

BOLD
PLANNING SOLUTIONS

What's Your Plan?



**Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)
Spartanburg County Preparation Package**

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INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP)

In the wake of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) has become a vital element in emergency planning. Organizations across the country at all levels - federal, state, and local - have begun preparing for emergencies by engaging their staff and committing the time and resources necessary to develop effective and realistic plans. The federal government has been the leader in this arena and has required many agencies and departments to produce COOP plans based on published directives and guidance, referenced below.

- FEMA, Federal Preparedness Circular 65
www.fema.gov/pdf/library/fpc65_0604.pdf
This circular is specifically directed to federal executive branch operations but offers executive-level support to the importance of COOP.
- Presidential Decision Directive-NSC-67
www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd/pdd-67.htm
Issued October 21, 1998
Enduring Constitutional Government and Continuity of Government Operations
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/assessments/hspd8.htm
Issued on December 17, 2003
The purpose of HSPD-8 is to “establish policies to strengthen the preparedness of the United States to prevent and respond to threatened or actual domestic terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies . . . outlining actions to strengthen preparedness capabilities of federal, State, and local entities.”
- Interim National Preparedness Goal (HSPD-8)
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/InterimNationalPreparednessGoal_03-31-05_1.pdf

In support of the strategic goals of the organization and to ensure operational continuity, Organizations are adopting COOP planning as a high priority. Due to this prioritization by high-level management, a COOP program has been developed by your organization to ensure the ability to recover and provide vital services to your constituents following a major disruption.

COOP is a basic building block of any emergency planning program. It also has applicability well beyond large-scale disaster events. There are many potential situations when a COOP plan will be activated even though there is no emergency. Some examples may include:

- Facility issues that affect the workplace, such as plumbing leaks, air-conditioning and heating problems, or loss of power and other utilities.
- Workplace disruptions, such as relocation to new office space or reorganization of divisional units.
- Workforce reduction issues, including high levels of absenteeism due to sickness, loss of key staff due to attrition, and the inability to hire sufficient new workers in a timely manner.

It is vitally important that organizations go through the planning process to develop viable and effective COOP plans in order to respond to major disasters as well as maintain operations during smaller localized disruptions.

COOP INITIATIVE FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

Your organization has initiated a COOP project to assist all departments with plan development and ongoing plan maintenance. Your organization has identified the following assumptions as essential for the long-term success of the project:

- COOP must be developed and maintained with a minimal allocation of time and human resources by all applicable departments.
- Many planners will have practically no experience with COOP or emergency planning, therefore, effective guidance must be provided.

Technical support and COOP consulting will be available for all planners via telephone and the Internet.

ELEMENTS OF A COOP

A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is defined by FEMA as an internal effort within individual components of a government to ensure the capability exists to continue essential component functions across a wide range of potential emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological or attack-related emergencies.

This means that each functional unit within your organization must be prepared to continue providing basic services to constituents. Each unit must be ready during a wide range of disruptions, from a broken water line in a single facility to a devastating earthquake affecting an entire region. The elements of a COOP plan are easily identified by most organizations, and the process of developing a base plan is not difficult. In general, a COOP plan tries to answer relatively simple questions about people, places, and things:

Staff Information

- *Who are the key people in your organization?*
- *How are these people organized into teams?*
- *What are their individual responsibilities?*
- *If key staff members are unavailable, which individuals are authorized to assume management responsibilities?*

Facility Information

- *How many different facilities are used by your organization?*
- *What resources and equipment are available and necessary at each facility?*
- *How do you contact and communicate with the facility manager?*
- *If a certain facility were unavailable, where would staff go to resume critical operations?*

Resource Information

- *What vital records and systems are required for your organization to provide basic services?*
- *What physical equipment is necessary to perform mission-essential functions?*
- *What communications equipment is available during emergencies?*

By gathering this data during the initial planning process and following up with routine maintenance, an organization can dramatically improve its preparedness.

The Planning Process

To be truly effective, COOP is a team effort that must involve an entire organization. If only a few individuals are involved in the planning effort, the remaining staff may be unprepared and uninformed in an emergency. Because of the importance of Continuity of Operations Planning, a wide range of individuals will need to be involved with the COOP team.

- Executive management must be involved from the beginning and provide direction and resources in order to successfully develop and maintain the plan.
- Managers of key units and departments must be actively involved to provide details about their specific staff and operations requirements.
- Facility managers have vital responsibilities for building operations and relocation options.
- Information technology managers must detail disaster recovery programs for IT infrastructure and provide support services to other units during disruptions.

