



*Business Disaster
Prevention
Planning &
Recovery Guide*

SELF STORAGE ASSOCIATION ASIA

Business Disaster Prevention Planning and Recovery Guide

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The SSAA would like to acknowledge the contribution and assistance of the
Self Storage Association of Australia and Ms Simone Hill

DISCLAIMER

This guide is intended to inform members of matters relevant to business disaster prevention and recovery planning in a general manner. Every effort has been made to cover the broad range of issues involved with disaster prevention and recovery to enable members to produce their own business specific plan. The result should be a living document that is site specific and suits the requirements of individual organisations. It is not, however, to be used or relied upon as a substitute for professional advice. The Association and its directors are excluded from any liability for damage howsoever caused, that arises.

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Section 1:

Understanding the Importance of Risk Assessment



Business interruption and/or disasters are unpredictable and often unimaginable. They can occur as a result of – acts of nature or accidental acts from person(s); or your business can simply fall victim to an unintentional incident resulting in loss and or business interruption. The consequences vary depending on the effects of the disaster and can range from total to partial loss of – customers, reputation, market share, location, vital records, income, staff and equipment. **Trust us, we know.**

Yes, disasters or catastrophes do happen and their impact on an unprepared business can be horrendous!

A partial or total disruption to the operation of your business could occur (if you are unlucky) at any time and it makes good business sense to prepare for such an event.

Insurance is essential but does not solve everything – nor does the claim cheque arrive immediately. You need to stay operational to continue doing business, to create profit and confidence and show banks and customers your business is still operational.

In this Guide, we suggest that with a little planning and prevention, your self storage business can achieve peace of mind and security from this issue.

The Five Day Rule

The golden rule is that any business suffering any disaster or business interruption has five days to be operating again; otherwise, it will probably end up a statistic. So this must be the goal for any business disaster plan.

After five days, if you don't answer the phone, if you are unable to deal with customers, if you cannot supply services and/or space, etc, your customers will go elsewhere. After five days if you are employing staff or other contractors, they will move on as they have mouths to feed and mortgages to pay.

What will be your bank's reaction and support (or otherwise) if you have a disaster and they doubt your ability to come back – will they continue to support your existing loan facilities? – will they provide the additional funding to bridge your reconstruction as you await your insurance payout? (regardless the amount of insurance recovery you may be entitled to).

The impact of a disaster on the viability of a business can be horrendous, and should ring alarm bells for your business security as you operate your business and seek to protect your assets and your future.

If your business is at its upper limit on its funding, then any funding extension for this disaster may not be available, even if you are covered by insurance. Remember that the banks know the statistics of failure after a disaster.

So the big message must be that you must be prepared with a business disaster prevention recovery plan, should the inevitable collapse occur.

In Section 2 we explore how to be prepared should a disaster occur; your future is too important to be left to chance. Remember what is at stake here is the entire future of your business, your ability to generate cash flow, income and sustain employment for you and your staff.

This is a self-assessment guide that enables you to assess your exposure, implement precautions and avoidance measures, and handle the remedial actions as and when necessary.

This manual is not intended to be scary or intimidating: rather to show that with preplanning, you can be assured that you will and can rest easier at night knowing that you have done all in your power to properly protect your business, your staff and your lifestyle from the unfortunate occurrence of a potential disaster, which may, yet we hope will never occur.

Section 2:

Exposure to Disaster Risk



Below is a list of the types or sources of disasters that could impact on your self storage business. It is extensive, however, not intended to be frightening or intimidating but rather to show the exposure or extent of impact that could occur.

A disaster could come from:

Fire: burns down the facility or office from inflammables stored on premises. Fire in neighbouring property causing water or smoke damage to your premises.

Flood: soaks the office, destroys all records, ruins client's property. Torrential storm undermines the foundations, walls collapse and totally floods the building with water, hailstones destroying roof/windows, roof flies off exposing full facility. Earthquake, typhoon, hurricane. Explosion in a neighbouring building cracks your walls.

Electrical fault: starts a fire from which you could suffer total or partial destruction of your premises.

Power failure: prevents access and or alarm systems from working for prolonged period. Delivery truck damages wall of building requiring complete demolition.

Road closure/diversion, bridge collapse: affects access for you or your customers.

