Building Safety Checklist



There’s no one-size-fits-all fix for business resumption following a fire, earthquake or other disaster. However, the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) has published some useful general information that can help companies before, during and after disasters.

- Structural integrity of a building or facility must be determined by a qualified professional before anyone is allowed to enter it.
- The condition of drain, fill, plumbing and hydraulic lines on processes and machinery must be tested. Plumbing lines should be evaluated and tested to detect any hazardous gases.
- Appropriate government agencies should be contacted to gain approval to resume occupancy of a building. Entry should not be permitted until proper clearances have been obtained.
- Clean-up and business resumption processes must be carried out in a safe and healthful manner. Hazardous waste disposal issues must be evaluated before clean-up begins. Appropriate PPE must be used during clean-up and restarting processes. Fire and smoke alarms must be cleaned and tested before re-occupancy is permitted.
- Air quality assessments must be undertaken to ensure asbestos and other chemical and toxic agents are not present before business operations resume.
- Vents need to be checked to ensure water heaters and gas furnaces are clear of dust and debris and operable. Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems must be inspected before being restarted.
- Ensure no interior wall or ceiling materials are in danger of falling. Check for cracked windows and any loose or damaged exterior materials that could fall and injure people. Broken glass, debris or other materials with sharp edges should be safely gathered and disposed of immediately. Don’t wait until your company’s regular collection day.
- Electrical systems, computer cables and telecommunications equipment must be checked for damage. Wiring inspections should be conducted from the outside in to ensure nothing is shorting out because of water or other types of damage. Lighting, including emergency lighting, should also be tested. If there is no access to electricity on the site, do not use fueled generators or heaters indoors. Ensure there are no gas or sewer leaks. Check with your local utilities.
- Have sanitation facilities inspected to guard against potential employee exposures to toxic agents. Unused food should be discarded, and oven hoods and other kitchen ventilation devices should be inspected to ensure they are not clogged.
- Office furniture should be inspected to ensure it can withstand expected loads.

Storage devices screwed or bolted onto walls must also be checked for stability following an explosion, earthquake, fire or other disaster.

- Create a new emergency plan and distribute it to employees as soon as they return to work. Make sure that employees can quickly evacuate a building and those fire extinguishers are fully charged. Ensure they know where to meet or call during emergencies, so everyone can be accounted for. Frequently update lists of emergency names and telephone numbers.
- Check flooring surfaces to ensure they are acceptable and free from possible slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Use existing federal guidelines provided by agencies such as FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and NIOSH for additional start-up.