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Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management
Incident Planning, Response, and Recovery Manual

Preparing a Continuity of Operations Plan

OPSEM

The George Washington University
Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management

INTRODUCTION TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Planning is critical to emergency preparedness

There are two types of emergency preparedness plans:

- *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 ***continuity of operations*** planning

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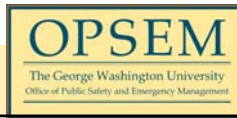
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THE COOP PLAN

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



GETTING STARTED

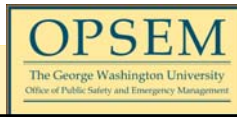


In your overall Continuity of Operations plan, try to address these broad issues:

- Have you established the department’s priorities and identified the University priority of “people first”?
- Is authority and responsibility specifically addressed?
- Who will activate the plan, and how will they do this?

When building the content of your COOP plan, a matrix may be the most appropriate format, for example:

Function/ System	Priority #	Rationale for Priority	Dependencies and Interdependencies	Recovery Goal	Minimum Requirements	Alternate Method/Location	Recovery Steps
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8 STEPS FOR CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANNING

1. a) Identify *Critical Operations and Functions*
b) Minimum *Requirements* to perform critical functions
2. Identify Internal and External *Dependencies and Interdependencies*
3. Determine *Alternative Methods and Redundancies* of critical functions
4. a) Identify the steps for *Recovery and Restoration*
b) Establish *Recovery Goals/Timelines*
5. Examine *Assumptions*
6. Examine *Communication* methods
7. Examine *Financial* Issues
8. *Implement* (Maintain, Review, and Exercise) the Plan



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. Remember to include those tasks or events which take place on a seasonal or quarterly basis.

Include descriptions of how these tasks are completed, breaking them down to the most basic level.

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



1a) 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 as they determine the necessary sequence of restoration (i.e. if one particular function is not restored, you cannot proceed to the next step)
- Value to normal daily operations (see the Incident Manual's [Purpose and Context: Priorities](#) section for more details)

For future reference, note your rationale in the appropriate column as you revise or validate your plan. This will also assist others in understanding your priorities.



1b) IDENTIFY *MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO PERFORM CRITICAL FUNCTIONS*

The minimal requirements for working are the resources (the physical space, equipment and personnel) required to fulfill your most vital critical functions. Assume you may have to operate from a different location, with limited equipment and supplies, and with a shortage of qualified personnel.

Basic resources may include:

- Essential personnel (By title and qualifications; number of support staff)
- Computers (software/hardware)
- Telephone, fax, stationery, mail services, etc.
- Supplies or specialized equipment unique to your function (are there currently spares stored at a separate location, or is transportation of equipment feasible? If you use a specialized database, can this be accessed remotely?)
- Essential office or classroom space – how many people must this space accommodate?



2. IDENTIFY INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL *DEPENDENCIES AND INTERDEPENDENCIES*

Departments must identify those other partners that they rely upon or to which they provide services. It should clearly identify services that are provided to you by other departments/organizations.

- Services provided by other departments/vendors
- Services provided to other departments/vendors
- Specifically identify contracts with outside partners (including a list of contact information for vendors or other departments during an incident)
- Can these services realistically be depended upon during an incident? If not, are there alternatives?



3. DETERMINE *ALTERNATIVE METHODS AND REDUNDANCIES*

In the immediate aftermath of an incident, critical functions may need to be restored by alternative methods. Outline interim procedures and locations that would allow part or all of your critical functions to be performed until full restoration.

- These alternatives need to be realistic and require minimal cost and time.
- Estimate the duration for which the department would be able to maintain operations without its usual resources.



3. DETERMINE *ALTERNATIVE METHODS AND REDUNDANCIES*

- Aspects to consider include: Personnel requirements, telecommuting/remote access, alternate processes, contracted or external services, built-in redundancies.
- Address technology recovery:
 - How can essential documents/files be preserved and accessed? Are there hard-copies? Storage on flash drive? Is VPN access in place (if feasible)?
 - For how long can the department function without technology access (for instance, one hour, one week)?

4a) IDENTIFY *RECOVERY STEPS*

List the sequence of steps that are required in order to restore each function; designate those aspects that may be restored in parts

Hint: A separate list may be useful instead of incorporating all this information into a matrix

The steps may include:

- Necessary facilities/technology/support resources
- Important contacts
- Needed contracts
- Specific personnel (with back-ups) designated, identified, and appropriately tasked
- Rough estimate of cost, or outline for procuring necessary resources

4b) ESTABLISH *RECOVERY GOALS/TIMELINE*

Recovery goals should identify how quickly each function or operation would ideally be restored (in both short- and long-term).

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

5. EXAMINE *ASSUMPTIONS*

Before continuing, identify and examine the assumptions on which your plan is based. Example: "GWorld card system will be working during an incident, allowing staff and faculty to enter University buildings and offices."

Hint: Assumptions should be listed explicitly and may be included as footnotes. For more on assumptions, review the Incident Manual's [Purpose and Context Assumptions](#) section.

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
- Are the assumptions specific? Are they reasonable and realistic? Are they clearly identified ?

6. EXAMINE *COMMUNICATION* METHODS

Effective communication is paramount during an incident. Plan for communication up, down, across, and out.

- Identify incident communication methods and their requirements
- Establish alternative communication strategies (personal cell phones, for example)
- Include specific and detailed instructions for communication methods (phone trees, website updates, list-servs, etc.)
- Include pertinent communication information, like Departmental contact lists and helpful internal and external points of contact (e.g. Registrar's Office, ISS, contractors)



7. EXAMINE *FINANCIAL* ISSUES

During an incident, departments will likely accrue additional expenses necessary to maintain or restore operations. It is critical to identify a method for tracking incident-related expenses.

- Has the financial manager for the department been consulted about the specifics for the plans? Does s/he have an alternate?
- How should expenses accrued during an incident be documented?
- What some alternative methods are for paying for needed materials (P-card, credit card, etc.)?
- If a cost estimate has been conducted for your department, has this information been included?

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



8. IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

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

- Is your plan available in hard copy to the people who must use it in an incident?
- Is there a schedule for reviewing the plan?
- Who will be responsible for updating the materials?
- Who will provide copies of the plan to all departmental employees?

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



LOCAL COOPS 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



A word on the 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 campusadvisories.gwu.edu.

