



# **DND/CF BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

## **ANNEX J**

### **DND/CF BCP Exercise Plan**

*January 2010*

## **DND/CF BCP EXERCISE STRATEGY**

- References:
- A. Policy on Government Security, July 2009
  - 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 1003-1 Business Continuity Planning Program
  - F. PS BCPP Compliance Report Reference 4.4: A Strategy to Exercise Business Continuity Plans for Government Institutions

### **INTRODUCTION**

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 developed 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. Every Level 1 has developed a BCP to restore their critical services to the minimum service level. Each Level 1 organization 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:

- a. Demonstrate the viability of the BCP by applying well defined and relevant disruption scenarios that may highlight discrepancies or inconsistencies;
- b. Use the results of the tabletop exercise to update and improve the plan; and
- c. 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:

- a. Selection of simulation exercise scenario(s);
- b. Determination of BCPs or BCP sections to be tested;
- c. Identification of all participants;
- d. Scheduling of the tabletop exercise and all participants in an appropriate facility; and
- e. 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:

- a. 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
- b. BCP Coordinators at the Level 0, Level 1, Level 2, 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

- c. 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
  - d. Recorder or Scribe – This person 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
  - e. Observers – Often, interested parties may be invited to observe the BCP tabletop exercise. They may include senior management, internal auditors or individuals from different organizations.
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; as follows:

- 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; and
- 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; and
- 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; and
- 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. Control Staff Structure and Duties. As previously mentioned, the Control Staff comprises Controllers, Evaluators and members of Simulation Cells. For the most part, and as a natural evolution, the members of the Exercise Design Team become members of the Control Staff for the conduct of the exercise:

- a. Controller is the title given to members of the Control Staff who, in accordance with the Master Events List, do the injections that cause play. In effect they control the tempo of the exercise. Tempo includes pacing and the desired tension and activity. After discussions with Control Staff, decisions may be taken that affect the Master Events List by causing a quickening or slowing down of injections in a specific area or exercise-wide. Players may request clarification of injections from Controllers, who in answering should avoid advising how the information should be played. The location from which Controllers do injections should not be accessible to players;
- b. Simulation Cells are created to represent non-playing entities which would normally be available to players in real life. A Simulation Cell is usually just a telephone and facsimile number in the players' exercise telecommunications list, but it could also be a manned location to which players have access. Simulation Cells do not inject play, but are available to respond by providing realistic answers to matters referred to them by the players; and
- c. Evaluation Staff should have access to all player locations, but they should move about or attend meetings while seeming invisible to the players. They should do nothing to attract attention to themselves, and when making notes, care should be taken in their actions not to distract those being observed. Evaluators should not answer questions from players or divulge their findings or observations. Their job is to quietly observe and report according to the Evaluation Plan. Evaluators who are also Controllers may answer legitimate questions in that role.

29. Exercise Reports and Follow-up Action Plan. While Evaluators have work to perform prior to and during the exercise, their real work begins afterwards as they collect, collate, measure and try to render down their observations into meaningful findings for their part in the reports.

30. Reporting begins immediately after the exercise ends when a concurrent series of first impressions meetings are held at all locations of play. These series begin with the debriefing of small groups of players, Controllers and Evaluators by the senior person of the group. These senior-level officials attend and report at the next level of meetings until the top level has recorded all first impressions. A limited time to synthesize first impressions is then given before a organization-level first impression meeting is held by the Exercise Director, usually within one week of the end of the exercise. The result of this tightly scheduled process is a gut-feelings, unsanitized First Impressions Report which is circulated to participants and used to prepare their organizations' Final Report and their contribution to the departmental Final Report.

31. Organizations submit their Final Report to the Exercise Director and a first draft Final Report is prepared and circulated for comment. Revised drafts are prepared and recirculated, as required, until a Final Report results. The Final Report is presented to the Executive Committee, which ultimately tasks the BCP Action Team to take corrective action.

32. The BCP Action Team prepares and implements a Coordinated Follow-up Action Plan, which facilitates corrective actions by responsible organizations. Periodic reports are made to the BCP Action Team until all corrective actions are completed.

33. Scope. The scope of a departmental exercise, by definition, will include all organizations, both in the NCR and in the Regions. All employees who have been assigned roles within their BCPs will be players.

34. In order to fully engage the regional units, the scenario will be deemed to be occurring concurrently throughout the country. That is, if the opening scenario involved an ice storm, with all the resulting consequences, the storm would be deemed to have occurred and affected all regions where DND/CF might be called upon. Similarly, injections into the play would be considered as applying to all regions, simultaneously.

35. Timing. The timing of a multi-level or inter-organizational exercise will be dependant upon all completing their BCPs and testing the plans by performing walk-through and tabletop exercises.

36. Once all organizations must have their BCPs completed, and adequate time is allowed to test individual plans at the various levels of the organization, the DND/CF BCP Exercise should be scheduled. The BCP Action Team should recommend to Exercise controllers the timing of the BCP Exercise.

37. Duration. A full-scale exercise should be conducted over three days to reflect the progressive nature of the emergency and to provide for appropriate injections into the play. The exercise could be restricted to three half-days of play so as not to overly disrupt the normal business of the institution (the duration and degree of disruption of normal business should be decided by the Exercise Sponsor on the advice of the BCP Action Team).

38. Action Plan. The following is a list of elements to be included in the action plan for a BCP exercise:

- a. BCP Secretariat to develop a presentation on the BCP exercise process to be presented to the BCP Action Team;
- b. BCP Secretariat develops the Exercise Outline and Exercise Instruction documents which are then vetted by the BCP Action Team;
- c. Divisions and Directorates/Branches conduct walk-through and tabletop exercises of their respective BCPs;
- d. Authorization is sought from the Exercise controller for a departmental exercise based on the documentation produced above;
- e. The BCP Secretariat, acting as the Design Team, designs the complete exercise scenario and develops all the detailed instructions, including play injections to Control Staff, Evaluators and Players;
- f. All exercise participants are appointed and their roles and responsibilities are determined, including any non-organization evaluators/observers.
- g. BCP Exercise conducted;
- h. On completion of the exercise, a First Impressions Report is developed and circulated to BCP Action Team members for revision and vetting; and
- i. Final Report is prepared with Action Plan to implement corrective measures to BCP.

## **POSSIBLE EXERCISE SCENARIOS**

39. The DND/CF Threat/Risk Assessment identified three main categories of events that could affect DND/CF operations and services. These events can be categorized as resulting in:

- a. A loss or disruption of services, e.g. electricity or network services;
- b. A loss of staff, e.g. due to a Pandemic Influenza; and/or
- c. A loss or disruption to facilities, e.g. fire or physical attack.

40. Exercise scenarios based on the three main categories of probable disruptive events that might affect NDHQ have been developed. The exercise scenarios follow in sub-appendices attached to this document. Level 1 organizations would be affected to varying degrees by each of the scenarios developed and should base their own validation and exercise activities on the scenarios which best test their own BCPs.