Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

INSERT BUSINESS NAME

Updated: INSERT DATE UPDATED

*This template is designed to serve as a guide for developing a basic Continuity of Operations Plan. It is only as useful as the information that is populated within and how well it is trained. Customize any aspects of the plan to best meet the needs of your organization to continue operations during and after an emergency.*

**Instructions:**

* Page 1 – Replace “INSERT BUSINESS NAME” with the name of your business or organization.
* Page 1 – Update the “INSERT DATE UPDATED” with the last date the plan was completed or updated.
* Page 2 – The table of contents field can be automatically updated by selecting “Table of Contents” and clicking “Update Table”.
* Page 2 – Select the footer and replace “INSERT BUSINESS NAME” with the name of your business or organization.
* The remainder of the template provides descriptions about each section and tables that can be easily populated with information from your organization. Customize the tables to and content to best suit your needs.
* Delete this text box once the plan is complete.

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**Point of Contact & Approval**

**Continuity of Operations Plan Points of Contact:**

| **Name** | **Title** | **Contact Information****(cell phone, email)** |
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**Mission statement:**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**Introduction & Purpose**

*This template is designed as a guideline for developing a basic Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The template should be modified to meet organizational needs and requirements. Supplemental materials (e.g. contact information, Memorandums of Understanding/Agreement (MOU/MOAs), evacuation maps, alternative facilities information, etc.) should be included, as needed.*

An effective COOP will address emergencies from an all-hazards approach in order to allow the entity to protect its own assets and people while providing an effective mechanism for determining how to resume service following a disaster. Continuity planning facilitates the performance of essential functions during situations that may disrupt normal operations. The goal of continuity planning is to reduce the consequence of any disruptive event to a manageable level, but specific objectives of a particular organization’s continuity plan may vary depending on its mission, functions, capabilities, overall continuity strategy. In general, continuity plans are designed to:

1. Minimize loss of life, injury, and property damage.
2. Mitigate the duration, severity, or pervasiveness of disruptions that do occur.
3. Achieve the timely and orderly resumption of essential functions and the return to normal operations.
4. Protect essential facilities, equipment, records, and assets.
5. Be executable with or without warning.
6. Meet the operational requirements of the respective organization. Continuity plans may need to be operational within minutes of activation, depending on the essential function or service, but certainly should be operational no later than 12-hours after activation.
7. Meet the sustainment needs of the respective organization. An organization may need to plan for sustained continuity operations for up to 30-days or longer, depending on resources, support relationships, and the respective continuity strategy adopted.
8. Ensure the continuous performance of essential functions and operations during an emergency, including those such as pandemic influenza that require additional considerations beyond traditional continuity planning.
9. Provide an integrated and coordinated continuity framework that takes into consideration other relevant organizational, governmental, and private sector continuity plans and procedures.

This basic Continuity of Operations Plan template has been developed in accordance with the National Security Presidential Directive 51 and the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 20 (May 2007). The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with non-federal partners, has developed Continuity Guidance Circular 1 (CGC 1 Jan. 21, 2009), Continuity Guidance for Non-Federal Entities. The purpose of this guidance document is to provide direction for the development of continuity plans for non-federal entities. FEMA has also produced the Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan Template Instructions, which provides instructions for developing a COOP Plan according to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Headquarters Continuity of Operations (COOP) Guidance Document, dated April 2004.

**Key Staff & Responsibilities**

Continuity of leadership is critical to ensure continuity of essential functions. Organizations should provide for a clear line of succession in the absence of existing leadership and the necessary delegations of authority to ensure that succeeding leadership has the legal and other authorities to carry out their duties.

