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The latest from the government and leadership office of the Venice Area Chamber of Commerce

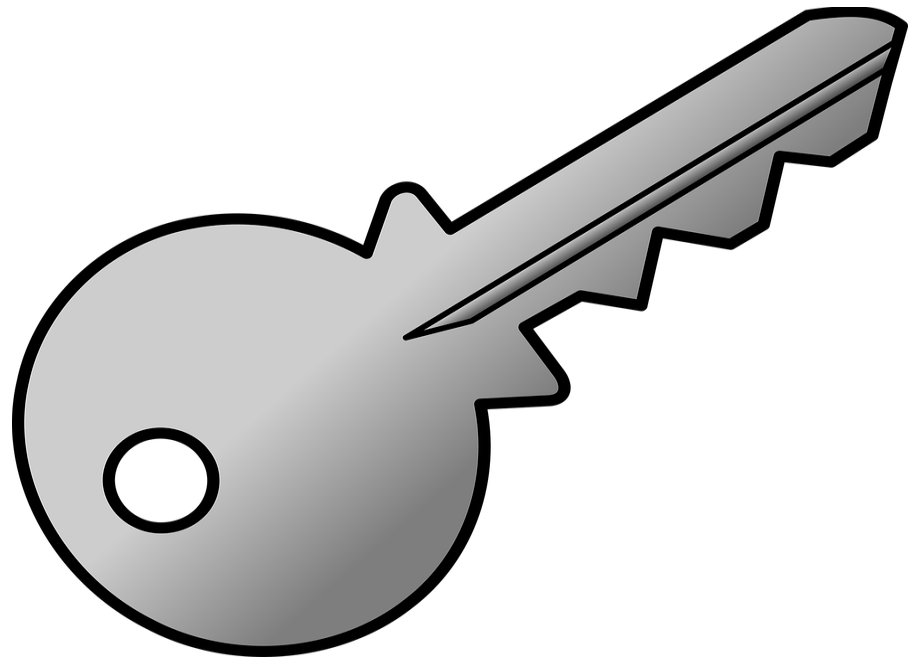
## INSIDE

**Resilient Business Initiative**  
**Week 7**

**Legislative Update**

**Did You Know?**

Uninterrupted Power Supply



## **Week 7 - Facility, Utilities & Access Resilience**

### **Purpose**

Identify facility and utility vulnerabilities that could interrupt your ability to operate, communicate, protect inventory, and serve customers during a disruption.

From an Incident Command System (ICS) perspective, this is a quick “critical infrastructure and access” scan: what do you *need* to keep life safety and essential business functions going, and what single points of failure will force you to shut down or relocate?

### **Why This Matters to Venice-Area Businesses**

Loss of access or utilities frequently halts operations *before* the incident is “over.” In hurricanes and severe thunderstorms, businesses often experience a cascade: grid power interruption → internet/phone degradation → card readers/POS failure → refrigeration/HVAC issues → water/sewer constraints → employee access and customer foot traffic collapse.

Local context example: if your site depends on customer access via *US 41 / Tamiami Trail* or *SR 776*, even short-lived signal outages, debris, standing water, or detours can make your location effectively “closed” even if your building is intact. Plan for both **utility outages** and **access disruption** as separate problems.

## Key Concept

Facilities are systems that fail predictably: power, water, wastewater, HVAC, roofing/envelope, security, and IT all have known weak points and “time-to-fail” patterns under heat, wind, flooding, and sustained outages.

- Power: single electrical panel, no generator interlock, no fuel plan, limited surge protection.
- Communications: internet modem/router on non-backed-up power; reliance on one carrier.
- Water/wastewater: lift station or pressure issues, restroom closure triggers immediate business closure for many occupancies.
- Access: parking lot flooding, blocked driveways, downed trees/signage, traffic signal outages reducing safe turns/entries.
- Building envelope: roof drains, doors, roll-up doors, storefront glass, and water intrusion at thresholds.

## Business-Friendly Incident Command Insight

ICS assumes infrastructure will degrade. Leaders set **incident objectives** (life safety, stabilize the situation, protect property, maintain essential services) and then identify **critical resources** (power, water, access, communications) needed to meet them. For business continuity, that means you pre-decide what you will do when utilities drop: *what you can still do, what you stop, and where you shift operations.*

## 10-Minute Weekly Task

- 1) Identify utility dependencies (power, water, wastewater, internet/phone) for your top 3 critical operations.
- 2) List access constraints: Which roads/entrances are “must have,” what gates/keys are required, and what conditions would prevent entry (flooding, debris, downed lines, evacuation order).
- 3) Note alternate options: a backup work location, a “no-internet/no-POS” sales method, a manual customer notification method, and a minimum staffing plan.

