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CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANNING

FOUNDATIONS OF CONTINUITY PLANNING

Continuity planning is an effort to document the existence of, and seek the capability to continue essential functions during a wide range of potential emergencies. Risk management is a process to identify, control, and minimize the impact of uncertain events. This process provides information to decision makers regarding potential risks, readiness, and options for risk mitigation. Proper budgeting and planning can help organizations provide the critical continuity resources necessary to continue performing essential functions before, during, and after an event.

Continuity Plan Phases:

- 1) Readiness and Preparedness
- 2) Activation
- 3) Continuity Operations
- 4) Reconstitution

BASIC OUTLINE FOR CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP)

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Organization Name
- Mission Statement
- Primary Operations Facility and Secondary Locations
- What are the most important functions or services that your organization performs?
 - **Essential Functions** – limited set of organization level functions that should be continued throughout or resumed rapidly after a disruption of normal activities

ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES AND RELOCATION

- Does your organization have any essential employees?
 - *Essential Employees would be designated to work when an office closing is authorized – would the employee be required to work in the event of a hurricane?*
 - *If there is no one in your organization that would be considered an Essential Employee, then consider what the organization would do if there was a short-term disruption in operations.*

- **Human Resources** – Does your organization have policies, plans and procedures that address human resources needs during a continuity event, such as guidance on pay, leave, work scheduling, benefits, telework, hiring, authorities, etc.?
 - **Delegations of Authority** – *identification by position of the authorities for making policy determinations and decisions*
- **Continuity Facilities** – *Location(s) from which critical positions may operate during a continuity event – these may include one or multiple facilities or virtual offices from which to continue essential operations.*
- **Continuity Communications** – *The systems that support full connectivity among leadership, internal elements, and other organizations to perform essential functions during a continuity event.*
- **Consider a chart showing which positions handle which essential functions:**

Function	Title/ Position	Name	Telephone Numbers	Additional Information
[Insert Mission Essential Function Here]	[Position or Title]		[Phone Number]	[Insert other organization-required information, i.e. duty station and addresses]
	[Position or Title]		[Phone Number]	

- Would anyone in the organization relocate or would they all be instructed to go home?
- If there are employees in the organization that would relocate, please consider where they would relocate to – do you have a designated continuity facility?
- Who in your organization would be responsible for coordinating the relocation and making sure all relocating employees were accounted for?
- What would the relocating employees need to take with them to be able to fulfill essential functions?
- What capabilities would the organization need to be able to continue operations at the continuity facility?
- What would be expected of employees who do not relocate (*this may be all of your employees*)? Who should they contact? How often should they check-in? Are they required to work from home?
- Who from the organization would be responsible for communicating with employees who did not relocate? What method of communication would be used?
- Which organizations and offices would need to be notified regarding office closure, relocation, activation, etc., and who would be responsible for relaying that information?
- If the primary location becomes uninhabitable (think long-term), who will be responsible for procuring office space for continued operations?

- Who is responsible for compiling an After Action Report and where will the documentation be maintained?
- Does the organization utilize hazard/threat warning systems? If so, which one(s)?

ESSENTIAL RECORDS

- **Essential Records** refer to those documents, records, information systems, and applications that are critically important to the continued functioning or rebuilding of an organization during and after an emergency.
- Where are the organization's essential records/documents located and what safeguards are in place to protect the records?
- What information systems and applications are essential to the organizations continued operations?
- Has the organization conducted an essential records and database risk assessment? When and what were the results?
- Who is responsible for the maintenance of essential records?

BUDGET

- Does the organization have a long-term strategic plan that incorporates a continuity budget? If so, where can a copy of the strategic plan be located?
- Who will be responsible for oversight of contracts during an emergency (Name/title/contact info)?

PLAN MAINTENANCE & TRAINING

- How often is a review of the plan performed (at least annually)?
- Who performs the review of the plan, and where are the documents confirming the review maintained?
- Does the organization have a Multi-Year Strategy and Program Management Plan? If so, provide the location where it can be found.
- Which organizations, agencies or employee groups will receive the Continuity of Operations Plan after each revision or as needed?
- Does your organization have a test, training, and exercise (TT&E) program?
 - Training provides the skills and familiarizes personnel with procedures and tasks in the event of an emergency.
 - Tests and exercises serve to assess and validate all components of continuity plans, policies, procedures, systems, and facilities.

ORDERS OF SUCCESSION

Provisions for the assumption of senior positions/duties during an emergency in the event those officials are unavailable to execute their duties.

- List all leadership positions requiring orders of succession, including the organization head and other key positions
- Where is a copy of the organization's orders of succession located?
- Who is responsible for ensuring succession orders are up-to-date and distributed?
- Who will the orders be distributed to and what distribution method will be used?
- Provide the organizations orders of succession:
 - *At least 3 positions deep, where possible, to ensure organization's ability to manage and direct its essential functions and operations*
 - *Geographically dispersed if feasible*
 - *Described by position/title rather than names of individuals holding office*
- Does the organization have a Delegation of Authority document? If so, where is it located?
- Have the individuals who are expected to assume authorities been trained? Please outline the training methods utilized and where those records are located.