

NEMA Contacts:
Taylor Gage (402) 471-1970
Jodie Fawl (402) 471-7428

June 24, 2019
NR-051-4420
FEMA News Desk: (402) 325-5829
FEMA-NewsDesk-NE4420@fema.dhs.gov
SBA PIO (916) 200-6720

News Release

Disaster Preparedness Makes Good Business Sense for Nebraskans

LINCOLN, Neb. – A survey commissioned by Nationwide insurance company in 2015 found that three in four small business owners do not have a disaster recovery plan in place. But more than half of those surveyed said it would take at least three months to recover from a disaster.

In Nebraska, more than 1,000 businesses were affected by the winter storm that resulted in a major disaster declaration in March 2019. While still assessing damage from the recent spring floods, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) urge all business owners and managers to prepare now for the next disaster.

“The sooner the private sector bounces back after a disaster, the quicker the whole community recovers,” said Constance C. Johnson-Cage of FEMA, who is the federal coordinating officer for the March storm. “Survivors need to feed their family, fill their gas tank and get back to work.”

“Better yet, businesses that can weather a storm can supply vital resources, minimize hardships and jumpstart recovery,” said Earl Imler of NEMA, who serves as the state coordinating officer. “Those businesses that have a disaster preparedness plan—and implement it—have less damage, loss and downtime than those without a plan.”

To promote both readiness and resilience, Nebraska formed a coalition of leaders from key state agencies and businesses called the Nebraska Preparedness Partnership (NPP) in 2014. NPP offers training, exercises and networking for businesses of all sizes.

“A disaster preparedness plan protects people, property and data,” said Sandra Hobson, the director of NPP. “A plan must ensure continuity of operations for a wide range of scenarios—even total destruction. Provisions should be made to relocate to a pre-identified site, retrieve business records and carry on with minimal staff.”

To make your enterprise more resilient, Hobson advises business owners:

- Conduct a risk assessment to identify potential hazards.
- Develop procedures to quickly evacuate or shelter in place. Then run drills to practice.
- Back up your records and critical data. Keep a copy offsite or in the cloud.

- Create a crisis communications plan to keep your employees, customers, vendors and the public up to date on your operations.
- Install a generator for your building's essential electrical circuits in case of a power outage.

For more information on disaster preparedness, please visit: NEprep.org/preparedness/make-a-plan, or NEMA.nebraska.gov/operations/business or FEMA's ready.gov/business.

###

FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

For disaster updates from the State of Nebraska, visit Nebraska's website at NEMA.Nebraska.gov. You can also follow [@NEMAtweets](https://twitter.com/NEMAtweets) on Twitter, and www.facebook.com/nema.page on Facebook. Follow FEMA online at www.fema.gov/disaster/4420.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has faced discrimination, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-3362, voice/VP/711. Multilingual operators are available. TTY users may call 800-462-7585.

The U.S. Small Business Administration is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955. TTY users may also call 800-877-8339. Applicants may also email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov or visit SBA at www.SBA.gov/disaster.