Developing a Continuity of Operations Program

An Overview
COOP Overview: Benefits

COOP is a good business practice. It enables agencies to continue their essential functions across a broad spectrum of hazards and emergencies:

– Natural
– Manmade
– Technological
– National security emergencies
What is COOP

**Continuity Of Operations**

- The continuation of essential functions and services

- Achieved through the use of:
  
  - Continuity of Operations Program
    - The development, maintenance, training, exercising and strategy of maintaining the COOP plan requires an actively managed program
  
  - Continuity of Operations Plan
    - The document that is geared towards ensuring that an entity is capable of carrying out its essential functions given some disruption
Citizens have an expectation that government, especially public health and safety organizations, will continue to provide needed (or desired) services, regardless of the situation.
Why COOP?: Planning Objectives

- Ensure continued performance of essential functions
- Reduce loss of life/minimize damage
- Ensure succession to office of key leadership
- Reduce/mitigate disruptions to operations
- Protect essential assets
- Achieve timely recovery/reconstitution
- Maintain TT&E program for validation
Planning Considerations

COOP plans must:

- Be capable of implementation anytime, with and without warning.
- Provide full operational capability for essential functions not later than 12 hours after activation.
- Be capable of sustaining operations for up to 30 days.
- Include regularly scheduled TT&E.
How do we get there?

- Follow a planning process
- Use Project Management Framework
- Determine your risks
- Essential Functions
  - How do you do what you do?
A COOP Planning Model

- Initiate the COOP Planning Process
- Design and Build the Plan
- Determine Essential Functions
- Conduct an Impact Analysis
- Conduct a Risk Analysis
- Test, Train, and Exercise the Plan
- Distribute, Maintain, and Update the Plan
STEPS TO COOP PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
Used for Court COOP Development

Step 1 – Designate the COOP Planning Team, Identify Operating Unit Roles and Assign Responsibilities
Step 2 – Develop Basis for Planning and Program
Step 3 – Develop Planning Assumptions
Step 4 – Determine COOP Activation Team
Step 5 – Develop COOP Plan
Step 6 – Develop Incident Specific Procedures for Priority Hazards, Threats and Events
Step 7 – Coordinate with External Entities (Vendors, Stakeholders, Partners)
Step 8 – Provide Education and Training to Staff on Emergency Operations and Personal and Family Preparedness
Step 9 – Implement the COOP and Incident-Specific Procedures in Response to an Event
Step 10 – Conduct On-Going Reviews and Corrective Actions for COOP
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FEMA COOP Program Management Guidelines

- Leadership and Staff
- Communication and Technology
- Facilities
- Planning and Program Management

Continuity Program Management Cycle

- Plans and Procedures
- Tests, Training and Exercise
- Evaluation and Lessons Learned
- Corrective Action
Planning Team

- Assign one person that is ultimately responsible
- Get the right people on your planning team
  - Senior personnel
  - Operational Staff
  - Support staff (Information Technology, Telephones, etc)
  - Stakeholder entities and partners
  - Balance between “do-ers” and “tell-ers”
- Assign specific responsibilities
  - Essential functions, personnel, etc
  - Alternate Locations
  - Vital Records and Systems
  - Training and Exercise
Planning Basis

- Risk Assessment
  - Natural Hazards
  - Technological Hazards
  - Terrorism
  - Catastrophic

- Laws, Rules & Regulations

- Essential Functions

- Essential Personnel

- Vital Records & Systems

- Alternate Locations – Where do we go?
Planning Basis – Essential Functions

Loss of this function would have the following effect on the agency:

A. Catastrophic effect on the agency or some divisions
B. Catastrophic effect on one division
C. Moderate effect on the agency
D. Moderate effect on some divisions
E. Minor effect on the agency or some divisions
Planning Basis – Essential Personnel

Examine **Consequences from a Vacancy**.
- This methodology examines consequences when leaving a position vacant for any amount of time. It may also help to identify how authority to make decisions was delegated to others. It is helpful to identify which decision-making authorities were delegated to others during the vacancy.

Identify **Key Positions by Questioning**.
- Using this methodology, the COOP Planner asks personnel and management what potential consequences exist if a position were left vacant or were determined to be non-essential during an emergency.

