

Risk Management is an essential part of good management practice. The process involves identifying, assessing and controlling risks to property, staff and visitors.

Disaster and Recovery Planning is a method of ensuring that basic information is available to minimise the immediate impact of a major event or disaster.

Disaster Recovery Planning

Every museum and organisation is susceptible to a serious incident preventing normal opening and activities. Main risks can be from fire, flood, or security incidents. A high risk time is often when contractors are working on site.

Disaster Recovery Planning provides a framework to deal with the immediate aftermath of a major incident with three main objectives:

- The Business is to continue
- Any delay is kept as short as possible
- Minimum inconvenience to customers and staff

Plans should not be over complicated but should bring together the information needed immediately after a major incident. Generally the following information should be included:

- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of senior museum staff, site managers and key holders
- Details of utility and security companies
- Details of specialists that may be required such as, locksmiths, specialist fine art transporters, your insurance broker and insurer
- Information for the emergency services. The plan should show the location of utilities, security services, emergency exits, fire fighting equipment and, if appropriate, hazardous materials.

Importantly the recovery plan should confirm the method of removing or protecting particularly valuable or important objects and a priority method for dealing with these items.

Rehearse the Plan and Train Staff

The local emergency services such as, the fire brigade, police and ambulance services should be involved. These services should familiarise themselves with your site and, particularly important for the fire brigade, ensure that their vehicles have adequate access to the site.

Update the Plan

Premises and Gallery layouts change over time, special exhibitions are set up that may alter physical access to the premises. Any plan will become obsolete unless updated regularly with refresher training for staff.

It is vital that the museum takes the development and maintenance of the disaster recovery plan seriously. It is not one of those tasks that should be left until there is time to deal with it. A serious incident can affect the museum at any time including the next 24 hours.

Risk Management Strategy

Risk Management involves identifying risks and then taking a deliberate course of action to:

- Eliminate or minimise the impact of risks assessed, for example by changing procedures or contingency planning
- Accept the risk as an ongoing operational issue
- Transfer the risk, usually by insurance

- Reduce the risk, if completely avoiding the risk is impossible or disproportionately expensive

Risk Management must be driven by senior management and the culture accepted throughout the organisation. It is not static but a continuous process with the objective of ensuring the museum or gallery is as safe as is 'reasonably practicable'.

Risk Identification

Risk Identification is the first step in managing risk. There are many approaches to this but in practice the following actions need to be taken:

- Identify the hazards in the business
- Decide on whether staff, visitors or property may be harmed
- Assess the risk and its severity and take action
- Record the findings (essential for employers who have five or more employees)
- Review the assessments as an ongoing process and update Risk Assessments as and when necessary.

Outside Advice

There is a wealth of advice available to you from external consultants and also your Insurance Advisers. Insurers are keen to work with their policyholders to minimise risk and offer advice free of charge.

Risk Management and Insurance

The Risk Assessment will have identified areas of risk and action taken on removing or reducing hazards as far as possible. Insurance transfers the remaining risk to the insurance company with modern policy wordings providing a wide range of cover. Specialist wordings will deal with the unique risks of museums and similar organisations.

The insurance programme should deal with:

- Buildings and contents
- Specialist collections of fine art or similar
- Loss of revenue
- Legal liabilities to both staff and visitors
- Each museum will require cover specific to that institution and advice from insurers or insurance brokers should be taken in this area.

In Summary

Disaster Recovery Planning, Risk Management and Comprehensive Insurance cover are there to help keep museums open and accessible.

Museums present particular challenges and advice should be taken from organisations experienced in the sector to review the areas outlined.

For an informal chat please speak to **Tim FitzJohn** or **Dick Culpin** and see how our experience can be of help.