

Majority of U.S. Small Businesses Unprepared for Emergencies, Natural and Man-made Disasters

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'Quick Check for Disaster Prep' Online Tool Developed by AT&T Calculates Score in Minutes Helping 'Raise Preparedness Bar' 100 Small Businesses to Win AT&T Data Backup and Tech Support for One Year

DALLAS, June 6, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- As the country buckles up during the first full week of hurricane season, disaster preparedness statistics for the country's 25 million small businesses are stormy ... to say the least.

- Nearly two-thirds of U.S. small businesses do not have an emergency or disaster preparedness plan in place (Ad Council).
- This despite the fact that about one in four small businesses will experience "a significant crisis" – hurricane, wildfire, tornado, power outage, flash flood, cyber breach, etc. – in any given year. (Association of Small Business Development Centers)
- Sadly, four out of 10 of small businesses affected by a natural or man-made disaster never reopen their doors. ([Insurance Information Institute](#))

To put it in more tangible terms, more than 125,000 jobs were lost in the Gulf Coast area due to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In Louisiana alone, more than 20,000 businesses were shuttered. In short, when emergencies and disasters strike small businesses, the "ripple effect" can cause surrounding communities to be negatively impacted as well.

Helping mitigate the impact, [AT&T](#)* today launched an initiative – "[Safeguard Your Business](#)" – to shine new light on the importance of small businesses being prepared and offer simple, proactive steps to preparedness. Small businesses do not have to be an AT&T customer to participate.

Specifically, the multi-faceted initiative includes:

- An interactive "[Quick Check for Disaster Prep](#)" online tool, enabling small businesses to quickly assess their state of preparedness or "readiness" for emergencies and disasters, based on responses to 10 simple questions. The check:
 - Takes just a few minutes to complete, calculating a "score" from one to 10 and providing some topline recommendations for individual small businesses.
 - Integrates with the American Red Cross Ready Rating program, which helps businesses become better prepared for emergencies. The Ready Rating website, [ReadyRating.org](#), provides a free assessment tool that dives deeper into specific areas of preparedness.
- 100 sweepstakes winners to receive [AT&T Tech Support 360\(SM\)](#) Premium PLUS one-year subscriptions valued at \$425 each:
 - Includes unlimited and automatic PC data backup; remote, live support by certified techs; PC tune-up for optimization; removal of viruses and spyware and much more
 - 100 winners will be randomly selected from eligible small businesses that complete the "Quick Check for Disaster Prep" via the online tool between June 5 and June 30, 2012.
- Aggregation of free online resources, providing small businesses with a single convenient destination when considering next steps for emergency and disaster preparedness and planning.

In addition, results of the [2012 AT&T Small Business Technology Poll](#)** revealed that:

- While nearly three-fourths (71 percent) of small businesses feel it is important to recover computer data in the event of a disaster, less than one-third (31 percent) use the Internet or computer network to send data to a remote location.
- Small businesses with more employees are further likely to take measures to keep wireless devices safe – 93 percent of business with 51 to 99 employees, compared to 77 percent of businesses with two to 10 employees.
- Small businesses with more employees are further likely to be concerned about computer and online data security – 61 percent of business with 51 to 99 employees, compared to less than half (47 percent) of businesses with two to 10 employees.
- Awareness of cloud services, which can be critical during emergencies and disasters, continue to

grow – 91 percent, up from 68 percent a year ago, though use of [cloud services](#) remains relatively low at 37 percent, compared to 33 percent a year ago.

Today's news comes after a [March announcement](#) by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, announcing AT&T as the first company in the nation to earn DHS certification for disaster preparedness planning. AT&T's certification is the first under the DHS Voluntary Private Sector Preparedness Program, which enables organizations to enhance their capabilities for planning, responding to, and recovering from natural disasters and other threats.

Quotes

- "The key for all of us, including small business owners, to help recover and survive during and following disasters is being properly prepared," said Jonathan Epstein, American Red Cross scientific advisory council member and developer of Ready Rating. "We see this as a stark reality through the eyes of our local chapters and volunteers, who are on the front lines every day, dealing with the aftermath of tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, and other emergencies."
- "AT&T has a long-standing commitment to business continuity and disaster preparedness on behalf of our customers," said Cathy Martine, AT&T executive vice president of Small Business Solutions. "Today we've taken it to the next level for small businesses, which represent the fabric of the U.S. economy, by offering free resources to help them prepare for emergency situations. This is critical, because when small businesses sneeze, the whole country catches a cold."

General Information

For other resources on disaster preparedness and cyber security, they can visit [AT&T Protect Your Assets](#). Small businesses that want more information about all AT&T products and services can visit [AT&T Small Business](#).

Additionally, real-time information and updates can be found on the [AT&T Small Business Facebook page](#) and [AT&T Small Business Twitter channel](#). Join AT&T Small Business in spreading the word and find the latest updates by Tweeting with the hashtag #ATTSafeguard.

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*** Study Methodology – The results of the "AT&T Small Business Technology Poll" are based on an online survey, conducted in November 2011, of 1,232 small business owners and/or employees responsible for Information Technology (IT). The sample of participating small businesses, having between 2 and 99 employees, was drawn from e-Rewards' online business panel of companies.*

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