

Definity-G(x) Demystified:
By Walt Medak

It's time to talk a little bit about planning for a disaster, and what to do if one does happen. We believe the best thing you can do to protect yourself is to have a good maintenance contract with a reliable and experienced company, such as Walt Medak & Associates, Inc. In addition to that however, there are a number of things that you can do to prepare yourself for any situation that might come up.

The easiest way to recover from a disaster is to prevent one from happening in the first place. The single, most important thing that can be done to protect your phone system is to make sure you are using a quality, properly sized uninterruptible power system (UPS). This not only will provide power to the switch in the event of a commercial power failure, but more importantly it will protect the equipment from power surges and spikes that could otherwise damage sensitive electronic equipment. Depending on the demands of your particular business, a UPS that provides an hour of backup time might be more than adequate. Other businesses or institutions that demand 24/7 phone service might have a larger UPS that can provide power for several hours, or a smaller UPS that only provides power for enough time to start a generator that could provide power for days if necessary.

Another good idea is to have a supply of spare parts available in case something does happen and equipment in the switch does get damaged. This is often referred to as a "crash kit". What you would have in your crash kit depends on what you would consider to be critical to your operation. Obviously, a full set of common control circuit packs in the case of the Definity systems would be a good idea. If your business literally depends on your system to be running at all times, spare trunk boards would be a good idea, whether DS1 or analog. Station circuit packs would be good as well. This can be taken to the extreme. One customer we have worked with not only has replacement circuit packs for every pack in their system, but in some cases has multiple replacements, and even has a complete cabinet ready to install in the case of a major disaster.

Another good idea is to have a copy of your translations saved in an off-site location. In the case of the Definity systems, that would mean having a spare, or several spare flashcards and rotating them. How often you would rotate them would obviously depend on how many changes you make to the programming on your system. In the case of the newer S-class servers, backups can be done to a network drive. Depending on your particular setup, that network drive might be in a completely different location, or a backup could be done from your data network, and whatever backup media is used could be stored off-site.

Something that is often overlooked is just how prone the system may be to water damage. If the system is installed in a nice, clean equipment room with some kind of dry fire-suppression system, you're very lucky. Often times however, phone systems are relegated to a back corner in a closet or basement. In those types of locations the systems are more susceptible to water not only from outside the building leaking in, but also from the buildings own water pipes. Also, older air conditioning systems were prone to dripping water. If the system is installed in such a location, building a cover of some sort that would prevent water from dripping on the switch would be a great idea. Obviously,

the switch needs a fresh supply of air to keep from overheating, so make sure to leave plenty of room around the switch for airflow. Finally, for those systems that have air filters, it is critical to keep them clean to maintain an adequate flow of air through the system.