Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

[Name of Jurisdiction]

[Date]

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# ANNUAL REVIEW

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# RECORD OF CHANGES

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[Name of Jurisdiction] has a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan that is used to prepare for, respond to, and recover from any emergency or disaster. The Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is an additional document designed to help the community effectively resume day-to-day essential services and functions following a continuity event.

This COOP documents the procedures for ensuring the continuity of municipal services following a continuity event. It will enable departments which provide community services to resume minimum essential operations within 12 hours of a continuity event, with or without warning, and to sustain continuity operations for up to 30 days.

This Continuity of Operations Plan:

1. Delineates Essential Functions and Activities
2. Delegates Authority
3. Establishes Orders of Succession
4. Identifies Requirements for Interoperable Communications
5. Identifies Essential Records and Databases
6. Identifies Alternate Facilities
7. Outlines Tests, Training, and Exercises for COOP Capabilities
8. Identifies COOP Plan Maintenance Requirements and Responsibilities

# 2. INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is vulnerable to a host of hazards, including hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, coastal and interior flooding, dam failure, radiation exposure and contamination, hazardous materials spills or releases, wildfires, drought, winter storms, civil disturbance, terrorism, and disease pandemics.

[Name of Jurisdiction] has completed a threat, hazard and vulnerability assessment for the jurisdiction by [briefly describe methodology used]. The analysis identified the following potential hazards and threats, vulnerabilities and impacts to population, property and critical infrastructure. [list potential hazards]

COOP planning is part of the fundamental mission of local governments as responsible and reliable public institutions. The changing threat environment and recent emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, technological emergencies, and terrorist attack-related incidents, have shifted awareness to the need for COOP capabilities that enable local governments to continue their essential functions across a broad spectrum of continuity events.

# 3. PURPOSE

COOP planning is an effort to ensure that the capability exists to continue essential government functions for the [Name of Jurisdiction] across a wide range of potential continuity events. The objectives of this COOP plan include:

1. Ensuring the continuous performance of a government’s essential functions/operations during a continuity event.
2. Protecting essential facilities, equipment, records, and other assets.
3. Reducing or mitigating disruptions to operations.
4. Reducing loss of life, minimizing damage and losses.
5. Achieving a timely and orderly recovery from a continuity event and resumption of full service to customers.

# 4. PLAN ACTIVATION

The COOP and its associated annexes will be executed in whole or in part as directed by the Chief Municipal Officer, the Emergency Management Director, or other duly authorized department head or representative in response to an existing or an impending COOP emergency. Refer to the appropriate department annex for Delegations of Authority and Orders of Succession. This plan may also be activated under the following circumstances:

* At the time of an actual continuity event
* When the [Title of the Chief Municipal Officer] has declared a local state of emergency or COOP emergency.
* When an authorized representative or department head has a COOP emergency

# 5. PLANNING BASIS

 a. Essential Functions: Essential functions are those that enable local governments and jurisdictions to provide vital services, exercise civil authority, maintain the safety and well-being of the general populace, and sustain the industrial/economic base in an emergency. Each department will be tasked with reviewing its list of functions and selecting those which were deemed to meet these definitions.

 b. Order of Succession: Succession planning and management is an important part of both Continuity of Operations (COOP) and of Continuity of Government (COG) planning. Both seek to maintain leadership in the event of an emergency and consist of two components: Delegation of Authority and Orders of Succession. Essential functions must proceedwithout interruption regardless of the availability of any individual. During any period in which the position of department/jurisdiction head is vacant, or the department/jurisdiction head is sick or absent, the department’s highest official on their designated list (who is not sick or absent) will perform the duties of the department/jurisdiction head.

 c. Essential Records, Files, and Databases: This COOP includes the identification and protection of essential records, systems, data management software, and equipment (including classified or sensitive data) necessary to perform essential functions and activities and to reconstitute normal agency operations following an emergency at any single or multiple departments. Essential records specify how an agency will operate in an emergency or disaster and records needed to protect the legal and financial rights of the government and citizens.

d. Vital Systems and Equipment: A system or piece of equipment is vital if it is essential to emergency operations and/or to the department’s continuance of critical functions during a crisis of a minimum of 30 days. Many critical processes supporting essential agency functions include or consist of IT systems and applications. As such, the IT system of any agency plays a vital role in COOP planning. Not every system or piece of equipment is vital, even if it is important. The timing of a system or piece of equipment’s use may also bear on whether it is vital or not. For example, the Department of Public Works’ snowplows are vital in Massachusetts during and immediately after a blizzard, but they are not vital during summer.

