Continuity of Operations Plan for the ORGANIZATION

December 4, 2023

Table of Contents

**Facilitator Note:**

Update the table of contents before finalizing a plan.

[Instructions 3](#_Toc105688053)

[Using this Document 3](#_Toc105688054)

[Facilitating a Meeting 3](#_Toc105688055)

[Recommendations 5](#_Toc105688056)

[Introduction 6](#_Toc105688057)

[Plan Purpose 6](#_Toc105688058)

[Plan Scope 6](#_Toc105688059)

[Concept of Operations 7](#_Toc105688060)

[Activating the Continuity of Operations Plan 7](#_Toc105688061)

[Restoration of Essential Functions 7](#_Toc105688062)

[Reconstitution of All Organization Functions 10](#_Toc105688063)

[Organization Leadership and Succession 11](#_Toc105688064)

[Organization Leadership 11](#_Toc105688065)

[Organization Priorities 12](#_Toc105688066)

[Mission 12](#_Toc105688067)

[Guidelines 12](#_Toc105688068)

[Organization Functions 13](#_Toc105688069)

[Essential Function & Service Leadership 13](#_Toc105688070)

[Organization Facilities 14](#_Toc105688071)

[Organization Essential Resources 14](#_Toc105688072)

[Organization Devolution 16](#_Toc105688073)

[Communications 16](#_Toc105688074)

[Appendix A: Communications Considerations 17](#_Toc105688075)

[Keys to Communicating in a Crisis 17](#_Toc105688076)

[Initial Communications Tasks During a Crisis 17](#_Toc105688077)

[Appendix B: After-Action Review Form 19](#_Toc105688078)

[Appendix C: Reconstitution Planning and Considerations Checklist 20](#_Toc105688079)

[Appendix D: Legal Authorization 22](#_Toc105688080)

# Instructions

*This section describes how to use this template and how to facilitate a department, agency, or office Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan meeting.* ***It should be deleted before the plan is finalized.***

## Using this Document

This document is a template for a final COOP Plan and contains sections for succession, priorities, essential resources, technology, devolution, and communications, as well as three appendices: the Communications Considerations, After-Action Review Form, and Reconstitution Checklist. However, additional sections can be added and pre-existing sections can be modified to make the plan fit the team building it.

Text highlighted in yellow is meant to be deleted and replaced with applicable language. There are also Facilitator Note boxes throughout the document with tips and explanations for facilitators. These should be deleted before the plan is finalized.

## Facilitating a Meeting

### Brainstorming Essential Functions

When facilitating a meeting, it is best practice to start at the [**Guidelines**](#_Guidelines) section. Explain the difference between essential functions—those that *must* be performed within a day—and important and non-essential functions to the group and ask if they have any questions. Then, scroll down to the [**Organization Functions**](#_Department_Functions)table below it.

In this section, ask the team to list any essential functions they can think of and write each one in its own cell beneath the *Essential* column heading. Consider asking specifically whether the team has:

* An Information Technology department, as IT is likely an essential function and should be included in the succession table
* Any legally mandated functions to be included in either the essential or important function columns

Sometimes, teams may not be sure if a function is essential or not. Re-emphasize the definition—that an essential function *must* be performed within 24 hours. It is acceptable for an organization to have few or no essential functions, though it can sometimes help to reassure teams that just because their functions are not essential, they are still a valued department, agency, or office and their staff are essential. However, staff may be requested to work in an Emergency Operations Center (EOC), support the performance of the organization's essential functions, or assist other agencies during an emergency.

After brainstorming and finalizing a list of essential, important, and non-essential functions, copy the first column of the table (only the essential functions) and paste it into the first column of [**Essential Function & Service Leadership**](#_Essential_Function_&), [**Organization Facilities**](#Organization_Facilities)**,** [**Vital Records**](#_Vital_Records)**,** [**Technology Platforms**](#_Technology_Platforms)**,** and[**Essential Supplies and Equipment**](#_Essential_Supplies_and)**.** Each essential function should be in its own cell of the new table. The goal of these tables is to list the relevant staff or resources required to achieve each essential function.

It is recommended that a facilitator moves through these sections in order, starting with leadership and ending with supplies and equipment. The process should remain similar for each table. For each function, ask the team, “Who (or what) is required for this function?” Record their answer. There is sometimes confusion about the difference between technology platforms and vital records. If asked, explain that vital records are documents, lists, or forms required for a function, while technology platforms are pieces of technology or software required for a function. Each section has a Facilitator Note box explaining the information required for each essential function.

