

**Department of National Defence
Canadian Forces**

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Annex A

Appendix 6

DND/CF BCP Exercise Strategy

DRAFT

DND/CF BCP Exercise Strategy

- References:
- A. Government Security Policy (Business Continuity Planning) 1 Feb 02
 - B. 3120-1 (SJS CANUS Plans) DM/CDS Initiating Directive – DND/CF Continuity of Critical Operations and Services (Business Continuity Plan) 5 January 2007
 - C. TBS Public Service Readiness Plan 2008
 - D. DAOD 1003-0 Business Continuity Planning
 - E. DAOD 1003-BCPP Business Continuity Planning Program
 - F. PS BCPP Compliance Report Reference 4.4: A Strategy to Exercise Business Continuity Plans for Government Institutions

CONTEXT

Issue

1. In addition to providing training and team building, an exercise is a planning tool to determine the workability, feasibility, effectiveness and understanding of a plan or arrangements, in this case, the Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The purpose of an exercise is to 'prove and improve' the subject of the exercise. Evaluation, therefore, is the ultimate reason for all exercises.
2. The products or outputs of an exercise are: the findings that highlight the arrangements that were proven effective; those requiring modification and suggestions for that modification; and, those which did not work and suggestion for their replacement. Depending on the complexity of the exercise, the findings can vary from an oral summary given immediately at the end of the evaluation, to a comprehensive written report taking months to coordinate and prepare. Regardless of how the findings are stated, the exercise is really not concluded until all corrective actions have been considered and, those that were accepted, instituted.
3. A BCP is unlikely to be effective unless an appropriate test or exercise program is implemented. Prior to a full test or validation of a plan, the exercise participants must be made aware of and trained in their roles and responsibilities. This is achieved through a series of awareness sessions and small-scale exercises leading to the full-scale exercise. As this training develops, the exercises become more complex and broader in scope until participants are able to approach a full-scale exercise with some degree of confidence.
4. The aim of this Annex is to provide BCP Planners at various levels across DND/CF with a strategy to exercise or test their BCPs. It will discuss how to structure and deliver an exercise, starting with a simple walkthrough test, followed by a desktop exercise (with a scenario) and culminating with a full-scale exercise at the institutional level. The strategy will include suggested goals and objectives for an exercise, preparations required, the scope and selection of participants, possible scenarios, procedures during

the exercise and the evaluation process. Finally, the strategy will suggest a timetable for the testing of BCPs.

BCP EXERCISE STRATEGY – PROGRESSION OF EXERCISES

5. The progression of exercises progresses from the least intrusive orientation/walk-through to a full-scale exercise. There is also a progression of the scope of the exercises from unit or division to the full organization. The planning and execution of these exercises becomes more complex and closer to reality as one moves through the progression.

Orientation/Walk-Through Exercise

6. Each Level One has developed a BCP to restore their critical services to the minimum service level. Each Level One must, therefore, test its plan. Once a BCP has been authorized by senior management/leadership, it needs to be communicated to employees in the organization and they need to be educated as to its contents. A simple, non-intrusive way to accomplish this is through an orientation/walk-through test.

7. An orientation/walk-through is the most basic type of exercise. Its primary objective is to ensure that personnel, who would have a role to play in a real incident, are familiar with the BCP. It is characterized by:

- a) Discussion about the BCP in a conference room or small group setting;
- b) Individual and team training; and
- c) Clarification and highlighting critical plan elements (i.e. verification of prioritization, phone lists, etc.)

8. These tests require less preparation time, with minimal attempts to stimulate reality and little attention paid to real time. Orientation/walk-through tests allow participants to evaluate plans and procedures and to resolve questions of coordination in a non-threatening environment. This is a good way to communicate the BCP to employees and educate them in their roles and responsibilities during a disruptive incident.

