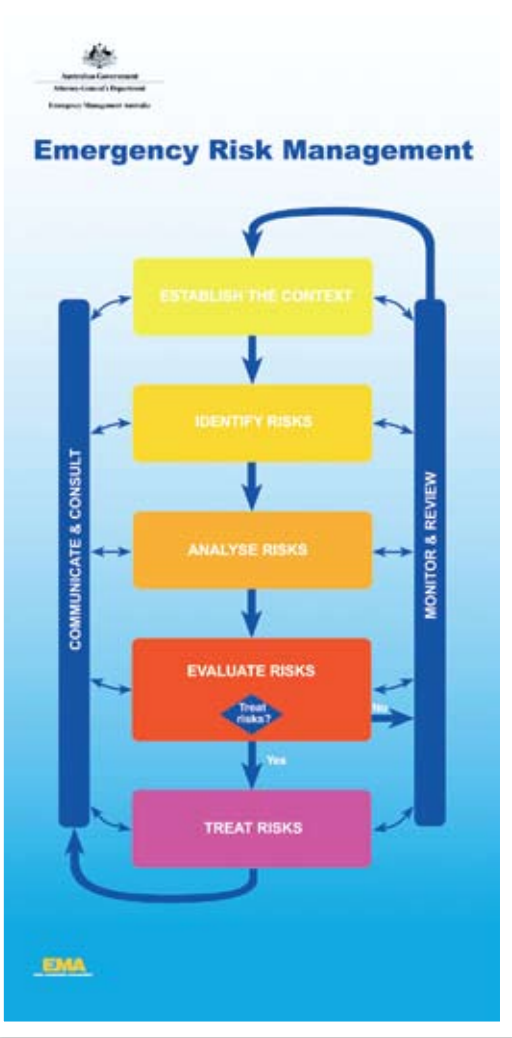




photo supplied by Elvis Santana

Keep on rolling

While State and Territory authorities are responsible for co-ordinating and planning disaster response efforts, private companies can do their bit by having their own action plan to keep the business of doing business operational. **Advanced Safety** reports.



Australia is a nation prone to a range of natural, technological and human-caused emergencies. Since 2000, on average each year 24 people have lost their lives as a direct result of natural disasters. Almost 600 have been injured and up to 390,000 affected in some way.

The economic cost to communities of natural disasters has been in excess of \$3.6 billion annually. Many more people are also affected by human-caused emergencies and disasters, with a further significant cost to the nation. But this need not be the case for businesses.

As the devastating Victorian bush fires have shown, essential business services need to keep on running.

Emergency Management Australia is taking this one step further with its emerging role in private sector industrial consultation. The aim is to help businesses better plan for emergencies that could affect them, their staff or suppliers.

Business continuity

Like any insurance plan, emergency management sets in place ways for businesses to continue operating. It means workers still have jobs to go to, the impact on local economies is minimised, suppliers don't suffer unnecessarily and a business can maintain or even strengthen its good will.

Business continuity is defined as management and planning for the continued availability of essential business services during and after an emergency, including all the functions and resources associated with the provision of these services.

The prime objective of continuity management is to reduce damage to staff, clients, property, equipment, reputations, good will and credibility.

It's a manager's responsibility and a logical extension of corporate planning and risk management practices. Successful continuity management requires leadership, commitment and support from senior managers and participation of all staff throughout the process of developing and implementing a continuity management programme.

Assessing risk

One of the first tasks is to assess the risks. Any risks to business continuity can be prioritised by evaluating and comparing the level of risk against predetermined standards, target risk levels or other criteria. It is an essential

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John Shephard
State Manager
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Phone: (08) 9289 8360
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