### Succession

After completing the tables listed above, move to the [**Organization Leadership and Succession**](#_Department_Leadership_and) table. This table is meant to designate a backup contact for all vital leadership roles on the team. The team director or leader should appear at the top of this table, and their deputy or assistant typically appears in the alternate contact column.

There are no strict rules for who must appear in the succession table, but if a team is broken into departments or divisions, each department or division leader should appear in this table.

Some teams may have more detailed lines of succession. If there are multiple backups for a single individual, include them in the alternate contact cell by splitting the cell vertically into however many sub-cells are needed to list all the backups. It is also acceptable for the same person to appear in the table twice. For instance, the deputy director could be the backup for the director and appear on the next line as the primary contact for a sub-division and have a backup contact of their own.

For each person, it is recommended to list their title, email, and phone number. Depending on publication plans for the final document, however, it may be better to omit personal phone numbers and instead use office phone numbers. If the team is in the process of hiring someone to fill a position, it is acceptable to leave the position **To Be Determined** or **To Be Hired**.

### Devolution and Communication

After completing the succession table, we recommend moving to the [**Organization Devolution**](#_Department_Devolution)table. Devolution reflects the people and organization who can take responsibility for all of a team’s essential functions if leadership and staff are all unavailable. Some teams find it more realistic to include a different devolution organization for each essential function. In this case, paste the essential functions into a new column of the table.

### Communication

The Communications table is meant to be a single location where a team can determine with whom to communicate and about what during a continuity event. Use the highlighted row as a springboard and ask whether it is true that the team needs to contact internal employees about the following information and in the following ways. Then, prompt them to consider other people the team might need to contact and complete the rest of the table.

### Concept of Operations

It is recommended a facilitator progress to the [**Concept of Operations**](#_Concept_of_Operations) section last. This section is meant to be a guiding checklist that walks a team through activating the plan, restoring their essential functions, and returning to normal operations after a continuity event.

We recommend placing positions and titles into the empty column instead of specific names. This way, the plan remains up to date even if personnel leave or new staff are hired. For instance, if Director Cecelia Vong is responsible for notifying staff, write “Director” and not “Cecilia Vong” into the relevant cell.

It is acceptable to have the team’s leader written in most of these cells. Consider offering the language “Director or Designee” (or the equivalent for that team) as possible wording.

## Recommendations

The recommendations for this process can help support development of a plan:

* It can take between one and two hours to fill out the essential functions and all related tables (i.e., not the concept of operations, devolution, or communications sections) in most cases. It often takes an additional 45 to 60 minutes to complete the rest of the plan, in a second meeting
* Screen sharing the rough draft of the plan and filling in the sections in real time alongside the planning team can ensure information is captured accurately
* Recommended group size for plan development meetings is three to five and should include departmental or organizational leadership and the information technology management
* The concepts in the plan, especially regarding the concept of operations and communication procedures, should mirror day-to-day actions and operations as much as possible, so that response during a disruption or emergency is second nature and was practiced through non-emergency operations

# Introduction

## Plan Purpose

Continuity of operations planning allows for the continued performance of essential functions and ensures that essential services continue to be provided to the community whenever there is a disruption to normal operations. Disruptions to normal operations can occur as part of a larger disaster or crisis—such as an earthquake, cyber-security attack, wildfire, or pandemic—or as an event that only impacts the ORGANIZATION NAME—such as a power outage, a problem with a supplier or vendor, or loss of internet access—requiring that the department be able to implement the following continuity of operations plan as part of a county-wide response or independently from external support.

## Plan Scope

The following information is necessary for the ORGANIZATION NAME to guide their response to disruptions in normal operations and their ability to perform essential functions and provide essential services to the community. Should the disruption to normal operations exceed what the organization can address, the department should request activation of its devolution organizations.

