National Defence Défense nationale

Department of National Defence
and
Canadian Forces

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

"A guide to assuring
availability & continued delivery
of your organization's
Critical Services"

You have just had a great weekend, but it's over!

Work awaits you, along with the many critical functions and services you provide in support of those who serve this country. The critical services you provide are required and are functions that should not be interrupted for very long, if at all.

On any given day, disruptive events can occur and prevent you from delivering these critical services.

Below are just a few examples of disruptive events:

You get to work and find that you cannot access anything on your computer, the servers are down and IT services aren't sure how long the interruption will last!

What will you do?

You get to work and find out that the power is out on your floor only!

What will you do?

You get to work and find out there has been a fire in the building and your facility is closed until further notice!

What will you do?

Answer - "A"

Relocate to another building!

Answer - "B"

Implement your Business Continuity Plan, which is the timely execution of pre-authorized plans, measures, procedures and arrangements in order to ensure minimal or no disruption to the availability of critical services and their associated assets.

Both answers are viable options, but *answer "B" is correct!*

The content of this booklet will help you understand Business Continuity Planning and why it is important to any organization!

OVERVIEW

The Treasury Board Secretariat, on behalf of the Government of Canada (GoC), has mandated departments and agencies to establish and maintain a Business Continuity Planning (BCP) program to provide for the continued availability of services and associated assets that are *critical to the health, safety, security or economic well-being of Canadians*, or the effective functioning of government[1].   BCP is designed to ensure that in the face of a disruption, including a tragic or disastrous event, an organization can continue to provide or quickly restore critical services to a minimum service level before it results in high degree of injury to Canadians or to government. BCP is part of a series of GoC mandated plans and programs to respond to disruptive events and focuses on the immediate response period (i.e. the first 30 days) as the organization works to restore and resume services.

Although civilian employees of the Department of National Defence and members of the Canadian Forces (DND/CF) are well trained and stand at the ready to respond to unexpected events, our effectiveness relies on the continued availability of assets necessary to deliver these critical services and operations, namely personnel, facilities and supporting services such as information technology and power distribution system.

Research has shown that organizations are more likely to survive disaster when they are prepared for the unexpected; therefore, ensuring your organization's has a robust BCP that is continually maintained and regularly tested is the first step to ensuring the continuity of your critical services and operations.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING (BCP)

What is BCP?

BCP is an all-encompassing term, which includes the development and timely execution of plans, measures, procedures and arrangements to ensure minimal or no interruption to critical operations and the continued availability of DND/CF critical services and operations, and their associated assets. BCP is a proactive planning process that ensures critical services and operations are delivered during a disruption supported by well thought-out plans, arrangements and measure to be used during and after the occurrence of a disruption, regardless of its nature.

Why BCP?

Implementation of an effective BCP can lessen or eliminate negative impact from threats to an organization or a department's mission critical systems, assets, facilities or personnel. Furthermore, an effective response and recovery strategy, within a BCP, will assist in the continued delivery of critical services and help in the restoration of critical business functions or operations.

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[1] In the context of Business Continuity Planning, the effective functioning of Government does not refer to "business as usual" but rather to the government's ability to provide leadership and effectively manage the response to a disruptive event and ensure the continued delivery of critical services to Canadians

ELEMENTS OF A BCP PROGRAM

The BCP program is comprised of 4 elements, which are crucial in creating an effective plan.

1. Governance structure

A proper Governance structure ensures that your organization has an authoritative body responsible for the effectiveness of your BCP and its compliance to established standards. It provides for a structured and coordinated approach to the activities of all personnel involved in your BCP. The NDHQ Coordination Committee, with representation from all Groups and Commands, acts as the steering committee for the DND/CF national level BCP Action Team.

2. Business Impact Analysis (BIA)

A BIA determines which of your functions are critical services and operations. The BIA identifies how long a critical service or operation can be disrupted before a high degree of injury occurs and prioritizes their recovery accordingly. A BIA also identifies the consequences of a disruption, the dependencies and interdependencies and the minimum service level that is required during the recovery period for each critical service or operation.

3. Plans and Arrangements

BIA results are transposed in plans, arrangements and/or measures to ensure effective response and recovery strategies are in place to alleviate or eliminate the impact from a disruptive event on the continued availability of critical services or operations. They identify the required resources and provide for options, such as alternate facilities, to be available when required. The sooner a critical service or operation must be restored to minimum service level, the more robust, proven and immediately practicable your response and recovery strategies must be.

4. Readiness

A disruption, incident or emergency can occur at any moment, during or after normal working hours. Readiness is essential to ensuring continued availability of critical services and operations in the face of a disruption at all times.

Readiness is assured by the following:

❑ Continuously updating pertinent information and refreshing plans, arrangements and strategies in light of changes to the organization's personnel, structure, mandates or priorities.

❑ Managing risks by continuously assessing your risk environment and mitigations strategies.

❑ Training personnel, namely critical personnel and their alternates on your BCP by establishing a BCP training program for all employees.

❑ Periodically practicing and validating your Response and Recovery strategies through exercises. A yearly exercise (i.e. from table-top to fully-functional exercise) should be conducted. Additional exercises may be warranted when significant changes have been made within your plan.

❑ Capturing lessons learned from exercises as well as real-time events and amending you BCP and related plans as required.

❑ Performing audits to ensure your BCP meets your organizational needs in the event of a disruption.

CONCLUSION

The critical services and operations of the DND/CF are vital to the health, safety, security or economic well being of Canadians and contribute to government's response to any disruptive event. The inability to deliver critical services would result in a high degree of injury, and could have reputational consequences as well.

As the health, safety and security of our employees and members, as well as other associated assets, contribute to continued availability of the critical services and operations of DND/CF, which support and protect all Canadians at home and abroad, we must ensure a robust and up-to-date BCP program is in place at all levels.

For further information with regard to BCP please contact:

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