

# Continuity of Operations Plan Template

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# **Continuity of Operations Plan**

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## BASIC PLAN

### I. PURPOSE, SCOPE, SITUATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

#### A. PURPOSE

This document outlines the Continuity of Operations Plan for

Heretofore,  
will be referred to within this document as “the Laboratory.”

The overall purpose of continuity planning is to ensure that essential laboratory functions are continued with or without minimal delay under all conditions. The Laboratory is committed to continuing all aspects of its critical activities during a reduction of its core services. In addition, the Laboratory is dedicated to safely and promptly resuming normal operations after an event. The Plan recognizes that reaching out to other (e.g., local, Environmental Response Laboratory Network [ERLN]/Water Laboratory Alliance [WLA]) laboratories for support may be necessary due to separate or concurrent events, such as the result of a natural disaster, major water main break, pandemic flu, terrorist attack or other event(s). While the severity and consequences of an emergency cannot be predicted, effective contingency planning may minimize the impact on the Laboratory’s mission, personnel and facilities.

During an emergency, the Laboratory Director or assigned person (see Appendix A, Key Personnel) continues to exercise general direction, control and overall supervision of laboratory resources. The Laboratory Director has the authority to commit laboratory resources, to ensure the continuation of essential functions, which will help minimize the impact of the disaster on the community. Furthermore, the Laboratory Director will coordinate with the Incident Commander (IC), Environment Unit (EU), utility manager or other Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) depending on the magnitude of the incident.

#### B. SCOPE

This COOP applies to the functions, operations and resources necessary to ensure the continuation of the Laboratory’s essential functions in the event its normal operations are disrupted or threatened with disruption. This plan applies to all Laboratory personnel. The Laboratory staff should be familiar with continuity policies and procedures and their respective continuity roles and responsibilities. This document assists the Laboratory in the

maintenance of its essential missions and functions under all threats and conditions, with or without warning, which includes but is not limited to:

- Personnel
- Equipment
- Supplies and reagents
- Data management
- Clerical and other support personnel

### C. SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Laboratory's risk assessment is found in Appendix B. This risk assessment addresses the following:

- Cross training of personnel to ensure redundancy of capability
- Back-up instrumentation
- Electrical power failure (e.g., back-up generators)
- Procedures to rapidly obtain supplies and reagents
- Access to other laboratories for analytical support (e.g., membership within ERLN/WLA and/or Water/Wastewater Agency Response Networks [WARN] to have access to additional resources to address capability and capacity issues during an emergency [e.g., supplies, personnel])
- Information Technology (IT) support and procedures to address Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)
- Procedures in place to ensure appropriate support staff are available to support laboratory core activities

### D. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

This COOP is based on the following assumptions:

- An emergency condition may require the redistribution of the Laboratory's resources (e.g., prioritization of critical sample analyses)
- An assessment of the Laboratory will be made to determine if, and to what extent the COOP will be activated
- Ideally the Laboratory will begin essential functions within 24 hours or less from the time the COOP is activated, for potentially up to a 30-day period or until normal operations can be resumed
- In the event that the Laboratory is not able to conduct essential functions due to the loss of personnel, equipment or damage to the facility, the Laboratory will reach out to other laboratories to obtain the necessary support
- Samples may need to be shipped to alternate laboratories for analyses



- Procedures will be in place for preservation and shipment/transport of samples to other laboratories, as necessary, to ensure continuation of essential functions
- The Laboratory is a member of the ERLN/WLA
- Other

## II. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

### A. PHASE I: READINESS AND PREPAREDNESS

The Laboratory will participate in the full spectrum of readiness and preparedness activities to ensure personnel can continue essential functions in an all-hazard threat environment.

The Laboratory's readiness activities are divided into two key areas:

- Laboratory readiness and preparedness
- Personnel readiness and preparedness

#### **Laboratory Readiness and Preparedness**

The Laboratory preparedness incorporates the use of the following tools and activities:

- Water Contaminant Information Tool (WCIT)
- Selected Analytical Methods for Environmental Restoration Following Homeland Security Events
- Compendium of Environmental Testing Laboratories (Laboratory Compendium)
- Established relationships with local laboratories
- Membership in the ERLN/WLA and WARN
- Annual review of COOP
- Modification of the COOP based on exercises and trainings

#### **Personnel Readiness and Preparedness**

The Laboratory personnel preparedness incorporates:

- Annual trainings to familiarize personnel with the COOP
- Cross-training of staff to ensure redundancy of analytical capability
- Exercises
- Other

### B. PHASE II: ACTIVATION, REPRIORITIZATION AND/OR OUTSOURCING

To ensure the ability to attain operational capability at the laboratory or at a supporting laboratory with minimal disruption to operations, the Laboratory will execute the COOP as described below.