# Concept of Operations

## Activating the Continuity of Operations Plan

The goals of activating the Continuity of Operations plan are to:

* Notify all relevant stakeholders about the disruption so that they can begin their own planning and preparation to respond
* Assess the situation and develop an initial understanding about how the organization is impacted

**Facilitator Note:**

If there is a specific method of notification, you can include it in the table. For instance, “Notify staff via Everbridge of an incident and gain accountability for team…”

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Step Description | Assignment |
|[ ]  **Notify staff of an incident and gain accountability for team.** Notification can include as much information as is available at the start of the response. Accountability can include an assessment of a staff member’s safety and their availability to support the organization’s response efforts.  | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|[ ]  **Assess the situation and determine the impact of the incident on the organization’s operations.** | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|  |[ ]  Review the Organizational Leadership and Succession table and identify any gaps. |  |
|  |[ ]  Review the Organization’s Functions table and confirm that the essential functions column reflects the department’s priorities.  |  |
|  |[ ]  Identify which essential functions are at risk of disruption as a result of the incident and identify the cause of the disruption (people, facilities, or resources). |  |
|[ ]  **Notify ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP about the disruption and the impacts on the organization’s essential functions.** | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |

## Restoration of Essential Functions

The goals of the Restoration Phase of the Continuity of Operations response are to:

* Stabilize the situation by rapidly restoring any function that is down and maintain the continued performance of essential functions that are still online, even if it requires temporary solutions
* Identify and employ the resources needed to first restore the function, then stabilize the continued performance of the function, even if it means reallocating organizational personnel and resources
* Organize the response to ensure information is being received and communicated to all needed stakeholders about the status of functions and how to engage with services

**Facilitator Note:**

The first task should belong to the position that *makes* the assignment, not the position responsible for restoration. This is true for all tasks that begin with “Assign.”

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Step Description | Assignment |
|[ ]  **Assign a person to be responsible for the restoration and ongoing performance of all department essential functions.**  | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
| [ ]  | **Notify the department of the disruption and the immediate actions being taken to restore essential functions.****Provide direction to staff members supporting important and non-essential functions to prepare to shift focus and support essential functions**. View the [**Communications Considerations Appendix**.](#_Appendix_A:_Communications) | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|[ ]  **Assess the disruption to each essential function.** | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|  |[ ]  Identify the people, facilities, and resources needed to ensure the continued performance of all department essential functions for the next 24, 48, and 72 hours. |  |
|  |[ ]  Inform department leaders of the resources required to ensure continued performance in the near-term. |  |
|[ ]  **Communicate the changes in services provided to all external stakeholders** who may be affected by services not being offered or **give instructions about how to engage with services being offered in a non-traditional method**.See the [**Communications table**](#_Communications). | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|[ ]  **Establish a coordination structure for the department** to ensure the conditions, actions, and needs for the continued performance of each essential function are identified and communicated to department leadership.  | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|[ ]  **Assign a person to lead the planning for the resumption of all department functions** (the next section).  | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|[ ]  **Develop the plan to continue a continuity of operations response for an extended timeframe** if the source of the disruption is not anticipated to be addressed.  | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|  |[ ]  Identify the people, resources, and facilities needed for a sustainable response. |  |
|  |[ ]  Develop training materials to allow for the rapid integration of temporary staff members into the performance of essential functions. |  |

## Reconstitution of All Organization Functions

The goals of the Reconstitution Phase of a Continuity of Operations plan are to:

* Develop a plan for the methodical resumption of all organization functions, remembering that a return of all services can occur on a good day and doesn’t have to be rushed
* Monitor the performance of all functions to ensure that the organization is able to maintain their continued performance, and prepare to return to a focus on essential functions if ongoing performance is not possible
* Assess the continuity of operations response and identify methods to improve performance in response to future disruptions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Step Description | Assignment |
|[ ]  **Establish the priorities and objectives for the organization** in order to return to normal operations. | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|[ ]  **Develop a re-opening/return-to-work plan for the resumption of all organization functions and validate the approach** **with organizational leadership, operational leadership, and key stakeholders.**See the[**Reconstitution Checklist Appendix**](#_Appendix_C:_Reconstitution)**.** | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|  |[ ]  The plan should include the process to assess organization facilities and resources for suitability and ability to maintain operations (e.g., building structural assessments, IT capability assessments, and supplier assessments). |  |
|  |[ ]  The plan should include a description of the conditions or circumstances that would prevent a full resumption of services and how the organization will return to a continuity of operations response.  |  |
|[ ]  **Develop and distribute messaging to all stakeholder groups about the restoration of all organization functions.** | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |
|[ ]  **Evaluate the organization's response to the disruption**, **assess the plan**, and **make improvements to the plan** to account for lessons learned in future continuity of operations incidents.See the [**After-Action** **Review Form**](#_Appendix_B:_After-Action)**.** | NAME of the POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY (or DESIGNEE) |

# Organization Leadership and Succession

## Organization Leadership

Orders of succession ensure that leadership of the organization is maintained when key personnel are unavailable during an emergency.

