CONTINUITY of OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP)

*(Protecting and Planning for Your Organization, Staff, Clients, and Volunteers)*

**Institution: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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Douglas County Emergency Management prepared this publication.

***Introduction and Overview***

Natural, man-made, and technological disasters are occurring with greater frequency and greater impact than ever. Disasters can be large in scale and scope (e.g., winter storm, terrorist attack, civil disturbance) or localized emergencies affecting a single building, block, or neighborhood (e.g., building fire, active shooter incident, hazardous material exposure).

Disasters can cause significant injury or death to employees, customers, or the public, disrupt or close down operations, and/or cause physical, technological, or environmental damage.

Non-profits serve the public every day, and when disasters strike, those services and resources are often needed more than ever. Without proper planning, a disaster will most likely impact an organization’s ability to perform its mission and disrupt vital services to the community.

***Purpose of a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)***

A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is a tool that allows for the planning and preparation required to minimize the adverse impacts of a disaster and ensure continued performance of mission essential functions. This includes reducing loss of life, minimizing damage, ensuring succession of key leadership, reducing or mitigating disruptions to operations, protecting essential assets, and achieving timely recovery and resumption of regular organizational operations.

***Core Considerations***

A COOP must be able to be implemented at any time, with or without warning. The goal is to ensure the safety and security of all present and achieve the full operational capability of mission essential functions within 12 hours with the ability to sustain modified operations for up to 30 days.

When developing, testing, and exercising the COOP, consider and plan for the inevitability of change – to staffing, facilities, technology, and other factors – which will impact the successful implementation of planning efforts.

***Organizational Overview***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ORGANIZATIONAL DETAILS** | |
| Organization Name |  |
| Primary Address |  |
| City, State, Zip |  |
| Main Telephone Number |  |
| Secondary Address |  |
| City, State, Zip |  |
| **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION - DIAL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY** | |
| Police (Non-Emergency) |  |
| Fire (Non-Emergency) |  |
| Emergency Manager |  |
| Electricity Provider |  |
| Gas Provider |  |
| Water Provider |  |
| Internet Provider |  |
| Casualty Insurance Provider |  |
| Worker’s Comp Insurance Provider |  |
| Poison Information Center |  |
| Rape/Victim Services |  |
| Other (Building Management, Payroll, Bank, etc.) |  |
| Other |  |
| Other |  |

**Core Mission**

Enter the organizational mission below: ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION.

**Incident Management Team**

Identify an incident management team inclusive of organizational leadership and key staff with responsibilities including operations, programs, security, human resources, finance, legal, and information technology. This team should collectively have the resources and knowledge to develop, maintain, and implement a COOP, including regular testing, training, and evaluation of the plan.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM** | | | | |
| Name | Position | Email Address | Cell Phone # | Alternate Contact Info |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
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Plan to coordinate with building management (if applicable), neighboring businesses, and other strategic partners in and outside of the region that could support continued operations in a regional disaster.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EXTERNAL SUPPORT TEAM** | | | |
| Name | Organization | Email Address | Cell Phone # |
|  |  |  |  |
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***Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)***

***1. Essential Functions and Critical Operations***

Identifying essential functions and critical operations forms the foundation from which all other components of the plan are prioritized and developed. These functions are necessary to continue providing vital services, maintaining safety and well-being, and sustaining an economic base during an emergency. Any function not deemed to be essential, or an operation not identified as critical should be deferred until additional personnel and/or resources become available.

Complete the Function/Operation table below, listing all functions and operations needed to keep your organization operating (consider support needed for sustaining necessary staffing levels, including payroll and other routine functions). Prioritize functions/operations using the following criteria:

* Critical – function/operation cannot be delayed.
* Important – function/operation can be delayed but should be resumed as soon as possible.
* Non-essential – function/operation can be delayed until normal operations resume.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FUNCTION/OPERATION TABLE** | | |
| Function/Operation | Frequency | Priority |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
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|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |

Focusing only on those functions/operations identified as critical, complete the Essential Functions Matrix below considering staffing and resources needed (including physical, Information technology, equipment, etc.):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS MATRIX** | | | |
| Priority | Essential/Critical Functions | Staff Responsible (note Succession in next table) | Resources Needed to Sustain / Reactive Quickly |
| 1. |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |
| 6. |  |  |  |
| 7. |  |  |  |
| 8. |  |  |  |
| 9. |  |  |  |
| 10. |  |  |  |

***2. Orders of Succession***

Who’s in charge? Identify a list of individuals to sequentially assume responsibility if the primary staff person is not able to perform his/her duties. Identify orders of succession up to three deep for key positions and ensure that those identified are trained and prepared to perform these duties in an emergency.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ORDERS OF SUCCESSION** |  |
| Position Title | Successors |
|  | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
|  | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
|  | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
|  | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
|  | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

***3. Delegation of Authority:*** Who is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the agency head and other key leaders for specific purposes during an emergency? Designations of authority should document the legal authority for making key decisions, identify the programs and administrative authorities needed for effective operations, and establish capabilities to restore authorities upon termination of the event.

