



Backups – A Great Insurance Policy

Why Backup?

You can lose your data when:

- Viruses from the internet corrupt your hard drive so badly that you have to reformat it.
- Your hard drive dies suddenly.
- A fire, tornado, flood, theft or other disaster hits your company.
- You have so much corruption in a file that it cannot be fixed, and the only thing to do is to use a backup to replace the file with an older version of the file. That takes the file back to when the program was working properly. The more recent the backup file, the less data you will have to re-enter.
- A power failure shuts down your computer in the middle of a program. Business software is especially susceptible to this problem. Backup Battery protection can help prevent this occurring.

We really hate telling a client that the problem can't be fixed and there is nothing further we can do because they do not have a backup.

Copy or Backup

Copy – This is like a photocopy of a document. It's great for document files when all you need is an exact duplicate of the letter you sent last week. When copying business software data files, make sure to copy all the necessary files. Business software data is often stored in more than one file, so be sure to copy all the necessary files.

Backup – Business software often has a Backup routine that compresses all the necessary data files into one file. You need to use the program's Restore function to access the data in the files.

Every company needs a written policy for:

- What to backup
- What to use to backup – the accounting program or a separate backup program.
- Who is responsible for making & testing the backups
- How often to backup
- How many backups to keep

- Where program and backup disks are stored
- Off-site backups
- Testing the backups

What to Backup

- All data files from your accounting, point of sale or restaurant software
- Important correspondence files
- Engineering files
- Customer contact information files
- Any vital files that would be difficult or impossible to replace

Who is Responsible

Decide who is responsible for making backups. Be sure and put the responsibility into the employee's job description.

What to Use to Backup

You may need to use more than one of the following methods for the different files you need to backup.

Flash drive – This is just one name for a small device that plugs directly into a computer's USB port. These are actual mini-hard drives that you can backup your data files to. You can use Windows Explorer Copy & Paste to transfer data files to the drive or a backup program. Other names for the drive are jump drive, memory drive, memory stick and come in a variety of storage sizes. Copy data files to separate directories on the flash drive so you don't copy today's data over yesterday's data.

External hard drive – This is a hard drive dedicated to backups. It plugs into the computer's USB port and you use your programs backup routine or Windows Explorer Copy & Paste to transfer data files to the drive. Copy data files to separate directories on the hard drive so you don't copy today's data over yesterday's data. The price of external hard drives has come down and make this an affordable way to secure your company information.

The Cloud – The latest method of backups is sending the backup data to The Cloud. This is done by sending your data files over your broadband internet connection to a company with a remote location that specializes in providing data storage services. These companies provide large and secure servers where you can store your data and still have access to them online. There are many companies that provide this online service, usually with a monthly charge. When choosing a company to trust with your confidential information, make sure they are providing a safe and secure physical environment as well as using all of the internet security tools..

How Often to Backup

When you use a backup to restore data, you are taking your files back to the way they were at the time you made the backup. All information that was entered after that date will need to be re-entered. The frequency of backup depends on how much data you enter each day.

How Many Backups

If you are making daily backups, create a separate backup for each day of the week or even two weeks.

- Never copy today's backup over yesterday's.
- Keep more than one set of backups. If you don't discover a problem right away, you may need to go back to a backup from a week ago to find one that isn't corrupted.
- Don't forget the off-site backups.

Storing Backups and Program CDs

Keep all the backups and Program CDs in a secure location. If using a safe, make sure it is fire proof for magnetic data. Not all are.

If you are downloading your program or update via the internet, save the download to a directory on your hard drive before running the install program on your computer. Save the saved, downloaded file to a CD or flash drive and keep with other important information.

Also keep a copy of the serial number and any registration or activation code number with your program CDs. You will need them if you ever need to re-install your software.

Off-site Backups

Businesses that have off-site backup storage can get back up and running quicker after a disaster.

- Decide where the off-site is located. Make sure it is secure and fire proof.
- Decide how often you will make off-site backups and how many copies you will keep off-site. Make sure you keep the off-site backups current.
- Decide who is responsible for the off-site backups and put it into the employee's job description.

Testing the Backup

It's a good idea to test your backup regularly. We've run into companies that are backing up old, not current data files, empty directories, or partial data files.

In your program, create a new, blank company and restore your backup or copy to that company. Look at the data to see if it is current and accurate. If not, you will need to make an adjustment in your backup routine.

Have any questions?
Call us. We would be happy to talk with you.



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