

How to write and sign a business continuity policy

A plain-English checklist for writing and signing the policy

Need a business continuity policy? Use these nine steps to write and sign one. Each step maps to a section in the ESG Complete free Word template. A policy is not a playbook. People first, then keep the work running.

How to use this guide

Work through each step in order. Tick off the "What to include" bullets against your draft. Prefer short, honest clauses over claims you cannot evidence. Do not put recovery-hour tables in the policy. This is not legal advice; adapt wording to your operations and jurisdiction. Sign and date it, and review it every 12 or 24 months.

1. Write a short statement of intent

Say you will protect people first, then keep critical work running. Match it to the work you actually do.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Legal company name and country
- Protect people first
- Keep critical work running through disruption
- A short list of what the business does
- That you will set continuity objectives and improve after incidents and tests

Tip: Put Business Continuity Policy on the cover. Do not invent recovery times here.

Use in template section: Policy statement

2. Say who the policy covers

Name workers, and contractors or visitors if they come onto your work. Include suppliers you rely on.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Workers, and contractors or visitors if that is true
- Workplaces and sites you control
- Suppliers you rely on for that work

Tip: Do not claim you cover every visitor if you never have them on site.

Use in template section: Scope

3. Set high-level objectives

Keep aims short. Protect people, keep critical work going, meet legal and buyer duties, improve.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Protect the welfare of people in scope
- Keep critical work running, then return to normal
- Meet legal, regulatory, and other applicable requirements
- Improve after incidents and tests

Tip: Do not put recovery-hour tables in the policy. Those belong in the playbook.

Use in template section: Objectives

4. Name who is accountable

The most senior person signs. Name who owns continuity day to day.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Who is accountable for the policy
- Who owns continuity day to day (name or job title)
- That workers follow this policy and the written playbook
- That managers make sure people can find both

Tip: Use a real name or role. Do not leave this as "management".

Use in template section: Roles and accountability

5. Commit to running the programme

The policy says you will work out what must keep running, keep a playbook, and walk through it. It does not write that playbook.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Identify which work must keep running
- Keep a written playbook, or say you will
- Walk through the playbook, or say you will once it exists
- Learn from incidents and tests

Tip: If you already follow ISO 22301, say this policy sits alongside that system. Do not claim a certificate you do not have.

Use in template section: How we run it

6. Say how people get the policy

Staff must be able to find it. Buyers who ask should be able to see it.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Available to your people
- Shared with buyers and others who ask

Tip: A file nobody can find does not help in a disruption.

Use in template section: Communication

7. Point to the playbook, honestly

If you already have a written playbook, name it. If not, say you will keep one. Do not invent a filename.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- This policy sits above the playbook
- The playbook holds the operational detail

Tip: A policy is not a playbook. Recovery times and call trees go in the playbook later.

Use in template section: Related documents

8. Set a review date

Unsigned or stale policies get sent back. Pick 12 or 24 months.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Review at least every 12 or 24 months
- Sooner if the work, the law, or an incident means it is out of date

Tip: A one-page current policy beats a ten-page copy from three years ago.

Use in template section: Review

9. Sign and date it

The most senior person signs. Reviewers reject blank approval blocks.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Name and title on their own lines
- Date and signature

Tip: People first. Then keep the work running. Then sign it.

Use in template section: Approval

After the nine steps: keep the signed policy with your records. If you later need a playbook with recovery times and call trees, write that next. It is not this document.

Prefer not to spend hours writing it?

Answer a short questionnaire and ESG Complete fills a branded business continuity policy for you. Same nine sections as this guide. This is not the operational playbook. **US\$99**. Usually the same day. Revisions included.

Start here: <https://www.esgcomplete.com/business-continuity-policy/thank-you?scroll=think-about>

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