Identify **Key Positions by Historical Evidence**.
- Utilizing After Action Reports, other documentation, interviews and personal experience during an emergency the COOP Planner examines which positions and skill sets were most essential during an emergency.
Essential Functions and Personnel

Orders of Succession
- Formal designation of who takes over a position that remains unfilled
- “3-Deep” Concept

Delegations of Authority
- “official documents by which the responsibilities and authorities of an office or official may be carried out by another office or designee(s) during an emergency condition or threat of such.”
- Delegations of Authority are not necessarily connected to formal rules of succession
- usually have triggers for activation, procedures outlining the delegation including notification of relevant staff of the transfer of power, and the limitations on the duration, extent and scope of the delegated authority/authorities
Vital Records

Those that, if lost or impaired, directly impact your organization’s ability to carry out essential functions and otherwise conduct business

- Financial
- Human Resource
- Legal
Critical Systems

- Systems that enable an entity to carry on its day-to-day business.
  - Information Technology
  - Communications
  - Security Resources
Alternate Locations

- Space Requirements for Alternate Facility
  - How long can it be occupied?
- Accessibility
- Logistical Support
- Not affected by same event as primary facility
Alternate Locations

- List them all
- Rank them by criteria
  - IT infrastructure
  - Accessibility
  - Comfort
  - Safety
  - Health
- MOU/MOA or Contract
Assumptions

- **Timeframes**
  - 12 hour activation
  - How long AWL can be occupied
- **What resources will be available**
- **What events or incidents will affect you**
- **Priorities**
- **Actions of Stakeholders and those organizations that you will rely on**
COOP Activation Team

- Rep from Senior Leadership
- IT Staff
- Communications Staff
- Operational Personnel
- Security Personnel
- Facilities Personnel
- Vendors?
- Can they be ready in 12 hours
The COOP Plan

identify stakeholders that need to be notified, the critical and time-sensitive applications, alternative work sites, vital records, contact lists, processes, and functions that shall be maintained, as well as the personnel, procedures and resources that are needed while the entity is recovering. (5,8.3.8, NFPA 1600)
COOP Plan

1. Ensure the performance of essential functions during a COOP event
2. Reduce the loss of life and minimize damage and losses
3. In the event a disruption renders leadership unable to assume their duties or responsibilities of office, successfully executing orders of succession,
4. Mitigate or reduce disruption to operations
5. Protect essential facilities, equipment, vital records and other key assets
6. Achieve a timely and orderly recovery from an emergency and reconstitution of normal operations that allows resumption of essential functions
7. Validate preparedness and COOP readiness through testing, training and exercising the programs that support the COOP plan
8. Ensure alternate facilities are available to continue performance of essential functions
Outline of COOP Plan Template from EMA Guidance

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
II. INTRODUCTION
III. PURPOSE
IV. APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE
V. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS
VI. ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS
VII. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES
VIII. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS
   A. PHASE I: ACTIVATION AND RELOCATION OR DEVOLUTION
      1. Decision Process
      2. Alert, Notification, and Implementation Process
         a. With and Without Warning
         b. Contacting Families
      3. Leadership
         a. Orders of Succession
         b. Delegations of Authority
      4. Devolution
         a. Calling back retired judges / contract judges
         b. Devolving (surrendering to another jurisdiction or another court with authority) caseload
   B. PHASE II: ALTERNATE FACILITY OPERATIONS
      1. Mission Critical Systems
      2. Vital Files, Records, and Databases
   C. PHASE III: RECONSTITUTION
      1. Reconstruction
      2. Recalling Personnel to Normal Work Location
      3. Reconstituting Normal Operations at Primary Facility
      4. Closing out Alternate Facility
IX. COOP PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES
X. LOGISTICS
   A. ALTERNATE WORK LOCATION
   B. INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS
XI. TEST, TRAINING, AND EXERCISES
XII. COOP PLAN MAINTENANCE (MULTI-YEAR STRATEGY AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT PLAN)

Annex A: Authorities and References
Annex B: Operational Procedures and Checklists (specific functions, systems or hazards)
Annex C: Alternate Work Location/Facility Information
Annex D: Maps and Evacuation Routes
Annex E: Family and Individual Planning Resources
Annex F: Definitions and Acronyms

Appendices
1 – Public Health Event (Pandemic)
2 – Catastrophic Incident
3: Additional Incident Specific Appendices as Needed (Building Emergency, Power Outage, Bomb Threat)
Implementation Phases of a COOP

- Readiness
- Activation and Relocation
- Continuity Operations
- Reconstitution
Procedures

- For each position
  - Reduces need for cross-training
- COOP Team Opening the Alternate Facility (from 12 hours to 30 days)
- Security of Alternate Facility
- Moving necessary records
- Movement of incarcerated persons
- COOP Team Activation
External Coordination

- Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement
- Contracts with Vendors (Contingency)
Education and Training

- Emergency Operations
- Building Safety
- Personal and Family Preparedness
Implementation

- Exercise your plan
- Activation
- Resumption of Normal Activities in Normal Setting
Update and Review

- After use or exercise
- At set intervals
- With changes in personnel
Conclusion

- Having a COOP Program in place enables your agency to meet the expectations of the public, especially in trying times when demands for your services may be especially high.

- Alternate facilities should be identified and coordinated.

- Essential functions, and the times they are more critical, should be known and planned for.

- Essential personnel should be identified, orders of succession put in place, and delegations of authority issued and put in writing.

- Ensure you have procedures in place.