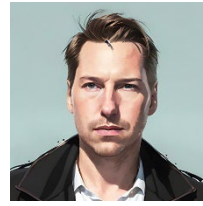




Australian  
**DRIVER  
TRAINERS**  
Association



## **Steering Through Crisis: Business Continuity Planning in Driver Training**

by Glen Till CEO Raise RTO and ADTA Director

*In an era marked by uncertainty, the need for effective planning is more crucial than ever. As a driver training business owner, you do have control over how prepared you are for unforeseen challenges. To guide you through this complex landscape, we've consulted with Registered Training Organization (RTO) owner and ADTA Director Glen Till. This paper aims to answer vital questions that can help you navigate disruptions in your operations:*

- *How can you prepare for unforeseen events and what steps are essential for risk assessment?*
- *What are the key elements of a tailored contingency plan for your specific challenges?*
- *Which communication protocols should be in place?*
- *How frequently should you test your contingency plan to confirm its effectiveness?*
- *What strategies can keep your plan updated in a rapidly evolving business environment?*

*By addressing these issues, this paper serves as a comprehensive guide to crafting a Business Continuity Plan that is uniquely tailored for your driver training business.*

### **Introduction**

#### Developing a Business Continuity Plan

As a driver training business owner, you understand the importance of being prepared for unexpected events. From health-related disruptions to vehicle breakdowns, various factors can interrupt your operations and impact your bottom line. That's why it's crucial to have a business continuity plan in place.

#### What is a Business Continuity Plan?

A business continuity plan is a documented strategy that outlines how your business will operate when an unexpected event or disruption occurs. This plan ensures that your driver training business can continue to operate effectively.

#### Key Steps to Develop a Business Continuity Plan

- Identify Potential Risks and Disruptions
- Develop a Risk Matrix
- Develop a Contingency Plan
- Test Your Plan
- Keep Your Plan Up to Date

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### **Identify Potential Risks and Disruptions**

#### Vehicle-Related Issues:

- **Vehicle Breakdown:** Vehicles can be unpredictable, and a mechanical failure could happen during a lesson. **Flat Tire:** A tire could go flat while driving, necessitating a change on the spot.
- **Safety Concerns: Student Accidents:** Even with dual controls, accidents can happen, such as collisions or minor bumps.
- **Student Panics:** A student might panic while behind the wheel, potentially causing a dangerous situation.
- **Student Under the Influence:** If a student shows up under the influence of drugs or alcohol, this compromises the safety of everyone involved.

#### Health Issues:

- **Instructor or Student Illness:** Either party could fall ill, requiring an immediate end to the lesson.
- **Medical Emergencies:** Either the instructor or the student could experience a medical emergency such as a heart attack, seizure, or fainting.

#### Operational Issues:

- **Schedule Conflicts:** Double-booking or other scheduling errors can lead to conflicts and loss of business.
- **Bad Weather:** Storms, bush fires, or extreme heat could lead to cancellations.
- **Equipment Failure:** If your computer system goes down, you might not be able to schedule appointments, update records, or process payments.

#### Legal and Compliance Risks:

- **Expired Licenses or Certifications:** Forgetting to renew these could lead to legal troubles.

#### Liability Issues:

- If an accident happens, especially if it results in injury, you may face liability concerns. Good thing you have great Professional Indemnity / Public Liability cover in place via the ADTA.

#### Communication and Reputation:

- **Miscommunication:** Failing to communicate clearly with students or guardians could lead to misunderstandings or dissatisfaction.
- **Negative Reviews:** One dissatisfied customer can have a significant impact on your reputation, especially in the era of social media.

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Unexpected Events:

- Local or Global Events: Natural disasters, pandemics, or other significant events could force you to suspend your operations temporarily.

Being aware of these risks allows you to prepare effectively and mitigate the impacts on your driving instruction business.

### Develop a risk matrix

A risk matrix is a visual tool that helps you to identify, assess, and prioritize different kinds of risks or hazards. It usually consists of a grid that outlines the likelihood or probability of a risk occurring on one axis and the severity or impact of the risk on the other axis. By plotting risks in this manner, you can decide which risks you really need to have a plan for, whilst others you can probably address as needed.

Here's a simple example of what a risk matrix might look like:

Risk matrix	High Impact (if it happens, the impact on the business will be very significant)	Medium Impact (if it happens, the impact on the business will be harmful)	Low Impact (if it happens, the impact on the business will be reasonably low)
High Likelihood (It could and probably will happen at some point)	Critical Risk	High Risk	Medium Risk
Medium Likelihood (it may happen)	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Low Likelihood (not very high chance of this happening)	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Very Low Risk

How to Use a Risk Matrix:

- Assess Likelihood: For each risk, evaluate how likely it is to occur.
- Assess Impact: Similarly, for each risk, evaluate the potential impact should the risk materialize.
- Plot Risks: Place each identified risk on the matrix according to its likelihood and impact.

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### Develop a Contingency Plan

Risks that fall into the "Critical Risk" or "High Risk" zones are usually prioritized for action. Strategies are either reactive measures (what to do if it happens) or mitigation strategies (what you will do to prevent it happening). This is just a few examples to get you started.

- **You Are Unwell** - Mitigation Strategy: Have a group of trusted and suitable group of instructors who can fill in for you at short notice (or you for them).
- **The Student Has an Accident While Training** - Mitigation Strategy: Offer specialized "emergency situation" training as part of your curriculum to prepare students for unexpected scenarios.
- **Equipment Breakdown** (e.g., Vehicle Breakdown) Mitigation Strategy: Regular maintenance checks of training vehicles. Reactive Measures: Have backup vehicles or partnerships with rental agencies for quick replacement.
- **Severe Weather Mitigation Strategy:** Develop a flexible rescheduling policy for lessons impacted by severe weather.
- **Student is Incapacitated** (Drugs or Alcohol) Mitigation Strategy: Have a clear policy in place, and ensure that students are aware that lessons will be immediately terminated if they are under the influence.
- **Regulatory Changes** - Mitigation Strategy: Watch for communications from ADTA so you can stay updated on industry regulations and compliance requirements. Adjust training modules and procedures to comply with any new regulations.
- **Cyber Risks** (e.g., Booking System Hacked) - Mitigation Strategy: Employ robust cybersecurity measures including firewalls and secure payment systems. Regularly update software and ensure anyone using your equipment is trained on cybersecurity best practices.
- **Communication Breakdowns** - Mitigation Strategy: Establish clear channels of communication between instructors, students, and administrative staff. Use a reliable scheduling and notification system to keep everyone in the loop.

Each of these mitigation strategies can be further developed to suit the specific circumstances and capabilities of your driving school. Remember, the goal is to be as prepared as possible for any risks that may come your way.

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### **Test Your Plan**

Use downtime, (maybe a spare half hour during the day) to simulate scenarios and identify areas for improvement.

### **Keep Your Plan Up to Date**

Be prepared to adjust your plan based on new guidelines or unexpected situations.

### **Conclusion**

Developing a Business Continuity Plan for a driver training business involves the critical steps of identifying potential risks, plotting them on a risk matrix, and developing tailored contingency plans. Special attention is given to a variety of risks, from vehicle breakdowns and weather-related disruptions to health emergencies and compliance issues.

Mitigation strategies are formulated to address each type of risk, with testing of the plan to ensure its effectiveness.

The plan is designed to be a living document, adaptable to new guidelines or unforeseen challenges.

By taking this comprehensive approach, your driver training business is better equipped to maintain operations and ensure safety, even in the face of unexpected disruptions.