and services, which may entail access to less frequented areas of premises.

Business Continuity Planning in Severe Weather

The link below focuses on the potential impact to business during severe weather events and offers advice on key issues that should be addressed as well as suggesting measures to underpin business continuity including a practical checklist.

<https://dbe.gov.ie/en/Publications/Business-Continuity-Planning-in-Severe-Weather.html>