- Staffs throughout the organization that have key involvement in day-to-day operations should be actively involved in providing details of mission-essential functions to the COOP planner.

Depending on the size and complexity of an organization, the COOP team could be as small as four or five individuals. However, for medium and large organizations, many individuals will be actively involved in the ongoing planning process. During the first training session, a well-prepared department will be able to develop its own basic COOP plan. Once a COOP team is established, most organizations can complete their plan within about six months, with the following commitment from each management and staff person:

- Executive management - 5 hours
- Primary COOP planner - 40 hours
- COOP team member - 15 hours
- Facility manager - 10–30 hours for support of all plans within that facility
- IT manager - 10–30 hours for support of all organization plans

The actual planning process will comprise four phases. By actively participating during each phase, an organization can complete a viable and realistic COOP plan that will produce tangible results during an event.

- Preparation - Research and gather existing information within your organization and designate the planning team members.
- Training and plan development - Learn the details of a COOP plan and develop the actual plan through team interaction.
- Plan review and approval - Review of draft plan for completeness and correctness before receiving final approval from executive management.
- Plan maintenance - The initial COOP plan must be constantly maintained and updated in order to be useful during a disaster or disruption. Part of this routine maintenance effort includes testing, training, and exercising of the plan.

Web-based Program:

The centerpiece of your organization's COOP planning strategy is the Web-based COOP program. This system can be accessed through any Internet browser, and uses HTTPS (Hypertext Transfer Protocol over Secure Socket Layer) to provide an encrypted connection that safeguards information while it is in transit (*i.e., from the user's browser to the Web site server*).



Figure 1. Screenshot of EMplans.com Website

SYSTEM ACCESS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

All departments in your organization are licensed to access the system in order to develop and maintain individual COOP plans. Password access for each department will be set up and delivered to the department's primary point of contact. Once these access credentials have been delivered, COOP team members can begin developing their own plans.

COOP planning must be an organization-wide process for it to be effective. All departments must identify the operational functions and the individual facilities that perform distinct mission-essential functions. For larger organizations, some of the departments or subdivisions may be large and complex and located in geographically distinct facilities. In these cases, it becomes necessary for each of these individual units to designate a COOP team and develop their own unique plan for their operations.

The Web-based system is totally scalable for use by small and large organizations. The first step is to examine your organization and determine the key departments that need to develop an individualized COOP plan. Based on the number of distinct departments,

subdivisions, and facility locations identified as critical, password access will be issued to the Web-based tool. Each distinct department will receive a new password for the system only for their specific planning data. Once all of the individual department passwords are distributed, a master password will be established that will allow the COOP primary manager access to all department COOP plans.

- Small organizations may need only a single password to develop the plan for the entire operation.
- Small and medium organizations may develop their main plan using a single password but then may also use a few separate passwords to collect COOP data for the larger departments or geographically diverse outlying operations.
- Most medium organizations and all larger counties will require a number of passwords for all individual functions and locations.
- Departments may be divided along functional lines that may not correspond directly to the organization chart of the organization.

COOP TRAINING

Bold Planning Solutions is offering a comprehensive set of support services to assist departments with the development of COOP plans. Along with the Web-based tool, Bold Planning Solutions will provide the following:

- Full-day COOP training seminars
- Written documentation and guidance in conjunction with the Web-based tool
- Telephone and Internet support for technical issues or COOP-related questions

The COOP training sessions will be held at on-site facilities. The seminars are not lectures about COOP but hands-on COOP development training sessions. Each will be held in a computer training facility, where participants will begin entering their specific plan data.

Time and resource commitments are necessary to achieve project success, and it is vitally important to have executive management support for this planning process. Each separate departmental COOP plan must have a primary planner, who should attend at least one of the trainings and who will commit approximately 30 hours to the project over a six-month period. Other key individuals and the estimated time required from each person are listed below:

- Executive management—5 hours
- Primary COOP planner—40 hours
- COOP team member—15 hours
- Facility manager—10–30 hours for support of all plans within that facility
- IT manager—10–30 hours for support of all organization plans

These estimates include time for preparation, training, updating, and exercising the individual department plan.

PLANNING TEAM

The Bold Planning Solutions team has developed this comprehensive COOP program to assist all departments with plan development. Though time and resources are required, the program is designed to make the process as simple and streamlined as possible. The planning process will result in a high-quality contingency plan that will help your organization respond and recover in an efficient and timely manner. The instructions below are designed to help prepare for the planning process by identifying critical planning team members.