The decision to activate the Laboratory's COOP and related actions will be tailored for the situation and based on projected or actual impact and whether or not there is warning. To support the decision-making process regarding plan activation, key laboratory personnel will use the decision matrix below to support that process.

As the decision authority, the Laboratory Director will be kept informed of the threat environment using all available means, including the Laboratory's Emergency Communications Center, regional notification systems, Alertnet systems, local operations and State and local reporting channels and news media.

### **Alert and Notification Procedures**

The Laboratory Director maintains plans and procedures for communicating and coordinating activities with personnel before, during and after a continuity event.

Before an event, personnel in the laboratory will monitor advisory information, including

In the event normal operations are interrupted or an incident appears to be imminent, the Laboratory will take the following steps to communicate the laboratory's operating status with all staff:

(1) The Laboratory Director or designated successor will notify

of the emergency requiring lab COOP activation

(2) Refer to Appendix C for notification steps

(3) The Laboratory's personnel will notify family members, next of kin and/or emergency contacts of COOP activation

Upon the decision to activate the COOP, the Laboratory Director will notify all Laboratory personnel, as well as other entities with information regarding continuity activation, operational and communications status and the anticipated duration. Additional entities may include:

- EPA Regions
- WARN/WLA
- Local laboratories (e.g., public health)
- Other

### **Prioritization Process**

Once the COOP is activated and personnel are notified, the Laboratory will prioritize resources to ensure the continuation of essential functions. Laboratory personnel will perform essential functions and other continuity-related tasks.

In the event of an activation of the COOP, the Laboratory may need to procure necessary personnel, equipment and supplies that are not already in place for continuity operations on an emergency basis.

The  
maintains the authority for emergency procurement. Instructions for these actions are found in Appendix D.

### **Accessing Additional Resources**

Upon activation of the COOP, the Laboratory Director will follow the

located in Appendix E, to determine whether emergency assistance in the form of laboratory personnel, equipment, materials and other associated services are necessary, from other water/wastewater or commercial laboratories. The Laboratory Director, in conjunction with the Utility Director, will consult the State-specific Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement, located in Appendix F for activation of the WARN.

Depending on the magnitude of the continuity event, the Laboratory Director may seek further support from the ERLN/WLA to provide assistance or conduct analyses. The Laboratory Director will consult the WLA Response Plan (RP), located in Appendix G, for guidance on securing laboratory support. Additionally, the Laboratory Director will consult the Laboratory Compendium and the EPA Regional Laboratory Director for assistance in identifying an appropriate support laboratory.

## **C. PHASE III: CONTINUITY OPERATIONS**

Upon activation of the COOP, the Laboratory will continue to perform essential functions until ordered to outsource some or all essential functions due to capacity issues by the

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At that time, essential functions will either be performed by the Laboratory with additional laboratory support or be transferred in whole to local or network laboratories. The Laboratory should ensure that the COOP can be operational within 12 hours of plan activation, based on FEMA recommendations.

## **D. PHASE IV: RETURN TO NORMAL OPERATIONS**

The Laboratory will return to normal operations when the Laboratory Director or other authorized person determines that the emergency has ended and is unlikely to reoccur. Once the appropriate authority has made this determination in coordination with other state, local and/or other applicable authorities, one or a combination of the following options may be implemented, depending on the situation:

Upon verification that the required capabilities are available and operational and that the Laboratory is fully capable of accomplishing all essential functions and operations, the

will begin supervising a return of personnel, equipment and documents. The return of personnel, functions and equipment will follow the priority-based plan and schedule outlined below. The Laboratory will develop return plans based on the incident and facility within      hours of COOP activation.

- See Appendix H for priority-based phase-down and return plan

The Laboratory will continue to conduct essential functions through a supporting network laboratory until ordered to cease operations by the

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At that time, essential functions will transfer back to the laboratory. The Laboratory has developed plans to instruct personnel on how to resume normal operations as outlined below. The Laboratory will develop resumption plans based on the incident and facility within      hours of COOP activation.

