

Enhancing Continuity of Operations In The Bureau of Land Management

Background. When emergencies occur that result in mid to long-range impacts, COO plans become the means by which the Bureau carries out its essential mission and activities, and restores normal operations. COO plans must be current and activities coordinated. Since underlying components comprises COO plans, it is necessary that each element be planned thoroughly, with necessary resources pre-positioned or otherwise readily accessible at alternate locations should normal facilities or resources become inaccessible.

Management and Employee Commitment.

- Assistant Directors are to provide policy guidance expertise, and identify resource needs to conduct their essential activities and functions under emergency situations. In addition, the following ADs are responsible for specific COO plan elements:

AD-300: Emergency Organization
 Succession and Delegation of Authority
 Warning and Notification
 Training and Exercise
 Plan Maintenance
 Homeland Security Threat Condition Levels and
 Associated Protection Measures

AD-500: Vital Records
 Information Technology
 Telecommunications

AD-600: Communications

AD-700: Accounting for Employees
 Occupant Emergency Plans
 Human Resource Management issues

AD-800: Business Management
 Budget
 Procurement
 Relocation and alternative work sites

- State and National Center Directors are to support the COO program and responsibility for their facility COO plans by designating a senior manager (e.g., Deputy State Director – Support Services, or equivalent) to assume management responsibility for COO plans and program activities for facilities under their jurisdiction, designating a senior staff member to coordinate COO activities on a day-to-day basis, and providing representatives to serve on the COO Program Advisory Group on a

rotational basis. State and Center Directors are to advise WO-360 of their designated COO leads within 30 days from the date of issuance of this IM.

- The following performance standard is to be included in everyone's Employee Performance Plan and Results Report commencing with the rating period beginning on 10/01/03.

Continuity of Operations. Supports viable emergency operation capabilities by backing up working files, protecting and pre-positioning vital records, identifying resource needs, and participating in tests and exercises. Performance is measured by level and sufficiency of contingency planning and conduct of essential activities and functions during emergency situations or exercises.

COO Advisory Group. A COO Program Advisory Group is hereby established to assist in planning, budget and program coordination. Representatives from all levels of the Bureau will serve on the advisory group and coordinate on COO policy, multi-year plans, resource needs, best practices, and other issues. The group will be lead by WO-360. Initial members will come from the WO through Deputy Assistant Directors and subject matter experts, and from similar positions from those MEFs having direct support roles under the WO COO plan (Eastern States Office, Idaho State Office, National Office of Fire and Aviation, and the National Centers located in the Denver Federal Center). One field office (to be determined) will also be represented on the group. The group will meet periodically, but conduct most of its business through subject matter experts, and contractors (subject to funding).

Strategic Planning and Coordination. The BLM must prepare a multiyear plan for maintaining viable COO capabilities. AD-300 is assigned the responsibility to coordinate plan preparation and submittal, with the assistance of the COO Advisory Group.

Budget.

- Each AD and State/Center Director is responsible for identifying needs and requesting resources for the program components that support COO (e.g., AD-500 is expected to support and fund vital records and information technology components through normal program funding requests).

Plan Review, Revision and Certification.

- Maintenance and currency are core requirements for all COO plans. All plans are to be reviewed, tested, revised and certified as viable in accordance with the AS/PMB's schedule.
- AD-300, State and Center Directors must ensure that the attached plan update process has been completed before certifying that their COO plans are viable.

During the Continuity of Operations training, participants were asked to:

1. Brief Top Management. The State and Center Directors, Associates and Deputies must understand Continuity of Operations program and plan expectations. This understanding is required to ensure the leadership directs the resources required to ensure viable COOPs are developed throughout the bureau.
2. Conduct an exercise of the office's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Mission essential facilities have been required to have COOPs since 1999. These plans must be exercised to assess their viability. Tests and exercises reveal whether the plan provides the necessary capabilities to effectively respond to a situation that may render normal resources inaccessible. Desktop exercises can be used so leadership teams can address how it would respond to an emergency scenario that requires relocation of the facility.
3. Revise the COOP to reflect the lessons learned identified during the exercise and incorporate planning guidance. The exercise will probably identify several shortcomings of the existing COOP. Possible shortcomings could include: inadequate identification of essential activities and functions that must be conducted at the alternate sites, insufficiently equipped alternate facilities, inadequate information to contact stakeholders. Shortcomings should be addressed in a revised COOP. Actions and capabilities that were performed well should be retained.

In addition to lessons-learned, the revised COOPs should incorporate guidance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the DOI. The guidance was presented at the COOP training session, and the draft revised WO COO plan was distributed for use as a model plan. Each COOP should address the following elements with sufficient breadth and depth to ensure viability while working at an alternate site:

Operational Timeline

- Mission Essential Activities and Functions
- Information Systems and Vital Records
- Emergency Organization
- Succession and Delegation of Authority
- Warning and Notification
- Accounting for Employees
- Communications
- Relocation/Alternate Work Sites
- Human Resources/ Planning Issues
- Business Management
- Restoration
- Training and Exercise
- Plan Maintenance
- Implementing Homeland Security Threat Condition Protective Measures

The revised WO COO plan draft can be used to gauge the appropriate level of detail to be addressed for each element.

4. Submit COOPs developed for the bureau's mission essential activities and functions to the WO COO Coordinator. (George Stone, WO-360). The Department requires the Director, BLM, to certify that MEF have viable COOPs by September 30, 2002. Guidance will be provided describing how MEFs will certify to the WO that they have viable plans. In the meantime, each MEF should expect to submit a paper and electronic copy of its plan to the WO by September 13, 2002.