

Disaster Preparedness And Wireless Service: Is Your Small Business Ready?

(NAPS)—From hurricanes to tornadoes, floods to fires, disasters can strike anywhere at any time. Small businesses can often keep the doors open or recover faster by having a disaster communications plan that uses the latest technology to keep customers and employees informed. It is particularly important to consider the role wireless service plays during a disaster when power is lost or employees need to evacuate the office.

Here are some basic steps small businesses can take to help prepare for communications during and following a disaster:

- Charge wireless phone batteries as soon as disaster warnings are issued.
- Have additional charged batteries and car-charger adapters readily accessible.
- Keep a “dry box” handy for phones, batteries, chargers and other equipment.
- Maintain a list of emergency phone numbers, including customers and employees, and program them into your phone.
- Know how to forward your business phone so calls can be directed to your wireless number and you are reachable in case of evacuation.
- Limit nonemergency calls and use brief text messages rather than voice calls to conserve battery power and free up wireless networks for emergency agencies and operations.
- Ensure that all employees know how to use their wireless phones to send and receive text messages. Sending text message updates to employees or customers could be the only way to



A disaster communications plan can help small businesses adapt should emergency strike.

communicate during a crisis.

- Understand the features of your mobile phone. E-mail, weather updates and news reports are all tools that can help you plan your business activities before and after a disaster.

The most effective disaster communications plan for any business is one that is built into the operation, so when disaster strikes, databases, processes and programs can be immediately moved to a new location. Wireless tools of the trade for the savvy business owner include:

- Wireless devices equipped with high-speed data service, such as Verizon Wireless' Mobile Broadband service, can give small businesses a fast, reliable way to get to the Internet, e-mail and other important information. From anywhere within the Mobile Broadband footprint, business owners and employees can continue to conduct business, including accessing e-mail and information housed on a secure company server, by using a PC card, a laptop with built-in capability for high-speed wireless

connectivity, a USB modem or a phone that can be used as a high-speed modem.

- Mobile e-mail applications can also provide wireless access to personal information management tools, such as calendars, contacts and tasks, while away from the office. Whether the business uses POP3 e-mail accounts or a corporate server, the ability to send and receive e-mail on a mobile phone when away from computers can help communicate a disaster plan to employees or stay in touch with customers. Hosted VZEmail Services from Verizon Wireless can provide a cost-effective solution to ensure e-mail stays up and running regardless of the emergency.

- Internet access on a wireless phone allows business owners and employees to get breaking news, weather and personal banking information when away from their computers.

No matter the size of their organization, business owners should discuss disaster preparedness with their wireless provider to ensure reliable wireless coverage in and around the location of the business, in addition to products and applications. Also, it's important to choose a wireless carrier that plans ahead and invests to maintain its wireless network year-round, so in the event of a disaster, the carrier can provide customers with the necessary connectivity.

For more information about how solutions from Verizon Wireless can help a business with disaster preparedness, visit www.verizonwireless.com/smallbusiness.