

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

Considerations to Be Taken During a Pandemic & Best Practices



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Continuity of Operations Plan

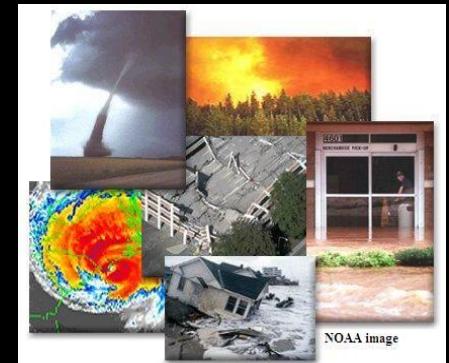
- What is COOP planning?
- Elements of a viable COOP plan
- Key considerations for COOP in pandemic
- Lessons Learned
- Best Practices
- Available training
- Resources

What is COOP Planning?

- Emergency Management vs. COOP
- Response vs. redundancy
- Plan “B” for a **“Disruption Event”**

Terms

- **BCP – Business Continuity Planning**
- **COOP – Continuity of Operations Plan**
- **COG – Continuity of Government**
- **MEF – Mission Essential Functions**
- **DRP -- Disaster Recovery Planning**
- **RTO -- Recovery Time Objective**



NOAA image

Why is COOP planning important?

- Businesses and government, like individuals, must plan and prepare
- 40% of businesses without a BCP never reopen and another 25% go out of business 1-year post-disaster (**FEMA & SBA report**)
- Government agencies that do not prepare and have a COOP cannot provide services to the community
- The faster you bounce back, the better your chances of survival

COOP = Quick Recovery

- Simple, specific, succinct, and available
 - Include only processes and services that truly impact your mission
 - Prioritize processes and services for continuity and recovery
 - Make roles of individuals explicit and clear
 - Include detailed procedures or checklists of critical actions
 - Condense and keep the plan within easy reach of key personnel
 - Have the necessary equipment, alternate site and technology to accomplish your Mission Essential Functions

Objectives of COOP Planning

- Ensure the continuous performance of mission essential functions (MEFs)
- Protect essential facilities, equipment, records, and assets
- Mitigate disruptions to operations
- Minimize loss of life and property damages

Why is a COOP so important to your organization?

- Hurricanes
- Floods
- Droughts
- Cyber threats
- Fires
- Biological
- Gas leak
- Pandemics
- Power outages
- Civil unrest
- Winter storms
- Pipe rupture or leak
- Terrorism
- Plane crash into building

“Disruption Event”

What does acronym COOP stand for?

- A. Common Operating Organizational Picture
- B. Critical Organization Operations Plan
- C. Continuity Of Operations Plan
- D Community Organization Operations Plan

Identify MEFs

- For EACH mission essential function, identify:
 - Process dependencies and personnel responsible for dependency
 - Recovery time objective (RTO*)
 - Staffing levels
 - Vital records, databases, applications, supplies, equipment, vendors, continuity management group

RTO refers to the amount of time you need to bring a system or operation back online

Criteria for MEFs

- Are there any legal or statutory requirements?
- Will the department/agency be fined, penalized, or sanctioned or face potential lawsuits?
- Does conducting this function generate revenue?
- Will public confidence be degraded?
- Is this function a dependency for another department/agency/office?
- Does the function have a pre-determined RTO?

Orders of Succession

- Orders of succession (3–6)
- Delegation of authority for designated successors
- Devolution - The transfer or delegation of power to a lower level, especially by central government to local or regional administration.



Human Capital Management

Definition:

A systematic approach to monitoring, protecting, and maximizing the effectiveness of employees in support of the mission and goals of the agency

Human Capital Management

- Procedures for communicating with and accounting for employees
- Dismissal and closure procedures
- Communication and media announcements
- Facility operations
- Pay and benefits flexibility

Continuity Facilities

Definition:

A location, other than the normal facility, used to carry out mission essential functions in a COOP situation

Continuity Facilities

Identify three continuity facilities:

- Same Campus
- Locally (5 miles)
- Regionally (50 miles)
- MOUs/MOAs/interlocal agreements
- E-Work Home Office

Which of the following is not one of the criteria for a Mission Essential Function?

- A: Are there any legal or statutory requirements?
- B: Do we have enough people to perform this Function?
- C: Will the department/agency be fined, penalized, or sanctioned or face potential lawsuits?
- D: Does conducting this function generate revenue?

Continuity Communications

- Support the execution of mission essential functions
- Provide redundancy with internal and external communications
- Identify alternate modalities of communication
- Be available within 12 hours of activation and sustainable for up to 30 days

Reconstitution

- Effect the transition from COOP status
- Coordinate and pre-plan options for the reconstitution of business operations
- Outline procedures necessary to effect a smooth transition



Testing, Training, and Exercising

- Assess and validate COOP plans, policies, and procedures
- Ensure all personnel are familiar with COOP procedures
- Train personnel to carry out essential functions
- Test and validate equipment and systems for interoperability

Plan Maintenance

- Frequency of changes required to the COOP Plan
- Designation of a plan maintenance team



Key Considerations

COOP planning during a pandemic must consider:

- How to maintain operations while accounting for employee health and limited resources.
- Identifying and protecting critical infrastructure and essential services is key to keeping communities functioning.
- Working in virtual environments requires consideration of cybersecurity measures and provides opportunities for community engagement.