# 6. LOGISTICS

a. Alternate Facilities: Emergencies or potential emergencies, whether anticipated or not, can affect the ability of governments and departments to perform their mission-essential functions from their primary locations. A critical element in COOP planning is the identification and preparation of facilities that can be used to accomplish essential functions if the department’s primary facilities become unusable. The following criteria were used to identify suitable alternate locations for continuity of operations for all departments in the [Name of Jurisdiction]:

* Immediate capability to perform essential functions under various threat conditions, including threats involving weapons of mass destruction.
* Sufficient space and equipment to sustain the relocating department.
* Availability of interoperable communications with all identified essential internal and external departments, organizations, critical customers, and the public.
* Reliable logistical support, services, and infrastructure systems, including water, electrical power, heating, and air conditioning, etc.
* Ability to sustain operations for up to 30 days.
* Consideration for the health, safety, and emotional well-being of relocated employees.
* Appropriate physical security and access controls.
* COOP alternate locations for each town department will be shown in the appropriate annexes to this plan.

 b. Interoperable Communications: The success of operations at an alternate facility depends upon the availability and functionality of critical communications to support the mission of the department. These include:

* Communications capability that adequately supports department essential functions and activities.
* Ability to communicate with COOP contingency staffs, town management, citizens, and other customers.
* Ability to communicate with other organizations and emergency personnel.
* Access to systems and data necessary to conduct essential activities and functions.
* Ability to operate in the alternate facility within 12 hours and for up to 30 days.

# 7. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS-PROCEDURES FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Procedures for Plan Implementation were developed based on the following key assumptions:

* Continuity events, actual or threatened, can adversely impact the government’s ability to continue to support essential functions and provide these functions and services to its citizens.
* Continuity events, actual or threatened, can differ in priority and impact.
* The vulnerability of the government depends upon the probability of an event occurring and the impact this event would have on operations.
* Outside assistance could be interrupted or unavailable during an event.
* Local governments, departments, agencies, and offices must be prepared to operate without help for at least 72 hours.
* When a COOP event is declared, the government will implement a predetermined plan using trained and equipped personnel.
* The government will provide operational capability within 12 hours of the event and be able to continue essential operations for 30 days or until event termination, whichever is earlier.

**Pre-COOP Activation: Form a COOP Management Team consisting of:**

* Department heads that are responsible for their departments’ performance of essential functions.
* A Continuity Manager who is responsible for the community’s COOP program. The Continuity Manager will oversee day-to-day operations when the COOP plan is activated.
* Information Technology will support continuity of communications, critical systems and data.
* Human Resources will help incorporate reasonable accommodations for employees including telework and designate employees as continuity personnel.
* Facilities management will help in identification of and relocation to alternate facilities.
* Fiscal will help ensure availability of resources needed to perform essential functions.
* Security will address the protection of personnel, data and facilities.
* Department staff will help each department support essential functions during a COOP activation.

 **Phase I: Activation and Relocation (0-12 Hours)**

* The affected department(s) will notify the [who], the community Emergency Management Director (EMD) and the alternate facility manager(s) of the impending relocation requirements. The reason for the relocation, if not already announced, will also be included.
* The affected department(s) will activate their plans and procedures to transfer activities, personnel, records, and equipment to the alternate operating facility.
* Instruct all assigned personnel on what they are to do.
* Transport all required and re-locatable records and equipment which can be safely moved. The normal operating location will be secured within safety and security limitations.
* Order any required equipment and supplies if not already in place.
* The Emergency Management Director (EMD) will, as necessary, convene the COOP Management Team in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) [or where] to assess the situation and determine what if any assistance is required.
* If community resources are not sufficient to meet the situation, the EMD may contact the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to request additional assistance.
* General and specific instructions will be found in each department’s individual annex to this plan and in other documents maintained in each department by the head of that department.

