

Winter Prep Checklist

How to Prepare Your Business for Winter Season

Winter is around the corner, so you've probably already started prepping for the snow. Whether it's assembling winter safety kits, ensuring you have ways to keep warm, or digging around the attic for those holiday decorations, you know how to get ready for the season.

In the same sense, business owners should also make preparations to ensure their businesses can withstand the harsh cold.

BEFORE THE SNOWSTORM

Backup all data frequently by following the 3-2-1 Backup Rule

To best prepare your business for a snowstorm, follow the 3-2-1 backup rule. The 3-2-1 backup rule recommends keeping three copies of your data stored at two different locations and storing one additional copy off-site.

Because snowstorms are known to cause power outages and snow-ins, it's important to have multiple copies of data to back up your business data.

Establish communication expectations

When heavy snow is approaching, it's important to communicate with all business stakeholders, including clients, employees, and vendors, to keep them updated on information regarding their data and business operations.

Before a snowstorm occurs, set communication expectations with your clients and employees, including:

- How you will reach out to them (email, phone call, SMS text, etc.)
- How frequently you will communicate (proactively or reactively?)
- How they can best reach you in the event of a natural disaster.

Maintain a contact list and store it in three places: the cloud, on your hard drive, and in your pocket. Having various copies of data will offer multiple ways to safe-keep your data and contact stakeholders before, during, and after.

Make sure your IT inventory is up to date

Before a natural disaster, it's good to have an accurate inventory of your business's IT assets. This is useful for insurance claims and for any technician troubleshooting issues following the storm.

Move your business devices to a secure location

To minimize damage to your network devices, you should protect your electronic devices in multiple ways.

- Shut down and unplug devices to protect them from power surges
- Move devices away from windows to protect them from breaks
- Move devices off the ground and cover them to protect them from elemental damage

Consider moving all devices to an alternative location that is safe from harsh weather. This will improve your chances of avoiding serious damage.

Have a business continuity and disaster recovery (BCDR) plan

Documenting a plan for incidents like natural disasters is the best way to protect your business from the unexpected. To develop a BCDR plan, outline your recovery strategy by assessing your current data and identifying vulnerabilities in your infrastructure. Once you've secured your business, test regularly to improve processes and responses.

Partner with a solution provider

If you do not have the resources to effectively prepare your business for a snowstorm or other natural disaster, consider partnering with a solution provider who can guide your business before, during, and after an incident to maintain security.

AFTER THE SNOWSTORM

Proceed with caution

Following the storm, proceed with caution when reentering your place of business. Melted snow, gas leaks, and fallen power lines are all realistic threats to your personal safety.

Assess and repair damaged property

If your business was impacted by the effects of a snowstorm, chances are your IT infrastructure and equipment may be damaged. If so, it's important to inspect your technology for damages and document the impact to report to your insurance provider.

Contact your insurance provider

Following a natural disaster, contact your insurance provider to make a claim about any damages to your business or technology. This will help offset the costs of recovery.

Put your BCDR plan into action

After a disaster occurs, time is of the essence when it comes to your business' continuity and data protection. Your BCDR plan should be prepared to outline how your business should respond to the incident, including detailed recovery strategies and processes specific to your business.

If you're looking for a partner to help you prepare and recover from disasters that may come this winter, **contact our team today!**

800-228-3628