CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN
TEMPLATE

Instructions for Completion

A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) details how a department’s essential functions will be handled in the event of an emergency or situation that disrupts normal operations, leaving department facilities damaged or inaccessible. With this goal in mind, the COOP planning process is designed to answer the following questions:

- What essential functions do you absolutely have to perform, regardless of the outside threats?
- What personnel do you need to perform those functions deemed essential?
- What resources do the personnel need to perform the essential functions?
- How can we ensure that the designated people and resources are prepared to perform those functions when called upon?

In answering these questions throughout the COOP planning process, decision-makers should be guided by the following objectives when developing their COOP plans:

- Ensure continuous performance of daily essential functions.
- Protect critical facilities, equipment, vital records and other assets.
- Reduce or mitigate disruptions to operations.
- Reduce loss of life and minimize damage and losses.
- Achieve a timely and orderly recovery from an emergency.
- Resume essential services to agency stakeholders.

The purpose of this document is to guide departments wishing to develop their own COOP plans by completing the accompanying COOP template. Although general guidance is provided in this document for reference, departments are encouraged to tailor COOP Plan development to meet their individual needs and requirements.

Section 1: COOP Plan

Introduction

This section should offer a brief overview of the department’s purpose and type of services offered. In writing its COOP Plan, the department will assess its mission essential functions that maintain critical services provided by the agency. The department should assess its continuity capability in the following way:
- Participating in the COOP Project kickoff meeting to initiate the planning process.
- Identifying mission essential functions and the critical resources necessary to support those functions.
- Identifying key personnel and backup personnel for the department.
- Discussing alternate locations and interoperable communication capabilities.

**Mission Essential Functions**

Mission essential functions are those department-specific duties or responsibilities that, if left unperformed, would substantially impact the ability of the university to fulfill its mission. During the planning process, the department will identify its mission essential functions that support the university. The following table contains the criteria that should be used to determine the recovery priority for each mission essential function.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Recovery Priority</th>
<th>Recovery Time Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>IMMEDIATE</td>
<td>0 - 24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These functions involve those with the direct and immediate effect on the agency to preserve life, safety and protect property.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CRITICAL</td>
<td>24 - 72 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These functions can be delayed until Tier 1 functions are restored but must be operational within 72 hours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NECESSARY</td>
<td>72 hours to 1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These functions can be delayed until Tier 1 and 2 functions are established but must be operational within one week.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IMPORTANT</td>
<td>1 week to 30 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These functions can be delayed until Tiers 1, 2 and 3 are operational.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section should also include a table detailing each mission essential function, including the name, description, priority and recovery time objective for each function. During a COOP event, the department can refer to this list of prioritized functions and determine which functions will be returned to normal operational status.
Key Personnel

This section should provide an overview of the department’s physical location and number of staff members. During the planning process, the department will assess its key positions to determine possible backups. Key positions are those positions necessary to carry out the agency’s mission essential functions and fulfill the department’s mission. Key personnel are those members of staff who have the skills and training necessary to perform tasks of other employees in the event of an emergency that reduces the number of available workers. The department should consider the staff requirements necessary to maintain mission essential functions and the availability and capabilities of backup personnel. A table should be included to list the key personnel and backups for each essential function.

Delegations of Authority

Delegations of authority specify who is authorized to make decisions or act on behalf of key leadership and personnel if they are away or unavailable during an emergency. Planning for delegations of authority involves the following:

- Identifying which authorities can and should be delegated
- Describing the circumstances under which the delegation would be exercised, including when it would become effective and terminate
- Identifying limitations of the delegation
- Documenting to whom authority should be delegated
- Ensuring designees are trained to perform their emergency duties

Once identified, the department should include a table to list the delegations of authority within the department, including the task, incumbent, delegated position and the limitations of the incumbent’s authority.

Critical Resources

Critical resources are the files, systems and equipment necessary to maintain the continuity of mission essential functions. These resources must be identified to ensure their availability during a COOP event.

Vital Records, Files and Databases

Vital records are those records that if damaged or destroyed would disrupt operations and information flow, and require replacement or re-creation at considerable expense or inconvenience. In the event that the department is unable to access its primary facility or equipment during a COOP event, these resources must be accessed to ensure continuity of mission essential functions. The department should identify the vital files, records and databases for each mission essential function, in addition to the storage location and point of contact for each resource, all of which should be included in a table for later reference.
Critical Systems

Critical systems include the information technology (IT) systems and software required to perform mission essential functions. As the capabilities of IT systems grow, agencies are utilizing these programs to facilitate their day-to-day processes. It is important to identify, prior to a disruptive event, those IT systems necessary for the completion of mission essential functions. This section should include a table that lists the IT systems and software used by the department, including a description of the system or software, the name of the systems manager, the vendor or point of contact, and the contact information of the identified vendor or point of contact.

