

Getting Started with a Business Continuity Plan

The priorities for business disaster preparedness are the same as for all disaster preparedness planning:

- Identify legal requirements and constraints.
- Assess hazards.
- Develop a plan based on highest risks (i.e., the most hazardous jobs and locations should be addressed first).

The details of how to comply with the law are beyond the scope of this book, but it is possible to summarize some important principles, explain their benefits, and provide some guidelines on how to accomplish them. Many dependable sources provide specifics on how to comply with the law. One of the first resources for veterinary practices to consult for the appropriate development of OSHA guidelines is their state veterinary medical association (VMA).

OSHA requires that all businesses with more than 10 employees have a written Emergency Contingency Plan (ECP). For businesses with 10 or fewer employees a written plan is not mandated but is highly recommended. The purpose of an ECP is to prevent accidents and injuries to people and if they do occur, to be able to control them effectively and reduce their impact.

OSHA regulations also require that employers protect their employees during and after a disaster. After a disaster the methods for OSHA compliance may change. These changes should be taken into account and may require new job descriptions for employees and different types and levels of insurance coverage.

Two areas of compliance are legally required by OSHA and apply to most animal care businesses. These are the ECP and the Hazard Communication Plan (HCP). After a disaster strikes, a business is first responsible for the safety of its employees and only then should focus on resumption and restoration of business.

Incident	Who to contact	How to contact	
		Phone	Address
Fire			
Hazardous materials spill			
Worker injury			
Sewer back flow			
Earthquake			
Tornado			
Blizzard			
Water main break			

FIG. 13-1 Form that can be used to prepare employees for disasters.