



University of Colorado

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All-Hazard Continuity of Operations (COOP) Guidelines

University of Colorado System
Administration

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Introduction

CU Systems Administration (CU-SA) is committed to the safety and protection of its employees, students, operations, and facilities. In support of this commitment, CU-SA has critical operations that must be continuously performed, or rapidly and efficiently resumed in an emergency. The changing threat environment and recent events (i.e., active harmers, hurricanes, severe winter weather, etc.) has raised awareness of the need for Continuity of Operations (COOP) capabilities that will enable us to continue the performance of essential functions (activities and tasks that cannot be deferred during an emergency or resumed quickly following a disruption) across a broad spectrum of emergencies. By planning for operations under such conditions, we hope to mitigate the impact of the incident on our people, our facilities, and our mission.

The University of Colorado (CU) is aware that all types of events can disrupt operations and jeopardize the safety of university faculty, staff, and students. Emergency planning, including COOP planning, has become a necessary practice for CU. **This document provides a guideline for planning and program development to ensure CU-SA is capable of conducting its essential functions under all conditions. Please see the [COOP Guide](#) for instructions and details of developing your department COOP in the designated software.**

Participation in COOP will increase the ability of each department to recover quickly. CU-SA recognized this and initiated the COOP requirement in 2009, in response to the H1N1 Pandemic. As part of that initiation, CU-SA collaborated and partnered with AMC, CU Denver, and UCCS to utilize the current COOP software, developed and maintained by Bold Planning Solutions which has resulted in program consistencies as well as cost efficiencies.

The FEMA course listed below introduces the concept of continuity planning, provides a brief overview of continuity, including its definition, the legal basis for continuity planning, the Continuity Program Management Cycle, and essential elements of a viable continuity program.

- [FEMA IS-1300: Introduction to Continuity of Operations](#)

Purpose

CU-SA provides critical support and services to CU campuses and community and works to facilitate a rapid recovery from all disasters. To accomplish this, CU-SA must ensure its operations are performed efficiently and with minimal disruption.

This plan provides a framework to continue essential functions in the event that an emergency threatens CU-SA operations or requires the relocation of select personnel and functions. The COOP plan presents an approach to begin continuity operations within the identified recovery time objectives and maintain essential functions. The COOP plan is an all-hazards plan and addresses threats including natural, manmade, and technological sources.

Scope

This document is applicable to all CU-SA departments and personnel. The COOP supports the performance of essential functions from remote or alternate locations and provides for continuity of management and decision-making, in the event that senior management or technical personnel are unavailable. A separate COOP plan will be developed for each CU-SA department using the designated COOP software.

Planning Assumptions

Assumptions used to develop COOP Plans include the following elements.

- A major emergency or COOP event could happen at any time.
- Emergencies or threatened emergencies can adversely impact the university's ability to continue essential functions and provide day to day operations.
- There will be a sufficient number of available managers with adequate supporting personnel to continue the essential functions of CU-SA departments.
- When an emergency incident occurs that impacts essential functions, the university will implement the COOP Plan.
- Communications capabilities, transportation, and other infrastructures will be sufficiently intact to allow implementation of this plan.
- CU-SA personnel and federal, state, and private resources will be available as necessary to continue essential functions.
- Recovery of the CU-SA's critical functions and application systems will occur and allow essential operations to continue.
- A disaster may require staff and the public to function with limited support services and some degradation of service, until a full recovery is made.

Departmental COOP Teams and Development Procedures

CU-SA has contracted with BOLD Solutions for software that each department can use in creating their individual COOP plans. Each department head will designate a person to be their COOP coordinator. This person will complete the COOP template within the COOP software and submit it for approval with respective department head. The individual department COOP plan will follow this COOP guideline and using the COOP planning software.

The departmental COOP teams are comprised of personnel from departments across the CU-SA. Any organizational element that has a role in continuing or restoring essential functions is considered a part of this team. Overall, departmental teams are responsible for:

- Determining the scope and impact of the incident on their operations.
- Prioritizing and implementing continuity and recovery actions.
- Managing and directing the activities of departmental personnel involved in continuity and recovery.
- Deploying requested resources and equipment for continuity operations.
- Requesting any additional resources and equipment needed to continue essential functions.
- Implementing their departmental reconstitution plan.
- Providing facts to support the dissemination of timely, accurate, and appropriate information.

