

Continuity of Operations Plan Development Guide



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INTRODUCTION

A departmental Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) is designed to provide valuable guidance for sustaining departmental essential functions in response to an emergency incident.

A COOP addresses the following disruptions to normal operations:

- ▶ Loss of part or all of a facility;
- ▶ Loss of services due to a reduction in workforce; and
- ▶ Loss of services due to equipment or utilities disruptions or failures.

A COOP is intended to minimize the impact on Essential Functions during recovery operations.

Actions taken immediately before or during an incident, or documented in your plan, should be consistent with the plans, programs and policies & procedures of Florida State University.

Incidents may occur at any time that limit your capacity to perform your department's *Essential Functions*. This guide is designed to provide a minimum planning standard for use in developing or strengthening your department's COOP. By maintaining a COOP you are more likely to effectively respond to and recover from future disruptions.

The COOP development process begins with identifying the appropriate stakeholders for the campus department / unit. These stakeholders then develop a list of Essential Functions specific to the department. Next, the COOP Coordinator will work to define and prioritize the Essential Functions, critical assets, and develop a risk profile. After completion of the Essential Functions documentation, the COOP Coordinator leads the development of the COOP Narrative, which addresses maintaining and recovering department Essential Functions.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The three most important planning considerations are: loss of your facility, or part of your facility; a significant decrease in available staffing, or the loss of utilities and records (including important files, documents, and records necessary to maintain your operations). These types of loss can directly, and significantly, impact the department's ability to carry out its mission. The purpose of the Continuity of Operations Plan is to strategically identify and support key business processes or Essential Functions, and define the roles of those tasked with incident-recovery and restoration of departmental functionality.

Research is an integral component of the mission of Florida State University. During the COOP planning process, it is important to consider departmental research within the context of Essential Functions. Research is often reliant on specialized utilities, hazardous materials, third party vendors and technically skilled personnel. Incidents impacting any of these elements poses a risk of disruptions to on-going research, and protracted incidents may lead to irreparable damages to equipment, infrastructure, unique collections of samples and specimens, and loss of intellectual property. See "Essential Functions" (page 4) for additional guidance on the development of Essential Functions, and considerations for teaching, research, and business operations.

COMPONENTS OF THE COOP

Essential Functions are the foundation of the COOP. The strategic evaluation of business processes resulting in identification of select services and the critical assets of each define the core functions of the campus department / unit. These resulting Essential Functions, then drive the recovery process through strategic prioritization, pre-defined logistical needs, and pre-determined points of contact. The COOP Narrative accounts for the collective Essential Functions, and provides for more global recovery guidance. The following information provides section by section guidance on completing your department's plan.

To develop a strong COOP, the department Essential Functions should be defined, and associated documentation completed, prior to the development of the COOP Narrative. The Essential Function documentation includes: the essential function description; key personnel; critical resources; vital files, records, and databases; external contacts and vendors, and risk assessment. The COOP Narrative will identify and address the following departmental specific information: Department Description, Orders of Succession, Delegations of Authority, Alert and Notification Methods, Vital Record, Systems, and Equipment, Specific Facility Requirements, Implementation Procedure Checklist, and Personnel Contact List.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Essential functions are defined as services, programs, or activities which may not sustain an interruption greater than 30 days in order for the department to continue operating at normal status. Not all Essential Functions may be disrupted as a result of a given incident; however, consideration and evaluation of each will define the strategic goals of the department with respect to recovery operations.

Some examples of departmental Essential Functions are:

- ▶ Academic Advising
- ▶ Academic Instruction
- ▶ Basic Utilities (e.g. power, water, waste removal)
- ▶ Budget and Finance Administration
- ▶ Facility Operations
- ▶ IT Services
- ▶ Research (e.g., Operations, Data Collection, Animal Care)

Each Essential Function will require the following information:

1. Essential Function Description

- Included within the description, the department will need to identify the priority of the essential function, recovery time objective, and an interim process for the essential function.
- Recovery time objective should be used to help prioritize each essential function. We understand that all Essential Functions are important to a department; however, in the recovery process following an incident when Essential Functions are prioritized this will help establish a plan to focus on the functions that are most important.

2. Key Personnel

- Identify the personnel that would be involved with the implementation of the COOP for the department.

3. Continuity Resources

- Identify the type of resource(s) that would be needed for the essential function. Resources may include equipment, facilities, people, supplies, and other specialized services.

4. Vital Files, Records, and Databases

- Verify compliance with 4-OP-H-10, Information Technology Disaster Recovery and Backup Data Policy. If not in compliance, document your department's plan for critical assets that provides information on recurring backup procedures, and also recovery procedures from both natural and man-made disasters. Requirements and best practices can be found in the policy.

5. External Contacts and Vendors

- Identify external resources critical to the department's essential function.

