

The George Washington University Incident Planning, Response, and Recovery Manual

Preparing a Continuity of Operations Plan

May 2007



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INTRODUCTION TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- ◆ Planning is critical to emergency preparedness
- ◆ Continuity of operations (COOP) plans are designed to maintain critical functions and operations
- ◆ Contingency plans are geographically specific and protect life safety
 - They help protect the corporate memory of each element
 - They are the gateway to continuity planning
- ◆ Together these plans support one another and help departments prepare for potential disruptions
- ◆ This presentation will focus on COOP planning



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THE COOP PLAN

The purpose of a local continuity of operations (COOP) plan is to establish priorities and procedures to restore University operations in the event of a disruption.

Plans should cover the restoration of operations as quickly and completely as possible and provide for alternate methods and locations of operations during the disruption.

COOP plans integrate into Annex B of the Incident Manual, available online via www.gwu.edu/~gwalert/.

For additional assistance preparing your local plans, contact opsem@gwu.edu.



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GETTING STARTED

- ◆ Prior to building a COOP plan, establish a framework
- ◆ Plans are most easily developed using a matrix format
- ◆ The following outline is useful for continuity planning:

Function/ System	Priority #	Rationale for Priority	Dependencies and Interdependencies	Recovery Goal	Minimum Requirements	Alternate Method/Location	Recovery Steps
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- ◆ Other aids are available to help you get started writing your COOP plan
- ◆ See the [Got Plans?](#) webpage via [GW Campus Advisories](#)

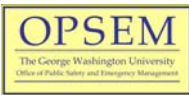


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12 PHASES OF CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANNING

1. Identify Critical Operations and Functions
2. Identify Minimum Requirements to Perform Critical Functions
3. Identify Internal and External Dependencies and Interdependencies
4. Establish Recovery Goals/Timelines
5. Determine Alternate Methods of Operations and Locations
6. Identify Recovery Steps
7. Examine Assumptions
8. Examine Communication Methods
9. Examine Financial Issues
10. Examine Information Technology (IT) Issues
11. Implement the Plan
12. Maintain, Review, and Exercise the Plan



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1. IDENTIFY CRITICAL OPERATIONS AND FUNCTIONS

During the initial stage of continuity planning, you should list all the operations and functions for which your area is responsible.

It may be useful to ask your people to list what they do during the day in order to identify all tasks.

A description of how these tasks are completed, breaking them down to the most basic level, should be included.



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1. IDENTIFY CRITICAL OPERATIONS AND FUNCTIONS

These functions and operations should now be ranked according to their priority for restoration, considering:

- Requirements that vary in importance depending on critical dates (e.g. Commencement, end of fiscal year, etc.);
- Prerequisites for each function and operation, which determines the necessary sequence
 - ❖ i.e. if one function is not restored, you can't go to the next step;
- Value to normal daily operations (see the Incident Manual's [Purpose and Context: Priorities](#) section for more details).

Record your reasoning for prioritization in the rationale column to help validate or revise your initial prioritization.

- This will also assist others in understanding your priorities.



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2. IDENTIFY MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO PERFORM CRITICAL FUNCTIONS

The minimal requirements for working are those resources needed to perform at least your most important and basic functions.

- ◆ Basic resources include:
 - Personnel (number, qualifications)
 - Computers (software/hardware)
 - Telephone, fax
 - Stationery
 - Mail services
 - Supplies unique to your function



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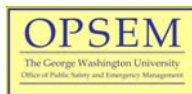
3. IDENTIFY INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DEPENDENCIES AND INTERDEPENDENCIES

- ◆ Do you obtain services from other offices that are important to your operations, and vice versa?
- ◆ Must these services be restored in the event of a disruption?

Important existing contracts must also be identified and their need during and after an incident recognized.

- You must determine if the contractors' businesses are sustainable as well.

This assessment will facilitate a rapid recovery of essential functions.



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4. ESTABLISH RECOVERY GOALS/TIMELINE

Recovery goals should identify how quickly each function or operation would ideally be restored.

