Globe Midwest
Adjusters International

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10 TIPS
FOR BUSINESS OWNERS
IN TIMES OF
DISASTER
RECOVERY

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Disasters are rarely tame or predictable and few businesses are truly prepared for the full extent and nature of a disaster when it strikes. While recovery is never easy, there are a few key steps you can take before and after the event of a disaster to help make your insurance claim go more smoothly.

Pre-Disaster

1

Take photographs of property before a disaster occurs.

Photographs will be important to prove the extent of your damages later. Take new photos every year or after making any alterations to the property.

2

Back up business-critical information.

Make sure your business-critical client records and communications systems are backed up off site so that you can immediately retrieve key client information, financial documents, and sales histories. Having this information immediately available can make or break your public relations and disaster recovery efforts.

Post-Disaster

3
Have a response team in place.

Put a claim management team together before a disaster strikes and assign a lead spokesperson. Only an individual who is knowledgeable in the area of insurance should handle interactions with your carrier. This is essential, since the smallest comment can make a big difference in how much money you recover.

4
**Protect your property from further damage.**

It's your responsibility to perform emergency work such as putting up tarps, removing wet drywall and carpeting to prevent mold, and boarding up openings and installing fencing, where necessary, to protect your belongings and keep others from getting hurt.

5

Beware of contractors asking you to sign a contract for non-emergency services.

Ideally, you should not hire a contractor to rebuild your business until you have agreed on a repair/replacement scope of damage and an estimate of pricing with your insurance company. Only after speaking with your insurance company will you know how much you will have to spend on reconstruction.
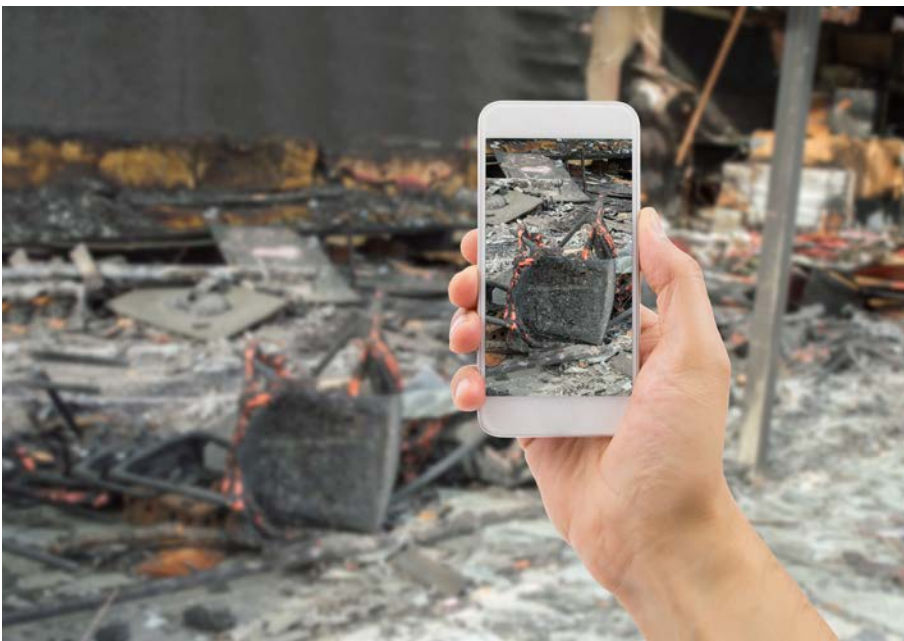
6

Document the damage.

Photograph or videotape the scene including the "debris pile" before you begin any cleanup efforts. When estimating damages, do not rely solely on your historical records. Instead, secure replacement cost estimates.

7

Request a complete copy of your insurance policy.

Read and make sure you understand your rights and obligations under your insurance policy before entering into any serious discussions or negotiations with your carrier. Seek out a professional to help you understand what your policy actually covers and, just as important, what it doesn't.

8

Document all your activities and expenses.

Keep a log of all activities and save all receipts, including those for property replacement and extra expenses. This will provide the documentation a disaster recovery professional requires to present expenses to your carrier and you will know which expenses will be reimbursed as you rebuild.

9

Make decisions that are best for the survival of your business.

Policyholders often expect the insurance company to tell them what to do to save their business. Insurance company adjusters are simply auditors of your property insurance claim. Only you know your business and what's best for your recovery.

10

Hire your own experts.

The insurance adjuster sent by your carrier to evaluate the damages is working exclusively for the insurance company, not for you. It's your responsibility to document and submit your claim. Make sure you have someone on your side who knows insurance inside and out to ensure that you get a full, fair and expedited settlement while you concentrate on maintaining your operations, not on claim details. Understand that your claim will have to be verified.

We're here to help. Get in touch with us.

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