



Data Backup Basics

Data backups are critical to ensuring your business is protected in the event of an emergency or disaster. If you are unable to operate your business without your data or records, then you need to make sure this information is always accessible no matter what happens to your facility. Think of how any of the following could affect your ability to operate your business:

- Computers or records stolen
- Building flooded
- Power surge
- Fire
- Building or roof collapse
- Hard drive failure
- Loss of files
- Building inaccessible

Plan your data backup strategy

- Decide where you will store your backup data, and select the media. Your options include:
 - Offsite (online data backup and storage service)
 - Offsite (physical storage, such as tape, CDs, or external hard drive)
 - Onsite (tape, CDs, external hard drive, server)
- Consider your short (daily) and long-term data needs if you cannot access your facility.
- Develop a data backup protocol
 - How often will you backup your data (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)?
 - Who will be responsible for data backup? What happens if they are sick or absent?
 - How will your data files be catalogued for easy reference if multiple versions are kept?
- Consider how storage may be impacted by your identified hazards, and adjust as needed.

Data Backup Tips:

- Make data backups a part of your normal schedule of daily tasks.
- Data backup schedules should be based on how often your data changes. If your data changes weekly, a daily backup might be overkill. If you have critical data that updates every hour, you may need to back up several times a day.
- Because backup errors can occur, it is good to keep multiple versions (at least 3)
- Full backups can be supplemented by incremental backups, which backup only those files that have changed since the last full backup. This requires much less time.
- Test your backups periodically to make sure:
 - They are working correctly and storing what you need
 - You are comfortable working with them so that you are able to easily use the backup data in the event of a disaster or emergency
 - You are able to download them to an alternate location and maintain business operations
- Review your backup logs to identify backup problems or errors
- It can be beneficial to maintain both onsite AND online backup versions for critical data