Electricity surge: blows out communications and computer systems.

Computer virus: destroys all systems and data.

Terrorist attack, bomb threat, criminal extortion. Vexatious staff or competitor: contaminates your business reputation in the public domain, requiring a total consumer and community alert.

Theft: from storers' units by corrupt staff or others who have access.

Centre used as a dumping ground for toxic or medical waste.

Death or disability to owner or major proprietor.

Website: problem with service provider so customers can't make contact or bookings.

Fumigation of property: goes wrong or impacts on customers' property and prevents access to unit.

Pest, termites or vermin: infects your building.

Mice, possums or birds nesting: plague within the building.

Toxic chemical spill: contaminates site and other customers' goods.

Vandals: break into the complex and torch your records or property.

You may have found some of these sources of disaster a little hard to believe. However, this list was compiled from the responses researched and surveyed from a number of self storage centres. And it certainly doesn't cover the full extent of exposure or disaster, which could impact on a self storage business. It does, however, show just how susceptible your business could be to any type of disaster. This highlights the importance of being better prepared in the event of any incidental disaster occurring.

Section 3:

Consequential Risk Assessment or Business Impact Assessment

Risk assessment is about analysing the impact on your business in the event of a disaster.

Listed below are examples of potential consequences to your business in the event of partial or total destruction, which could occur, from any number of the scenarios given in Section 2.

IMPACT

ASSESSMENT

Customers

Phone does not ring, website doesn't work, customers cannot get through, they want to know what has happened to their property, potential customers go elsewhere!!

Customers' Goods	Physical property destroyed or access restricted for a considerable time period, water or smoke damage.
Reputation	A loss severely impacts your reputation and future goodwill. As customers lose valuable and irreplaceable heirlooms they may vent annoyance with verbal abuse that impacts your business reputation. Business name damaged.
Financial Sustainability	Loss of income as facility cannot deliver services, yet expenses and overheads continue.
Accounting Records	Accounting records and historical information. Costing records, quotes and investment proposals.
Taxation Records	Tax returns, current and past. Motor vehicle logbooks, tax files, receipts, invoices, petty cash dockets. Listing of assets owned, purchase details, depreciation schedule.
Employee Records	Group certificates – current and past. Contracts of employment or awards covering pay rates, overtime and allowances. Personnel history records, date of commencement, long service leave, sick leave, annual leave entitlement and amount taken, superannuation entitlement, deductions and contributions.
Sales/Management Records	Business/management records/reports, customer records, account statements. Who owes what, who has just paid, documentation for delinquent customers. Signed agreements and customers' insurance contracts. Artwork – Logos, pictures, signage, promotional materials, photographs, designs.
Cash on Premises	Uninsured cash and petty cash.
Staff	If premises destroyed then the business cannot afford to keep staff employed. Loss of loyal and well trained staff, possibly to a competitor. Personal loss of life would be devastating.
Computers	Hardware and software, originals and backups, computer files. In-house developed business models and spreadsheets.
Legal Actions	All records lost necessary for any legal action that is in progress, or pending.
Manuals	Business policies/procedures, operational and training manuals. Equipment operation manuals e.g. lifts, gates, security, software.

Stationery	Invoices, business cards, letterheads, brochures lost, damaged or stolen.
Insurance Policy	Policies and records to prove if business is adequately insured. If loss of profits coverage, how to prove profits earned if records are destroyed.
Bank Records	Bank statements, cheque butts, deposit slips, mortgage documents and correspondence on loans lost or destroyed.
Office Equipment	Fax machine, telephone systems, office furniture, filing cabinets, and security equipment stolen or destroyed.

This is just the tip of the iceberg and highlights the importance of businesses undertaking their own 'Business Impact Assessment'.

In an extreme situation, you could potentially lose your physical location. While temporary alternative premises may be able to be organised, they will not be purpose built and customised to meet the demands required for self storage.

Section 4: Business Contingency Planning



Prevention is better than cure

In this Section, we cover some strategies for preventing the severity of impact as previously covered in Section 3.

With a little bit of effort, your business can develop a business contingency and recovery plan which will have you well placed to cope with or avoid any disaster, should it unfortunately occur.