- ◆ Considerations for recovery goals include:
 - Time when replaced or restored functions are needed
 - Alternate method if required restoration is later than expected
 - Aspects of the function that can be restored in parts



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5. DETERMINE ALTERNATE METHODS OF OPERATIONS AND LOCATIONS

Outline interim procedures and locations that would allow part or all of your critical functions to be performed until full restoration.

Make sure they are realistic, not based on unstated assumptions, and not cost or time prohibitive.

- ◆ Suggestions to consider include:
 - Personnel Requirements
 - Telecommuting/Remote Access
 - Alternate Processes
 - Contracted or External Services
 - Redundant Options for the Function



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6. IDENTIFY RECOVERY STEPS

List the sequence of steps that are required in order to restore each function.

- ◆ The steps can include:
 - Identifying/obtaining resources needed
 - Identifying availability, qualifications, and responsibilities for required personnel
 - Estimating cost



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7. EXAMINE ASSUMPTIONS

Before continuing, the assumptions on which your plan is based must be identified and examined to better ensure your plan's effectiveness.

Assumptions should be listed explicitly and can be included as footnotes.

- ◆ Considerations include:
 - Impact of disruption of tasks or functions performed by other departments (ex. information back-up by ISS)
 - Time for return/availability of all personnel and/or space for operations
- ◆ For more on assumptions, review the Incident Manual's [Purpose and Context Assumptions](#) section



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8. EXAMINE COMMUNICATION METHODS

- ◆ Effective communication is paramount during an incident
- ◆ In your plan, you need to ensure that you:
 - Have identified the incident communication methods
 - ❖ Ex. Voicemail, e-mail, etc.
 - Plan for communication up, down, across, and out



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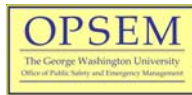


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9. EXAMINE FINANCIAL ISSUES

The financial issues involved are not always considered during planning and the most cost effective ways of recovery need to be established.

- ◆ Review [Annex X](#) of the Incident Manual: Expense and Budget Procedures



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9. EXAMINE FINANCIAL ISSUES

- ◆ Also, you must consider:
 - If a financial manager has been incorporated into, and been protected by, your plan
 - Who will be your financial manager's alternate
 - How you will document expenses accrued during an incident
 - What some alternative methods are for paying for needed materials (P-card, credit card, etc.)



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10. EXAMINE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) ISSUES

The first questions that need to be asked:

- WHAT documents/files are most valuable?
- WHERE are these files stored?
- WHEN will these files be needed during an incident?
 - ❖ In one hour, in one day, etc.?
- HOW can these files be accessed?
- ◆ Do critical personnel have VPN access?
- ◆ Do you and your staff have alternate e-mail servers and/or alternate e-mail addresses?
- ◆ Do you have hardcopies of your important documents and is a copy stored in an alternate location?



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11. IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Once your plan is written, decide who will be responsible for its implementation and how they will do this.

- ◆ Is your plan available in hard copy to the people who must use it in an incident?



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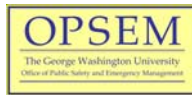
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12. MAINTAIN, REVIEW, AND EXERCISE THE PLAN

OPSEM will review your completed local COOP plan, provide feedback, and include final plans in [Annex B](#) of the Incident Manual.

Ensure that your plan incorporates an annual schedule or system for its review.

- Update it at least once a year
- Assign someone this responsibility



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LOCAL CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANS AND GUIDELINES

- ◆ All final COOP plans are posted in [Annex B](#) of the Incident Manual
- ◆ A COOP Planning Guide and a Planning Checklist are located on the [Got Plans?](#) webpage available via [GW Campus Advisories](#)
 - These materials can also be found in [Annex K](#) of the Incident Manual



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LOCAL CONTINGENCY PLAN

Your local COOP plan will be useful in preparing your local contingency plan, since your functions and priorities are already determined.

A local contingency plan provides *geographically specific* information to support local preparation for, response to, and recovery from an incident, therefore, protecting life-safety.

It includes procedures regarding expectations and responsibilities, contact information, and indoor post-evacuation rendezvous points.

For more information on local contingency planning, please see [Preparing a Local Contingency Plan](#), or review the information in the Incident Manual available online via www.gwu.edu/~gwalert.



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