Tabletop (with Scenario)

9. The approach to completing the BCP Tabletop exercise is to first agree with management on the scope and objectives of the exercise. Facilitated sessions are then planned for the execution of the tabletop exercise. At a high level, the planning and execution of these sessions should include:

- a) Selection of relevant scenarios for the tabletop exercise;
- b) Identification, notification and scheduling of appropriate personnel;

- c) A facilitated walk-through of the scenario, along with discussions on BCP actions and responsibilities;
 - d) Capture of tabletop exercise notes, including issues and areas for changes or additions to the BCP;
 - e) Assignment of responsibilities for BCP update work; and
 - f) Closing discussions.
10. Following the conclusion of the tabletop exercise, the facilitator and participants should discuss issues and comments relevant to the status of the BCP. BCP Coordinators retain ownership and responsibility for ensuring that appropriate changes and updates to their BCP are implemented.
11. Objectives. The objectives of the tabletop exercise are as follows:
- Demonstrate the viability of the BCP by applying well defined and relevant disruption scenarios that may highlight discrepancies or inconsistencies;
 - Use the results of the tabletop exercise to update and improve the plan; and
 - Educate responsible persons on the workings of the plan and their roles within it.
12. Preparation. Prior to the tabletop exercise, the following activities should be performed by the BCP Coordinator and management:
- Selection of simulation exercise scenario(s);
 - Determination of BCPs or BCP sections to be tested;
 - Identification of all participants;
 - Scheduling of the tabletop exercise and all participants in an appropriate facility; and
 - Communicate roles and expectations to all participants.
13. Participants. The participants in the tabletop exercise will be any of the following, depending on the scope and objectives of the particular exercise:
- Exercise Facilitator – This may be a BCP expert or other individual identified by management. It might be appropriate to identify an independent facilitator, an individual with no vested interest in either the process itself or the BCP being tested. The Facilitator should not be a member of the BCP Response Team. This person’s responsibilities are to:
 - Introduce the scenario (provide clarification)
 - Keep the session flowing
 - Introduce ‘roadblocks’ during the exercise
 - Keep the session on schedule
 - Provide summary comments at the conclusion
 - Discuss next steps activities and timeframe

- BCP Coordinators at the Level Zero, Level One, Level Two, etc levels (i.e. the level of the plan being exercised). Their role is to:
 - Participate in the exercise as their BCP Team Leader
 - Monitor the description of the BCP Response Team
 - Emergency Response Team Members – Individuals with assigned tasks and responsibilities within the BCP to be exercised, within the selected scenario (including BCP Coordinators). Their responsibilities are to:
 - Review the BCP prior to the exercise
 - Describe, during the exercise, the actions to be taken based on the disruption scenario; the timeframes following the disruption; and, the documented BCP instructions (i.e. who does what and when following an interruption)
 - Suggest responsible groups or individuals for action items identified during the exercise
 - Recorder or Scribe – This individual documents the proceedings of the tabletop exercise. They are asked to:
 - Record the tabletop exercise proceedings
 - Capture issues as they arise
 - Record corrective actions and responsible group
 - Create the Exercise Report
 - Observers – Often, interested parties may be invited to observe the BCP tabletop exercise. They may include senior management, internal auditors or individuals from different Branches.
14. It is expected that each tabletop exercise will require approximately two to four hours of scheduled participants' time. An appropriate facility (conference room) should be arranged for the exercise.
15. Scenarios. The organization's BCP Team should select one or two disruption scenarios for discussion during the simulation exercise. The team should select or create an appropriate tabletop exercise scenario(s) using criteria such as:
- a) The ability to concurrently exercise multiple elements of the BCP;
 - b) The coordination plans and strategies require significant communication and coordination; and
 - c) The scenario may be unlikely or severe, but not beyond possibility.
16. Agenda. The agenda for the tabletop exercise should include the following:
- a) Overview of exercise objectives;

- b) Introduction of participants and roles;
- c) BCP overview;
- d) Presentation of the scenario;
- e) Description of team procedures and assigned tasks;
- f) Evaluation of BCP and strategies;
- g) Review issues, corrective actions and responsible parties; and
- h) Closing discussion and next steps.

17. Rules. Tabletop exercise 'rules' often apply, as follows:

- a) Everyone is free to contribute;
- b) 'Silence' indicates agreement;
- c) The scenario can/will change as needed;
- d) This is not a 'test', but an exercise;
- e) Facilitator has the right to table any issue for later resolution; and
- f) No outside interruptions permitted.