**Facilitator Note:**

The **Responsibilities** section is meant for important responsibilities not listed in the essential function table. If the team does not have any, delete this section of the table.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Position | Primary Contact | Alternate Contact |
| Director  | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX |
| **Responsibilities:** |
| DIVISION LEADER | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX |
| **Responsibilities:** |
| DIVISION LEADER | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX |
| **Responsibilities:** |
| DIVISION LEADER | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX |
| **Responsibilities:** |
| Consider including an IT position in this table | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX | **Name**TitleEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX |
| **Responsibilities:** |

# Organization Priorities

## Mission

The ORGANIZATION NAME is responsible for [INSERT ORGANIZATION MISSION].

## Guidelines

Prioritizing organization activities during emergencies and disruptive events is necessary to allow the organization to ensure the Primary Essential Functions continue to be performed. An organization’s activities, functions, and services can be categorized into three categories.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Function Category | Priority | Restoration Objective |
| Essential FunctionsThe functions that allow the organization to preserve life, accomplish the organization’s Primary Essential Functions, meet legal requirements, and ensure inclusion of the organization’s values during an emergency. | High | Less than 24 hours |
| Important FunctionsThe functions that can be delayed for a short period of time until essential functions are restored.  | Medium | One day to one week |
| Non-Essential FunctionsThe functions that can be delayed until the Essential and Important functions have been restored and the organization has the staff and resources to perform all functions. | Low | One week to one month |

## Organization Functions

**Facilitator Note:**

In some cases, leadership may have certain required essential functions. Be sure to include those in the table before facilitation begins and ask the team whether they consider them essential or want to change the wording.

Mark legally mandated essential functions with an asterisk (\*) and **bold** them so they are easy to spot.

| Essential Functions | Important Functions | Non-Essential Functions |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Prepare for and respond to emergencies affecting the organization |  |  |
| Maintain and provide Information Technology (IT) infrastructure |  |  |

*\*These essential functions are legally mandated. Some legally mandated functions may be temporarily waived or delayed in the event of an emergency. The organization director should determine any delays to legally mandated functions and communicate those changes to [OVERSEEING BODY, IF APPLICABLE].*

**Facilitator Note:**

If a department maintains its own IT infrastructure, this is almost certainly an essential function.

## Essential Function & Service Leadership

The following staff members and their alternates are responsible for ensuring the continued performance of the organization’s essential functions and services during a disruptive event.

**Facilitator Note:**

In this and the following tables, paste the finalized essential functions and fill out the proper information in the other columns.

In this case, each essential function should have the names and contact information for two people, the individual primarily in charge of ensuring the function is performed and their backup if they are unable to perform the function during a COOP incident.

| Essential Functions | Primary Contact | Alternate Contact |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Paste all essential functions here | **Name**PositionEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX | **Name**PositionEmail AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX |

## Organization Facilities

The following locations have been identified as the primary and alternate locations where the essential function can be performed to ensure uninterrupted service or restoration within 24 hours during a disruptive event.

**Facilitator Note:**

Each essential function should have three addresses (or “Remote”) associated with it. The primary location is where all staff normally go to perform this function (e.g., fire station for a firefighter). The secondary location is where all staff go if the primary location is damaged or unavailable (it must be able to fit the entire staff). The tertiary location is where staff go if both primary and secondary locations are unavailable.

| Essential Functions | Primary Location | Secondary Location | Tertiary Location |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Paste all essential functions here | **Building Name**Building Street Address City, CA ZIP CODE  | **Building Name**Building Street Address City, CA ZIP CODE | **Remote** |

## Organization Essential Resources

### Vital Records

Vital records are the documents and records that are necessary to carry out mission essential functions. Content, not media, determines their criticality. Vital records are records that, if damaged or destroyed, would disrupt operations and information flow, and, if destroyed, would pose a challenge to the organization’s reconstitution to normal operations.

**Facilitator Note:**

Each essential function should have associated records that are required to perform the function. For instance, a doctor may need access to a patient’s medical records.