Develop an importance rating scale and review your records and documentation applying the rating to them. This will help you to determine future maintenance and management of existing records. For example; standard self storage agreements, customer insurance contracts, customer file notes, property maintenance and security

reports are just some of the documentation that you should apply an 'Importance Rating' to.

Documents and Records – Electronic and Paper

Importance Rating

1. Absolutely critical – must protect

Action

- a) Stored in a fireproof safe.
- b) Duplicate and store off-site.
- c) Backup daily and store off-site.

Importance Rating

2. Necessary but not critical

Action

- a) Duplicate and store off-site.
- b) Backup daily.

Importance Rating

3. Good to have but get by without

Action

- a) Keep on-site in lockable cabinet.

Computers

Develop a procedure that ensures regular backups of files and off-site storage. There is a wide range of hardware and software available on the market to make this easy and it is forever changing with improvements. Consult your local computer technician for advice on the best system for you.



Property

Your management practises and property design can play a major role in minimising loss and preventing disaster. In this Section, we have suggested some strategies for property management and design. As a result of working through this Section, reviewing aspects of your management and property design, you may well find and implement some strategies of your own which are more applicable for your particular business.

i) Cash Control

- a) Maintain minimum cash on hand.
- b) Bank regularly.
- c) Install camera surveillance on the cash drawer.

ii) Equipment Electronic gates, lifts/hoists, security systems, camera surveillance etc.

- a) Record/document any specific information required for their operation.
- b) Ensure all staff has full knowledge of their operation.

c) Boldly display contact numbers in case of emergency/malfunction.

iii) Inspections

- a) Develop a Property Maintenance Inspection Report.
- b) Staff should undertake an inspection regularly and keep records.
- c) Include in the inspection: buildings, driveways, vacant units, gutters, restrooms, lighting, fencing, the overall grounds and any equipment.
- d) If you have after hours or remote customer access, install an emergency phone.

iv) Opening & Closing

- a) Develop opening and closing procedures so they are routinely followed and documented.
- b) (If not a 24 hour centre) Include a procedure that ensures no person(s) is locked in the centre at closing.
- c) Opening procedures should ensure a general inspection of the property to ensure no incidents have occurred overnight.

v) Fire Equipment

- a) Have fire safety equipment regularly inspected by a qualified tester and keep all certified reports of inspections.
- b) Train staff in the use of all installed fire protection equipment – often the local fire department or your original fire protection installer can help with this.
- c) All equipment must be kept in working order and readily accessible if required.
- d) Ensure emergency lighting in the event of fire is operational. Early warning detection systems ranging in sophistication and price (that can be monitored off-site) are available; talk to your local fire protection consultant or security company about your requirements.

vi) Security

- a) Excellent security products are available for the self storage industry; they include camera surveillance, individual door alarms, controlled access systems, motion detectors, finger printing etc. Seek advice from SSAA Supplier Members specialising in these products. Your investment in good security could cost you less than defending court action from an uninsured disgruntled storer in the event of break-in/theft incident.
- b) If you have camera surveillance or other electronic security, install prominent signage accordingly.
- c) At a minimum, perimeter security fencing should be installed and good night lighting also installed.
- d) Take regular security walks throughout the centre during the day.
- e) If you operate a remote site, ensure it is inspected daily.

vii) Site Signage

Install easy to read signs for:
Emergency telephone, emergency exits, fire fighting equipment, first aid, lights, location maps (especially for multistorey buildings), no smoking, toilets, mains power, etc.

viii) Site Design

The design and construction of self storage centres range from multistorey to

single level sites; from purpose built to conversion of existing buildings. It is therefore difficult to cover issues of site design. However, consideration to the following design aspects should be noted.

- a) Compartmentalisation – to reduce the spread of fire, where required by the local Building Code.
- b) Early fire detection and warning systems.
- c) Fire hose reels and fire extinguishers as required by the local Building Code.
- d) No dead ends – allow for speedy evacuation if needed.
- e) Clear exit signage and directional guidance.
- f) Entry point for emergency services.
- g) Ease of access – allow for customer parking and loading/unloading bays.
- h) Battery/power backup in case of power failure, especially where electronic controlled access and security systems are installed.
- i) Insulation paper under the roof sheeting and wall sheeting to prevent condensation.
- j) Polythene building film under concrete slabs to prevent rising moisture.
- k) Elevator control units to control levels of access in multistorey sites.
- l) Safety beams or ground pads on electronic gates or access doors.
- m) Intercoms throughout the building for two-way communication between the office and customers.
- n) Weather seals on roller doors and corridor entry doors.
- o) Ensure that all pavements fall away from the building.

