

COOP Preparedness

FAQS



Throughout the Continuity of Operations Planning process many of the same questions have surfaced from the various county agencies. The following are a few of the most frequently asked questions about the COOP planning process.

What is an essential function?

Essential functions are those functions that enable an organization to:

- Provide vital services.
- Exercise civil authority.
- Maintain the safety of the general public.
- Sustain the industrial or economic base during an emergency.

In other words, essential functions are any agency's business functions that must continue with no or minimal disruption.

Can you define activation and relocation?

During activation, agencies must be prepared to activate their COOP Plans for all emergencies, regardless of warning period. Agencies must also plan to activate their COOP plans during both duty and non-duty hours.

Relocation involves the actual movement of essential functions, personnel, records, and equipment to the alternate operating facility.



Relocation may involve:

- Transferring communications capability to the alternate facility
- Ordering supplies and equipment that are not already in place at the alternate facility
- Other planned activities, such as providing network access

Can you explain the difference between a COOP activation and an Emergency Response Plan ?

Federal Preparedness Circular (FPC) 65 makes a distinction between emergencies that result in short-term unavailability of a facility and those that result in long-term unavailability. Emergencies, such as a hazardous materials incident, may require facility evacuation with little notice. These emergencies result in the activation of the Emergency Response Plan (ERC)

but cause only a short-term disruption. Emergencies that are so severe that an agency facility is unusable for a period long enough to impact normal operations, may require COOP plan implementation.

What is an alternate site?

When a COOP activation is required, an agency's primary operating facility has been determined to be unavailable and its essential functions require relocation. Agencies are required to identify a location, other than the normal facility, that can be used to carry out essential functions in a COOP situation. Agencies should also identify business continuity or devolution sites in case the alternate facility is made inoperable.

Can you explain the difference between orders of succession and delegation of authority ?

Orders of succession provide for the orderly and predefined assumption of senior agency positions during an emergency in the event that any officials are unavailable to execute their legal duties. Success to office is critical in the event that the agency leadership is unavailable, debilitated, or incapable of performing their legally authorized duties, roles and responsibilities.

Delegations of authority are formal documents that specify the activities that those who are authorized to act on behalf of the agency head or other key officials may perform. All delegations of authority state specifically:

- The authority that is being delegated
- The limits of that authority
- To whom the authority is being delegated (title, not name)
- Circumstances under which delegated authorities would become effective and when they would terminate
- The successor's authority to re-delegate those functions and activities

Checking in with the COOP Planning and Oversight Committee

The [Planning and Oversight Committee](#) has received approximately 95 percent of the participating agencies COOP Phase I deliverables, at this time. Throughout the Phase I review process, the committee experienced very positive partnering with the different agencies. The partnering continued into the Phase II workshops that were provided in mid December. Information and instruction offered during the Phase II workshops received an overwhelming response by those COOP coordinators who attended. Currently, the Phase II deliverables are being submitted daily and the committee is gearing up for their Phase II review conference. Due to the complexity of Phase II, the committee has extended the Phase III deadline to March 1, 2007 to allow for sufficient time to conduct roundtable and offsite meetings and provide feedback. The Planning and Oversight Committee remains very optimistic about the COOP planning process.