Disaster planning: Ideas for Payroll & HR

The coronavirus pandemic is just one disaster among many that could interrupt your business. There will be others. HR and Payroll need to work together to ensure the continuity of the business during interruptions. Here's some help to get you started.

√ Back up payroll and personnel files on a regular basis and send the backed-up data to an alternate site for safekeeping.

√ Remind nonexempts who are working remotely to keep track of their time, and also of the deadline for submitting their time records to you.

√ Have payroll staff practice processing the payroll remotely. Provide staff with secure laptops and hot spots and ensure that secure cloud access for payroll is separate from other file storage.

√ Obtain access to a MICR check printer for employees who don't receive their pay electronically; always be able to contact one senior manager with check-signing authority.

√ Post employees' pay statements to a secure website.

√ Establish a method for communicating with employees before, during and after an event. Check that you have everyone's email, cell phone numbers and social media contact info.

√ Identify employees who are essential to keeping the business running. Inform them of their duties during an interruption (e.g., picking up the mail, scanning it in and forwarding it to employees who are working at home).

√ Ensure telecommuters have a suitable work environment at home and have access to a computer with required applications, data, peripherals and a secure broadband connection.

√ Assemble a business continuity team from relevant departments. Define team members' roles and responsibilities; address interactions with suppliers, independent contractors and insurance agents.

√ Conduct a business impact analysis to identify time-sensitive or critical business functions (e.g., payroll and benefits administration) and the processes and resources supporting them.