

[↑Insert Organization Logo↑]

**[Insert Date of Exercise]**

Continuity of Operations

Exercise

**[Insert State Organization Name]**

**SITUATION MANUAL**

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# Preface

[Insert State Organization Name] has undertaken the effort to increase the Organization’s preparedness and response to a continuity-disrupting incident. This Continuity of Operations (COOP) exercise is one of many ongoing activities intended to increase the level of preparedness and response for [Insert State Organization Name].

This situation manual (SitMan) provides exercise participants with the information necessary to fulfill their roles in the exercise. The SitMan is tangible evidence of [Insert State Organization Name]’s commitment to ensure coordinated efforts for response to any continuity-disrupting incident. The intent of this exercise is to ensure a standard level of awareness among [Insert State Organization Name] personnel and other partner stakeholder agencies. Next steps include providing guidance and improvement planning for operational plans, procedures, and related documents for future response operations.

This SitMan and all information discussed as part of the exercise is FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO). The document is to be controlled, stored, handled, transmitted, distributed, and disposed of in accordance with your Organization’s practices relating to FOUO information and is not to be released to the public or personnel who do not have a valid need to know without prior approval of the authorized [Insert State Organization Name] official.

## Background

Continuity of Operations is defined[[1]](#footnote-2) as:

“…*the effort within public and private entities to ensure that mission essential functions continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including natural disasters, accidents, and technological or attack-related emergencies.*”

A COOP Plan presents the threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities that an agency is subject to during daily operations. A COOP Plan also establishes what the essential functions/critical business processes are for the [Insert State Organization Name]. Essential functions/critical business processes are the limited set of functions that must be continued throughout or resumed rapidly after a disruption of normal activities. Planning to reestablish these essential functions/critical business processes requires understanding what processes, personnel, and equipment support the essential functions/critical business processes and which individuals have the responsibility and authority to carry out actions to ensure these functions/processes are resumed within the identified timeframe after a service disruption.

A COOP Plan must be flexible and scalable for a variety of situations, as there are many scenarios that may require a State Organization to enter into a continuity environment on or off duty hours. The ability for [Insert State Organization Name] to maintain its critical services during emergencies is vital. To that end, effective planning is the key to ensuring a timely response and sustainment of critical services.

## Educational Materials

A number of COOP educational materials are available for participants who wish to know more about COOP planning and best practices. Links to material are listed below.

* + - * Delaware Department of Technology and Information COOP Training - <https://extranet.dti.state.de.us/COOP/information/training.shtml>
* COOP Sample Plan
* How to Read Your COOP Plan Video
* COOP 101 – Delaware-Specific Video
* DEMA Training Offerings - <http://www.dema.delaware.gov/services/calendar/Trng_Cal.shtml>
* FEMA Independent Study COOP Courses - <https://training.fema.gov/is/searchis.aspx?search=COOP>

# Exercise Agenda

[Insert Date of Exercise]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TIME | AGENDA ITEM |
| HH:MM  *(15 minutes)* | Evaluator Briefing [Delete if delivered prior to the day of the exercise] |
| HH:MM | Participant Sign-In |
| HH:MM  *(10 minutes)* | Opening Remarks [Facilitator] |
| HH:MM  *(1 hour)* | Module 1: COOP Plan Phase 2 - Activation and Notification   * Facilitated Discussion |
| HH:MM | Break |
| HH:MM  *(1 hour)* | Module 2: COOP Plan Phase 3 – COOP Operations   * Facilitated Discussion |
| HH:MM | Break |
| HH:MM  *(30 minutes)* | **Optional** Module 2A: COOP Plan Phase 3 (cont.) – Advanced COOP Operations [Delete if not applicable]   * Facilitated Discussion |
| HH:MM | Break |
| HH:MM  *(30 minutes)* | Module 3: COOP Plan Phase 4 - Reconstitution   * Facilitated Discussion |
| HH:MM | Exercise Hotwash |
| HH:MM | Closing Remarks and Adjournment |

*Note: The exercise is designed with four total modules that correspond to the COOP Plan Phases. Time estimates are provided for planning purposes. Some Organizations may need to allot more or less time to complete each module. Module 2A is an* ***optional*** *module that may be included in the exercise based on the Organization’s capabilities. Module 2A includes additional continuity disruptions, lines of succession and delegations of authority/supply chain disruption/network outage considerations. It is recommended that the modules be completed in order. However, all modules do not have to be completed during one exercise sitting. Modules can be completed in multiple sittings based on the needs and schedule of the participants.*

