

Brace for Impact – Save Your Law Office from These Disasters

No one wants to think about the possibility of a disaster occurring in their lives. But it only takes five minutes of the nightly news to realize that disasters happen in this world – every single day. Your law practice is not immune from this reality, and you never know when a disaster could strike your office. That's why it's so important to be prepared.

Your clients depend on you to handle their matters and protect their valuable data. Your staff members depend on you to keep the business open and compensate them for their work. So, shouldn't you take the initiative to prepare for the unexpected?

There are essentially four steps to disaster planning in relation to a law practice:

- Prevention – While some types of disasters strike without any notice or warning, there are steps you can take to prevent others. When possible, put protocols in place to help avert some of the avoidable disasters.
- Establishing a first response – When a disaster does happen, it is important to have a plan of first reaction in place. This includes ensuring the physical safety of your staff and preserving firm resources. Your first response to a disaster is critical to your firm's survival.
- Creating a business continuity plan – Once the initial shock of a disaster passes, you need to have a plan in place for the continuation of your law firm in the coming days, weeks, and even months. This may entail using a temporary office or working remotely, but you need to get back to work as quickly as possible.
- Resuming operations – Getting back to normal is the last step in a comprehensive disaster response plan. Think proactively about what would be required to get your firm back up and running to full capacity.

The following are some disasters that can wreak havoc on your law office. But with some preparation and planning, you can preserve the integrity of your firm, while continuously serving your clients.

A Cybersecurity Breach

Law offices are constant targets for cyber attackers. They recognize the value of the data that firms tend to maintain and they want it. From your clients' social security numbers to confidential banking information, these cyber criminals spend tons of time looking for ways to access your files.

Even a single breach can have far-reaching and costly consequences for your firm, such as:

- The inability to access your firm email accounts, phones, and computer systems for days or weeks
- Financial implications that could reach thousands of dollars a day in lost billable hours
- Rescheduled court appearances and delayed client matters
- Disgruntled clients, which could lead to professional grievances complaints
- Potential lawsuits alleging inadequate cybersecurity measures

While there is no way to 100% prevent any security breach from ever happening, you can take measures to lessen your likelihood of being cyberattacked. Perform regular reviews of your cybersecurity measures to determine if they are adequate to deal with current threats. If you don't have a dedicated IT person to handle this task, bring in an outside consultant to analyze your systems. It is worth the peace of mind.

Cloud-based storage is another tool for the prevention of a cyber attack. Reputable cloud-storage providers typically utilize state-of-the-art security to keep your data safe. These companies employ top cybersecurity professionals who diligently work to identify and prevent the latest potential threats.

A Natural or Manmade Disaster

Unless your practice is located in a particularly risky area of the country, you have likely done little to prepare for a possible natural disaster. But it only takes a minute for a severe storm or tornado to devastate your physical office. Likewise, it only takes a minute for human carelessness to result in a manmade disaster, like fire or severe water damage.

Unfortunately, there is not much you can do in the way of prevention of natural disasters, so your planning will mostly center on establishing a first response, continuity, and resuming normal operations.

- First, create a first response safety plan. Make sure it includes a check-in system to ensure that all members of your firm are safe and steps to secure firm files and resources.
- Next, create continuity and resuming operations plans that identify the necessary components for providing continuous service to your clients in the short run and returning to full operations in the long run.

While you can't prevent a natural disaster, you can prevent the total destruction of your firm data with cloud-based storage that maintains your files in a secure environment. Physical storage units are unreliable and may not withstand the devastation of a disaster. Cloud is the most secure option on the market.

Billing System Crash

For some reason, legacy billing systems are still quite popular within the legal industry. But these systems can be quite unreliable, particularly because they require the use of a physical server within the office. Users commonly have to deal with the server temporarily locking up and freezing, resulting in time-wasting and frustrating reboots.

If the server completely crashes, the firm could be left without the ability to invoice at all. Your staff may not be able to access the billing system to review tracked time, create new invoices, or view client billing accounts.

These types of system lock-ups and crashes translate into lost earnings for law firms. You end up paying for a service you can't access and paying employees who are left without the tools to perform their job duties.

I hate to sound like a broken record, but a reputable cloud-based billing system eliminates the worry of a disastrous billing system crash. The folks at TimeSolv complete all of their software upgrades instantly and remotely, so your firm members can keep time tracking and billing, without interruption. They also maintain their legal billing system on a state-of-the-art development environment in order to provide customers with almost 100% uptime.

Saving your Office

Are you seeing a pattern here? A cloud-based storage system provides you with the extra security you need to prevent and adequately address any disaster that threatens your law practice data. To learn more about TimeSolv's cloud-based legal billing system and state-of-the-art security measures, click [here](#) for a free 30-day trial.

About Erika Winston:

Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, The Legal Writing Studio, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.