Regularly review that you have adequate cover.

Insurance

IN this section we have considered some specific aspects of your self storage business insurance policy to consider or investigate.

Prepare an Incident Report Log and train staff to log every incident.

i) **Public liability**

Understand the Public liability component and check if you have cover for “goods in physical/legal control”. While the Standard Self Storage Agreement stipulates that the owner is not responsible for goods in storage, to have a proportion of this cover in relation to the size of your business is recommended.

ii) **Loss of Income/consequential loss**

Insure against your loss of income. Depending on your ability to rebuild and establish a break-even level of occupancy, the indemnity period may need to be extended anywhere from one to three years.

A current property valuation will assist in the verification of value of insurance cover.

iii) **Additional increased costs of working**

This insures for the costs involved if you have to relocate while you rebuild.

iv) **Extra costs for reinstatement**

Changes to building regulations that have occurred may indicate it will cost you more to rebuild.

Contact your insurance agent immediately in the event of an incident, however minor it may seem.

v) **Packing and Unpacking:**

Costs involved in the packing and unpacking during reconstruction, or in the case of smoke or water damage to otherwise undamaged goods in units.

vi) **Landscaping**

Covers redevelopment of gardens and landscaping.

Keep a camera in the office to photograph any damage or incident that could become an insurance matter.

When disaster strikes, the impact is usually more severe than that which you had allowed for in insurance coverage; this may be the exclusion in the policy – loss of income, penalties for inability to complete your contract, loss of intangible intellectual capital, cash on premises, etc. or significant waiting periods before compensation kicks in. Make sure you are fully conversant with the coverage of your policy.

*Ensure your customers understand that their goods are stored at their **risk** and that they should take out insurance cover.*



People

The **safety** of your customers and staff should always take **Key Safety** priority in your business disaster prevention planning. Therefore, it is important to develop an 'Emergency Management Plan'. This covers the specifics of what to do, when to do it and how to do it in an emergency.

Points

Develop an emergency management plan. Practise it and test it regularly.

Clearly identify exit signs and display floor/property maps with nearest exits marked.

Also include: **'You are here'** indicators so customers know exactly where they are in relation to the nearest exit.

Centres with lifts, clearly mark all the safety and operational guidelines.

Ask the storer for formal identification when completing the Standard Self Storage Agreement

Your emergency management plan when trained and practised, should help to reduce irrational behaviour during emergencies. A further aim of an emergency management plan is to fulfil statutory and common law responsibilities in respect to the health and safety of those at the self storage centre.

i) Emergency Management Plan

- a) Various local fire departments have implemented guides on what to do in case of an emergency. The SSAA highly recommends members contact their local fire services departments and find this plan.

ii) Management

- a) A **no smoking** policy is a good strategy to reduce the risk of fire; place signage around the centre accordingly.
- b) Ensure all staff diarise all suspicious, unusual events or incidents.
- c) Consider the use of personal emergency response devices for staff when they are predominately on their own.
- d) Maintain good housekeeping:
 - a. If you provide a dumpster for customers' use, keep it locked and oversee its use to ensure no dumping of illegal substances or hazardous waste.
 - b. Keep all driveways/access points free of obstruction.
 - c. Maintain public conveniences at the highest standard.
 - d. Inspect all appliances and equipment frequently to ensure they are in good working order.
 - e. Train staff in basic first aid and have a first aid kit on-site in case of any emergency.
 - f. Support your full disaster prevention and emergency response plan with a simplified immediate response procedures checklist, which should be on display where all staff see it frequently; learn the initial steps to take and implement when managing an emergency (see sample next page).
 - g. Consider having a mobile phone available as a backup in case of emergency.

ARMED HOLD-UP

You may not wish to think about it but your business with cash on hand and other valuables is a likely target for armed robbery or hold-up. While we may not be able to avoid all incidents, with planning and various precautions, we can minimise the chances of this happening and more importantly reduce the risk of injury to your staff and customers.

Below are some suggestions to incorporate in developing a policy for armed hold-up.

