

DESKTOP WALKTHROUGH EXERCISE SCENARIO

A desktop walkthrough exercise is a very useful way to test your Business Continuity Plan without disrupting normal business.

Suggested format:

Attendance: Key staff

Lead: Manager

Structure: Distribute or display the injects one by one, giving time after each for reviewing your Plan (if you have one) and discussing the questions posed.

INJECT ONE

Tuesday 2.40am	A call is received notifying of a fire affecting your business premises. A manager attends the site to determine the nature of the situation and finds the adjoining building fully ablaze. A fire officer confirms that the fire has spread to the back of your building but is unable to confirm the extent of any damage. A cordon has been established around the site.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is likely to receive that call? • Do they have the home contact details for other colleagues? • Who would attend on site? • Would other staff be notified at this stage? How would this be done and what message given? 	

INJECT TWO

Tuesday 7am	The fire has been extinguished. Any damage to your building has been restricted to the back section and Building Inspectors have been called in to determine whether it is structurally safe. They are expected to arrive shortly and will then take some time to complete their survey. No one is allowed on site in the meantime.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Business Continuity arrangements would be considered at this stage? • What instructions would be given to staff and how? • How would the situation be communicated to customers? • What about stakeholders and suppliers? 	

INJECT THREE

Tuesday 10am	A Police Officer informs your attending manager that a body has been found in the adjacent building and that the entire site is now a crime scene. Crime Scene Investigators have been called in and the cordon is expected to remain in place for at least 24 hours. A request to make an accompanied visit to assess the state of the premises and collect essential items is turned down. Police have requested an interview.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would additional Business Continuity arrangements need to be put in place? • What actions would be necessary and who would do them? • Who would attend the Police interview? • How would you maintain communications with staff and what would you tell them? 	

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INJECT FOUR

Wednesday 5pm	Your premises are deemed structurally sound. You are allowed to make an accompanied visit and discover that the fire damage to the back is limited to the exterior fabric. However, the interior areas at the back have been affected by significant water and smoke damage, plus debris caused by breaking windows and water jets. The majority of the building is unaffected except for the strong smell of smoke. The cordon is lifted at 7pm.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who would be tasked with the cleanup? • What instructions would be given to staff, customers and suppliers - and how? • How would operational backlogs be managed? • What might the longer term issues be and how would they be addressed? 	

A FINAL THOUGHT

Instead of the scenario outlined above, consider instead that circumstances had been rather different and that your manager had arrived to find the fire had spread to your building too, which was also fully ablaze!

HOW WILL YOUR BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN MEASURE UP?

Do you have a Business Continuity Plan? UK Government information states that 50% of businesses which experience a disaster fail within the following 12 months. Preparing a plan is time well spent and need not be a complex process. Find out how by using the Toolkit which you can find on the Businesses web page.

If you do have a plan, check it against the Simple Business Continuity Audit Checklist to ensure it contains:

- Sufficient information
- Suitable triggers for response escalation
- Appropriate actions
- Clear delegation of responsibilities