

# Technology Disaster Preparation for Winter Storms

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IT'S TIME TO DUST of your snow blower, get your shovels ready and don your best winter hat – winter is quickly approaching. As you prep for the cold rain, snow and ice – please consider how this inclement weather can wreak havoc on your technology. Tech Impact wants to make sure you are empowered to take action and defend against pesky winter storms.

If you have onsite infrastructure (think servers and switches), please follow the below guidelines to make sure you're doing what you can to protect your technology assets when the storm hits.

## 1. Invest in protective devices such as UPSs and line filters.

It's important to think about what happens to your machines when you lose power but do not experience a surge. This situation occurs more frequently and sometimes you can't predict when it's going to happen. To protect your machines from losing power (blackout) or not getting enough power (brownout) invest in an uninterrupted power supply (UPS) and make sure it is configured properly. UPSs are devices designed to keep your computer running for a given period of time when building power is cut off. UPS's need to be configured to send a signal to your machines that tells them to gracefully shut down after a certain period of time. The battery in UPSs last for a limited amount of time, and if you do not configure them your machine will eventually turn off without gracefully shutting down - just like it would have if you didn't have a UPS. You should also consider installing line filters for power surges. Line filters monitor power intake and prevent blackouts and brownouts.

## 2. Forward calls to cell phones.

Many phone providers allow the option of automatic call forwarding to cell phones. The feature works wonders for people who work remotely in the field but is also very handy when your office (and the phones in

it) loses power. If you work for an organization that provides critical or emergency services and currently cannot forward your calls to mobile phones/devices - look into alternative phone providers.



## 3. Power off and unplug servers, workstations and networking equipment.

The best way to prepare your equipment when expecting severe weather is to shutdown your workstations, servers and network equipment properly and then unplug all power cables. If you cannot power down and unplug your server because it is essential, make sure it's protected by a reliable surge protector and UPS and back up your files. Remember - not all power strips are effective surge protectors, it is likely that a strong surge can run right through your strip and fry your machine.

## 4. Make sure your backups are working properly.

Check the backups you have already set in place. When is the last time your files were backed up? Are there any files that are not included in the backup that you can move to a cloud file storage space for safekeeping?

If you currently are not using a backup solution - now is the time to investigate which tool will work best for you. The expense to back up your information is far less than the cost your organization will incur if you lose your data.

## 5. The Cloud has a silver lining.

With cloud solutions like Office 365 for Nonprofits and VoIP it may be possible to decommission your onsite hardware to receive better service, features and the peace of mind that a qualified professional is protecting your infrastructure and data.

If you have any questions about the cloud and how it can save you headaches and money while giving you access to enterprise level tools that meet a nonprofit budget, please contact Tech Impact. ■