The overriding principle is; never put employees, customers or yourself at risk – we have insurance, however, money cannot replace injury or death to human life.

Remain calm: this will permit you to be alert and follow the procedure you have implemented and practised.

Comply with all requests of the aggressor.

Do not argue, disagree or stall for time as that may incite the aggressor to violence.

Do not try heroics.

Do not make any sudden moves, above all, avoid eye contact.

Be as observant as you can in the circumstances, as the information may be valuable later in finding and convicting the offender.

If you don't have keys, money or valuables on-site, explain to the offender that this is company policy.

Do not block offenders escape route, note direction of escape but do not give chase.

Immediately memorise a full description of the offender, any names that may have been used, vehicle type, colour or registration number.

Contact senior management/owner and other pertinent authorities as soon as possible, provide as much information as possible.

Secure the site: it is in your interests that the site is made safe and that all evidence is retained uncontaminated.

Offender Description Form **SAMPLE**

Each person/witness should use a separate form. Take a copy and pass it onto authorities when completed. Keep the original on file.

Centre Name _____

Address _____

Offence:

Robbery Theft Assault Other _____

Date: _____ Day: _____ Time: _____ am/pm

Characteristics

Sex: M F

Build: Thin Fat Medium Large Approximate Weight.....

Age: 10-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 31-35 36-40
 41-45 46+ Approximate Age

Name: Was called: _____ Sounded like: _____

Hair: Colour Black Brown Blonde Grey Sandy
 Type Straight Curly Wavy
 Length Long Short Shaved Medium Bald
 Condition Clean Greasy Thinning Scruffy Thick

Height: centimetres.....or feet and inches.....'.....''

Eyes: Colour Black Grey Brown Green Blue
 Type Narrow Bulging Deep set Wide Squint
 Eyebrows Bushy Joined Thin Thick Shaved
 Eyeglasses Clear Tinted Plastic Metal Dark

Descent: Race: e.g. Caucasian, Asian _____

 Skin Colour Fair Dark Black Tanned Pale
 Skin Type Clear Acne Scarred Freckled Moles

Clothing: Upper Body Lower Body Footwear Head Gear Gloves
 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Identifying Marks: Describe any specific marks.

Description	Part of the body
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Mannerisms:

Posture	Stooped	Straight			
Movement	Jerky	Normal	Slow		
Face	Twitch	Normal	Sweating		
Eyes	Blinking	Normal	Staring		
Speech	Slow	Slurred	Accent	Fast	Stutter

Any other details:

Vehicle details:

Registration _____
Make _____ Model _____
Colour _____ Year (approx) _____
Distinguishing features _____
Number of occupants _____

Type of weapon:

Knife Syringe Pistol Rifle Shotgun
Other _____

Any other observations or comments you wish to note:

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency Action

Call 1..... (if required) and stipulate the services needed.

Implement evacuation procedures.

If there are injured personnel stay with them and provide the appropriate support.

Designate someone to meet the emergency services on arrival directing them to the emergency area.

Designate personnel to shut off utilities, e.g. power, gas and water supply if necessary.

Designate personnel to operate/shutdown electronic/automated equipment, e.g. electronic gates, lifts etc.

Notify adjacent buildings if danger of disaster is likely to be spreading.

Notify owner, senior management (if applicable) of the situation:

Name _____ Tel: _____

Name _____ Tel: _____

Notify insurance agent:

Name _____ Tel: _____

Notify designated media spokesperson:

Name _____ Tel: _____

Disaster Recovery Action

Establish a communication centre away from the scene and arrange for the business phone numbers to be diverted to the communication centre.

Prepare yourself for media enquiries and direct all media enquiries to the relevant spokesperson:

Name _____ Tel: _____

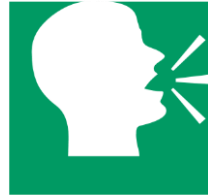
Secure the centre—organise security (if required) and isolate damaged areas.

Damage control—access damage when safe to do so.

Log events: take the time to clearly write down what occurred and the sequence of events. Take inventory of any damage; support it with photographic evidence. Liaise with insurance representative/broker. Implement full disaster recovery plan.