Select Primary Organization COOP Manager

Your organization should designate one individual to be the primary project manager for the entire COOP effort. Bold Planning Solutions personnel will be available to assist the COOP manager throughout the course of this project.

Get Management Support

It is vital to have strong support from top management for this planning project. This is an ongoing process that will require time and resources from all departments and units within the organization. Therefore, executive management must be involved from the beginning. It is recommended that the executive officer write a letter or internal memo to all staff emphasizing the importance of COOP and outlining the resource requirements necessary to successfully complete the organization's plan.

Organize the COOP Team

The primary COOP manager will need to gather key individuals from all departments of the organization and establish the COOP team. Taking the following steps will help the primary COOP manager organize the COOP team:

- Collect contact information for all team members and ensure it is kept current.
- Distribute the memo from the executive COOP manager to all team members.
- Distribute this COOP Information and Instructions document to all team members.
- Hold an initial planning team meeting to discuss project initiation and the preparation requirements detailed in these instructions.

Identify Critical Departments and Subunits

A COOP plan must involve all members of an organization in order for it to be effective. The planning team should identify any critical units that should produce a separate departmental COOP plan. Departments that should be considered will have one or more of the following criteria:

- Staff - Departments that have 25 or more staff members.
- Locations - Departments that operate from unique geographic locations separate from the organization's primary facility.

- **Functionality** - Departments that perform vital functions that must be maintained or departments that play a key coordination role with a number of other departments.

Once all the critical departments have been identified, a primary departmental COOP planner should be designated for each. Contact the project manager with this list of departments and primary planners to receive password access to the Web-based system.

DATA COLLECTION

In preparation for a COOP training session, each of the primary planners for critical departments needs to gather data about their operations. Gather the following elements and bring this information to the COOP training session in either electronic or printed form.

Contacts

The most important aspect of a COOP plan is related to the staff of your organization. During any disruption, it is vital to be able to communicate with everyone. Identify the most current staff roster for your organization and divide them up according to the list below:

- **Key staff** - Members that will need to respond immediately to support the recovery process.
- **Staff** - All other staff members within your functional unit. These employees will not be required to immediately respond. However, they must be made aware of the situation and any changes to the job location, duties, and functions.
- **Non-staff** - Individuals who may not be employed directly by your department but would require contact in the event of COOP activation (*i.e., security personnel*).
- **Vendor/other** - Vendors may include the armored car service for financial deposits, the locksmith, or others that are relevant to your department's activities.
- **Facilities contact** - Your building contact and/or local contact along with the 24-hour Facilities Support Center number (*TBD*).

For the individuals identified, you will need the following information:

- Name (*first, last*)
- Department/division
- Job title
- Work and home address
- Work, home, and cell-phone numbers
- E-mail address (*if possible, also a personal e-mail address*)

- Comments - Provided so you can add details to the individual’s contact information. Comments may include “nurse, CPR trainer, lives across the street from the main office,” or other details that may be helpful to know at the time of an emergency or during the recovery process.

The screenshot shows a web form for entering contact information. The form is titled "Contact Information" and is part of the EMplans.com system. It has two tabs: "Address, Phone, Email" (which is selected) and "Username & Security". The form fields are organized into two columns. The left column includes: Member Type (a dropdown menu), First Name, Middle Name, Last Name, Address (three lines), City, State (a dropdown menu), ZIP Code, and Comments (a text area). The right column includes: Department, Division, Title, Home Number, Work Number, Cell Number, Pager Number, Nextel Pager, Fax Number, Work Email, and Other Email. A "Continue" button is located at the bottom center of the form. Below the form is a navigation bar with the following links: Home | General | Contacts Database | Coop Teams | Succession | Primary Facilities | Alternate Facilities | Vital Records | Mission Essential Functions | Drive-Away Kits | File Archive | Reports | Logout. At the very bottom, there is a copyright notice: Copyright © 2004 - 2007, Bold Planning Solutions Inc. All rights reserved.

Figure 2. Screenshot of a blank contact information page

COOP Teams

Along with the department contact information, COOP teams must be identified. Prior to attending training sessions, meet with your department head and identify the individuals who should belong to each COOP team. Include their individual contact information with your list from above.

- COOP teams
 - COOP executive team - These are the individuals with primary decision-making responsibility for the overall organization. In most cases, this team will include the executive officer, along with other key management personnel.