**Order of Succession:**

Such orders of succession are an essential part of an organization’s continuity of operations plan to ensure that organization personnel know who assumes the authority and responsibility of the organization’s leadership if that leadership is incapacitated or becomes otherwise unavailable during a continuity situation. Orders should be of sufficient depth to ensure that the organization can manage and direct its essential functions and operations throughout any emergency.

| **Order of Succession** | **Name** | **Title** | **Contact Information****(cell phone, email)** |
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**Delegation of Authority:**

To ensure a rapid response to any emergency requiring the implementation of its continuity plan, an organization should delegate authorities for making policy determinations and other decisions, at the field, satellite, and other organizational levels, as appropriate. It is vital to clearly establish delegations of authority, so that all organization personnel know who has the right to make key decisions during a continuity situation. Generally, a predetermined delegation of authority will take effect when normal channels of direction and control are disrupted and will lapse when those channels are reestablished.

Identify three people that will have authority for each of the following categories:

1. Policy decisions
2. Re-delegate functions or activities
3. Ability to enter into contracts or agreements
4. Leave or travel approval
5. Purchasing authorization

| **Delegation** | **Name** | **Title** | **Contact Information****(cell phone, email)** |
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**COOP Planning Team:**

The COOP Planning Team leads the planning efforts of organizational operations from several days to weeks in the future.

| **Order of Succession** | **Name** | **Title** | **Contact Information****(cell phone, email)** |
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**COOP Relocation Team:**

The COOP Relocation Team will go to the alternate site and get it ready for the operation of essential functions. This team should be made up of employees with key roles and responsibilities.

| **Role** | **Name** | **Title** | **Contact Information****(cell phone, email)** |
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**COOP Support Team:**

The COOP Support Team serves as supplemental staff and will be awaiting assignments. Team members may be working from home or staying home until told where to report.

| **Role** | **Name** | **Title** | **Contact Information****(cell phone, email)** |
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**Mission Essential Functions**

Mission Essential Functions are those functions that enable an organization to provide vital services and sustain an economic base during an emergency.

The identification and prioritization of mission essential functions is a prerequisite for continuity planning, because they establish the planning parameters that drive an organization’s efforts in all other planning and preparedness areas. Resources and staff will likely be limited during an event that disrupts normal activities and that necessitates the activation of continuity plans, preventing the organization from performing all of its normal functions or services. Therefore, a subset of those functions that are determined to be critical activities are defined as the organization’s essential functions. These essential functions are then used to identify supporting tasks and resources that should be included in the organization’s continuity planning process.

Identify what needs to be done during the emergency and what can be suspended. It is helpful to list all your department services, tasks, or products that you provide and place them in three categories:

1. Must be done during the emergency to sustain operations
2. Can be suspended for a day to a week
3. Can be suspended for a week to a month

During the emergency you will only be providing your efforts in that first category. As the situation stabilizes over a time period you will start to include tasks from the 2nd category and then the 3rd category.

| **Category** | **Essential Function** | **Staff Responsible** |
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**Facilities Continuity (Primary and Alternate)**

Facilities are the locations where essential functions are performed by leadership and staff. Organizations should have adequate, separate locations to ensure execution of their functions. Physical dispersion should allow for easy transfer of function responsibility in the event of a problem in one location.

As part of continuity planning you should identify continuity facilities; alternate uses for existing facilities; and, as appropriate, virtual office options including telework. Risk assessments should be conducted on these facilities to provide reliable and comprehensive data to inform risk mitigation decisions that will allow entities to protect assets, systems, networks, and functions while determining the likely causes and impacts of any disruption. The alternate site should not be in the same hazard zone as the primary site.

The alternate site may be a branch office of your primary department and you have arrangements to share office space or a hotel conference area where you have made previous arrangements or agreements. Each department at a different location will be its own primary site and have alternate sites.

| **Site** | **Name** | **Address** | **Point of Contact** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Primary |  |  |  |
| Alternate |  |  |  |

When determining the need to move to an alternate facility, consider the following:

* Does staff need to operate on site, off site or remotely?
* Does the alternate site have adequate infrastructure to conduct operations (i.e. internet access, phone access, restrooms, etc.)?
* Do you have staff who can serve in other capacities? If so, how many and what are the skill sets?
* What is the number of staff needed at the alternate site after the emergency for the first category of the prioritized core functions?
* What is the number of staff needed at the alternate site after the emergency for the second category of the prioritized core functions?
* What is the number of staff needed at the alternate site after the emergency for the third category of the prioritized core functions?
* Who provides IT Support at the alternate site?