18. Facilitator Leading Questions. The primary role of the facilitator is to ensure that the tabletop exercise proceeds on schedule and achieves the desired result of determining the viability of the BCP. To achieve that result, there are several questions that can be asked as the exercise begins and through the discussion of issues and assignment of responsibility for corrective actions. The facilitator also has the option to introduce 'roadblocks' to the recovery teams, to try and identify gaps or weaknesses in the documented business continuity strategies. Here are some suggested questions:

a) Introduction

- Are all the right people here?
- Has everyone read the relevant BCP information for their areas?
- Does everyone understand their role in the BCP?

b) Scenario Presentation

- Does everyone understand the disruption scenario?
- Are there any questions or assumptions that we should agree upon (as a group) before proceeding?

c) Simulation Exercise

- Who makes the decision to activate the BCP?
- On what basis?
- Is there a central meeting point or communication for initiation of BCP tasks?
- Who does what first/next?
- What is the timing or sequence of this action?

- How long will it take?
- Can the next step begin?
- Are there any anticipated barriers? What could prevent activity from proceeding?
- Are there any possible accelerators? What could be done to assist recovery?
- What is the alternative (if plan A is unavailable?)
- Who else needs to be notified or involved?
- Are they in the plans?
- Is contact information complete, current and accurate?
- What if the primary contact is not available?
- What if a key resource is not available (i.e. HR, facilities, technical, essential records?)
- Does additional detail need to be in the plan?
- Are any steps missing?
- Are any required resources missing?
- If so, who will add them?
- Are we now 'back in business'?
- What can we do?
- What can't we do?
- At what point does this contingency procedure become a problem?
- What can be done at that point?
- Have personnel been trained in the alternate procedure?
- What is required to return to normal?

d) Closing

- Have we captured all issues/concerns/questions?
- Have we identified the person responsible for updating the BCP for each issue?

19. Evaluation. A discussion with key personnel of those groups involved in the tabletop exercise should be conducted immediately following the exercise. The exercise results will be presented at that time and action plans will be initiated for all issues identified.

Entire Organization Full-Scale BCP Exercise

20. A full-scale exercise carried out at the organizational level requires significantly more planning, preparation and resources than either a walkthrough or a tabletop exercise. In a full-scale exercise, decisions are taken and acted upon as in real life. Time cannot be telescoped as actual activities are taking place.

21. A full-scale exercise invites active participation in field simulations of all individuals involved in the BCP initiative. Coordination is provided through the BCP Command Centre. Such an exercise is intended to demonstrate that walk-through and tabletop

exercises produced an effective BCP and organization. It would also demonstrate that the organization is prepared to respond to disruptive incidents interrupting regular operations.

22. Exercise Organization. Full-scale exercises need to be designed with clear structural organization and appointments. The organizational setup, as specified by the exercise policy, includes the following major elements: Players, Exercise Sponsor, Exercise Director, Exercise Design Team and Exercise Control Staff. Each of these will have specific responsibilities.

- a) Exercise Sponsor: The person who originates and authorizes the exercise and orders it to take place, issues the basic instructions for the concept, scope and coordinating details of the exercise.
- b) Exercise Director: The person who executes all detailed aspects of the preparation, conduct and evaluation of the exercise including: coordination of events and incidents, simulation and necessary artificialities; briefing of senior officials; supervision of the staff selected as exercise control; and, completion of the exercise report.
- c) Exercise Design Team: The BCP Secretariat is responsible for exercise details and the production of exercise documentation and will form the basis of the Control Staff.
- d) Exercise Control Staff: Control Staff includes Controllers, Simulators and Evaluators, and are the persons who by virtue of extensive knowledge of their organization, its procedures and systems, and of exercise methodologies, are selected to control the exercise or a portion of it. They should master all aspects of the exercise. A Senior Controller may be appointed who is directly responsive to the Exercise Director for internal Controller activities. Controllers are responsible for the exercise tempo, injection of events and for local interpretation of unclear inputs. Simulators, or Simulation Staff, will represent all non-playing persons or entities that are essential for the conduct of the exercise. Simulators may be required to 'play-act' certain non-playing persons.
- e) Evaluation Staff: As part of the Control Staff, the Evaluation Staff is a specifically appointed group that has a mandate to analyze and evaluate the conduct and play of the exercise in relation to the exercise aims and objectives. The conclusions and recommendations developed by the Evaluation Staff are used not only to improve the BCP, but also to improve future exercises. Evaluators have access to all exercise activities in the capacity of silent observers.
- f) Players: Players include management, staff and specialist teams who have been assigned roles within their respective BCPs. A player must be aware of the exercise aim and applicable instructions, but should have no prior knowledge of the exercise events.

