

Best Practices for IT-Centric Disaster Recovery Plan Testing

Business Continuity and IT Disaster Recovery are tested together

Charles Shriver
Independent Consultant

Conducting the Test

- Describe the objectives of the test. How will you measure successful achievement of the objectives?
- Meet with management and explain the test and objectives.
- Gain their agreement and support. Have management announce the test and the expected completion date and time.
- Collect test results at the end of the test period.
- Evaluate results. Was recovery successful? Why or why not?
- Determine the implications of the test results. Does successful recovery in a simple case imply successful recovery for all critical jobs in the tolerable outage period?
- Make suggestions for changes. Call for responses by a given date. Change the test plan as necessary.

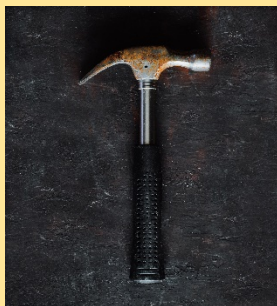


Areas to Test:



- Alert and notification systems and procedures for all employees and for business continuity personnel
- Access, protection, and recovery strategies found in the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and IT Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) for essential records, critical information systems, services, and data. Any other IT scenarios should also be tested
- Internal and external interoperability and functionality of primary and backup communications systems
- Backup infrastructure systems and services, such as fuel, power and water
- Other systems and procedures necessary for the organization's business continuity strategy, such as the IT infrastructure required to support telework options during a business continuity plan activation
- Accessibility for employees and members of the public with disabilities

References:



- <https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/business-continuity-plan.pdf>
- <https://www.ibm.com/docs/en/i/7.4?topic=plan-section-11-testing-disaster-recovery>
- https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/Continuity-Guidance-Circular_031218.pdf
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jc-782yz2w>
- FEMA 'Disaster Recovery for Information Systems' course