



TogetherWE Prepare Workplace: Managing Business Risks

By *Cecelia Matta*

Few businesses succeed without a business plan, whether you're an Eastside software company, a Kent box manufacturer or a Bremerton neighborhood café. Your business can only grow from the careful steps you employ to seed your idea, nurture and shape the concept, then harvest and deliver your profitable "fruit" to market. This planning sequence—from identifying your niche and developing your products or services, to securing financial backing and training the crew—also includes risk management.

What does the Red Cross have to do with risk management - assessing and mitigating the "worst case scenario"? When it comes to emergency planning and training Red Cross offers a suite of resources to help you get ready for emergencies and unthinkable events. Our national initiative, TogetherWE Prepare, promotes the essential elements of preparedness, which are easy to incorporate into your business plan:

Make a Plan. Build a Kit. Get Trained. Volunteer.

Whether through your Safety Committee, Human Resources team or Facilities Manager, you can call on your Red Cross to support safety at your business.

Make a Plan: Identify the risks in your workplace.

What are the emergencies and disasters that might happen to your business, including to you, your facility, your staff and your neighborhood? Plan how you will avoid or minimize interruptions. Mitigate hazards; e.g., secure bookcases, file cabinets, artwork, stored chemicals and other materials, so they don't cause secondary disasters. Decide your reasonable response to emergencies, thinking beyond earthquakes and power outages. Health emergencies are far more likely than other events when you have personnel and customers in your care. Make provisions to protect critical equipment, records and other assets.

Red Cross Tools: Business Continuity Planning CD.

We include this nine module template in the package when you engage us to present one of our Preparedness classes at your company or organization.

Buy/Build a Kit: Running out to the store won't be an option when a disaster strikes. At the very least, stock three

days supply of water – 1 gallon/per person/per day – for staff and customers who will be on hand. Inventory your first aid kits. Do you have enough for your work zones? What existing kits need restocking? What special supplies should you have on hand for specific workplace hazards and staff needs?

Red Cross Tools: Have we got kits! Choose from our Under the Table Safety Tubes and Four Person Backpacks to Ten Person Emergency First Aid and Pet First Aid Kits. One-stop shopping at our Online Store!

Get Trained: Do an inventory of how many staff in each work zone on each shift have current First Aid and CPR certification. And check that at home too. When did you last hold an earthquake drill? Your safest response will still be "Drop. Cover. Hold." (www.seattleredcross.org for more information.) Practice it at least twice a year; if you don't, you will have less than a ten percent chance that you will do it when needed. Review and practice your fire escape plan, at work and at home. Run a winter drill too; emergencies don't wait for a sunny day! To learn a new behavior, you have to do it at least seven times. To develop an automatic response, you have to do it twenty-one times. Practice won't just make it perfect – it will save you!

Red Cross Tools: We have dynamic instructors to train and certify you at work in First Aid and CPR, Disaster Preparedness and other work-related health and safety classes. Our newest class, "Protect Your Patrons," gives a concise 90-minute overview of First Aid and preparedness specifically for the restaurant, hospitality and retail trades.

Volunteer: We have over 2000 volunteers who help our chapter deliver disaster relief, First Aid classes and language assistance. Think globally and act locally. Visit our website, www.seattleredcross.org, for more information.

In business, as in life, you can't avoid every risk. You can plan for them, prepare and equip yourself for them and train for them. Call on your Red Cross to help with all three risk management tasks. Workplace Preparedness – Cecilia Matta, (206) 726-3507 or (360) 377-3761 ext. 13507 or e-mail to prepare@seattleredcross.org.