

Disaster Response Plans

The careful work of the broadcast industry in creating disaster plans can help stations respond to some of the key questions they face with the COVID-19 crisis.

Given the important role they hold in serving our communities, many broadcasters have detailed emergency response plans covering all nature of threats ranging from workplace violence to hurricanes. For many years, NAB has worked with broadcasters and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to ensure local broadcast teams have robust and redundant capabilities to survive unexpected events that threaten stations' facilities and capabilities to serve their local communities.

NAB recognizes that there are many unknowns concerning the impacts of COVID-19 – health, societal and economic. That makes reviewing and adjusting existing emergency preparation plans all the more essential. Here are three ways to evaluate your current disaster plans and emergency response preparations in light of the unique nature of the current crisis.

Ask your team – how could the length, intensity and overall impact of a coronavirus crisis compare to past disruptions? What aspects of this crisis are similar or different compared with prior disruptions? How can we apply those learnings and capabilities to this crisis? For example, if you have developed a plan for a team to shelter in a station during a major storm for several days independent of outside resources, can that be applied to a team self-isolating for two weeks inside a broadcast facility?

Ask your team – how could the vulnerabilities and dangers we have prepared for in our emergency plans be applied to the potential disruptions created by COVID-19? What aspects of our contingency plans for broadcasting from another location if our main studios or transmitter are down can be applied to this crisis? For example, if you have plans ready for moving studio production, could that plan be used if you cannot use your main facility for an extended time while it is cleaned for coronavirus concerns?

Ask your team – what preventative measures do we usually take in advance of a potential disruption that could help during the current crisis? What preventions or precautions can we take now to make sure that we are ready for any possible disruption to our people, equipment, suppliers and the community? For example, if you have plans to service essential broadcast equipment in advance of a winter storm, should your team plan now to accelerate maintenance on that equipment to prepare for employees not easily being able to do such during an extended and intense coronavirus crisis?

Broadcasters have a distinguished history of preparing for challenges and keeping their service to the community going no matter what the circumstances. Those existing plans and preparations can be adapted to help broadcasting address any coronavirus issues.