**Communications:**

The ability to communicate is critical to daily operations and absolutely essential in a crisis. All entities should identify the communication requirements needed to perform their essential functions during both routine and continuity conditions. This may include internet, two-way radio, telephone, etc.

| **Methods of Communications** | **Responsible to Initiate** | **Timeline** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Primary: |  |  |
| Alternate: |  |  |
| Tertiary: |  |  |

**Vital Records Management:**

“Vital records” refers to information systems and applications, electronic and hardcopy documents, references, and records needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation. A critical element of a viable continuity plan and program includes the identification, protection, and availability of electronic and hardcopy documents, references, records, information systems, and data management software and equipment (including classified and other sensitive data) needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation. Personnel should have access to and be able to use these records and systems to perform essential functions and to reconstitute back to normal organization operations. Organizations should pre-position and regularly update duplicate vital records to ensure performance of essential functions.

**A vital records program should be incorporated into the overall continuity of operations plan, and it needs a clear authority to include:**

* Policies.
* Authorities.
* Procedures.

**Organizations should conduct vital records and database risk assessment to:**

* Identify the risks involved if vital records are retained in their current locations and media, and the difficulty of reconstituting those records if they are destroyed.
* Identify offsite storage locations and requirements.
* Determine if alternative storage media is available.
* Determine requirements to duplicate records and provide alternate storage locations to provide readily available vital records under all conditions.

**A vital records plan packet should be developed and maintained. The packet should include:**

* A hard copy or electronic list of key organization personnel and disaster staff with up-to-date telephone numbers.
* A vital records inventory with the precise locations of vital records.
* Updates to the vital records.
* Necessary keys or access codes.
* Continuity-facility locations.
* Access requirements and lists of sources of equipment necessary to access the records (this may include hardware and software, microfilm readers, Internet access, and/or dedicated telephone lines).
* Lists of records-recovery experts and vendors.
* A copy of the organization’s continuity of operations plan.

| **Vital Record** | **Description** | **Form (Electronic or Hard Copy)** | **Data Backup or Storage Locations** |
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**Essential Equipment - Needed at Alternate Site:**

This is a list of office equipment that is necessary to conduct your essential mission functions and must either be already located at the alternate site or should be transported there as you leave your office. If it is not possible or convenient to pre-position or move equipment, list a location where it can be used or acquired.

| **Key On-Site Supplies & Equipment** | **Point of Contact/Alternate Point of Contact** | **Pre-Positioned At Alternate Site (Y/N)** |
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**Key Contacts & Local Resources:**

Identify resources that are necessary for continuing operations and can strengthen your response to emergencies (i.e. police, fire station, hospitals, utilities, vendors, etc.).

| **Resource** | **Phone** | **Address** |
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**Devolution of Control and Direction**

Devolution is the capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from an organization’s primary operating staff and facilities to other organization employees and facilities, and to sustain that operational capability for an extended period.

Devolution planning supports overall continuity planning and addresses the full spectrum of threats and all-hazards emergency events that may render an organization’s leadership or staff unavailable to support, or incapable of supporting, the execution of the organization’s essential functions from either its primary location or its alternate location(s). Organizations should develop a devolution option for continuity, to address how those organizations will identify and conduct its essential functions during an increased threat situation or in the aftermath of a catastrophic emergency.

