

Have an Emergency Plan in Place
By Joe Bunn
For Mobile Beat Magazine

You know how you go into a large building and blow off those signs that tell you where to go in case of an emergency? Or how about the flight attendants that you ignore on every flight that you've ever flown? They are telling you what to do in case of an EMERGENCY! You should probably pay attention (or at least pretend to)! I'm not here to scold you or chastise you though, I'm here to help you. As a DJ company owner, whether you have one DJ or twenty, you must have an emergency plan.

I won't go into all of the details, but I have spoken about my biggest nightmare gig before at a couple of DJ conferences. To sum it up, I was picked up in a golf cart on an island that doesn't allow cars. I was told that the island was flooded, but that the cart would make it through. What they didn't factor in was adding me at 170 pounds and several hundred pounds of gear. Long story short-the cart stalls, then goes, and my entire DJ rig dumps off the back into a swamp...two hours before my wedding gig. YIKES! Talk about a disaster.

So what did I do next? Well, I was able to salvage a couple of things, but I also had emergency things in the one bag that I had on my back, my "Emergency Kit" if you will. So what saved this gig? For one, I had my phone in my pocket with the Mobile Beat Top 200 in a playlist, as well as a huge 160GB iPod classic with almost my entire catalog in it. My mixer still worked (sort of) so I was able to crossfade between those two sources. Was I able to beat mix? No, but nobody seemed to mind. I also lost my wireless mic, but guess what was in the DJ backpack? A trusty corded Shure SM58. And all of this went through one Bose L1 tower and one B1 bass bin that I was able to dry out before the gig. Not only did the guests and bride and groom have a blast, not one of them knew anything was wrong until they read my blog the week after the wedding!

So, that's my personal emergency plan, but what about for those of you with multiple DJs. What if a DJ gets sick or has an accident on the way to the show? Do you have an emergency plan to make sure that your client is taken care of? Two summers ago, I was sitting in a movie theatre with my two sons and I get an urgent "CALL ME" text from one of my best DJs. I tell my guys to leave me alone on the weekends unless they really need something for their show, and so I knew this was bad. It turns out that he had pulled a back muscle and was laying face down on his kitchen floor. Not only could he not move, but he couldn't load his gear or get to his gig. This could be a HUGE problem if you don't have an emergency plan! But what did I do? I walked out of the theatre, looked at the calendar on my iPhone and figured out exactly who was not working that day and then I started going down the list calling each one until I found an open DJ. I said "Suit up man, Greg is hurt, and I need you to cover his gig". Without flinching, he goes "I'm on the way". The other way to insure that you could cover a gig is to always leave one of your DJs open and make them the "On-Call" guy for that weekend. Now, how does the replacement DJ

know what their first dance is, who is giving a toast, etc.? That part is simple! You can either give your DJs the master login for your DJ booking software (Ewebmin, DJIntelligence, DJEventPlanner, etc.) or just email them the information they need on the way to the gig. At the end of the day, my “backup DJ” made it to that gig, on time, ready to go, dressed the part, and even though the bride was disappointed that Greg couldn’t make it, my guy still did an amazing job and everyone had a blast! Save!

The bottom line is this, things can and will go wrong, in this business and every business. Be prepared for the worst, don’t panic, and do whatever it takes to pull off the show. I’m sure you all have “war stories” of your own and I hope you’ll share them with me in February at MBLV.