Business Continuity Plan : The Life Cycle

Whether you are new or experienced in Continuity Planning this is a great refresher of the life cycle and process. Best practice is to attend a BC Workshop before starting your BCP.

1. **Identify**- This is where the department/division identifies their critical/essential functions within the department. One thing to think about when deciding on the critical/essential functions is the Business Impact Analysis, analyzing how a disruption may impact the department/division.

    1. Identify the potential disruptions and hazards: Natural/ Human-related/ Pro-active human hazard

    2. Analyze and prepare for varying losses: facilities/equipment, physical data/IT, loss of staff, loss of energy, etc.

    3. Evaluate the possible outcomes and recovery time of critical functions needed for the department/division. Consider all potential losses such as reputational or enrollment impacts.

2. **Build**- Creating or Updating the plan in VEOCI

    1. A key feature of VEOCI is that its questionnaire based which help facilitate the necessary conversations for the BCP. This will help guide you on which level the critical/essential function may land on.

    2. Once the BCP has been completed and socialized within the department/division for agreement among staff, the department/division will submit their plan in VEOCI for EM/BC to begin the review process with steps 3-5.

3. **Exercise (Test the Plan)** – EM/BC will exercise the plan that has been created inside VEOCI. The TableTop Exercise (TTX) is a no-fault discussion-based activity held in an informal setting facilitated by EM/BC, to generate discussion regarding a hypothetical, simulated emergency/disruption. The department/division team will participate in this TTX using their plan to work through the scenario presented.

Continuity - Vocabulary

4. **Review (After Action Report)**- Following conclusion of the TTX the department/division team will participate in a Hotwash to identify strengths and limitations. Using the Hotwash findings and TTX experience, the team will fill out and submit After Action Report (AAR). If a level of criticality, process/function, or contingency plan differs in the plan than what was utilized during the exercise, review the BCP and update/edit within VEOCI. This is done to identify and address any gaps or inconsistencies in the BCP and make sure everyone in the department/division is on the same page.

5. **Fix (Corrective Action Plan)** –The AAR will be used to create a Corrective Action Plan. This process is to identify the action items needed and identify who is responsible for completing such as cross training or MOU management. Within VEOCI, the corrective actions can be recorded in the action items section along with the person(s) responsible.

6. **Implementation and Maintenance**- The plan is now complete and can be used to navigate through disruptive events and familiarize staff with processes. The department/division will update and maintain the plan as needed and test the plan's operational continuity with annual tabletop exercises. Typically, many updates are infrequent but usually include document uploads, software changes, vendors, staff point of contacts, and/or policy changes. It is best practice to review the plan quarterly in this phase to best capture changes that may occur in each of our departments and divisions as they arise.

Continuity Planning Cycle

Identify

Build

Implement

Exercise

Fix

Review