**Phase II: Alternate Facility Operations (12 Hours – Termination)**

* Provide guidance to key staff and any non-emergency personnel.
* Identify any shortfalls in equipment and personnel and report these to the [who] and the EMD.
* Begin full execution of essential operations.
* Advise citizens and other concerned personnel of the move as soon as possible to minimize any disruption of the ability to serve customers.
* Begin to plan a return to the normal operating location as soon as circumstances permit. This will include phasing down operations at the alternate location and returning activities, personnel, records, and equipment to the normal operating facility.

**Phase III: Reconstitution (Termination and Return to Normal Operations)**

* Inform all personnel of the termination of relocated operations and provide instructions and a timeline for the return to normal operations.
* Supervise an orderly return to the normal operating location, or movement to other temporary or permanent facilities using a phased approach if conditions dictate.
* Report the status of the relocation to the EMD and the [who] and other department points of contact as required.
* Conduct an after-action review of COOP operations and the effectiveness of plans and procedures as soon as possible. Identify areas for correction/improvement and develop a remedial action plan. Provide this input to the EMD for any required changes to the [Name of Jurisdiction] COOP Plan.

# 8 COOP TESTING, TRAINING, AND EXERCISES

Testing and exercising COOP capabilities are essential to demonstrating and improving the ability of organizations to execute their COOP plans. They serve to validate plans or identify for subsequent correction, specific aspects of COOP plans, policies, procedures, systems, and facilities. Periodic testing also helps ensure that equipment and procedures are maintained in a constant state of readiness. [Name of Jurisdiction] will periodically test the following:

* Alert and notification systems and procedures for all employees
* Protection, access, and recovery strategies found in the COOP plan and annexes for essential records, critical information systems, services, and data
* Internal and external interoperability and functionality of primary and backup communications systems
* Backup infrastructure systems and services, such as power, water, and fuel
* Other systems and procedures necessary to the [Name of Jurisdiction]’s continuity strategy, such as the IT infrastructure required to support telework options during a COOP activation
* Measures to ensure accessibility for employees and members of the public with access and functional needs

Training familiarizes individuals with roles, responsibilities, plans, and procedures for conducting mission essential functions and providing critical services when normal operations are disrupted. Exercises play a vital role in preparedness by enabling partners, stakeholders, and elected officials to shape planning, test and validate plans and capabilities, and identify and address gaps and areas for improvement.

COOP training and exercises will include:

* Orientation Seminar: For both current employees and new hires. The department head will brief personnel on the department’s COOP Plan and the employee’s responsibilities and duties under the plan.
* Drill: Personnel will walk through the procedures for gathering applicable equipment and records and how to re-locate them to the alternate work location.
* Tabletop: Conduct a tabletop exercise to activate the EOC and COOP Management Team and walk personnel through a COOP relocation and management’s actions to support relocation.
* Other Exercises: Community Management and the EMD will develop and conduct other exercises to test:
	+ COOP plans and procedures in order to validate the community’s strategy and ability to continue its mission essential functions and services
	+ Intra- and interagency backup communications capabilities
	+ Backup data and records systems required to support mission essential functions for sufficiency, completeness, currency, and accessibility
	+ Recovery from the COOP activation and environment and transition back to normal operations

After activating or exercising the COOP Plan, the Emergency Management Director will conduct an After-Action Review (AAR) with all department heads as soon as possible following the return to the primary operating facility or establishment in a new primary operating facility. This review will study the effectiveness of COOP plans and procedures, identify best practices and areas of improvement, and document these in an After-Action Report and Improvement Plan.

