

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS (COOP) PLANNING

*A comprehensive overview to the
Maryland Government Finance Officers Association*
October 27, 2017 -- Presenter: Eric Oddo



Presentation Agenda

- Background/Introduction (**5** minutes)
- COOP “Cliffs Notes” (**45** minutes)
- Q&A (**10** minutes)

CHHS Background

- mdchhs.com
- Semi-autonomous consulting firm associated with the University of Maryland-Baltimore; founded in 2002.
- ~40 professionals, headquartered in downtown Baltimore. About half of personnel work on-site at client locations.
- Primary areas of expertise: emergency management, homeland security and public health.
- Client base: mostly state and local DMV government agencies; federal and international institutions, as well.



My personal background

- Continuity Program Director at CHHS
- Managed multi-year COOP projects for federal, state, local government and institutional entities over past 9 years
- Currently lead COOP planner for District of Columbia city government
- FEMA-instructor for two-day management-level COOP course nationwide

What is COOP?

Official definition:

A comprehensive, internal effort within an organization to ensure the capability exists to seamlessly continue mission essential functions in the aftermath of an emergency event.

Assumptions and Considerations

- All-Hazards (e.g. loss of specific facility, loss of critical resource(s), loss of personnel)
- Implemented after human safety measures and incident stabilization
- Should be maintained at a high level of readiness, and executable both with and without warning
- Executable within 12 hours; sustainable for up to 30 days
- Tiered operational levels OK

Historical Origins of COOP/COG



Initial Actions to get program off the ground...

- Identify COOP Program Coordinator
- Identify COOP Planning Team
- Take the necessary steps to ensure that the program has the legitimacy of a real project, with executive support and consequences for non-compliance.
- Determine human capital and financial resources to be allocated to COOP plan development and maintenance

“Houston, we have a problem.”





“We gotta find a way to make this, fit into the hole for this, using nothing but that.”

Mission Essential Functions

What is an “essential function?” Some subjectivity involved

Does it...

- achieve agency’s mission?
- provide vital services?
- exercise civil authority?
- maintain safety & well-being of citizens?
- sustain industrial & economic base?
- And/or... can it not be postponed for **30 days** post-event?

Mission Essential Functions

- How would the lack of this function for 30 days impact your jurisdiction and its residents?
- Are there laws, regulations, statutes, orders or other legal considerations which mandate this function's execution under all circumstances?
- What is the harm to the reputation of your agency if this function is not performed in a timely manner?

Mission Essential Functions

What is a “non-essential function?” Common examples:

- General training and exercises;
- Research and development;
- Long range planning;
- Travel to conferences;
- Audits and inspections;
- Non-essential hearings and proceedings.

Can be postponed for 30 days post-event

Functions Categorization Model Worksheet

	Essential	Non-Essential (during an emergency)
Mission	Mission Essential Function <i>Example: Respond to emergency Fire Department calls—fight fires</i>	Deferrable Mission <i>Example: Provide community fire prevention education</i>
Non-Mission	Essential Supporting Activity <i>Example: Keep fire trucks operational and ready to respond</i>	Deferrable Supporting Activity <i>Example: Provide retirement guidance to firefighters</i>



Human Capital Management

Human Capital Management

- **Everyone knows their responsibility amidst a COOP activation.**
 - Emergency relocation group (ERG)
 - “Second shift” ERG, if applicable
 - Telecommuting
 - Non-continuity personnel
- Systematic training
- COOP part of organizational culture



March 30, 1981



“I am in control here.” –Alexander Haig

Succession Planning



- Use position titles whenever possible.
- Make sure to consider: triggers, method of notification, limitations, authority to re-delegate, geographic proximity

