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What's Your Plan?

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Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan Review Guidelines

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PLAN INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

MAIN PLAN

This grade relates to their General Info page. (Devolution is not reviewed here, but later in the review process.)

- Does the plan identify the Name of the Organization?
- Does the plan identify the Department Head/Organization Head?
- Does the plan provide a mission statement?
- Does the plan provide a supersession statement?
- Does the plan identify who activates computers at alternate Facilities?

Green – All information including appropriate Mission Statement and Supersession is totally complete. (Again, Devolution is reviewed separately later.)

Yellow – Means that something is not filled in or the Mission Statement or Supersession is incomplete. (If, for example, the Mission statement is a place holder comment or something like, "My mission is to make coffee," that will be commented on and will bring it from a green to a yellow.)

Red – Very limited or no entries have been made. On the initial review, this is also the only place where the comment is made if the plan contains no data. The remainder of the Annexes will not be reviewed.

TEAMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Have specific personnel been designated to perform on each of the teams within the plan?
- Is the number of personnel on the teams comparable to the size of the Department?
- Does the plan provide clear description of each team member's responsibilities? Are the descriptions for each responsibility complete? (Example of incorrect description: "Assist relocation.")

Green – At least two people defined and placed on the critical teams, and each member has tasks/responsibilities assigned. The support team is discretionary, depending on the size of the organization. The pandemic team does not need to be addressed for a green score, although it is a plus.

Yellow – There are less than two people on the critical teams; and limited or no responsibilities for each person. (Larger organizations will need the support team.)

Red – No effort has been placed in this section.

FACILITIES

Primary location and an alternate location other than an organization's normal facility used to conduct essential functions in the event of COOP activation.

- Does the plan provide a well-defined list of resources at both Primary and Alternate Facilities, and are they listed as pre-positioned or transported at the alternate location?
- Is the number of staff identified at the Primary Facility and the number to relocate identified for the Alternate Facilities?
- Are the facility managers identified at each Primary and Alternate Facilities?
- Does the plan identify at least one Alternate Facility location per Primary Facility?
- Does the plan clearly identify which Alternate Facility serves as Alternate for each Primary?

Green – The Primary Facility has resources and number of staff listed and the Facility Manager is identified. Resources and number of staff to relocate (at a minimum) have been identified at the Alternate Facility, and it is identified as to which primary the location is alternate for.

Yellow – The Primary Facility must have its resources and number of staff listed and the Facility Manager identified. There may or may not be an actual Alternate Facility listed. "To Be Determined" is acceptable, but the needed resources and number of staff to relocate should be listed.

Red – No effort has been placed in this section.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Essential Functions are an organization's prioritized functions which must be performed under all operational conditions. COOP plans are created to ensure that these functions can continue to be performed even following a major disaster. (These need to be specific tasks or actions, not general or one-word descriptions).

- Does the plan identify an appropriate number of functions for the Department?
- Are the functions conducted during normal operations, not the actions taken during an event or emergency response to an event?
- Are the functions written in a clear description for readers to understand?
- Does the plan include an estimation of Personnel and Vital Records or Resources that are required to complete each function?
- Have the functions been sorted by Tiers and Prioritized?

Green – At least three Essential Functions for normal operations are listed and prioritized using the Tiers. The content is clear, easy to understand and action-based. Each Essential Function has complete linking of Personnel and Resources / Vital Records.

Yellow – Two or less Essential Functions are identified. Content, personnel, and resources and vital records do not meet the green criteria.

Red – No Essential Functions are listed or very limited data is provided.

ORDERS OF SUCCESSION

The sequence in which one person assumes the roles and responsibilities within the organization in the event the usual leadership is unavailable to perform those duties.

- Does the plan identify the Order of Succession for the “Department Head?”
- Has each of the pre-identified Succession Lines been thoroughly completed?
- Is each line three deep?
- Have they added more succession lines relevant to positions in their organization? (optional)

Green – At a minimum, the Department Head with a succession of at least three deep is identified (two deep for very small organizations.) Depending on size of the organization other key leadership positions are defined. Again, depending on size of the organization, support and pandemic are a plus.

