

Crisis Management Planning

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita demonstrate the importance of creating, analyzing, revising, and practicing your agency's crisis management plan. If it's been awhile since you've reviewed your procedures, here are some things to consider:

- Improve your technology. You can easily store critical information on compact discs or jump-drive storage devices. Ship your data to offsite locations or storage facilities. Make sure these facilities are located away from coastal areas and flood plains.
- Practice your crisis management plan. Know what you need to take with you in an emergency. Locate critical files and equipment in zones where they can be quickly evacuated, along with staff. Assign specific responsibilities to staff members so there is no confusion about who should evacuate records or personnel. Very importantly, have a backup plan in case critical personnel are out at the time of a catastrophe. Identify backup power supplies and evaluate the crisis response capabilities of vendors you use as well.
- Protect vital records. Preserving your records makes it easier to get your organization up and running after an emergency. Vital records include financial and insurance information, personnel and client files, administrative and collections information, and engineering plans and drawings.

Consider enhancing your knowledge of emergency management planning. The Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) offers a number of free emergency management resources on their web site, www.fema.org.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.