If the vital records are stored in multiple formats, include them all.

| Essential Functions | Vital Record | Storage Locations |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Paste all essential functions here | **Record Name** | Digital? Where are these stored and who maintains them?Hardcopy? Where are they stored? Backups? Are these backups off-site?  |

### Technology Platforms

Critical technology platforms and software services that allow for the continued performance of essential functions.

The organization has a data center located at ADDRESS and maintained by INTERNAL TEAM/DEPARTMENT/OTHER. There are backups at ADDRESS.

OR

The organization does not have a data center.

**Facilitator Note:**

For each piece of technology, ask the team who maintains it at a local level (e.g., if it is not working, who do they call for support?) and at the network level (e.g., who installs it, who maintains its data, does it run in the cloud?).

It is important to try to figure out where all platforms are located (e.g., on premises or in the cloud).

| Essential Functions | Platform and Criticality | Responsibility |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Paste all essential functions here | What SOFTWARE is required for this essential function? How important is it? For instance:Adobe Illustrator |  IT/Internal Department or Third-Party Vendor (State or Company) |

### Essential Supplies and Equipment

Essential supplies and equipment are the items that are required to perform essential functions. These items can include the perishable or non-perishable items necessary to perform the work.

**Facilitator Note:**

What supplies do staff require to perform each essential function? Note: this is physical equipment, not software platforms or specific reports and information.

| Essential Functions | Required Supplies |
| --- | --- |
| Paste all essential functions here |  Laptops, desktops, and phonesRadiosVehiclesOffice suppliesPPE |

# Organization Devolution

In situations when the department is unable to ensure the continued performance of essential functions or continue to provide essential services, the department should transfer authority and responsibility from the organization’s primary staff, facilities, and resources to another organization.

**Facilitator Note:**

Ask the team, “If your whole team was unable to report to work or perform any work, which department or agency would take over managing your essential functions?”

| Devolution Agency | Devolution Contact |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency Name**Street AddressCity, State Zip Code | **Name****Title**Email AddressXXX-XXX-XXXX |

# Communications

Consider communicating with the following groups when activating the Continuity of Operations Plan:

| Audience  | Information Needs | Means of Communication |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Internal employees | When to come to work or where to work from | Group textEmailWebsite |

# Appendix A: Communications Considerations

During a disaster or continuity event, the organization’s employees may be working outside their area of expertise, in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), or with people they do not know well. The chaotic environment makes accurate and timely communication with key stakeholders even more important. This annex guides you through writing a briefing during a crisis.

## Keys to Communicating in a Crisis

* Remember that everyone is experiencing this crisis with you
* Communicate continuously and clearly
* Provide instructions in writing so people can review anything missed that was presented verbally
* Do not make yourself a bottleneck in the decision-making process; identify bottlenecks on your team and work to distribute responsibilities to avoid delays in communication
* Provide a focus for your team on what you *do* know and what you *can* do
* Be empathetic and compassionate, not focused on your own feelings
* Be transparent and avoid minimizing problems and emotions
* Check in regularly, but be ready to adjust your communications to meet the needs of your team

## Initial Communications Tasks During a Crisis

When communicating with your team and department, remember to include the following details:

|  | **Task** |
| --- | --- |
|[ ]  **What is the situation**? Describe it in one or two sentences. |
|[ ]  **What do we know and what are we still learning**? Be clear about ambiguity that still exists. |
|[ ]  **What are your priorities**? Emphasize three to four team priorities, not a laundry list. |
|[ ]  **What has not changed**? Make it clear what functions the organization is still responsible for. |
|[ ]  **What actions are you taking**? |
|[ ]  **What resources are available to your teams**? Where can they find them and how soon will they be available? If managers are also receiving the memo, include resources about supporting their teams. |
|[ ]  **What can your teams do**? Be explicit about next steps. If none exist, make that clear. Future memos may include sources of information and places to donate, but because this takes time to research, it does not need to be part of the initial memo. Remember, better not to include true information than to accidentally send out misinformation. |
|[ ]  **Where can your team ask questions**? If there is a point person, highlight them and provide their contact information. If team members should *not* contact you with questions, make that clear. |
|[ ]  **Where can people find updates**? How often will they be posted? This is where you can point people towards your physical or virtual location for discussions and questions. |
|[ ]  **What is the anticipated timeline for this event**? |
|[ ]  **Closing words**. Emphasize the training and support in place that will help your team overcome this current challenge and conclude with a more optimistic sentiment. |

