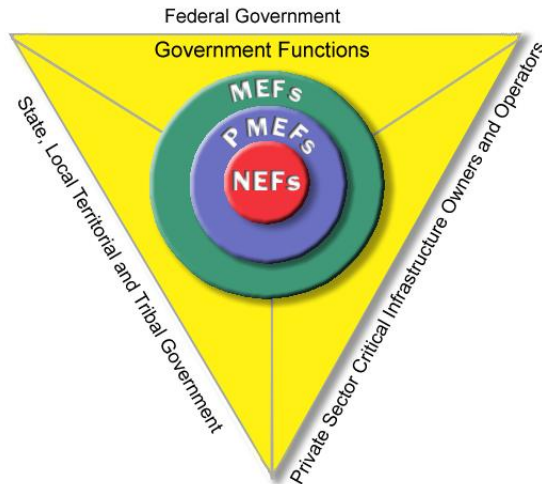


## What is Continuity of Operations?

Continuity of Operations (COOP), as defined in the National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan (NCP/IP) and the National Security Presidential Directive-51/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-20 (NSPD-51/HSPD-20), is an effort within individual executive departments and agencies to ensure that Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs) continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents and technological or attack-related emergencies.



## What is the Goal of Continuity?

The ultimate goal of continuity in the executive branch is the continuation of National Essential Functions (NEFs). In order to achieve that goal, the objective for organizations is to identify their Essential Functions (EFs) and ensure that those functions can be continued throughout, or resumed rapidly after, a disruption of normal activities. The Federal Government has an important partnership with other non-federal government entities and with private sector owners and operators who play integral roles in ensuring our homeland security.

## Elements of a Viable Continuity Capability

*The Continuity Plan is the roadmap for the implementation and management of the Continuity Program. NSPD-51/HSPD-20 outlines the following overarching continuity requirements for agencies.*

- **Essential Functions** – The critical activities performed by organizations, especially after a disruption of normal activities. There are three categories of essential functions: NEFs, PMEFs, and MEFs.
- **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.
- **Delegations of Authority** – Identification, by position, of the authorities for making policy determinations and decisions at HQ, field levels, and all other organizational locations. Generally, pre-determined delegations of authority will take effect when normal channels of direction have been disrupted and will lapse when these channels have been reestablished.
- **Continuity Facilities** – Locations, other than the primary facility, used to carry out essential functions, particularly in a continuity event. Continuity Facilities, or “Alternate facilities”, refers to not only other locations, but also nontraditional options such as working at home. (“teleworking”), telecommuting, and mobile-office concepts.
- **Continuity Communications** – Communications that provide the capability to perform essential functions, in conjunction with other agencies, under all conditions.
- **Vital Records Management** – the identification, protection and ready availability of electronic and hard copy

documents, references, records, information systems, data management software and equipment needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation.

- **Human Capital** – during a continuity event, emergency employees and other special categories of employees who are activated by an agency to perform assigned response duties.
- **Tests, Training, and Exercises (TT&E)** – Measures to ensure that an agency’s continuity plan is capable of supporting the continued execution of the agency’s essential functions throughout the duration of a continuity event.
- **Devolution of Control and Direction** – capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from an agency’s primary operating staff and facilities to other agency employees and facilities
- **Reconstitution** – The process by which surviving and/or replacement agency personnel resume normal agency operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility.

## Four Phases of Continuity of Operations Activation

- **Phase I - Readiness and Preparedness**
- **Phase II - Activation and Relocation:** plans, procedures, and schedules to transfer activities, personnel, records, and equipment to alternate facilities are activated
- **Phase III - Continuity Operations:** full execution of essential operations at alternate operating facilities is commenced
- **Phase IV – Reconstitution:** operations at alternate facility are terminated and normal operations resume

## Under what Conditions will the Continuity Plan be Activated?

The plan could be activated in response to a wide range of events or situations – from a fire in the building; to a natural disaster; to the threat or occurrence of a terrorist attack. Any event that makes it impossible for employees to work in their regular facility could result in the activation of the Continuity plan.

Continuity planning is simply the good business practice of ensuring the execution of essential functions and a fundamental duty of public and private entities responsible to their stakeholders.

## Where can I learn more about COOP?

You can start with the COOP point of contact (POC) for your organization or your Regional COOP Program Manager. The COOP POC/Regional COOP Program Manager is the individual responsible for coordinating your areas COOP-related activities and is the principal liaison between your organization and the National Continuity Programs (NCP) Directorate. Another source of information would be the web-based independent study course on COOP (IS 546a and IS 547) that the agency offers online.

## Reference Documents:

- **FCD 1:** *Federal Executive Branch Continuity of Operations*
- **FCD 2:** *Federal Executive Branch Mission Essential Functions and Primary Mission Essential Functions Identification Process*
- **CGC 1:** *States, Territories, Tribal, and Local Government Jurisdictions and Private Sector Organizations*
- **NSPD-51/HSPD-20** – *National Continuity Policy*  
[www.fema.gov/about/org/ncp/coop/planning.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/about/org/ncp/coop/planning.shtm)

## To Learn More about Continuity of Operations:

Talk to your management and the Continuity point of contact (POC) responsible for the coordination of your organization's Continuity of Operations related activities.

- **REGION I (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT):**  
617.832.4798
- **REGION II (NJ, NY, PR, VI):**  
212.680.8504
- **REGION III (DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV):** 215.931.5641
- **REGION IV (NC, SC, KY, TN, GA, AL, MS, FL):** 770.220.5453
- **REGION V (MN, WI, IL, IN, MI, OH):**  
312.408.5389
- **REGION VI (LA, AK, OK, TX, NM):**  
940.898.5131
- **REGION VII (IA, KS, MO, NE):**  
816.283.7082
- **REGION VIII (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY):** 303.235.4658
- **REGION IX (AZ, CA, NV, HI, Guam, Pacific Islands):** 510.627.7009
- **REGION X (AK, ID, OR, WA):**  
425.482.3721
- **FEMA HEADQUARTERS (NCR):**  
202.646.4282



# Continuity of Operations

## *An Overview*

*“Providing the foundation for the nation’s First Essential Function, Enduring Constitutional Government, and the foundation for the tiers of the National Response Framework, operational governments at all levels-local, State, and Federal-capable of performing their essential functions, under all conditions.”*



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