- COOP relocation team - These members have responsibility for setting up and staffing an alternate facility when the primary location is damaged or restricted. This team usually includes staff from facilities management and information technology.
- COOP support team - These members are actively involved in the COOP process and support the other teams as necessary.

Pre-identification of individuals who will serve as back-up for key staff and facility management personnel are necessary to complete your plan.

- Succession - Key positions throughout the organization must be identified and lines of succession established for each primary position. If a key individual is unavailable, at least three successors should be identified who can step in and fill the necessary position.
- Delegation of authority - Similar to succession, individuals must be identified who can assume authority for certain vital activities such as purchasing, leave authorization, and travel.
- Facility management - Individuals who have direct responsibility for any facility issues should be identified as COOP staff; orders of succession should be identified for these individuals.

Facilities

It is necessary to gather information about the facilities that support the day-to-day operations and any potential alternate locations that may be used for relocation during disruptions. Most of this data should be readily accessible by contacting the facility manager for your organization.

It is recommended that at least two alternate facilities be identified for each primary facility in order to support critical operations. Identifying and securing an alternate location may not be feasible for each location; however, it is an opportunity to review your needs and identify a possible relocation facility. Consider the options of shared space or an alternate facility. Talk with your neighbors and identify issues, concerns, and needs. Consider the following:

- “First-choice” facilities - Locations that can easily support the relocation of your organization. Typically, these are additional facilities managed by the organization that may be geographically close and already have supporting services in place.
- Regional facilities - In the event of a large-scale event, first-choice facilities may be equally affected and unavailable. For this contingency, regional options should be determined for relocation.

For each primary and alternate facility, the following elements must be identified:

- Building name and address, including latitude and longitude, if available (*this will be a requirement for federal response, if necessary*)
- Building capacity (*occupancy number*)
- 24-hour contact information for the facility manager (*if different from above*)
- Details about building security protocols, including physical security and all access controls that it has or will need
- Details about the communications capabilities within the facility

Resources

Along with contacts and facilities, it is necessary to collect information about the equipment, resources, and systems that are required to perform the day-to-day activities of the organization. Consider your organization and gather information about the following required resources:

- Vital records and systems - Identify all records, systems, files, and documents (*electronic, hard copy, etc.*) that are necessary for the continued operations of your organization. Details about the backup procedures for this data are also necessary for your COOP plan.
- Required equipment and resources - Gather information about the required equipment in place in your primary locations, including computers, telephones, office furniture and supplies, and any specialized equipment. For alternate facilities, identify any prepositioned resources that will already be available during relocation.
- Re-location kit items - Specific items in the primary facilities should be identified for relocation and prepared to move to the alternate location during a disruption. These items can either be prepackaged as emergency kits or a checklist can be developed of items to be collected before leaving the building.
- Communications equipment - Special focus should be placed on resources used for communicating with staff, related support agencies, the public, and local emergency responders. Existing communications resources along with alternate methods should be identified, as well as all internal and external procedures for alert notification.

Mission-Essential Functions

The final preparation step is the identification and prioritization of mission-essential functions. These are not the emergency response functions to be performed during a certain event; rather, each organization must list the job responsibilities and critical functions that it performs on a regular day-to-day basis. For each function, consider the following factors:

- Length of disruption - Each individual function must be considered and a determination reached regarding the length of time that can elapse before this function must be resumed. Certain functions may need to be continued within a few hours of the initial disruption. Others may be able to be delayed for days or even weeks after the event in order to stabilize more critical functions.
- Prioritization - Related to the length of disruption above, the entire list of functions must be prioritized with respect to criticality. During times of disruption, additional resources will be allocated to high-priority functions while lower priority functions are put on hold until the situation is stabilized.
- Required personnel - For each function, the required staff must be identified. Attention should be given to the number of individuals and the type of individuals (*management, technical, administrative, specialized, etc.*) required to perform this function.
- Required resources - The resources required to perform each function must be identified. It is important to link these resources with each mission-essential function.

The identification and prioritization of mission-essential functions is a vitally important part of the COOP process. By outlining all of the normal functions and the resources and personnel required for these functions, an organization can begin to develop a solid roadmap for recovery.

Examples of Mission-Essential Functions

Mission Essential Functions
Monroe County - Fire Department

Mission Essential Functions

[Add New Tier](#) [Add New Function](#)

Tier 1 - Mission-essential functions that must be performed, given a One Day disruption. (From highest priority to lowest.)