Yellow – Some work has been done, but Succession Lines are not listed for all COOP teams and/or Succession Lines are not two to three deep, depending on the size of the organization.

Red – No work or limited data added to this section.

DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY

A statement provided to an agency head by the senior agency executive that delegates authority and responsibility. It can include objectives, priorities, expectations, constraints, and other considerations or guidelines as needed. Many agencies require a written delegation of authority to be given to the agency head prior to their assuming command of larger incidents.

- At a minimum, does the plan identify the Delegations of Authority pre-loaded within the system?
- Is each line three deep?
- Have they added more Delegations of Authority relevant to their organization? (optional)

Green – The four pre-loaded authorities with a primary and two alternate persons are listed, depending on the size of the organization. A primary person and one alternate may be acceptable. This can also be loaded in the **File Archive** section and referenced here.

Yellow – Anything less than green criteria.

Red – No action has been taken in loading authorities in this section.

ALERT NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

These procedures and / or documents can be uploaded and maintained within the File Archive but should be referenced in this section. There is a pre-loaded list in this section to get organizations started.

- Does the plan identify how notifications to staff and others outside the organization will be handled?
- Does the plan describe the process of how the message will be sent and by whom?
- Does the plan describe a process of how personnel can respond to notifications and/or whom to respond to?
- Does the plan identify any extra measures that may be used for notifications; such as the use of call trees, websites and phone call-out systems?

Green – Several items have been added to pre-loaded list in this section and/or referenced documents that have been loaded into the file archive.

Yellow – Only one or two items have been added to the list.

Red – No additional data has been added beyond the pre-loaded list of notification procedures.

VITAL RECORDS / RESOURCES

These are systems, records, resources, documents, specialized equipment or other information that, if damaged or destroyed, would for legal, regulatory, or operational reasons, not only cause considerable inconvenience and expense to replace or re-create, but would materially impair the organization's ability to continue operations.

- Does the plan identify a valid amount of Vital Records and Resources comparable to the size and complexity of the organization?
- At a minimum, for each, does the plan establish:
 1. Name of the Vital Record or Resource
 2. Description of the Vital Record or Resource (what it is and how it is used)
 3. Description of how the Vital Record or Resource is protected (maintaining/backing-up) and who is responsible for this process

Green – At least three Vital Records / Resources are fully defined with backup plans, locations and the back-up / review dates listed. The contact (POC) for the record and the POC for the location where it is stored are also listed.

Yellow – Less than three Vital Records / Resources listed and/or they are not fully defined.

Red – There are no defined Vital Records listed.

DRIVE AWAY or GO KITS

Kits contain supplies, equipment and documentation necessary for alternate facilities to be sustained for up to thirty days. These portable kits are transported by team members during relocation to an alternate site. The system provides several pre-loaded kits with suggested items to include for each.

- Have the pre-loaded Kits been modified to meet the requirements of the Organization?
- Have the kits been updated with additional items and/or quantities?

Green – Several amounts on the checklist have been provided and/or modifications have been made or items added.

Yellow – Only one change has been made to the provided list.

Red – No changes or additions have been made.

COMMUNICATIONS

Special focus should be placed on resources used for communicating with staff, related support agencies, the public, and local emergency responders. Existing communications resources and alternate methods should be identified, as well as internal and external procedures for alert notification.

- Does the plan identify several types of communication; phones, fax, internet, etc.?
- Does the plan state whether each is internal use, external use, mobile capable, and/or secure?
- Have the needed quantities been determined?

Green – Several methods of communication are listed and checked for the type and use.

Yellow – Only one or two communication methods are listed and no checks are made.

Red – No changes have been made.

SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROLS

The plan should clearly describe the Access Controls of each facility within the plan and the Security measures for each facility within the plan. (The Evacuation Plan is not graded here.)

- Does the plan identify the measures that limit personnel and non-personnel from entering or moving throughout each facility?
- Does the plan list the measures currently in place; guards, metal detectors, locked doors and file cabinets, key-card entries, security procedures, etc.?

