

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCY

Disaster planning and recovery checklists

Question:

I just recently started a new job at a private country club and noticed that they do not have a thorough disaster recovery plan in place. Can you provide guidelines or a checklist on how to develop a disaster recovery plan?

Answer:

This is a timely question given the natural disasters which occurred in 2005 and the ever-present threat of man-made disasters such as computer viruses and terrorist attacks. The following checklist, adapted from the National Club Association's *Decision-maker's Guide to Disaster Planning*, provides simple guidelines to help you develop a plan for before and after disaster strikes. These are just a few suggestions, but the comprehensive plan for a property could involve many more topics.

Disaster Planning Checklist

General Guidelines

- Develop a disaster planning team which should consist of department heads
- Identify the types of disasters likely to impact your property (earthquake, flood, volcanic eruption, terrorist attack, etc.)
- Each department should be involved in the development of a disaster plan for their department
- Involve all staff members in developing, evaluating and updating the plan

- Develop brief instructions for staff on how to deal with each disaster (bullet points work well)
- Prepare a detailed evacuation plan and make sure it is properly posted
- Evaluate your current insurance policy and make sure it is adequate
- Know the location of your current insurance policy and store one copy off-site
- Contact government agencies (both local and federal) and utilities about potential emergencies and how they will assist in the response
- Identify other facilities that can provide for your guests

Facilities/Security

- Properly store current blueprints for the property (off-site)
- Locate and record all utility shut-off locations
- Maintain a complete inventory including detailed photographs, video, dates of purchase, cost per item, etc.
- Make sure and change locks/passwords whenever personnel with access to sensitive material leave

Communication

- Develop a procedure for employees to report an emergency
- Develop a plan to communicate with both your employees and club members/guests
- Have a back-up plan in case phone lines are down
- Make sure you have an emergency contact list readily available

- Identify and list names and phone numbers of persons and firms to be notified in case of a disaster (local agencies, utilities, vendors, etc.)
- Designate one person to make statements to the media or club members/guests

Computers

- Electronic data should be backed up daily
- Properly store electronic data backup off-site
- Inventory all computer equipment and what software is utilized on each computer
- Install antivirus software and make sure it is updated on a regular basis

Accounting and Financial Information

- Properly store (off-site) all indispensable financial records
- Keep employee files and member files in a fireproof cabinet
- Store a current member roster off-site
- Put in place safeguards for financial records and cash receipts

Disaster Recovery Checklist

General Guidelines

- After a disaster has occurred check the property to assess the extent of the damage
- Isolate and secure the disaster
- Activate warning systems to let guests on property know that something has happened (i.e. fire)
- Evacuate members or employees for safety purposes and account for them once evacuated

- ❑ Coordinate with local emergency management officials
- ❑ Make a list and take photographs of all damages and how you plan to prevent any further damage such as blocking off openings, restoring power and securing the property
- ❑ Choose vendors ahead of time to assist with disaster recovery such as water removal, landscaping, etc.
- ❑ Maintain thorough records of everything that happens during and after an emergency
- ❑ After the disaster your offices may need to move to a remote location and management must determine what supplies/personnel are an absolute necessity to keep the club going
- ❑ Make sure a PR contact is designated and information is communicated in a timely manor to the public through media and press releases
- ❑ Club/hotel needs to determine how they will assist their employees which could include leave, food, clothing, loans, etc.

Disaster Recovery Team

- ❑ Just as there is a disaster planning team, there should also be a designated disaster recovery team headed by the

general manager whose members are department heads

- ❑ Designate a meeting place for the disaster team to meet in case of emergency
- ❑ After the facilities have been deemed safe, each member of the disaster team should investigate their area and report back to the general manager
- ❑ The disaster recovery team must prioritize repairs in a way that will allow the club/hotel to resume normal operations ASAP

Insurance

- ❑ As soon as possible, involve your insurance company and local government agencies if necessary
- ❑ If repair costs are incurred prior to meeting with your insurance agent keep detailed records of expenses

Review Disaster Recovery Plan

- ❑ After operations return to normal disaster recovery procedures must be reviewed

Once you have a plan in place make sure you train your employees in the procedures, run emergency drills and update your plan on a regular basis. It is also important to talk to other club/hotel

managers in your area and learn from their experiences. You also want to make sure you can continue serving your membership/guests even if it involves moving them to another club/hotel for a short period of time.

If you need further information check out other articles in this issue of The Bottomline which go into further detail on data back-up, insurance, and disaster preparedness. For further information not covered in this issue or information on responses for specific events such as hurricanes, power loss, or floods contact the HFTP Research Institute. ■

Sources

- Troiano, Jeff. (1996). Disaster Recovery: Preparation and Speed are the Keys. *Club Management* magazine.
- National Club Association. (1996). *Decision-maker's Guide: Disaster Planning*. Washington, DC.

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