# 9. COOP PLAN MAINTENANCE

This plan will be reviewed on an [annual basis]. The Emergency Management Director will oversee the review of the basic plan. All departments will review their applicable annex in order to ensure that their responsibilities and actions are still current.

# 10. COOP ANNEXES

Each department head will complete an annex applicable to their department. The EMD will incorporate these annexes as an addendum to the [Name of Jurisdiction]’s Continuity of Operations Plan.

# 11. SAMPLE TOWN DEPARTMENTS

Some examples of community departments that would need to complete an annex for inclusion in the COOP are:

 Police Department

Fire Department

Emergency Management Department

Department of Public Works

School Department (one annex for each school)

Administrator/Chief Elected Official

Accounting

Board of Assessors

Board of Health

Municipal Collector’s Office

Conservation Department

Recreation Department

Council on Agin

Water Department

IT Department

Personnel/Procurement

Planning Department

Public Library

Town Clerk/Treasurer

[NAME OF JURISDICTION]

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_//Signed//\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[Chief Elected Official]

# ANNEX [A][Create an Annex for each Department]

1. DEPARTMENT: [name of department]

2. NORMAL LOCATION: [location of department]

3. ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS: The [department] provides the following services:

 a. [as many as needed]

4. ALTERNATE FACILITY: The current alternate facility destination for the [department] is [location]. Department vital systems and equipment are [list]. Interoperable communications requirements include [list] for personnel to complete their essential functions.

5. ORDER OF SUCCESSION: To ensure that appropriate supervision is provided to the department, the following Order of Succession will be followed:

 a. [list 3]

 b.

 c.

6. ESSENTIAL RECORDS/DATABASES: All [name records] since [timeframe] connected with department essential functions are stored on [where/how]. They can be accessed [how]. Records prior to [timeframe] are stored as [how] in the [where].

7. COOP PREPARATIONS: A successful COOP relocation begins with some simple planning steps which map out the actions required to relocate the department and begin operations.

 a. Establish a COOP Management Team. This team will consist of the senior department personnel and will review department COOP plans. They will ensure that appropriate plans are in place to relocate the department and that all department personnel are aware of these plans and the actions which they may be asked to participate in. These personnel will also oversee and manage the department’s relocation and subsequent return to operation.

 b. Prepare a Department Recall List. The department head will maintain a complete list of department personnel and contact information. This will be used to alert employees to any relocation plans. Alternate means such as radio, TV, email, etc. should also be considered.

 c. Develop a COOP Relocation Kit. If specific forms or other items are required to accomplish your essential functions, consider preparing a kit containing these forms which can be quickly assembled and brought to the COOP relocation point. A kit maybe prepared ahead of time and pre-positioned. Alternately, one or more sources of these items can be identified and used during you relocation.

8. COOP RELOCATION ACTIONS: Upon any event which requires a COOP relocation, the department head will take the following actions:

 a. Notify the appropriate Community officials of the situation. Regardless of the status of the department head (elected or appointed) this will include the [list who] and the Emergency Management Director. These personnel will review the situation to provide any support required for this action (e.g., transportation, temporary manning assistance or other aid).

 b. Alert all department personnel of the situation and provide direction as to what actions they are to take.

 c. Coordinate with the owner/occupant of the relocation site to allow them to prepare for the relocation of the affected department personnel.

 d. Notify citizens of the new temporary department location via the appropriate communications channels. This may include newspaper articles, Channel [#] or other methods as appropriate [list methods].

9. RETURN TO NORMAL LOCATION: Throughout any COOP relocation the department head or other designated senior member will monitor the condition of the normal working area and plan for an orderly return when this space is able to be re-occupied. If the situation does not permit this to happen, the department head will work with the appropriate community officials to identify another location from which to establish a long-term working presence from which to conduct the department’s essential functions.

10. [ANNUAL] REVIEW: The department COOP Management Team will review this plan on an [annual] basis to ensure that all assumptions, plans, preparations, and essential functions remain up-to-date. Any changes will be coordinated with the Community Emergency Management Office to be added to the COOP Plan.