# Appendix B: After-Action Review Form

Following deactivation of the Continuity of Operations plan and a return to normal operations, it is important to identify what worked well and areas for improvement in preparing for and responding to disruptions to the department’s operations.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expected Action** | **Completed (Yes/No)** | **Strengths** | **Opportunities** |
| Continuity impacts were assessed and communicated to organizational leadership in a timely and effective manner.  |  |  |  |
| Decisions about the organization’s response to the continuity events, actions, and other pertinent information were reported to impacted employees.  |  |  |  |
| Impacts to organizational operations were efficiently and effectively addressed within each division.  |  |  |  |
| The Continuity of Operations plan supported decisions about which functions to maintain, which functions to stop performing, and the people, facilities and resources required to ensure their continued performance.  |  |  |  |
| Any lasting crisis impacts in my division have been documented and communicated, and a plan is in place to resolve those impacts.  |  |  |  |
| Employees within the organization were supported and updated throughout the response.  |  |  |  |

# Appendix C: Reconstitution Planning and Considerations Checklist

A reconstitution plan, also called a return to work or reopening plan, outlines the schedule and steps an organization can take to resume normal department operations. It is often the final step of responding to a disruption to operations.

While a Continuity of Operations Plan is often activated when problems are occurring, the return to work can be a thoughtful and orderly process. As a result, it is often preferable to assign department leaders to develop flexible plans at the earliest possible moments of a continuity of operations event.

The following considerations and checklists do not address every possible question and activity that should be taken as part of the reconstitution planning process, but they can serve as a guide when developing plans to address the specific needs of the incident, disaster, or disruption.

|  | **Planning and Communication Related Considerations** |
| --- | --- |
|[ ]  Identify the stakeholders who will influence the development of the reconstitution plan and gain input from those groups about what needs to be included in the plan. Groups may include:* **Department leadership**: Identify the intent, objectives, and considerations to be included in the plan, as well as any policies that need to be developed or revised prior to reconstitution
* **Department staff**: Identify the questions, concerns, and potential accommodations staff members will want addressed prior to reconstitution
* **Community members, clients, and customers**: Identify service recovery needs and impacts on community interactions with the department
 |
|[ ]  Develop a reconstitution plan that includes:* A **phased schedule** that allows for changes to the plan initiation date and duration of each phase of the plan
* **Objectives** that provide clear feedback about how well reconstitution is progressing and allow for adjustments to the planned approach
* **Contingency plans** to stop the reconstitution and return the organization to alternative methods of performing department functions if necessary
 |
|[ ]  Receive plan approval and begin reconstituting department operations by: * Briefing department leadership, County leadership, and key stakeholders on the reconstitution plan
* Establishing a date to initiate the plan and begin reconstituting department operations
* Updating County leadership on the status of the reconstitution and providing notice when it is complete
 |
|[ ]  Communicate with stakeholders regarding the reconstitution plan.* **For staff**: Deliver a return-to-work announcement and conduct a “return to the office” briefing
* **For community members**: Announce changes in services provided and how to engage with the department
 |

|  | **Facility Related Considerations** |
| --- | --- |
|[ ]  Ensure the primary facility/location is safe and habitable by:* Coordinating with the primary location’s **building owner**, vendors, maintenance support, and cleaning personnel regarding the department’s return
* Ensuring the building is **structurally sound**, identifying any construction needs to ensure the safety of employees, and developing cost estimates
* Ensuring the facility has **functioning infrastructure**, including electricity, water, information technology, heating, and air conditioning
* Ensuring the facility has appropriate **security measures** in place for a safe return of employees
 |
|[ ]  Ensure the primary facility/location is prepared for the return of department employees by:* Identifying workspaces for all employees, including those who joined the organization after the disruption
* Ensuring the facility has adequate parking, or developing a parking plan, for all employees returning to the office
* Developing and placing signage in the facility to support the effective reconstitution of department operations
 |
|[ ]  Return any temporary facilities to the building owner.* Coordinate with the temporary facility’s building owner regarding the schedule and transition requirements
* Conduct a walk-through of the facility to ensure it is being returned in its original condition
 |

# Appendix D: Legal Authorization

**Facilitator Note:**

In this section, include a list of all the laws (state or federal) and regulations (at every level) that legally require organizations to perform certain functions.

The functions identified as legally required in the Essential Functions table are derived from the following statutes and authorities:

* [TO BE COMPLETED BY AGENCY/ORGANIZATION]