

# Preparing a Contingency Plan

## Objective

The basic purpose of a contingency plan is to provide an organisation or a small unit within an organisation, with a pre planned booklet of practical guides and procedures for responding to any crisis or disaster

## Design Model

Ideally, planning is both a top down and a bottom up exercise with policy being set by senior management and then unit plans being developed consistent with that overall policy.

## Criteria to Consider

1. What services are provided by your unit/organisation?
2. Of those services, which are critical for your internal and external customers?
3. For your unit/organisation, what are the critical services and equipment you must have to continue operating?
4. What problems might you encounter with that critical service or equipment?
  - What can you least afford to lose?
  - Time frames - how long can you do without it?
5. What back up systems are required?
  - emergency lighting
  - emergency power
  - emergency water supply
  - medical gas
  - alternative sewerage
  - heating fuel
  - telephone - communications
  - security
  - suppliers
6. What is the likely monetary loss arising from an inability to provide your services?
7. Scenarios - how does the timing and extent of the disaster affect different operating functions?
8. What are your intangible exposures such as - unfavourable publicity - loss of market share - competitive disadvantage - confidentiality?

9. Identify the likely emergency conditions you may face
  - aggressive patient/intruder
  - fire
  - water damage
  - equipment failure
  - too many patients or patients unable to access your service
  - chemical spill
  - structural collapse
  - loss of staff
10. How can the risk be reduced before the crisis occurs?
11. What prevention measures can you take?
12. What alarm systems are required?
13. What communication systems do you have? How will you communicate when they are out of action?
14. Which emergency services need notifying? How and by whom?
15. Who do you call to restore essential services? What are their after hour numbers?
16. Who will take control during an emergency and from where will they operate?
17. What is an appropriate recovery option?
18. What emergency equipment is required?
19. What are the vital records of the unit? How will they be protected?
20. Who will deal with the news media?
21. Who are the essential staff to be notified in an emergency? How will you call staff back to duty?
22. Who will provide post crisis counselling to staff and patients?
23. How and by whom will calls from family and friends of patients be handled?
24. Who will authorise the all clear to resume normal operations?
25. How will your contingency plan be tested?

## **Writing the Plan**

The Plan should be prepared during a team meeting of all staff in the Unit. This ensures the collective knowledge and ability of all staff members is utilised and all staff are aware of the solutions identified. The discussion that takes place during the Plan preparation is as important than the finished plan.

## **Plan Content**

The Plan should include:

- Name of Unit
- Services supplied
- Name of team leader/manager
- Contact telephone numbers for all staff
- Contact numbers for support services
- Contingency Plans for dealing with any loss of failure of critical services or equipment.

An example of a contingency plan for a medium sized medical practice can be seen at <http://hemnz.org.nz/practice.pdf>

The three forms following provide templates for building your plan.

# Contingency Plan Template

Critical Service	Problem	Impact	Contingency	Task	Customer - Supplier	Responsibility

**NOTE:** This template is consistent with the template used by the Ministry of Health for Y2K planning

	KEY	DEPENDENCIES		
<b>Utilities</b>		<b>Off Site Services</b>		<b>On Site Services</b>
Air Conditioning		Banks		A & E Dept
Computers		Courier and Post		General Ward
Electricity		District Council		Outpatients Dept
Telephones		Laboratory Services		Maternity Ward
Fax Machines				Psychiatric Ward
Suction		Payroll		
Natural Gas		Service people		Pharmacist
Steam		Suppliers		Radiology
Water		Equipment technicians		Physiotherapy
				Engineering Services
Sewerage				Transport
Uninterrupted Power Supply				Clerical Staff
		Community Health Clinics		Household Staff
				Food Services
		Air Transport		Orderlies
		Ambulance Control		
				Laundry
				Parking
				Creche

Add or subtract names to reflect your situation

To quickly identify the services critical for your continued operation, score each box 5 for high dependency through to 0 for no dependency

**INVENTORY OF CRITICAL EQUIPMENT**

<b>Equipment Name</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Function of Equipment</b>	<b>Supplier/Repairer of Equipment</b>	<b>Estimated replacement/repair time for equipment</b>	<b>Alternative/back up for equipment</b>