Orders of Succession and Delegation of Authority

In the event that the leadership is unable to perform duties as the leader of the department, those duties must be assumed by department administration staff. Departmental COOP plans must outline unit specific orders of succession and delegation of authority.

Orders of Succession

This section should identify the orders of succession to key positions within the department. Orders should be of sufficient depth to ensure the department's ability to manage and direct its essential functions and operations.

Delegations of Authority

This section should identify, by position, the authorities for making policy determinations and decisions. Generally, pre-determined designations of authority will take effect when normal channels of direction are disrupted and terminate when these channels have resumed. Such designations may also be used to address specific competency requirements related to one or more essential functions.

Alternate Locations

CU-SA recognizes that normal operations may be disrupted and that there may be a need to perform essential functions at remote locations. As such, individual departments must identify in their COOP plans, primary and secondary operating locations for their COOP teams.

A successful alternate facility will provide the following in sufficient quantity to sustain operations for up to 30 days or until normal business activities can be resumed:

- Sufficient space and equipment, including computer equipment and software either on site or easily transportable from the primary facility.
- Capability to perform essential functions within 12 hours (or sooner if needed) of plan activation for up to 30 days or until normal operations can be resumed.
- Reliable logistical support, services, and infrastructure systems.
- Consideration for health, safety, security, and emotional well-being of personnel.
- Interoperable communications for effective interaction.
- Capabilities to access and use vital records.

Communications

It is understood that communications in a crisis situation can be compromised. The internal communications systems must support connectivity to staff and others in all circumstances. Your department communications section should identify available and redundant critical communication systems that are located at the alternate site. These interoperable communication systems should provide:

1. Ability to support a department's essential functions and operations
2. Ability to communicate with essential personnel and others
3. Ability to access data and systems
4. Communications systems for use in situations with and without warning
5. Ability to operate at the alternate facility within 12 hours, and for up to 30 days

CU-SA relies on many layers of communication tools with the expectation that different tools may work at different times during continuity operations. The following communication tools work to support COOP operations.

- Land lines
- Fax lines
- Data lines
- Cellular phones
- Instant messaging services
- Email
- Department Calling Tree

- CU Alerts
- CU-SA Website

Hazard Vulnerability Assessment

Below is a list of the hazards, based on a hazard vulnerability assessment typical of administration operations for CU-SA, which pose the greatest threat or impact on CU-SA departments. These hazards are reasonably likely to cause harm to the University and/or interrupt operations if they are not effectively managed. The hazards identified with the potential greatest disruption are:

1. Severe weather/storm (snow, wind, tornado, etc.)
2. Structure failure
3. Flood (pipe burst)
4. Active harmer/terrorism/riot/protest
5. Bombing
6. Structure fire
7. Infectious disease

Essential Functions

The identification of essential functions is the foundation of COOP planning. Essential functions are defined as those functions that enable the CU-SA to provide vital services and sustain in an emergency. In order to identify essential functions, each department should include in its COOP plan the following:

- Conduct a business impact analysis (BIA). Please see the [BIA](#) section for instruction.
- Identify all functions performed by the department, then determine which must be continued under all circumstances.
- Prioritize these essential functions.
- Establish staffing and resource requirements needed to perform essential functions.
- Identify mission critical data and systems necessary to conduct essential functions.
- Defer functions not essential to immediate department needs until additional personnel and resources become available.
- Integrate supporting activities to ensure that essential functions can be performed as efficiently as possible during emergency relocation.

Essential Personnel and Human Capital Management

Essential personnel must be prepared to sustain essential functions from a facility site or remotely for a period of up to 30 days. Supplies and equipment needed to perform essential functions will be pre-positioned, but individuals are responsible for personal items.

CU-SA relies on human capital resources and their flexibility to assist COOP team members in an emergency. CU-SA leadership is expected to:

- Be fully informed and understand human capital tools, flexibilities, and strategies.
- Regularly review and update personnel contact information and notification protocols to assure that information remains current.
- Ensure employees have clear understanding of their role in an emergency.
- Develop, review, and update emergency guides as needed.

