

## What You Need in Place Before the Real Work Starts

A strong response does not begin with flashing alerts and a war room. It begins with structure. Knowing how you will coordinate, communicate, and contain a threat before it happens turns a crisis into a recoverable event. This checklist helps you evaluate your organization's true incident response readiness and reveals where preparation ends and guesswork begins.

### How Prepared Are You to Respond Quickly and Effectively?

Check all that apply. These are the real markers of incident response maturity.

- ☐ **We have an approved and current incident response plan.**  
Not theoretical and not a draft. It is a real plan, owned by someone and reviewed regularly.
- ☐ **Everyone in the plan knows their role.**  
IR doesn't work if people are reading their responsibilities for the first time mid-incident.
- ☐ **We've identified our most critical systems, apps, and data.**  
When time is tight, you need to know what to prioritize. Not everything gets saved at once.
- ☐ **We have defined clear thresholds for escalation.**  
Does your team know what qualifies as a security incident and when to initiate incident response?
- ☐ **We know who to contact when external support is needed.**  
Law enforcement, legal counsel, forensics teams, and cybersecurity partners are not numbers you want to search for under pressure.
- ☐ **Our backups are validated, secure, and logically separated.**  
It's not just about having backups. It's about knowing they're going to work after an attack.
- ☐ **We've run a tabletop or simulation in the last 12 months.**  
Testing your plan in a controlled environment is the only way to see if it holds up under pressure.
- ☐ **We maintain a current contact list for key vendors and third parties.**  
IR often involves supply chain or service provider coordination. Old lists = delays.

#### What This Means

If you checked every box here, your incident response plan is not just written; it is active and effective. If you missed a few, you are not alone. ATS helps organizations build response strategies that hold up when things go sideways, plans that are followed, not filed.

When you're ready to build resilience, not just a reactive response—let's talk.

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