

Disaster Recovery Planning: A Free, Customizable Template

Creating a disaster recovery plan is a challenging task. Before beginning, you must take a detailed inventory of your IT operations' people, processes, and technologies. No shortcuts. An exhaustive audit is required, or your plan will be ineffective. Once you've done that, complete this exercise using the template provided.

Step 1: Identify risks

List the risks (e.g., human error, natural disasters, cyber threats, etc.) your organization will most likely face in the next 12 months.

Step 2: Calculate costs and perform a business impact analysis

For each risk, document how it could disrupt your operations. Put a dollar figure on the estimated cost of the disruption.

Step 3: Prioritize disruptions

Prioritize your top three disruptions in terms of impact on your business.

Step 4: Estimate recovery time objective & recovery point objective

For each of the top three disruptions, estimate the RTO and RPO.

Step 5: Establish a team

List the people and their respective roles for your disaster response team.

Step 6: Document the strategy

List your overarching disaster recovery strategies (e.g., deploying automated backup and recovery, SaaS, data isolation, virtual air gapping, etc.).

Step 7: Identify disaster recovery process and procedure

At a fairly high level, write down the steps your team will follow in case of disaster. Put the name of the responsible person(s) next to every step.

Step 8: Test plan

List the types of exercises or training and identify dates that you will undertake to test your disaster recovery plan.