6. Risk Assessment

- Completing this section will evaluate probabilities of potential disruptions, and associated consequences to your department's Essential Functions. This will help your department better understand risks and vulnerabilities to its Essential Functions and supporting resources. Consider the impact an incident could have on your relationships with stakeholders. Consider situations that would cause customers to lose confidence in your department and its services.

COOP NARRATIVE

1. Department Description

- Insert the mission statement of the department or campus unit. This is an opportunity to identify the purpose for the organizational unit, which also serves to define operational norm laying a foundation for recovery post-incident.

2. Orders of Succession

- Consider the need to plan for succession in positions other than the director, department head, or dean. Positions such as facility managers, researchers, administrative, etc. that serve Essential Functions, should be considered in your COOP development.

3. Delegations of Authority

- Identification, by position, the authorities for making policy determinations and decisions at all departmental locations.
- Some examples of delegations of authority include; COOP activation, signatory, contract or grant commitments, regulatory obligations, and financial obligations. The template provides for defining and limiting any delegation of authority. For instance, financial delegation may include a limit to the funding that may be committed.

4. Alert and Notification Methods

- Identify the mechanisms used by the department to communicate pertinent information internally among employees. How does your department plan to notify all members of the department post-incident of what actions they should take (e.g., report to alternate location, or employees work from home)?

5. Vital Record, Systems, and Equipment

- An effective COOP documents the processes providing for redundancy of key information, necessary to maintain Essential Functions. Identify the vital records, systems, and equipment, which support each essential function for your department. Consideration should be given to the function both upstream and downstream. Utilize guidelines detailed in 4-OP-H-10, Information Technology Disaster Recovery and Backup Data Policy.

6. Departmental Specific Facility Requirements

- The University is unlikely to be able to designate an alternate facility for each unit due to fiscal and resource availability constraints. In order to assist in relocation, should it become necessary, departments should detail space requirements to

sustain the unit's Essential Function performance in this section. Details should include approximate square footage or specialized rooms and/or laboratories that may be needed to continue the department's Essential Functions. If an alternate facility has been identified by your department/unit, include that information.

7. Annex A- Implementation Procedures Checklist

- In this section, the COOP Coordinator should assign tasks to individuals and positions. Typically, position titles are preferred over individual names. You may assign specific people to the identified tasks prior to an incident; however, please keep in mind that someone else may need to be assigned to the specific task if the primary assignee is not available. Alternatively, you may use Annex A at the time of notification to assign available individuals to the necessary tasks. Not all tasks will necessarily apply for a COOP activation and thus does not need to be assigned to any specific individual or position.

8. Annex B- Communications Plan

- The Communications Plan should contain key personnel from the department, affiliates, and vital vendors & contractors that would be essential to the implementation of the COOP. Typically, the implementation of the COOP requires a subset of employees serving key roles, thus not all need to be listed in the plan. It is recommended that departments keep a full list of employees separately.

9. Annex C – Essential Functions and Resource Requirements

- Documented here should be the department/unit's *Essential Functions* listed by priority. A *Recovery Time Objective* must be associated with each function. These objectives will of course depend on the nature of the event, extent of damage and access to available resources. Include the resources that would be required to maintain your essential functions for a day, a week, or longer.

10. Annex D – Plans and Procedures

- Each department / unit should develop plans or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) specific to the overall organizational mission. Preparedness and mitigation activities including procedures for employees who perform pre-event activities or shut down critical operations should be incorporated into the plan or SOPs. Please list what SOPs or plans will work in concert with this COOP.

11. Annex E – Alternate Facilities

- The COOP plan should designate an alternate operating facility with sufficient space, equipment, infrastructure systems, and logistical support to maintain operations for up to 30 days. If equipment, (i.e. computers, laptops, phone consoles, cell phones) are not onsite you need to explain how they will be obtained for the identified alternate location.

12. Annex F – Decision Making Matrix

- Use of the included Decision Making Matrix has been provided for your consideration. It should be considered another tool in your toolbox and is not a process that is required for future events.

13. Annex G – Evacuation Plan

- Each University-owned or leased facility is subject to the FSU Evacuation Policy. Each Department Administrator and appropriate Building Coordinator is responsible for developing, implementing, and updating building-specific Departmental Emergency Evacuation Plans in conjunction with the Emergency Management Coordinator and the Fire Safety Coordinator.
- FSU Fire Safety will assist departments to create written Emergency Evacuation Plans. Copies of these plans can be made available to employees for review and use. A template for creating an emergency evacuation plan is provided in the COOP template.
- Please reference and review:
https://safety.fsu.edu/safety_manual/Fire%20Emergency%20Evacuation%20Plans.pdf

DISTRIBUTION OF YOUR DEPARTMENT'S COOP

There is no requirement that the departmental Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) be shared with the entire department or published for public review. This document should be shared on a restricted basis and be limited only to those involved when activation of the COOP is necessary. Sharing this document outside of those involved with COOP implementation is at the sole discretion of the department itself.

ANNUAL REVISIONS

COOP updates are required to be completed annually by the last day of April.

