

What can we do to reduce the disruption of natural disasters?

In the news, we see posts about terrorism, unstable financial markets and pandemics, however of late, natural disasters appear to be taking centre stage.

Just two weeks ago, on the 25th August, we saw the disruption caused by Hurricane Harvey in Texas. Yesterday, images of the ongoing devastation of Hurricane Irma across the Caribbean begun to emerge, and today, an earthquake off the Pacific coast of Mexico takes more lives and threatens further disruption.

For individuals, natural disasters can be catastrophic; homes are damaged, at times beyond salvage and as we see during many large-scale disasters, lives are lost.

For businesses, natural disasters are equally catastrophic and damaging. Their staff may suffer physically and mentally and it's likely that their critical infrastructure will be damaged as well as supply chains becoming disrupted for extended periods of time.

There are many things these organizations can do to reduce the ongoing damage relating to this type of disruption. Preparation and collaboration are key. Preparing for a natural disaster isn't a science. There's no right or wrong way to ensure your business can continue but by ensuring you have considered the importance of your infrastructure, people welfare of all staff and how your supply chain will be affected, you can aim to continue business within a reasonable period of time.

When planning, by looking at collaboration opportunities, local businesses can work with others from further afield to obtain urgent supplies. They can work closely with the community to not only continue their business but to begin repairing the affected area. Those local businesses can repair homes and buildings, they can provide transport for critical supplies and help to repair critical services when they're disrupted.

Whilst continuing business during a disaster may seem like a low priority for communities, the reality is that the quicker businesses can start supplying products and services to the community, the quicker the area can begin to recover on a whole. Whilst planning and collaboration can't stop a disaster from happening, business continuity professionals use it as a tried and tested method to ensure their communities are restored as quickly as possible.