23. Exercise Documents. The following documentation will be produced for the BCP exercise:

- a) Exercise Outline: This short, key-stone document is used in the first instance to seek authority and expenditure approval for the exercise. It explains the exercise overview, concept, aim, scope, objectives and desired participation. Once approval for the exercise has been granted, the document is used to brief senior officials and, if necessary, to elicit their organizations participation and self-funding.
- b) Exercise Instruction: The Exercise Instruction contains the general details necessary for the preparation, conduct and evaluation of, and reports and follow-up actions from, the exercise. It gives primary guidance to the exercise designers and includes all the information players require to participate.
- c) Control Staff Instruction: This document, comprising several parts, directs the Control (including Evaluation) Staff in all their functions. The contents of this document are not to be seen by players and its parts are usually produced on coloured paper to warn recipients that it is sensitive exercise information. The Master Events List is the chronological listing of exercise injections that build the scenario and drive the player's actions. An Evaluation Plan should exist and may be a separate document.
- d) First Impressions Report: This report is prepared as soon as practicable after the exercise ends with the intention of capturing from participants the unabridged, unsanitized, gut feelings about the exercise. The Exercise Director will stage a first impressions meeting within seven days from the end of the exercise and organizations should table their consolidated first impressions which they will also use as the basis of their Final Report.
- e) Final Report: This document summarizes the key issues from the First Impressions Report, the independent Final Reports from participating organizations (Regions) and the formal evaluation of the plans, processes and players' responses. In it suggestions are made for corrective actions and it is, therefore, the basis of the Coordinated Follow-up Action Plan.
- f) Coordinated Follow-up Action Plan: This plan or program covers the corrective actions to be taken, by whom, and includes due dates, if possible.

24. Exercise Design Process. The BCP Secretariat, acting as the Exercise Design Team, will create the actual exercise, prepare the documentation, and generally form the basis of the exercise Control Staff for the conduct of the exercise. In summary, they will prepare, conduct, evaluate and report on the exercise. The starting point of the exercise design is the BCP and the Exercise Outline, both of which should be studied by the Design Team.

25. First, the Design Team leader develops a draft or proposed Opening Scenario. It need not be too detailed, as it is just a point of departure. The next step is for the Team,

through discussion, to visualize and describe the scenario end-state. At this stage, it should comprise brief statements following the question “by the end of the exercise what should have transpired to cause all of the issues from the BCP to be evaluated?” For example, at the end of the exercise there should have been...telecommunications failures, numerous injuries, evacuation of the premises, transportation interruptions, etc. The end-state list can be added to at any time during the exercise design process as issues surface, and each topic should be subjected to the test by answering who, what, where, when, why, how and how much? Is the issue to be injected suddenly, either in the opening scenario or during play, or built up by several injections over time? As each scenario element is discussed, an overall or final scenario is developing, with time and date approximations.

26. Designing the events and incidents to be injected into play should include the following steps and documentation for each injection:

- a) The Exercise Input Text will provide the Insert Controller the information needed to insert the play event. If it is to be inserted as a written document it should include all of the text and any letter-head, memorandum or message layout, signature box or such other devices to make it realistic (the document should clearly indicate that it is for the purpose of this exercise only). Telephone or facsimile numbers should be included if that is the method of injection. By completing the “Exercise Input Text” the designer ensures that the insertion includes all the essential information.
- b) The next step is to establish the Purpose and Evaluation of the injection, as this is the ‘why’ that it is intended to satisfy. This is the acid test, for if there is no beneficial evaluation arising from the proposed injection, there is no reason for it and the Design Team will filter it out during review.
- c) With the injection described the designer then determines how it is likely that players will react - Anticipated Recipient Reactions. This is primarily for Controllers and Evaluators to help them understand the mechanisms, reactions and where best to position themselves to do the evaluation.
- d) The designer then must determine:
 - which Controller should be the Insert Controller to inject the event;
 - who the Controller is pretending to be and from what location;
 - what Insert Method (letter, telephone, etc.) is to be used;
 - the Recipient player to receive the injection;
 - the Insert Day/Time; and,
 - if possible, the Duration (how long the matter is likely to remain in play).

