

Tip 6

Back up your data

A back-up is a copy of the data and certain programs on your computer. Creating a copy or back-up of data is a sensible and easy way to ensure that, in the event of a fire, computer theft or virus infection you can recover all of your business information from your computer or website quickly and easily.

You may either back up all the data and certain programs on your hard drive each time you back up or you may do incremental back-ups. This means that you back up only the files that have changed since the last time you backed up.

It is good business practice to assess your level of risk by asking yourself the following questions:

What are the consequences of a disaster occurring?

If the worst case scenario were to happen, what would be needed to get the business running again quickly?

Use the answers to formulate your strategy and then ensure that you implement a schedule for rehearsing the recovery strategy.

What you can do

Here are some key points for effective data back-up:

- develop a disaster recovery plan by first assessing your level of risk
- ensure back-up procedures are in place and tested and remember to test the actual data and restoring of data process
- ensure that you keep the back-up copies in a safe, fire-proof location away from your computer systems - usually these conditions can be met simply by storing the back-up in another place away from your business premises
- ensure back-up procedures include systems such as finance and payroll
- all third party software should be copied prior to its initial use (software licensing allows for the making of copies for legitimate back-up purposes). These master copies should not be used for ordinary business activities but should be reserved for recovery purposes. They should be stored in a secure off-site location.