

Article VDisaster
Recovery
Planning

☞ Believe it or not there is more to Disaster / Recovery Planning (DRP) than having your computer tech set up a program so that the membership database is backed up from the network server.

☞ It's not a question of a disaster will never happen to my office, but a matter of when it will occur.

*In the late 1980's I started work for a local manufacturing and distribution company that had recently lost their invoice and receivables database. To make matters worse there was no reliable backup. In order to rebuild their receivables they had to rely on the honesty of their customers to send back copies of their invoices. Thanks to a lot of honest responses and hard work by the staff, the company was able to continue and not become just another statistic. – This is an example of no **DRP***

The initial question to pose to you is,

How long can your office afford to be unavailable from providing the expected level of service to your members, contractors, benefits administrator and government agencies?

Is the answer in hours, days, weeks or months? Will the contractor patiently wait that long for getting the member dispatched to the job site?

With an understanding of your comfort level from the above question, the next point is what types of disasters to plan for in your **DRP**, consider:

- **Natural** – earthquake and flood
- **Civil** – riot, government body action
- **Man-Made** – computer virus, work place violence, loss of an essential staff member.

To help you get started here is a sample checklist to follow for your **DRP**:

- Determine essential business functions,
- Document who performs these essential activities,
- Document who the backup person is if the key person becomes unavailable,
- Ensure that at least these essential procedures are fully documented,
- Ensure you have an accurate inventory of all computer software on every workstation,
- Ensure the software program CD's are safely stored off premise,
- Ensure an up-to-date password list is safely stored,

With your **DRP** in hand, a final critical step is to actually test your plan to ensure that it works and make adjustments as required. The worst time to find out your plan has flaws is when the disaster has hit and you need it!!!

All this may sound time consuming and expensive. But let me assure you that it is well worth the investment.