

A temporary dental office can be a good Plan B!

by John E. Reese III, DMD

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You see them on the news almost daily — natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and wildfires. Even though we may have a warning about their arrival that can save our lives, we are powerless to stop their path of destruction.

We have seen devastation of epic proportions in the United States this year, especially from tornadoes in Missouri and Alabama. They have not only claimed hundreds of lives, but have caused billions of dollars in damage to property. While some things can be rebuilt and replaced, some victims of natural disasters have their lives irreparably altered. Many of our colleagues have experienced these disasters firsthand.

Ask yourself what *you* would do if *your* dental office — the place where you have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars, along with your “blood, sweat, and tears” — were suddenly demolished? Or more commonly, what if there were a fire or a waterline break that rendered your office unusable?



As I know from my own personal experience, even a small disaster, such as a fire caused by a paper shredder malfunction, can prevent patient care for weeks on end! Hopefully, your insurance will cover the cost of repairing your damage and replace some of your lost income, but where will your patients go? It is a



commonly known fact that the value of a dental practice begins to deteriorate very rapidly when the doctor is unavailable. Every day that your office is nonfunctional costs you in more ways than one!

So — what is your Plan B? How will you continue to serve the needs of your patients and pay your staff, your overhead, and yourself if you have no place to provide your dental services?

The faster you can resume operations, the better it is for everyone, so the answer may be a temporary dental office. With a temporary dental office, you can continue practicing with little interruption while the damaged office is being repaired. This not only allows you to continue to fulfill your obligations, but it also speeds up the process of repair and recovery, which helps the insurance company mitigate its losses, making it a win-win for everyone!

Temporary dental offices come in a variety of configurations and can be rented on a weekly basis. The ideal arrangement would be for the temporary office to be deliv-

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ered and set up at your original location so that patients can continue to come to a familiar location. In all cases of disaster, the goal is to return to normal as soon as possible so everyone can get on with their lives. This is especially true in a major disaster because it helps speed the sense of recovery for the victims.

Disasters are not the only reason to use for a temporary dental office. They are especially valuable in the case of new construction or office remodeling. Many doctors avoid remodeling their offices — even though some are in desperate need of it — because they can't afford to close the office during construction, or they don't want to go through the trauma of trying to continue to work while construction is underway.

In the case of new construction, the doctor can begin seeing patients in the new location before the office is complete. This also means the doctor can begin earning income sooner and build up a patient base before the “doors are open.” The income generated in the temporary dental office can help alleviate the stress caused by delays in construction completion, which are all too typical. In these times of increasing difficulty in obtaining financing for a new office, the ability to begin earning income sooner can prove to be a huge benefit in gaining loan approval.

Using a temporary dental office also allows cost savings and increased efficiency on the part of the building contractors. In a typical remodel, the doctor hires a contractor who does the majority of the work at nights and on weekends. This not only increases the time it takes to complete the project; it also significantly increases the cost. Even with the attempts to do most of the work while the office is not operational, some things must be done during normal business hours and may necessitate closing the office completely.

The advantages to operating in a temporary office during any type of construction are enormous because everyone can do what they do best without interrupting the functions of the others. Everyone can achieve the maximum possible efficiency and effectiveness, thereby reducing the cost and time to complete the project. When you add the income generated in the temporary office into the equation, it makes renting one to use during construction a home run! **DE**

John E. Reese III, DMD, graduated from the Medical University of South Carolina in 1988. In January 2001, he founded Dental Access Carolina LLC, a mobile dental practice. When its success was proven, he designed his own mobile clinic and temporary dental offices and now markets them internationally. To learn more, please visit www.dentalaccess.com.