Priority	Function	Division		
#1	Provide Fire and Emergency Response Services to the Monroe County response area.	Fire and Rescue	▼	Edit/View Delete
#2	Deploy resources to save lives and property	Fire and Rescue	▲ ▼	Edit/View Delete
#3	Respond to hazardous materials events	Fire and Rescue	▲ ▼	Edit/View Delete
#4	Distribute Emergency Notifications	Emergency Management	▲ ▼	Edit/View Delete
#5	Support the needs of the surrounding City Fire Departments.	Ambulance Services	▲	Edit/View Delete

Tier 2 - Mission-essential functions that must be performed, given a disruption greater than One Day, but less than One Week. (From highest priority to lowest.)

Priority	Function	Division		
#1	Maintain Fire Department vehicles	Fire and Rescue	▼	Edit/View Delete
#2	Assist in the re-location of elderly patients from local nursing homes to the Monroe County Regional Hospital.	Ambulance Services	▲ ▼	Edit/View Delete
#3	Conduct testing and maintenance of fire hydrants within Monroe County District 5	Fire and Rescue	▲	Edit/View Delete

Tier 3 - Mission-essential functions that must be performed, given a disruption greater than One Week, but less than One Month. (From highest priority to lowest.)

[Home](#) | [General](#) | [Contacts Database](#) | [Coop Teams](#) | [Succession](#) | [Primary Facilities](#) | [Alternate Facilities](#) | [Vital Records](#) | [Mission Essential Functions](#) | [Drive-Away Kits](#) | [File Archive](#) | [Reports](#) | [Logout](#)

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Figure 3. Example of mission essential function lists.

DEFINITIONS

Alternate facility: A location other than an organization’s normal facility used to conduct mission-essential functions in the event of COOP activation.

COOP Relocation Team (CRT): Members of the organization who have been trained to respond to emergencies necessitating the use of COOP. These members are responsible for reporting to the alternate facility and for making sure mission-essential functions are maintained.

COOP Support Team (CST): Personnel who do not report directly to the alternate facility. These individuals might initially be told to return to their homes until otherwise notified (*e.g., they may be needed as backup to support the CRT in carrying out mission-essential functions*).

Continuity of Government (COG): All measures that may be taken to ensure the continuity of essential functions of governments in the event of emergency conditions, including line of succession for key decision makers.

Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP): Internal agency efforts to assure continuance of minimum essential functions across a wide range of potential

emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological or attack-related emergencies.

Delegation of authority: A statement provided to an agency head by the senior agency executive that delegates authority and responsibility. It can include objectives, priorities, expectations, constraints, and other considerations or guidelines as needed. Many agencies require a written delegation of authority to be given to the agency head prior to their assuming command of larger incidents.

Relocation kits: Supplies, equipment, and documentation necessary for an alternate facility to be sustained for up to 30 days. These portable kits are transported by the CRT members during relocation to an alternate site.

Mission-essential functions: An organization's prioritized functions that must be performed under all operational conditions. COOP plans are created to ensure that these functions can continue to be performed even following a major disaster.

Orders of succession: The sequence in which one person assumes the roles and responsibilities of a particular function within the organization in the event the usual leadership is unavailable to perform those duties.

Vital records: Records, documents, or other information that, if damaged or destroyed, would cause considerable inconvenience or require replacement or re-creation at considerable expense. These are often records or documents, which, for legal, regulatory, or operational reasons, cannot be irretrievably lost or damaged without materially impairing the organization's ability to continue operations.

TRAINING CHECKLIST

Please bring the following items to the COOP training session:

Contact information:

Before you arrive, organize your contacts into the key staff, staff, non-staff, vendors, and facilities contacts as identified in the Data Collection section of this document.

Bring the following information for all contacts:

- Name (*first, last*)
- Department/division
- Job title
- Work and home address
- Work, home, and cell-phone numbers
- E-mail address (*if possible, also a personal e-mail address*)
- Comments; could include “nurse, CPR trainer, lives across the street from the main office,” and any information that may be relevant in the time of emergency/recovery

COOP team roster:

- COOP planning team
- COOP re-location team
- COOP support team

Mission-essential functions:

- Detailed task list
- Number of employees to complete task (*no names, but do list job titles*)
- Time frame during which each function must be completed (*for example, time sheets must be turned in every Friday for payroll, or every Thursday is armored car service pickup*)

Alternate facility information:

- Building location
- Facilities contact
- Business equipment needs (*two computers, service counter, public access, and so on*)