

CYBERNEWS

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MONSOON SEASON

Is your computer ready?

Monsoon season is upon us, and for your computer this is a dangerous time. Your computer needs electricity the way that the human body needs blood. It courses through every single piece of hardware. Without it, your computer can do nothing. However, just like an individual's blood pressure, sudden drops and surges in electricity can cause severe and harmful damage to your computers "heart" (hard drive), vital organs (internal hardware) or even its "brain" (central processor). The following precautions will help you keep your computer "healthy":

BACKUPS: The most important precaution against *any* risk of data loss is a full, up-to-date backup. Tape backups or Zip drives are the wisest form of insurance for your computer, and are very inexpensive (\$150.00 or less). This will protect you against system "crashes" due to electrical spikes, blackouts, water damage, etc. Make sure to keep a copy of your backup in a safe (off site) location, such as a safe deposit box.

SURGE PROTECTOR MYTH: Most likely, you have a power strip/surge protector on your system. All components plug into this strip. It is a common myth that these small strips will protect your system from serious electrical damage. "Surge protectors" provide only *limited* protection for your system against electrical "noise". You've spent several thousand dollars on your computer. Are you going to trust a \$10 power strip to keep it safe?

TELEPHONE LINE DANGER: One potential threat to your computer which most often goes unnoticed is your modem connection. Surges and power fluctuations can hit your system through your phone line and cause serious damage. Make sure you have telephone line protection. The best phone line protection (besides disconnecting your modem) is through a battery backup.

SHUT IT ALL DOWN: Many of our clients are on networks and have made it a habit to keep the computers on all the time. Monsoon season is the exception to the rule. Whenever a violent storm is expected, your safest strategy is to turn off all computers and disconnect your modems at the end of the day.



Monsoons can severely harm an unprotected computer

BATTERY BACKUPS: A single power outage is not as damaging to your computer as the extreme surges and drops in power that occur during a blackout, brownout, or just your ordinary lightning storm. Your computer is very sensitive to power fluctuations - protect yourself against this. Uninterrupted Power Supplies (UPS) are available at most any computer store or office supply store. Triplite, APC and "Blackout Busters" are all excellent brands, and most retail for under \$100.00. Ratings of "200" or "300" are sufficient for your computer, but don't plug your monitor or printer through these backups - they add extra drain to the battery.

TIME FOR YOUR CHECKUP: For those savvy Bryant Enterprises clients who already have a battery backup (your wisdom and foresight is commendable!) it's time to make sure your UPS is working as expected. Take a moment to verify that the power cord from your computer goes into the battery backup, not the wall. Now, simply unplug the UPS from the wall and turn on your computer. You should hear a steady series of beeps, but the computer should start up. After a minute or two, shut down your computer and plug the UPS back into the wall.

These precautions can save you a great deal of frustration and loss. Follow them, and have a *great* summer!

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