



## Spotlight On:

# IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN!

*Helping organizations prepare for disasters is one of the key missions of the Safeguard Iowa Partnership. Safeguard Iowa works to accomplish this goal by helping public and private agencies identify their key infrastructure and prioritize protection plans before disasters strike.*

*The Partnership also holds workshops offering specific steps that individual private and public firms can take to ready themselves for the worst.*

*What follows is one case study of the impact a disaster can have when a business is unprepared.*



James Peterson, owner and operator of Atelier Hair Space, a full service hair salon, believes that a power surge damaged one of his business's PCs, corrupting the software containing all

of Atelier's crucial customer and scheduling information. Peterson says this vital information was backed up on a nightly basis, but for the back-up to occur the application had to be shut down – a step that hadn't been completed prior to the power surge.

The first part of this nightmare involved losing all customer appointment data. Peterson says it was difficult, because his staff was never sure which clients would show up and which times were open. As a result, "we ended up with

some double bookings," Peterson explains. Even worse, customers with appointments did not receive their normal reminder calls, which resulted in a few no-shows at the salon.

The second part involved the loss of client information and their preferences. Notes about specific color formulas and other important information were erased. "We had to rebuild formulas from memory and work with our clients," Peterson says. In addition to the missing color information, data on clients' appointment frequency and personal information were also destroyed.

While Peterson used social media and other communication channels to try spreading the word to his customers, in the end he knows he lost customers due to losing their information because contingency plans were not in place.

After two months, Peterson finally began recovering from the loss of these files. Now Atelier Hair Space uses an online system that is automatically backed up on the host's servers. That's Peterson's first lesson learned. "Always double check to make sure the files are being backed up on a third party source," Peterson says.

The second lesson is to make sure there are contingency plans to continue operating, "even to the point of creating and filing hard copies of customer information," Peterson says. "Just in case you can't access the third party source."

As much as Peterson likes to avoid paper and work digitally, he also says another step is to print out a hard copy of the week's schedule as a precautionary step.

Identifying essential business functions and staff, and then making sure there are alternate sites available to continue in an emergency, are key steps in a full contingency plan that all small businesses should complete.

Contact Safeguard Iowa Partnership to receive free contingency planning tools for your business or organization. Steps taken now can help private and public agencies in times of disaster.

**To learn more about joining Safeguard Iowa Partnership, visit [www.safeguardiowa.org](http://www.safeguardiowa.org).**

The Safeguard Iowa Partnership is a 501c3 nonprofit involving government, private-sector, higher education and nonprofit organizations. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity of Iowa to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters through public-private collaboration.

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