At a minimum a devolution plan should:

1. Include the following elements of a viable continuity of operations capability: program plans and procedures, budgeting and acquisitions, essential functions, orders of succession, delegations of authority, continuity communications, vital records management, human capital, TT&E, and reconstitution operations.
2. Identify prioritized essential functions for devolution, define tasks that support those essential functions, and determine the necessary resources to facilitate those functions’ immediate and seamless transfer to the devolution site.
3. Include a roster that identifies fully equipped and trained personnel who will be stationed at the designated devolution site and who will have the authority to perform essential functions and activities when the devolution option of the continuity plan is activated.
4. Identify what would likely activate or “trigger” the devolution option.
5. Specify how and when direction and control of organization operations will be transferred to and from the devolution site.
6. List the necessary resources (e.g., equipment and materials) to facilitate the performance of essential functions at the devolution site.
7. Establish and maintain reliable processes and procedures for acquiring the resources necessary to continue essential functions and to sustain those operations for extended periods.
8. Establish and maintain a capability to restore or reconstitute organization authorities to their pre-event status upon termination of devolution.

Devolution plans, responsibilities, and capabilities should include all elements of continuity planning including tests, annual training of devolution staff, and exercises to ensure devolution capabilities are prepared and capable of performing an organization’s essential functions.

*\*The Devolution Plan should be included as an attachment to the Continuity of Operations Plan.*

**Reconstitution**

Reconstitution is the process by which surviving and/or replacement organization personnel resume normal operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility. Reconstitution embodies the ability of an organization to recover from an event that disrupts normal operations and consolidates the necessary resources so that the organization can resume its operations as a fully functional entity.

Organizations should identify and outline a plan to return to normal operations once organization heads or their successors determine that reconstitution operations for resuming normal business operations can be initiated. Organizations should:

1. Provide an executable plan for transitioning back to efficient normal operational status from continuity of operations status, once a threat or disruption has passed.
2. Coordinate and preplan options for organization reconstitution regardless of the level of disruption that originally prompted the organization to implement its continuity of operations plan. These options should include moving operations from the continuity or devolution location to either the original operating facility or, if necessary, to a new operating facility.
3. Outline the necessary procedures, whether under a standard continuity of operations scenario or under a devolution scenario, for conducting a smooth transition from the relocation site to a new facility.

Implementation actions associated with reconstitution include:

1. Informing all personnel that the actual emergency, or the threat of an emergency, no longer exists, and instructing personnel on how to resume normal operations.
2. Supervising either an orderly return to the normal operating facility or a move to another temporary facility or to a new permanent operating facility.
3. Verifying that all systems, communications, and other required capabilities are available and operational and that the organization is fully capable of accomplishing all essential functions and operations at the new or restored facility.
4. Conducting an after-action review of the effectiveness of the continuity of operations plans and procedures, identifying areas for improvement from the review, documenting these in the organization’s CAP and then developing a remedial action plan as soon as possible after the reconstitution.
5. Identifying which (if any) records were affected by the incident, and working with the records office (or similar function in the organization) to ensure an effective transition or recovery of vital records and databases and other records that had not been designated as vital records, as part of the overall reconstitution effort.

*\*The Reconstitution Plan should be included as an attachment to the Continuity of Operations Plan.*

**Test, Train, and Exercise (TT&E)**

The COOP should be updated at least quarterly or when your staff changes roles or responsibilities. All employees should be trained on COOP contents and should participate in annual table top exercises or drills. The COOP plan should be available to all employees by hardcopy and electronic copies.

An effective TT&E program is necessary to prepare and validate their organization’s continuity capabilities and program to perform essential functions during any emergency. This requires the identification, training, and preparedness of personnel capable of performing their continuity responsibilities and implementing procedures to support the continuation of organization essential functions.

The training and exercises will provide an annual opportunity for continuity personnel to demonstrate their familiarity with continuity plans and procedures and to demonstrate the organization’s capability to continue its essential functions.

An annual exercise that incorporates the deliberate and preplanned movement of continuity personnel to an alternative facility or other continuity location should also be considered.

| **Training Type** | **Topics Covered** | **Date Completed** |
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**Attachments**

* Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)/Memorandums of Agreement (MOA)
* Reconstitution Plan
* Devolution Plan
* Maps
* Staff Rosters
* Vendors
* Resource Lists
* Other Documents