Green – A strong list clearly defines the security and access controls for the primary facility. Cyber security comments are a plus but not required. The evacuation plan is not graded here. A “To Be Determined” comment addressing alternate facilities is acceptable here.

Yellow – Attempt made, but the list to address the primary facility security access controls is not strong or complete.

Red – No comments have been added.

FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

The system provides a Family Disaster Plan based on FEMA’s suggested best practices for family preparedness. It is the responsibility of each person within the Organization to share and discuss this information with their family in advance of disaster events.

- This is normally either not graded or given a Green, depending on the client’s preference.

DEVOLUTION

- Does the plan clearly identify an organization that has been selected for Devolution?
- Devolution is identified on the General Information page.

Green – An agency name other than theirs is listed.

Yellow – They have listed themselves as the designated agency or filled in a place holder comment.

Red – There is no devolution agency listed in the general information section.

TEST, TRAINING, and EXERCISES / PLAN MAINTENANCE

- Does the plan provide a thorough compilation of Test, Training, and Exercise events that have taken place to date?
- Does the plan provide a thorough compilation of Planning Events that have taken place to date?

Green – At least three additional TTE activities have been added in the system since the initial entry during training.

Yellow – Only one or two additional TTE maintenance activities have been added in the system since the initial entry during training.

Red – Only the initial entry was added during training or there are no entries at all.

FACILITY EVACUATION

- Is there documentation of the evacuation routes for each facility mentioned within the plan? (These documents can be uploaded and maintained within the File Archive but need to be referenced in this section.)

Green – The primary facility evacuation plan is either listed (step-by-step) or the plan has uploaded in the file archive. The alternate facilities are a plus but not required.

Yellow – There is no real possible yellow score. The evacuation plan is either listed (Green) or not listed (Red).

Red – No evacuation comments or documents are listed or loaded in the file archive.

CONTACTS

- Does the plan contain a complete list of personnel who would be involved during the organization's continuity event?
- For personnel and contacts entered into the Contacts database, is there a satisfactory amount of contact information provided, including work and alternate addresses, telephone numbers, and emails?
- Does the Contacts database include "non-staff" contacts which may be needed to assist during a continuity event? (IT personnel and/or Facility Maintenance contacts)
- Does the Contacts database include vendors which may be needed to assist during a continuity event? (optional)

Green – At least ten complete contacts are listed (based on the size of the organization, there may be more or less). A complete entry would include two phone numbers (work, home or cell) and two e-mails (work and another). IT staff and facility managers have been added.

Yellow – Three or more contacts have been added, but entries are not complete and/or IT staff and facility managers have not been added.

Red – Less than three contacts have been added to the database.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The plan should identify various types of events that could occur and possibly impact the organization's ability to operate.

- Does the plan identify several types of Hazards/Risks, i.e. natural, man-made, technological, etc.?
- Has each Risk/Hazard type been identified?
- Is there a description listed for each Hazard/Risk?
- Does the plan identify the potential impact of each event, including financial costs?
- Have the Hazards/Risks been sorted by their risk rating?

Green – Several Hazards/Risks are identified. The risk type, description and potential impact have been identified and the Hazards/Risks have been sorted by their risk rating.

Yellow – Three or less Hazards/Risks have been identified. Risk type, description or potential impact has not been identified. The Hazards/Risks have not been sorted by risk rating.

Red – No Hazards/Risks have been added.

RISK SPECIFIC ACTION LIST

For each identified Hazards/Risks, the plan should have list of “Actions” that the organization could take to help manage and minimize the effects of the event if it were to occur. The plan should organize these actions into four layers: Preparedness Actions (Pre-Event), Response Actions (During Event), Recovery Actions (Post-Event), and Mitigation Actions.

- Does the plan have Preparedness Actions for each Hazard/Risk?
- Does the plan have Response Actions for each Hazard/Risk?
- Does the plan have Recovery Actions for each Hazard/Risk?
- Does the plan have Mitigation Actions for each Hazard/Risk?

Green – For each Hazard/Risk there is one or more Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Mitigation Action.

Yellow – Some actions listed but there are Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Mitigation Actions identified for all Hazards/Risks.

Red – No actions have been added.