

## **How to Use This Manual**

Disasters can happen without warning. When they do, there is no time for planning and organizing, only scrambling to recover. Most disasters and their destruction cannot be prevented, but organizations can prepare for the possibility by implementing a plan for expedient and successful recovery.

Government organizations depend heavily on technology and automated systems, and their disruption for even a few days could have a severe impact on critical resources and impact essential services. The continued operations of an organization depend on management's awareness of potential disasters and ability to develop a plan to minimize disruptions of daily operations.

A business continuity plan is a comprehensive statement of consistent actions to be taken before, during, and after a disaster. The plan should be documented and tested to ensure the continuity of operations and availability of critical resources in the event of a disaster.

This manual assists government organizations in developing comprehensive disaster recovery plans, or business continuity plans, that are viable and cost-effective. The workbook format provides government organizations with a detailed description of the process and methodology for developing a clear, comprehensive business continuity plan that will comply with legal requirements and satisfy statutory standards. Designed to facilitate the process by providing detailed instructions and formats in an organized approach, this manual addresses the business continuity planning needs of in-house users, service center users, and various combinations. The methodology can be tailored to the unique aspects of each organization.

### **Senior Management Responsibilities**

Senior management may not realize their legal and fiduciary responsibility to protect the organization and related assets. If the lack of a business continuity plan for operational continuity results in personal injury, physical damage, financial loss, or failure to perform as contracted, the management could be held liable by individuals, corporations, and other organizations.

The Securities and Exchange Act of 1934 was amended by the 1977 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act to require all publicly held companies to keep accurate records and maintain internal control systems to safeguard assets. The courts have defined assets as including the computer system and all the data it contains. Critical records and original documents also are assets and should be protected. The law places equal emphasis on “making...records.” The organization that fails to generate a record is as liable as the organization that fails to preserve it.

The penalty for conviction under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act is a fine up to \$10,000 or five years imprisonment, or both.

Senior management has a similar responsibility to protect the government organization and its assets. By creating and updating a recovery plan, a government organization shows due diligence in developing control systems that will protect its records and assets.

### **Benefits of the Plan Development Phase**

Based on the various considerations addressed during the planning phase, the process itself and related methodology can be equally as beneficial as the final written plan. Benefits derived from developing a comprehensive disaster recovery plan include the following:

- Reduced legal liability
- Minimized potential economic loss
- Decreased potential exposure
- Reduced probability of occurrence
- Reduced disruption to normal operations
- Ensured organizational stability
- Ensured orderly recovery
- Minimized insurance premiums
- Reduced reliance on key personnel
- Increased asset protection

- Ensured safety of personnel and the public
- Compliance with legal and statutory requirements
- Minimized decision-making during a disaster

No organization is immune to the unexpected, regardless of size or location. Small and midsize government organizations also should have comprehensive contingency plans.

When a disaster strikes, it causes significant disruption and downtime to operations and business processes. It is essential to have a business continuity plan that enables the organization to respond to and recover from an incident that interrupts the organization's operations.

### **Organization of This Manual**

The primary goal of disaster recovery planning is to minimize the extent of the disruption to the organization and to minimize its escalation, thus reducing the impact on essential services and financial concerns.

The manual is organized into chapters that correlate with the sequence of the business continuity planning and development process. Chapter 1, The Contingency Planning Process, describes the objectives and the phases of the planning process. Chapter 1A, Contingency Planning and the Systems Development Life Cycle, describes approaches in which contingency planning strategies can be incorporated throughout the life span of a computer system. Chapters 2 through 6 provide a step-by-step explanation of each phase of the planning process. The six phases include the following:

- Project Initiation (Chapter 2)
- Security and Risk Assessment (Chapter 3)
- Disaster Recovery Strategies and Contracting Services (Chapter 4)
- Recovery Plan Development (Chapter 5)
- Continuity of Operations Planning (Chapter 5A)
- Testing and Training (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7)

Chapter 8, Laws, Standards, and Guidelines, contains a brief description of legislation, rules, and directives applicable to contingency planning, including the National Institute of Standards and Technology Planning Guide, the National Fire Protection Association 1600 Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

In the next section, Checklists contains a series of questions that touch on the elements needed in the planning and development phases. Sample Documents contains documents you can modify for your governmental organization's specific needs. Sample Policies provides policies on a variety of different areas addressed in a business continuity plan. These three parts and the forms and diagrams provided as exhibits throughout the manual are included to reduce the overall effort involved in preparing a business continuity plan.

The Glossary contains an extensive list of terms associated with the planning and development of a business continuity plan. The User Guide is available on the accompanying CD.