

Plan a small backup restore test

Turn a backup status into a useful recovery conversation, with a controlled test and a written result.

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BEFORE YOU START

Arrange the test with the system and data owners. Choose a non-sensitive sample and an authorised test location that will not overwrite live work.

01 Define a realistic question

Choose one business scenario, such as recovering a mistakenly deleted working document. Record which system, file version and date the business would need back.

Ask the data owner how much work could reasonably be recreated and how long the team could work without the data. Record these as targets to discuss, not as promises from the backup product.

02 Arrange a controlled restore

Ask IT to confirm that the selected data is covered, that the required restore point exists, and that access to the backup and test destination is authorised.

Have IT restore the sample to the agreed separate destination. Keep existing production files intact. Time the test and record any permission, dependency or recovery-key obstacles without recording secrets.

03 Check usability and follow up

Have the data owner open the recovered sample and confirm the expected contents and version. Note the result and actual elapsed time; a completed job alone is not this check.

Assign fixes for any gap, agree the next test date and have IT remove the temporary copy under the applicable retention rules. Include backup separation and access protection in the wider review.

Your practical checklist

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- ☐ Data owner and IT approval recorded
- ☐ Sample, restore point and separate destination agreed
- ☐ Live data protected from overwrite
- ☐ Recovered contents checked by the data owner
- ☐ Elapsed time and obstacles recorded
- ☐ Gaps, cleanup owner and next test date agreed

Record the next action

System / sample / restore point / authorised destination

Target time, actual time and result

Gap, action owner and next test date

One successful test covers only the sample and conditions tested. File sync, retention and backup can have different purposes; confirm your actual service scope and recovery dependencies.

OFFICIAL SOURCES & FURTHER READING

CISA and partners: [StopRansomware guide \(2023\)](#)

NIST: [small business information security fundamentals](#)

Links open the official source. Web edition: compurep.co.za/guides/backup-restore-check