



Business Continuity Planning from the municipal perspective

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What is BCP?

- All-hazard emergency planning intended to minimize the impacts of a business disruption
- Focused on defining short term, immediate needs, timelines, and guidelines at the functional area level
- Builds capacity to respond to emergencies, provide essential services, and protect assets and employees
- Should be viewed as an integral component of your emergency program



Why should we do this?

- Protects assets
- Ensures delivery of essential services
- Builds resiliency of emergency operations
- Increases confidence of employees, the public, and stakeholders
- Protection from liability
- **Without the required equipment, people, and facilities, you will not be able to effectively respond to an emergency**

What are the steps?

1. Identify your **functions**
2. Conduct a **risk analysis**
3. Prepare a **Business Impact Analysis** for all functions
4. Determine your **priorities for restoration**
5. Evaluate and select a **strategic approach**
6. **Write a plan** based on requirements of a function during an emergency
7. **Train and exercise** your employees



Starting points

- Get the support of your executive. Sell your Council on the need, the approach, and the required resources
- Assign the responsibility to someone, and make it a regular part of their work
- Get all employees aware and involved
- Don't view it as a one-time job – the investment only has value if it is grown and developed



Step 1 – Identify your functional areas

- Functional areas are groupings of activities within your operation – not the names of divisions or branches, but the things that happen within them
- Public Works is not a functional area – too broad. A snowplow is not a functional area – too narrow. Road Maintenance is a functional area
- EMO has three functional areas – Emergency Coordination, Disaster Recovery, and Finance and Administration



Examples of functional areas

- Water treatment plant
- Office administration
- First response – fire department
- Emergency Coordination
- Assessments and taxation
- Recreation – arena

Step 2 – Conduct a Risk Assessment

- Should be completed for all functional areas, and evaluate the impacts if a hazard develops into an emergency
- Evaluate probability of a hazard resulting in an emergency, and the impact on life safety, property, and the environment
- Once you have completed a BCP, the Risk Assessment will allow you to make decisions on focusing your planning by identifying the areas of greatest risk or concern



Step 3 – Prepare a Business Impact Analysis for each functional area

- Critically important piece – identifies the Minimum Operating Statement, which is the minimal level of service the functional area will need to deliver
- Identifies Recovery Time Objective – when the Minimum Operating Statement must be met
- Lists the positions, resources, facilities, information and all requirements for the functional area to work through a disruption



Step 4 – Determine priorities for restoration

- If resources are limited, you will need to make a priority of mission critical functions – issues like life safety, impact on the environment, statutory responsibilities
- Will contribute to an orderly restoration of services, especially when mutually dependent
- Not a definitive list – only meant to provide guidance if decisions need to be made on restoring services



Step 5 – Evaluate and choose a strategic approach

- Before you can write a plan, you need to know what you will do
- Consider options such as: having people work at home, establishing a remote office, back-ups with our municipalities, mutual aid, hot or warm sites
- Don't stop at 'what we would probably do' – think creatively about ways to deal with a problem
- Evaluate practicality, cost, and feasibility, and then chose the best approach



Step 6 – Write your plan

- Based on the requirements in your Business Impact Analysis and the strategic approach you've chosen
- Start writing plans based on functional areas, and if it's practicable, roll them up into branch or division plans later
- Should be simple, clear, and focused on the time requirements – what things need to happen and when in order to meet the Minimum Operating Statement

Other planning considerations

- Identify two back-ups for every position if possible
- If you know someone will not be available during an emergency, don't plan around them
- Make a connection to your Emergency Plan – BCP should be viewed as a separate component from emergency operations, but each is closely dependent on the other

Step 7 – Training, Exercises, Maintenance

- Assign someone the responsibility of keeping and developing the plan
- Ensure all employees understand BCP, and then their responsibilities and expectations
- Training should be progressive – start with a walk-through, then a tabletop, then a BCP exercise, and then something connected with an Emergency Plan exercise

Making it work

- Get a commitment from your Council
- Involve all employees
- Focus on practical, realistic ideas, and simple, manageable plans
- Make it someone's job, and the job of all employees
- Keep the focus on what would need to get done during an emergency, not restoring normal business
- Think a step ahead to longer-term operations and recovery



When it's all done, your BCP should ...

- Establish the minimal activities that need to happen in the event of a disruption
- Determine when it needs to happen
- Identify the resources required to do it
- Outline what needs to happen and when it needs to happen
- Provide guidance on what are higher priorities
- Include a way forward with plans for training, exercises, and on-going responsibility



Resources

- Disaster Recovery International Canada – www.dri.ca
- Disaster Recovery Information Exchange – www.drie.net
- NFPA 1600 – www.nfpa.org
- Manitoba EMO – www.manitobaemo.ca



Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization – Business Continuity
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