¹ Insert emergency number relevant to your location e.g. Hong Kong 999

Section 5: Business Disaster Recovery



Unfortunately, some disasters cannot be avoided; all we can hope to achieve with our business disaster prevention and recovery plan is a speedy recovery to minimise the pain that inevitably occurs. In this Section, we have covered some strategies to get you up and going again as quickly as possible

- i) **Contact your insurance company**
 - a. Immediately contact your insurance company and gain their agreement to the implementation of your recovery plan.
 - b. You must act quickly, yet not negate your insurance coverage.
- ii) **Restore lines of communication**

Use mobile phones to immediately restore communications and contact with clients.
- iii) **Contact employees**

Best that you tell them immediately, rather than have them learn of any disaster from the media.
- iv) **Contact customers**

Contact customers quickly and constructively – best, you tell them before they read or hear about it in the news. This requires a strong supportive type of communication to reassure them that the disaster is under control.
- v) **‘Help Line’ or ‘Help Desk’**
 - a. Implement an emergency Help Line or Help Desk.
 - b. Have staff ready to answer questions and reassure that business is not unduly affected, and is coping with the problem constructively.

vi) Statement to press/media

- a. The person responsible for making a statement to the press/media needs to be appointed well in advance of any incident, so they are fully prepared if required to make any statement.
- b. They need to know what the company policy is in relation to press statements.
- c. They must be prepared to “Manage the Press”, in a positive, emphatic, professional manner.
- d. Consider the use of a public relations company to professionally manage likely publicity pertaining to the disaster.
- e. Consider a ‘no comment’ or ‘no admission’ policy that is understood and followed by all staff.

vii) Contact utilities

- a. Arrange to have emergency utilities restored—telephone, electricity, gas etc.
- b. Arrange for additional security if necessary, to prevent illegal entry until the centre is secured.

viii) Business continuation

- a. Plan preventative maintenance and clean up; again liaise with insurance representative/broker.
- b. Plan for the relocation of customers’ goods (if necessary).

The frequency of the exercise is dependent upon business need and the environment in which it operates.

A minimum requirement should be every 12 months, but for some businesses, a more frequent program may be necessary.

Section 6 - Plan Exercising, Maintenance and Auditing



A business disaster prevention and recovery plan cannot be considered reliable until it is exercised or tested and has been proven workable, especially since false confidence may be placed in its integrity. Testing the plan therefore assumes considerable importance. This can take various forms, from a test of the communications plan, a desk-top walk-through to a full system test. **T**he objective of the exercise is twofold, to verify that the plan is practically workable by modelling recovery from disaster conditions, and training to familiarise staff with the operation of the plan.

How to Test your Plan:

- Establish a meeting of key recovery staff.
- Prepare a representative and suitably detailed disaster scenario.
- Include aspects such as date, time, current workload, political and economical conditions, accounting period end, concurrent activities.
- Initiate the exercise as a walk-through or a full system test by summarising circumstances. Consider whether to vary your plan, for example by substituting for a key player.
- Document and evaluate exercise results, amending the Plan where necessary.

Plan Audit:

The audit process ensures that the business disaster prevention and recovery process remains current and viable, in line with organisational change and current business disaster prevention practice. This process should ideally be carried out by an independent party – that can be external or internal – to ensure objectivity. As with exercising, the audit should be conducted on a minimum of an annual basis.

The Self Storage Association Asia has produced this guide to assist members in designing their own business disaster prevention and recovery plan.

The degree and complexity of individual plans will vary, as does the size and complexity of individual businesses. Therefore, it is imperative that this document be used only as an indicative guide to assist members in developing their own unique plan.

The steps taken in developing a business specific plan is to firstly understand the importance of risk assessment, which is discussed in Section 1.

Secondly, analyse your exposure to disaster, and thirdly, the risks and impact on your business associated with any negative exposure.

The final steps are; to determine the best strategies you can implement to minimise loss and maximise recovery.

A key component of your business disaster prevention and recovery plan is the design of an emergency management plan.

Finally, the success of your planning lies in the testing, rehearsing and auditing of your plan. Keeping in mind that it is designed to be a living document, therefore, it should be reviewed at a minimum annually.

The self storage industry is growing and developing throughout Asia at a steady pace. It is important that the industry adopts a proactive and responsible attitude and approach to disaster prevention and emergency management planning.