Examples include approving emergency policy changes, authorizing the commitment of resources, making personnel decisions, and signing contracts. Generally, pre-determined designations of authority will take effect when normal channels of direction are disrupted and terminate when these channels have resumed. Identifying this prior to an event is critical to ensure the continued operation of the organization and its essential functions.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY** | | | |
| Area of Authority | Designated Authority | Conditions | Responsibilities & Limitations |
|  | 1. |  |  |
| 2. |
| 3. |
|  | 1. |  |  |
| 2. |
| 3. |
|  | 1. |  |  |
| 2. |
| 3. |
|  | 1. |  |  |
| 2. |
| 3. |
|  | 1. |  |  |
| 2. |
| 3. |

***4. Alternate Facilities***

Alternate facilities are locations other than the normal facility used to carry out essential functions in an emergency. Alternate facilities should provide:

* Sufficient space and equipment.
* Capability to perform essential functions within 12 hours for up to 30 days.
* Logistical support and infrastructure systems.
* Communications and information technology.
* Computer equipment and software.
* Appropriate distance from the original location (Note: this may vary depending upon the incident that caused COOP activation).

In addition to the above considerations, consider the possibility of relocating within the organization (if possible) and /or allowing employees to work remotely with appropriate access to phone, email, internet, and technology. Organizations should also consider pre-positioning minimum essential equipment and supplies at the alternate facility(ies).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ALTERNATE FACILITIES** | | |
| Facility Name |  |  |
| Street Address |  |  |
| City, State, Zip |  |  |
| Telephone Number |  |  |
| Point of Contact Name |  |  |
| Telephone # |  |  |
| E-Mail Address |  |  |
| **SITE DETAILS** | | |
| Staffing Capacity |  |  |
| Equipment/Supplies in Place |  |  |
| Additional Equipment/Supplies Needed |  |  |
| Information Technology Systems |  |  |
| Anticipated Set-Up Time |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |
| Notes: |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |
| Notes: |  |  |

***5. Continuity Communications***

Continuity communications provide the capability to perform essential functions until normal operations can be resumed. This includes the equipment, resources, and access needed to:

* Support essential functions.
* Communicate internally (staff, board, volunteers).
* Connect externally with emergency management, other organizations, agencies, clients, and the public (as needed).
* Ensure access to data, systems, and services.

In the event of system failures, include a paper copy containing multiple forms of contact for key stakeholders as a COOP addendum. Consider and plan for a multi-pronged approach to post-event communication (email, phone, text, social media, website, etc.)

***6. Vital Records Management***

Effective vital records management provides for the identification, protection, and availability of files, records, and databases, which are necessary to perform essential functions and to resume normal operations after the emergency ceases. Power and internet outages in an emergency may affect access to electronic files and databases. As such, the following documents should be accessible via hard copy and electronically:

* Emergency operations records:
  + Emergency Response Plan
  + Continuity of Operations Plan
  + Crisis Communication Plan
* Organizational records:
  + Certificate of Incorporation
  + Proof of non-profit status/tax exemption
  + Bylaws
  + Deed(s) / lease(s)
  + Letterhead
  + Emergency phone numbers
* Legal/financial records:
  + Personnel
  + Payroll
  + Retirement
  + Insurance policies
  + Contracts

Items marked with an should be maintained in hard copy in a fireproof safe and stored in a portable digital storage device kept in a secure off-site location.

Cyber security and data backup should be an ongoing function to ensure the protection and integrity of data. Effective daily data management and backup can make a difference in continuity and restoration when disaster strikes.

***7. Human Resources***

People (staff and volunteers) are the greatest asset in recovering from a disaster. Organizations that promote personal and family preparedness among employees and volunteers ensure the organization’s greatest assets are protected. This can be accomplished by encouraging and supporting personal go-bags in the workplace, training in emergency preparedness, and promoting all-hazards preparedness sites such as [www.READY.gov](http://www.READY.gov).

Educate employees about all emergency plans and include them in testing this COOP and other plans. Develop a communication plan to disseminate information to staff and volunteers. Consider potential service interruptions and access issues in planning for post-emergency communication. Maintain a log of all employees, volunteers, and visitors that are onsite at any given time and include the reconciliation of this log with those accounted for post-disaster.

Address employees' and their families' health, safety, and emotional well-being by planning for appropriate care through an Employee Assistance Program and/or other resources. Ensure continuity of payroll, insurance, and other essential resources to ensure appropriate staffing throughout the disaster and once normal operations resume. Maintain ongoing communication with staff about the status of operations.

***8. Tests, Training and Exercises***

The key to a successful enactment of this Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) hinges on the ability of training, tests, and exercises to familiarize staff members with their roles and responsibilities during an emergency, ensure that systems and equipment are maintained in a constant state of readiness, and validate certain aspects of the COOP. It is recommended that employees are trained on their role within the plan within 60 days of plan adoption or hire for new employees. The plan is best exercised through a full-scale activation scheduled at least once each year. This is essential to demonstrating and improving the ability of the organization to execute its COOP. It also serves to validate or to identify improvements to the COOP’s policies, procedures, systems, and locations. Periodic testing and exercising can also help to ensure that equipment and procedures are maintained in a constant state of readiness. Be creative when it comes to COOP readiness and include snow days, power outages, server crashes, and other ad-hoc opportunities to assess preparedness and plan effectiveness. Following any test, exercise or activation, review lessons learned, incorporate appropriate adjustments to the plan, and educate staff about changes that affect their role/responsibilities.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **TEST, TRAINING, AND EXERCISE LOG** | | |
| Type of Training | Training Date | Lessons Learned and Recommendations |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

***9. Devolution***

*The capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from an agency’s primary operating staff and facilities to other employees and facilities and to sustain that operational capability for an extended period.*

***10. Reconstitution***

The process by which an organization’s personnel resume normal agency operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility:

* Once it is safe and prudent, provide instructions to staff for the resumption of normal operations.
* Supervise an orderly return to normal operations at a primary or alternate facility.
* Provide updates to other key stakeholders (partners, clients, funders, regulating agencies, etc.).
* Conduct an After-Action Review and make appropriate adjustments to COOP.