



Brief Overview: COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan) Plan

1. Definition of a COOP Plan

[RCW 38.52.010](#) defines **continuity of operations planning** to mean the internal effort of an organization to assure that the capability exists to continue essential functions and services in response to a comprehensive array of potential emergencies or disasters.

A **continuity of operations plan (COOP)**, as defined in the National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan and the [National Security Presidential Directive 51/Homeland Security Presidential Directive 20](#), is an effort to ensure that Primary Mission-Essential Functions continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents and technological or attack-related emergencies.

The critical business functions your COOP is planning for are those which must be:

- Operational not later than **12 hours** after activation.
- Capable of maintaining sustained operations for **up to 30 days**.

2. COOP Planning Objectives

The seven specific objectives of COOP are:

- Ensure the safety of employees
- Ensure the continuous performance of a department or agency's critical functions during an emergency
- Protect essential equipment, records and other assets
- Reduce disruptions to operations
- Minimize damage and losses
- Achieve an orderly recovery from emergency operations
- Identify relocation sites and ensure operational and managerial requirements are met before an emergency occurs

3. COOP Development: Scope of Work

- Check with other, like sized, agencies about their COOP planning efforts.
- Obtain copies of sample COOP Plans for agency directors and heads to review.
- **Identify key players** in the agency who would be involved in COOP Planning.
- **Define the role** of key OSPI players.
- Set dates for beginning and ending of the project.
- **Set meeting dates with directors** to begin the process.
- Collect necessary information for the agency plan.
- Begin the process of drafting the initial "draft" plan.
- Send the "draft" plan to agency directors for review.
- Make necessary changes to the "draft" plan.
- Finalize plan and prepare for Superintendent Dorn's signature.
- **Print/Post/Share Plan.**

4. Elements of a COOP

Essential Functions:

The critical activities performed by organizations, especially after a disruption of normal activities.

Orders of Succession:

Provisions for the assumption of senior agency offices during an emergency in the event that any of those officials are unavailable to execute their legal duties.

Delegation of Authority:

Identification by position, of the authorities for making policy determinations and decisions at headquarters, field levels, and all other organizational locations. Generally, pre-determined delegations of authority will take effect when normal channels of direction have been disrupted and will lapse when these channels have been reestablished.

Continuity Facilities:

Locations, other than the primary facility, used to carry out essential functions, particularly in a continuity event. Continuity facilities or alternate facilities refers to not only other locations, but also nontraditional options such as working at home, telecommuting, and mobile-office concepts.

Continuity Communications:

Communications that provide the capability to perform essential functions, in conjunction with other agencies, under all conditions.

Vital Records Management:

The identification, protection and ready availability of electronic and hard copy documents, references, records, information systems, data management software and equipment needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation.

Tests, Training, and Exercises:

Measures to ensure that an agency's continuity plan is capable of supporting the continued execution of the agency's essential functions throughout the duration of a continuity event.

Devolution of Control and Direction:

Capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from an agency's primary operating staff and facilities to other agency employees and facilities.

Reconstitution:

The process by which surviving and/or replacement agency personnel resume normal agency operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility.

5. Four Phases of Continuity of Operation Activation

- **Phase I:** Readiness and Preparedness
- **Phase II:** Activation and Relocation: Plans, procedures, and schedules to transfer activities, personnel, records, and equipment to alternate facilities are activated.
- **Phase III:** Continuity Operations: full execution of essential operations at alternate operating facilities is commenced.
- **Phase IV:** Reconstitution: operations at alternate facility are terminated and normal operations resume.

6. SAMPLE, DRAFT POLICY LANGUAGE

DISTRICT LEVEL Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP):

It is the policy of the (_____ District) to ensure that primary, mission essential functions of the district continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, biological and technological, or attack-related emergencies, and that the district maintain the critical and necessary environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place. To help ensure those primary, mission essential functions continue, the district will collaborate with local law enforcement agencies and first responders to develop district level emergency response plans to expedite communication, response and arrival in the event of such a threat or emergency.

In addition, the agency will establish a plan for continuity of operations. (COOP). The district COOP will ensure that primary, mission essential functions within individual district offices and departments continue during a wide range of emergencies. Elements of the continuity plan will include a brief definition of essential district functions, an order of succession and delegation of authority, vital communications with staff and community; continuity of facilities, vital records management, devolution of control and direction, and reconstitution contingencies, if necessary. To ensure that the plan is implemented effectively, the district will test, train, run exercises on, and update the plan on an annual basis.

Procedures: expanded within the COOP implementation plan.

7. Additional Resources

- Colorado: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cssrc/continuity-operations-coop-planning>
- FEMA: <http://www.fema.gov/guidance-directives>
[FEMA COOP Planning Templates](#)
- Pennsylvania:
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/continuity_of_government/406/coop_toolkit/383223
- REMS TA Center: <https://rems.ed.gov/K12COOPAnnex.aspx>
- Washington RCW 38.52.030: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=38.52.030>