Vital Records, Systems, and Equipment

Each department COOP plan must provide for the protection, accessibility, and recovery of any vital records, documents (electronic and hardcopy), information systems, equipment, and applications necessary to support essential functions during a COOP event.

The entire university relies a great deal on information technology and communication for most of the operations. As such, the information technology and communication must be an integral part of the COOP plan as they are intimately connected to effective continuity operations.

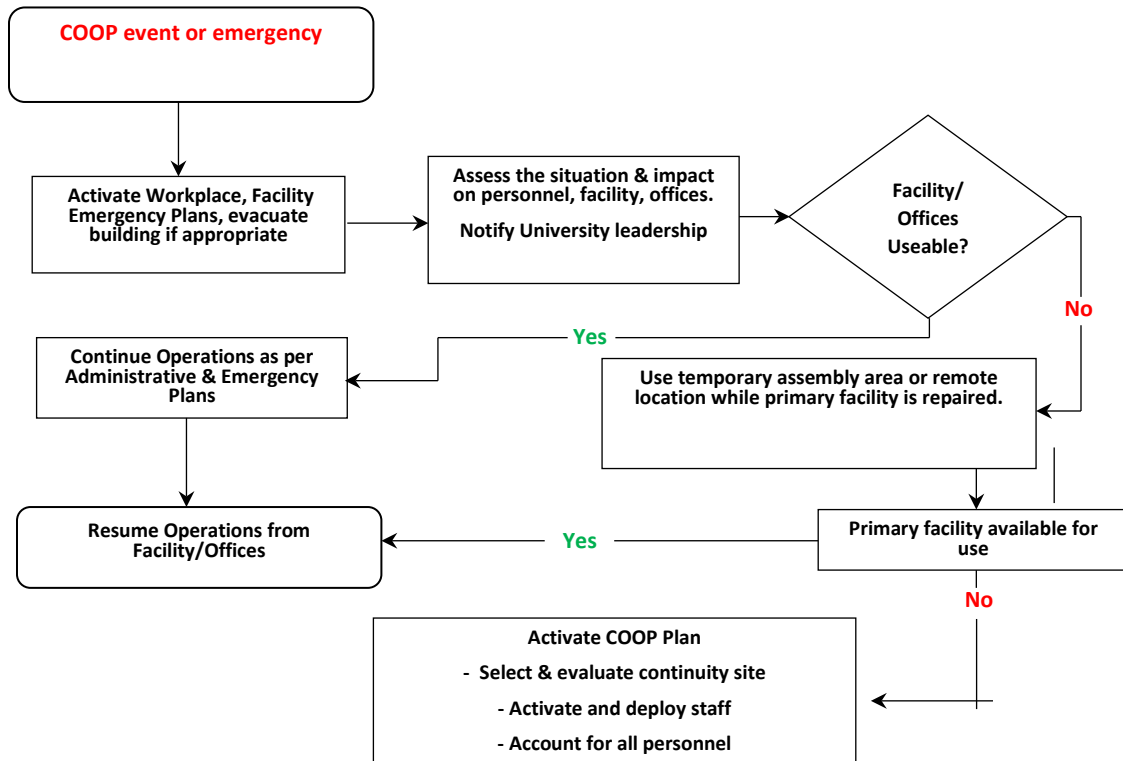
Alert, Notification, and Implementation Process

In this section, the COOP coordinator should identify the essential personnel within your department. Look at each critical operation and identify individuals who may be called upon in an emergency to maintain said operation. Once you have identified the personnel, assign a team leader. It is recommended to assign personnel by function. It is also important to designate an alternate team leader. Let these individuals know ahead of a disaster that they have been chosen as team lead.

Activating a COOP plan and relocating to a remote location is decided on an individual scenario basis. This allows for a flexible and scalable response to the full spectrum of emergencies and other events that could disrupt normal operations. These events may occur with or without warning during regular business hours or during non-business hours. Activating a COOP plan is not required for all emergencies. The decision to activate a continuity plan (and corresponding actions) are tailored to each situation, based upon projected or actual impact and severity.