27. Once all the play events are determined, a Master Events List is created. In effect, what the Design Team has at this point is the first draft of the exercise with play events laid out in chronological order. Care should be taken to compare the injects at each

moment with the overall intended scenario, to ensure compliance or adjustment of the scenario.

28. The DND/CF is an organization that spreads across the entire country and which has elements on duty at all times. The CF serves as a force of last resort for the Government when local and regional resources are overwhelmed by an incident of such intensity or size that augmentation is required as it has the ability to call out well trained, disciplined and specially equipped troops on extremely short notice.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

29. As a key element of the Canadian National Security program, the DND/CF cannot be perceived at any time as lacking in capacity to respond as the Government's force and support of last resort.

30. Given the special role of DND/CF with regard to maintenance of national security, there can be specific operational security considerations that must be taken into account when considering the release of information about the BCP. A significant portion of general information about the BCP is unclassified and can be made available to target audiences to increase awareness. Where operational security concerns arise, audiences may be informed of such. As the dissemination of information is one of the key objectives of the Program, public affairs officers should ensure that generic examples of why the release of more specific information could prove harmful are prepared and available to spokespersons.

31. The release of or restriction on the release of personal information is covered under the Privacy Act.

OBJECTIVES

32. The objective of the Communications Strategy is to ensure a harmonized DND/CF response to any incident affecting one or more elements of the organization. The intent is to reassure both the general public as well as DND employees and CF members that a business continuity plan is in place and activated to ensure minimal or no interruption to the availability of critical services and assets. The following master messages provide guidance for the development of supporting messages as applicable:

- a. In the event of a significant disruption to normal operation procedures, the CF has developed comprehensive plans to ensure the continuity of critical operations and the continued availability of critical services and associated assets;

- b. These plans, formulated across DND and the CF, allow for the effective functioning of the Department to assist in the governments' objectives of protecting the health, safety, security, and economic well-being of all Canadians; and
- c. The BCP complements existing emergency preparedness plans and provides the framework for a common management structure under which all emergencies and disruptive events can be managed.

SPOKESPERSONS

- 33. The MND, DM and the CDS maintain their responsibilities as spokespersons for the Department and Canadian Forces at the strategic level.
- 34. ADM(PA) shall advise the DM, CDS and appropriate Level 1 Advisor on any issue or crisis deemed to be of a DND, CF or national nature.
- 35. BCP Action Team, consisting of representatives from ADM(Fin CS) and DOS SJS, will respond to queries and provide technical advice to ADM(PA) representatives regarding activation of Business Continuity Plans.
- 36. Each Level One organization has its own Public Affairs advisor who will be called upon to advise and assist the management team on communications means and messages to be implemented in the event of activation of the BCP.

FIRST RESPONSE AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION MATERIAL

- 37. The BCP Program is currently promoted primarily through websites on both the unclassified and the secret level networks within DND/CF. The BCP websites have thus far been used primarily to provide information of use to BCP coordinators at various levels throughout the organization.
- 38. The awareness campaign to spread understanding of the Program to members and employees throughout the organization will be based on taking advantage of appropriate opportunities to address the topic with the internal audience. Existing publications such as the Maple Leaf, the bilingual weekly newspaper of the CF and DND, and Base newspapers across the country will be used to promote awareness of the BCP Program. Similarly, existing awareness campaigns such as Security Awareness Week, Emergency Preparedness Week and potentially the implementation of a new Business Continuity Awareness Week event will be utilized to promote awareness and understanding of the BCP Program.

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF

39. The VCDS, under direction of the Minister, CDS and DM, will be the authority for the activation and eventual termination of the BCP communications plan in the event the BCP is activated.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

40. In the event of the Level 0 BCP Activation, the Level 1 BCP Coordinators will be informed and will advise the members of the appropriate BCP Response Teams. BCP Response Teams will be activated as required; including communications plans integral to the BCP. ADM(PA) staff will be available to provide advice and guidance on communications activities.

BUDGETARY CONCERNS

41. Funding for appropriate communications costs (i.e. for promotional items, media press conferences and the like) will be identified within the overall costing activity associated with the BCP Program.