**Key Elements of Disaster/Emergency Planning**

##### Preparedness, Response, Recovery & Prevention/Mitigation

Disaster/emergency planning for records and information should be a planned approach for the prevention of records and information loss, preparedness and response to the emergency events affecting records and information, recovery of records and information, and necessary processes and equipment for business continuity following the event.

The recovery phase includes the implementation of short-term activities that restore vital records and information while restoring normal business operating procedures and practices. This phase includes assessing damage, stabilization and salvage techniques, restoration of records, information and equipment, and resumption of operations.

The prevention/mitigation phase involves: establishing a vital records program, completing risk management processes, and developing a disaster prevention plan.

The four primary phases are:

1. **Preparedness** - First, prepare to protect yourself, others and items of great importance in the event an emergency/disaster occurs.
2. **Response** - When there is an actual occurrence, administer first aid or get medical attention for victims if necessary. Attend to other emergency procedures that must take place in order to lessen the impact.
3. **Recovery** - After things are under control, begin the clean up or repair any damage and if necessary, call in professional restoration services.
4. **Mitigation** - Finally, ask how did this disaster, accident or emergency happen and how can any problems that occurred in handling the incident be lessened.