Critical Equipment

Like critical systems, critical equipment includes specific equipment required to perform mission essential functions. Each department within the agency provides different services; therefore, each department has different critical equipment needs. This section should include a complete list of critical resources for the department, including the quantity, equipment details, vendor or point of contact, and the contact information for the identified vendor or contact.

Key Personnel Contact Information

Key personnel include the leadership and support staff necessary to maintain mission essential functions. This section should contain a table listing the contact information for all key departmental personnel, including their name, department, primary and alternate phone numbers and email address.

External Contacts

The department will identify external resources necessary to maintain its mission essential functions. This section should contain a table that lists the contacts, vendors and stakeholders the department will need to contact during a COOP event. The table should include the name of the contact or vendor, a description of the external resource, main contact number, email address or website, and any other relevant notes.

Operational Risks

Operational risks are those risks associated with internal processes, business practices and personnel that have the potential to cause a disruption to services. The department will assess its operational risks and determine those risks with the highest potential to impact its mission essential functions. Once identified, these risks should be listed in a table that provides a description of the risk, the department’s vulnerability to each risk, and recommendations to mitigate those risks identified.
Section 2: Emergency Response Plan

Introduction

The department’s COOP Emergency Response Plan establishes policy and guidance to ensure the continuity of UNCW’s mission essential functions following a disruptive event. In conjunction with the UNCW’s Basic COOP Plan (Plan) and the department’s COOP Annex, the department’s Emergency Response Plan will be designed to:

- Provide timely direction, control and coordination to agency staff during and after an event, or upon notification of a credible threat.
- Establish and enact time-phased implementation procedures to activate the COOP Plan.
- Facilitate the return to normal operating conditions as soon as practical, based on circumstances and the threat environment.
- Provide all-hazard procedures capable of addressing all types of disruptive events.

Phase 1 – COOP Activation and Relocation

The COOP Plan will be activated by the agency upon recommendation of the COOP Planning Team. Notification of Plan activation will be disseminated to personnel via the methods identified in UNCW’s COOP Plan.

Additionally, the COOP Planning Team will identify critical departments that will relocate to an alternate facility in the event that the current facility becomes inaccessible. A list of all those departments identified should be included. Department leadership should establish a rally point for personnel to meet after an evacuation for further information.

Those departments selected to participate as a member of the COOP Relocation Team or COOP Recovery Team should also be listed under this section, in addition to providing an overview of the process of returning to the primary facility.

All department personnel should have drive-away kits staged outside the agency facility and maintained at a high level of readiness in the event that the facility is inaccessible. Drive-away kits are pre-packaged kits containing equipment, reference material, personnel items and logistical support items needed to perform a department, division or unit’s essential functions. COOP Drive-Away Kits should contain only those essential items that cannot be effectively maintained, in automated or paper format, at an alternate location.

Each annex will contain a COOP Implementation Checklist that should be used to guide key personnel in completing necessary tasks during each continuity phase. The Checklist contains columns to be filled in as each task is completed, noting the name or position to which the task has been assigned and the date/time of completion.

Phase 2 – Continuity Operations

The Continuity Operations phase focuses on restoring the department’s mission essential functions. This phase is initiated by the COOP Activation Team declaring an “all clear” condition, indicating that the event has ended and business functions can be resumed.
This section of the Annex will include a checklist outlining the procedures the department will follow during the Continuity Operations phase, including each task to be performed, the name or position to which the task has been assigned, and the date/time of completion.

**Phase 3 – Reconstitution**

Reconstitution is the process of resuming normal operations. Departments should refer to the agency’s COOP Plan to determine who will be responsible for assisting agency departments in the resumption of all functions and the return to normal operational status. This group, known as the Reconstitution Team, will be responsible for each of the following:

- Surveying damage and determining inventory salvage
- Conducting a damage assessment of the building
- Developing long-term reconstitution and recovery plans
- Tracking COOP activation-related costs

This section will contain a checklist outlining the procedures the department will follow during the COOP Reconstitution phase, including each task to be performed, the name or position to which the task has been assigned, and the date/time of completion.