## Deliverable

A one-page facility and utility dependency list (who provides it, how to report an outage, what it supports, and your workaround). Treat it like an ICS “resource status” snapshot you can use under time pressure. See the template for this on the next page, you can copy/paste it to a Word document.

## Readiness Outcome

- We understand our facility vulnerabilities (top 5 failure points identified and owned by a person/role)
- We know access limitations (primary/alternate routes and the trigger points for relocation or closure)

## Connection to Local Emergency Partners

Utility providers prioritize informed businesses when you can clearly describe the problem, location, and operational impact. In ICS terms, you are making a better “resource request” by sharing accurate status and needs (e.g., downed service line vs. neighborhood outage; water pressure loss vs. internal plumbing issue).

## Local highlights (examples):

- **City of Venice Utilities:** understand what services you receive (water/sewer/reuse) and keep the emergency after-hours number available for urgent service disruptions.
- **Alerting:** sign up for Sarasota County emergency alerts (AlertSarasota) and monitor City of Venice storm updates so access limitations and evacuation levels don't surprise your staff.
- **Power:** if you're on FPL electric service, pre-stage your outage reporting method and account details; decide what you will power with battery backup vs. generator.
- **Access coordination:** pre-identify who in your organization monitors road closures and who makes the "open/close/relocate" call.

## One-Page Dependency List Template (copy/paste and fill in)

<b>Business / Site:</b> _____		<b>Date Updated:</b> _____	
<b>Primary Address:</b> _____		<b>Primary Decision Maker (Role):</b> _____	
<b>Top 3 Critical Operations (what you must keep doing):</b> 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____			
<b>Operation</b>	<b>Dependency</b> (power, water, wastewater, internet, phone, access, HVAC, vendors)	<b>Provider / Account / Location</b> (meter/panel/room, acct # last 4, login location)	<b>Outage Reporting + Workaround</b> (who calls, how to report, manual process, alternate site)
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Time Tolerance / Triggers (ICS-style decision points):</b> If power is out > ____ hours, we: (close / relocate / run limited operations) _____ If internet/POS is down > ____ hours, we: _____ If water/restrooms are unavailable, we: _____ If access is blocked (flooding/debris/evacuation), we: _____			
<b>Internal Contacts (24/7 reach, if appropriate):</b> Facilities: _____ IT: _____ Keyholder/Security: _____ Vendor: _____			

## "Pro tip"

On a "Blue Sky" day, paste this template to a document and use your favorite AI assistant with a prompt specific to your business. You can be as specific as naming your business and its location.

Here is a generic prompt example: Use this dependency list template to assist with preparation for an extended power outage, take on my role as a restaurant owner knowledgeable in the Incident Command System and provide me with a filled-in example considering priorities for a 72 hour expected all utilities lost scenario".

## Next Week

Week 8 - Technology, Data & Cyber Continuity

## Legislative Update

- **Florida Legislature:** reporting and planning intensified around the Governor's late-April special session call. For employers, the Chamber view is simple: *expect rapid policy movement and short lead times*—watch for any downstream impacts to elections administration, compliance timelines, and public communications.
- **Sarasota County (April 22 Transportation Workshop in Venice):** the Board held a transportation-focused workshop at the Robert L. Anderson Administration Center. Chamber takeaway: the business community benefits when future road, signal, and corridor work is communicated early—especially along *US 41* and *SR 776*, where congestion and detours can directly reduce customer access.

**What we're watching:** updates from Tallahassee as special-session items are filed and scheduled, and any Sarasota County follow-up that affects near-term traffic flow, construction sequencing, or transit reliability in the greater Venice area.

## Did You Know?

For many businesses, the first "utility failure" in a storm is actually **communications**: when power flickers, your internet modem/router and Wi-Fi often go down immediately taking card processing, phone-over-internet, and cloud tools with it. A simple battery backup (UPS) on your network gear can buy you critical time to communicate, process limited transactions, and coordinate staff—especially during widespread outages.

**Local example (Venice):** a small retail or café operation near downtown or on the Island of Venice can stay functional during brief neighborhood outages by keeping Wi-Fi and a phone charging station up on a UPS—so staff can still message employees, post a status update for customers, and run limited transactions (cash/manual receipts) while waiting on full restoration.

- Put your **modem/router + a phone charger** on a UPS (and label the outlets so staff can plug into the right one).
- Create a "no-internet" plan: **cash-only**, manual receipts, or a mobile hotspot—then practice it once.
- Make sure key staff are subscribed to **AlertSarasota** and City storm updates so access restrictions and re-entry rules don't catch you off-guard.