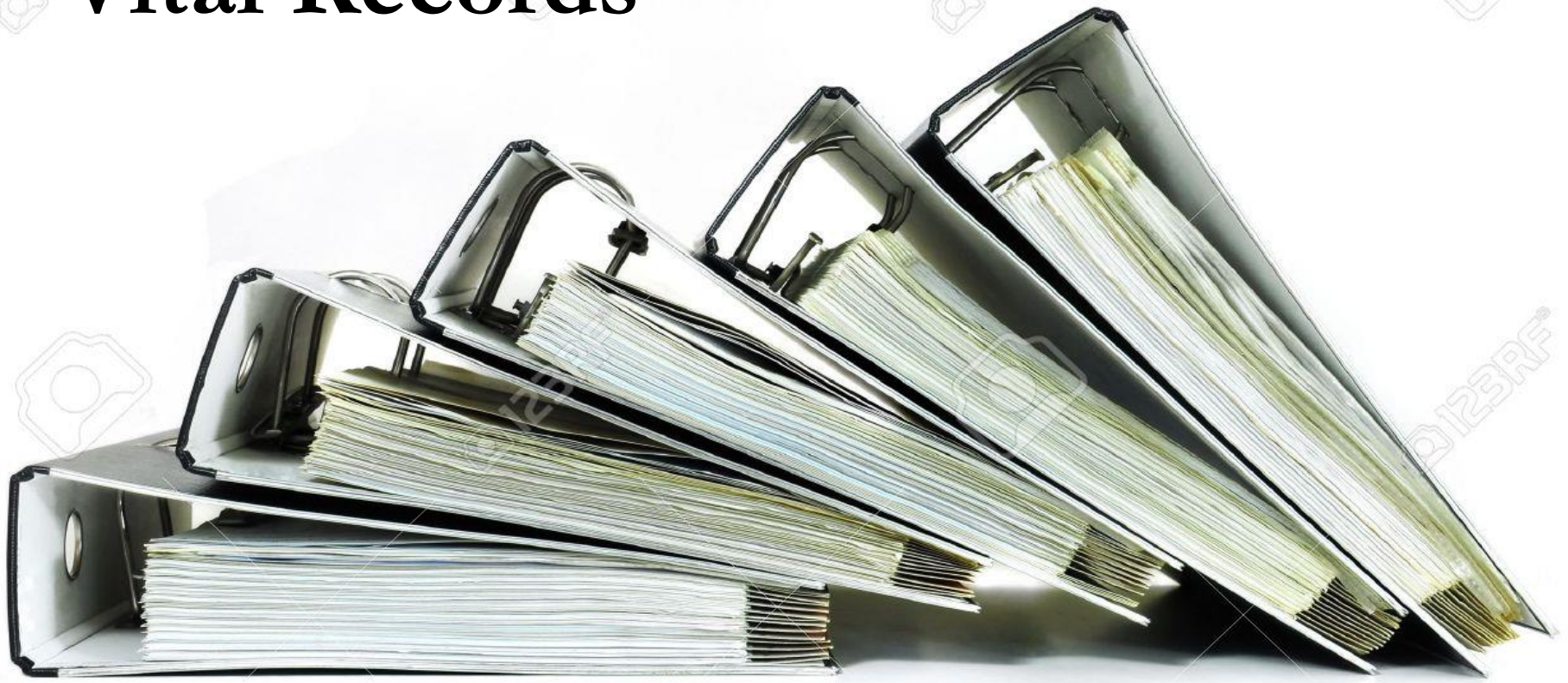
Communications



Communications

- (1) Determine primary and backup methods of notification to activate COOP plan
- (2) Identify primary and alternate forms of communication for the execution of essential functions
- (3) Have comprehensive strategy for dissemination of information to the media

Vital Records



Vital Records and Databases

*Records that directly correlate with the execution of one of more essential functions

Account for:

1. Name of record or database
2. Location
3. Format
4. Backup method
5. Remote accessibility
6. Ability to be transported by hand
7. Support/Vendor contact information
8. Vital Records “go-kit”

Vital Equipment



Vital Systems and Equipment

*Equipment that directly correlates with the execution of one of more essential functions

Account for:

1. Name of system or equipment
2. Quantity required
3. Location
4. Ability to be transported by hand
5. Supporting systems
6. Proposed alternate
7. Support/Vendor contact information

Alternate Facilities



Alternate Facilities

- (1) Always consider Telework first
- (2) Consider: Location, distance, transportation, building type, space, communications, security, accessibility
- (3) Secondary facilities; “hot” “warm” or “cold” site
- (4) Mutual Aid agreements
- (5) Logistics of relocation

Reconstitution

Definition: resuming normal operations post-emergency.

Reconstitution can be as **simple** as offices being fully open following limited operations after a snowstorm and all employees expected to report to work for normal operations.

OR

Reconstitution can be as **complicated** as recovering from an attack such as the one on the World Trade Center, with challenges that include relocation of operations with survivors — first to a temporary location for full operations, and then to a new permanent location.

Devolution

Devolution may be required under three general sets of conditions:

- The organization receives a warning of an impending incident of a magnitude that devolution is required.
- Occurrence of an incident that requires devolution (e.g., an incident that damages or destroys the organization's primary and alternate facilities; incapacitates the staff; or severely disrupts the infrastructure).
- The organization activates its continuity plan, which in turn, requires a short-term devolution of essential functions until the alternate facility becomes operational.

Training, Exercise and Evaluation

- (1) Systematic internal training within your agency; incorporate COOP into team meetings and on-boarding process
- (2) IS-546, IS-547
- (3) Discussion-based exercises (e.g. seminar, workshop, tabletop)
- (4) Operations-based exercises (drill, functional, full-scale)
- (5) Hot Wash / After-Action Reports

Want to talk further?

- (1) CHHS COOP consulting services, or
- (2) 2-day FEMA-accredited COOP training course

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