Activation and relocation include the following:

- Activate occupant emergency plans if applicable.
- Assess the impact on the facility, staff offices, and personnel.
- Notify University leadership if staff offices are deemed unusable and mission essential functions cannot be supported at the existing facility.
- Activate and deploy available staff to an assembly area or remote location.
- Notify all department personnel of COOP activation and provide additional guidance.
- Take appropriate measures to ensure security of the facilities and equipment or records remaining in the vacated building by designated security personnel.



COOP Plan Training and Maintenance

The key to a successful enactment of each department’s COOP plan hinges on the ability of training to familiarize staff with their roles and responsibilities during an emergency. It also ensures that systems and equipment are maintained in a constant state of readiness and validates certain aspects of your COOP plan. The following must occur:

- Each staff member shall be trained on their role within each department COOP plan.
- Each department’s COOP plan will be continually updated and revised with current contact information, resources, organizational changes to ensure all elements of the plan are current and applicable.
- Plan changes, updates, and revisions are the responsibility of the department COOP coordinator and department head, who will ensure that any plan changes are distributed accordingly.
- At a minimum, the entire plan will be reviewed annually.

Annex A – Glossary

Activation – When all or a portion of the COOP Plan has been put into motion.

All-hazards – The spectrum of all types of hazards including accidents, technological events, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, warfare, and chemical, biological including pandemic influenza, radiological, nuclear, or explosive events.

Continuity of Operations (COOP) – An effort within individual agencies to ensure they can continue to perform their MEFs during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological or attack-related emergencies.

Continuity Facility– A location, other than the original facility, used to process data and/or conduct essential functions in the event of a disaster, loss of facility use, or personnel shortages. Similar Term: Emergency Relocation Site (ERS)

Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan – A set of documented procedures developed to provide for the continuance of essential business functions during an emergency.

COOP Event – Any event or action which renders the primary worksite incapacitated and requires a full or partial activation of the COOP Plan.

Delegations of Authority – Pre-delegated authorities for making policy determinations and decisions at headquarters, field levels and other organizational locations, as appropriate.

Essential Functions – The critical activities performed by organizations especially after a disruption of normal activities. Mission Essential Functions (MEF) is one category of Essential Functions.

Essential resources – Resources that support the organization’s ability to provide vital services, exercise civil authority, maintain the safety and well-being of the general populace, and sustain the Nation’s industrial and economic bases during an emergency.

Facilities – Locations where an organization’s leadership and staff operate. Leadership and staff may be co-located in one facility or dispersed across many locations and connected by communications systems. Facilities should be able to provide staff with survivable protection and should enable continued and enduring operations.

Hazard Vulnerability Analysis – A process that defines, identifies, and classifies the susceptibility of a facility, computer, network, or communications infrastructure, to damage or destruction.

Information Technology (IT) - Applied computer systems - both hardware and software, and often including networking and telecommunications, usually in the context of a business or other enterprise.

Interoperable Communications - Alternate communications that provide the capability to perform essential functions, in conjunction with other agencies, until normal operations can be resumed.

Key Personnel – Personnel designated by their division as critical to the resumption of essential functions and services.

Legal and financial records - Records that are needed to protect the legal and financial rights of the transportation agency and of the persons affected by its actions.

Normal operations – Generally and collectively, “normal operations” refer to the broad functions undertaken by an organization when it is assigned responsibility for a given functional area; these functions include planning and execution of tasks throughout the range of operations.

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.

Plan – A proposed or intended method of getting from one set of circumstances to another. A plan is often used to move from the present situation towards the achievement of one or more objectives or goals.

Reconstitution – The process by which agency personnel resume normal business operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility.

Recovery – Recovery, in this document, includes all types of emergency actions dedicated to the continued protection of the public or to promoting the resumption of normal activities in the affected area.

Response – Those activities and programs designed to address the immediate and short-term effects of the onset of an emergency or disaster.

Vital Databases - Information systems needed to support essential functions during a COOP situation.

Vital Records - Electronic and/or hardcopy documents, references, and records needed to support essential functions during a COOP situation. The two basic categories of vital records are emergency operating records and legal and financial records.