- See Appendix I for normal operations resumption plan

## **III. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

Key staff positions within the Laboratory, to include individual continuity members, those identified in the orders of succession and delegation of authority, the Laboratory's Continuity Coordinator, continuity managers and others possess additional continuity responsibilities. The responsibilities of these key continuity personnel are delineated in Appendix J.

## **IV. DISASTER INTELLIGENCE**

During a continuity event, the Laboratory will require the collection and dissemination of critical information. While specific incidents may require additional or specialized reporting requirements,

the table in Appendix K lists examples of the information that would be collected and reported regardless of incident type.

## **V. COMMUNICATION**

The Laboratory has identified available and redundant critical communications systems that are located at the laboratory. Further, the Laboratory maintains fully capable continuity communications that support needs during all hazards and threats, to include pandemic and other related emergencies. All of the Laboratory's necessary and required communications, IT capabilities and LIMS should be operational within 12 hours of COOP activation. The Laboratory has evaluated their LIMS and has become familiar with electronic data deliverables that may be required if data needs to be reported within an ICS to either an IC or the EU.

## **VI. ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS**

Depending on the type and duration of the emergency the Laboratory will have established multiple agreements to ensure timely assistance. The Laboratory has established the following non-funded agreements:

In the event the emergency renders the laboratory incapable of providing essential functions for an extended period of time, the Laboratory has also established funded agreements

The Laboratory maintains a budget for these funded agreements.

## **VII. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

The Laboratory Director is responsible for maintaining the Laboratory's COOP. The COOP will be reviewed by and updated annually from the date of publication. The Laboratory is responsible for the annual plan review and update. In addition, the COOP will be updated or modified when there are contact information changes or other events that affect continuity processes or procedures. Comments or suggestions for improving this plan may be provided to

## Maintenance Chart

Responsibility	Frequency
Update COOP plan	
Update telephone rosters	
Review status of vital files, records and databases	
Conduct alert and notification tests	
Develop and lead COOP training	
Plan COOP exercises	

## VIII. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

Please refer to Appendix L for key authorities and references on which the laboratory's COOP is based. Additional references maybe listed in Annex B.

## FUNCTIONAL ANNEXES

### I. Essential Functions Annex

#### A. IDENTIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The Laboratory has completed the MEF process to identify those functions that should continue.

##### **Laboratory MEFs**

*Each laboratory should identify and prioritize their organizational MEFs and ensure the continued performance of those MEFs.*

The Laboratory's MEFs are validated and approved by

The Laboratory's MEFs are located in Appendix M.

### II. Continuity Facilities Annex

### III. Continuity Communications Annex

The Laboratory has identified available and redundant critical communication systems. Further, the Laboratory maintains fully capable continuity communications that could support the laboratory's communication and data reporting during all hazards and threats, to include pandemic and other related emergencies. These systems provide the ability to communicate and report data within and outside the organization. Please refer to Appendix N.

## IV. Test, Training and Exercises (TT&E) Program Annex

The Laboratory has established an effective TT&E program to support the organization’s preparedness and validate the continuity capabilities, program and ability to perform essential functions during any emergency. The testing, training and exercising of continuity capabilities are essential to demonstrating, assessing and improving the Laboratory’s ability to execute the COOP.

- Training familiarizes personnel with their roles and responsibilities in support of the performance of the laboratory’s essential functions during an event
- Tests and exercises serve to assess, validate or identify for subsequent correction, all components of the COOP, policies, procedures, systems and facilities used in response to an event. Periodic testing also ensures that equipment and procedures are kept in a constant state of readiness.

The Laboratory performs TT&E events at regular intervals, as shown in the table below.

Continuity TT&E Requirements	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	As Required
Test and validate equipment to ensure internal and external interoperability and viability of communications systems				
Test alert, notification and activation procedures for all personnel				
Test primary and back-up infrastructure systems and services at continuity facilities				
Test capabilities to perform essential functions				
Test plans for recovering critical information systems, services and data				
Test and exercise required physical security capabilities				
Test internal and external interdependencies with respect to performance of essential functions				
Train continuity personnel on roles and responsibilities				

## HAZARD-SPECIFIC APPENDICES

Please refer to Appendix O for special planning needs generated by a particular hazard or hazards.



## **ANNEX IMPLEMENTING INSTRUCTIONS**

Please refer to Appendix P for implementing instructions.

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## ANNEX A. GLOSSARY



## ANNEX B. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

**AUTHORITIES and REFERENCES:**

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## ANNEX C. ACRONYMS