Lessons Learned Related to Continuity of Operations during COVID-19 Continuity of Operations Planning for Pandemics

Potential Best Practice: Review and/or assess your organization's essential functions and personnel.

Resource: Use the FEMA Continuity Resource Toolkit and other continuity planning guides found at the link below to identify your essential functions and develop a continuity plan.

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/continuity/toolkit>

Resource: State and local government and private sector organizations who have not yet been impacted by the coronavirus should participate in a continuity of operations training to guide preparatory planning.

What is the final but continuous element of developing a COOP?

- A. Human capital management
- B: Capturing Mission Essential Functions (MEFS)
- C: Testing, training & exercises
- D: Plan maintenance

COVID-19 Best Practice Information: Continuity of Operations

- Background
- • Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) during a pandemic requires using existing continuity plans and strategies in more adaptive ways to address unique operational requirements, to include employee health, social distancing, and widespread absenteeism.
- • The following is a list of key findings and considerations for jurisdictions and communities regarding ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) operations across the country. These are best practices for consideration and do not constitute or should be considered as guidance in any way.

Critical Infrastructure Considerations for Pandemic Preparedness

- • Potential Best Practice: Identify essential workers needed to maintain the critical infrastructure services and functions Americans depend on daily.
- ○ Resource: Review the Department of Homeland Security's guidance on essential critical infrastructure workforce and actions for protecting infrastructure and the supply chain.
- • Potential Best Practice: Key critical infrastructure sectors should consider procuring supplies to include cots, sleeping bags, and food if essential workers need to shelter-in-place at work to ensure continued reliable service while avoiding exposure to the virus.

Recommendations for Local Governments Working in Virtual Environments

- • Potential Best Practice: Local governments should aim to conduct business remotely while continuing to make time-sensitive decisions.
- ○ Resource: The International City/County Management Association compiled Key Questions and Factors to Consider as Jurisdictions Shift to Virtual Governance including high- and low-tech options, paring meetings to cover essential business, and identifying and meeting legal requirements.
- ○ Mitigating Action: Incorporate established techniques for conducting successful government meetings remotely.

Recommendations for Local Governments Working in Virtual Environments

- Potential Best Practice: Kenmore, Washington, is using technology to expand virtual options to engage citizens in public meetings to maintain momentum on critical planning efforts.
- Resource: Utilize multiple venues for engaging the public to include video conferencing, recording meetings, and streaming live meetings on YouTube to facilitate public engagement.

Best Practice on Remote Working

Sarasota County Government- Enterprise Information Technology
Department

- Installed 1x Communicator on 300+ laptops for remote worker to receive calls in the county phone network. This enables the County's Contact Center to work remote, the Tax Collector to work remote, etc.
- **What is Avaya one-X Communicator?**
- Avaya one-X Communicator is a Unified Communications client that helps enterprise users manage their communications tasks by providing simple, intuitive access to all of their everyday communications tools.
- one-X Communicator can be deployed: as a standalone client; as a client that integrates with one-X Client Enablement Services, Conferencing Enterprise, and Avaya Aura Messaging or Avaya Modular Messaging; as a communications client that connects to the Avaya Communication Server 1000 (CS 1000).

Best Practice on Remote Working

Sarasota County Government- Enterprise Information Technology
Department

- Implemented an application to integrate a smartphone with the County's phone system ~ 200 smartphones.
- * Implemented a network standard for a remote worker's network.
- * Upgraded the County's internet bandwidth from 2gbps to 4gbps to better remote work.
- Potential Best Practice: Establish and practice your telework ability in advance Transition from desktop computers to laptop as much as possible

Best Practice on Remote Working

Sarasota County Government- Enterprise Information Technology
Department

- **EIT Tech Ops Details**
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- **Rolled out older laptops and current refresh laptops to more than double remote workers from 400 to 900**
- **Used Virtual Private Network (VPN) and Netmotion to support remote worker connectivity**
- **Set up Desktop as a Service (DaaS) in County Data Center for high end GIS remote workers**
- **Set up Microsoft Azure Cloud, Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) to keep users secure off County network**

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The Emergency Management Institute offers two online courses focused on continuity and resilience:

- An Introduction to Continuity of Operations: IS-1300
<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-1300>
- Introduction to Continuity of Operations Planning for Pandemic Influenzas: IS-0520
<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-520>

References & Resources

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Note: The sharing of the article above is not an endorsement of Seabeck Systems LLC products or services.

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