# Exercise Overview

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| EXERCISE NAME | Continuity of Operations Exercise |
| EXERCISE DATE | [Insert Date of Exercise] |
| SCOPE | [Insert a brief statement about scope of the exercise, target audience, primary purpose, and other pertinent details]  [*Example:**Activities related to continuity operations as reflected in the [Insert State Organization Name] COOP Plan.*] |
| MISSION AREA(S) | Prevention, Protection, Response, Recovery |
| CORE CAPABILITIES | Planning |
| OBJECTIVES | * Discuss and validate the State Organization’s COOP Plan elements, including:   + Identification of essential functions/critical business processes   + Incident management   + Alternate facilities   + Critical customers/partners and vendors   + Resource requirements * Discuss and validate the processes required to perform internal and external Crisis Communications. * Discuss and validate the process for reconstitution. * List any additional exercise objectives |
| THREAT OR HAZARD | [Choose one scenario and delete the others]  Mold  Earthquake  Winter Storm |
| SPONSOR | [Insert State Organization Name] |
| POINT OF CONTACT | [Insert primary point of contact for the exercise]  Name:  Title:  Facility/Organization Name:  Address:  Phone Number:  Email: |

# Introduction

## Purpose

As a proactive acknowledgment of the need for improved planning to identify, mitigate, and manage potential continuity-disrupting incident such as [Choose one: mold, earthquake, winter storm], [Insert State Organization Name] will conduct the COOP exercise at the [Insert the Exercise Location] on [Insert Date of Exercise].

The exercise has been designed to increase foundational knowledge of local planning, notification, and coordination processes that [Insert State Organization Name] leadership and personnel will implement for COOP Plan activation, entering into a continuity environment, and ensuring the restoration of essential functions/critical business processes. The exercise will focus on the processes outlined for [Insert State Organization Name] leadership, roles and responsibilities, and necessary critical tasks and resources.

# General Information

## Exercise Objectives

This exercise follows a capabilities-based planning approach. Jurisdictions use a capabilities-based planning methodology to identify a baseline assessment. The exercise objectives are aligned with state and federal capabilities such as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Core Capabilities. This approach identifies gaps in current capabilities and will help focus efforts on improving those capabilities in future training and exercise activities. Specifically, this exercise will measure performance of the Core Capabilities listed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CORE CAPABILITIES** | **EXERCISE OBJECTIVE** |
| Planning | * Discuss and validate the State Organization’s COOP Plan elements including:   + Identification of essential functions/critical business processes   + Incident management   + Alternate facilities   + Critical customers/partners and vendors   + Resource requirements * Discuss and validate the processes required to perform internal and external Crisis Communications. * Discuss and validate the process for reconstitution. * List any additional exercise objectives |

## Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise and their respective roles and responsibilities are as follows:

* **Facilitator.** The facilitator will provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They may also provide additional information and answer questions, as required. Key planning members also may assist with facilitation as subject matter experts during the exercise.
* **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
* **Evaluators.** Evaluators observe and document certain objectives during the exercise. Their primary role is to document discussions, including how and if those discussions conform to plans, policies, and procedures.
* **Observers.** Observers do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.

## Exercise Guidelines

Participants are expected to adhere to the following guidelines during the exercise:

* This exercise will be held in an open, low-stress, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
* Do not fight the scenario. The scenario is intended to drive discussion about the COOP Plan.
* Participants are expected to respond to the scenario using their knowledge of current plans and capabilities as well as insights derived from their training and experience.
* Decisions are not precedent-setting and may not reflect each participant’s department and/or Organization’s final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.
* Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could benefit preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus of discussion.
* Not every issue or problem can be discussed exhaustively. To achieve overall objectives, the facilitators may move the group to subsequent questions once the key points have been covered. Please, trust your facilitator.
* Decisions achieved through discussion will be documented for each module.

## Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted, and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants’ acceptance of the assumptions and artificialities listed below are essential in any exercise, and participants should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation. The following general assumptions and artificialities apply to this exercise:

* People and events in this scenario are fictional; any resemblance to real persons or events is entirely coincidental.
* The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes are evaluated.
* The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented. The scenario is intended to drive discussion.
* All participants receive information at the same time.
* The scenario will not play out in real time. Some events will require time compression or may be accelerated to meet exercise objectives.
* There is no hidden agenda; there are no trick questions.

## Exercise Structure

The exercise will be a facilitated exercise using a modular approach. Participants will be encouraged to participate in facilitated discussions associated with the following modules:

* **Module 1: COOP Plan Phase 2 – Activation and Notification**
  + Facilitated discussion
* **Module 2: COOP Plan Phase 3 – COOP Operations**
  + Facilitated discussion
* **Module 2A: COOP Plan Phase 3 (cont.) – Advanced COOP Operations**
  + Facilitated discussion
* **Module 3: COOP Plan Phase 4 – Reconstitution**
  + Facilitated discussion
* **Hotwash**

During the exercise, the facilitator will lead participants in a non-formal group discussion for each module. Discussions will be used to develop potential solutions to issues through a group-oriented, problem-solving process. All players will represent their respective State Organizations and roles.

## Exercise Evaluation

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the objectives and aligned capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks that are documented in Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEG). Evaluators have EEGs for each of their assigned areas. Additionally, participants will be asked to complete feedback forms. These documents, coupled with facilitator observations and notes, will be used to evaluate the exercise and compile the After Action Report (AAR).

# Scenario

[Three continuity-disrupting scenarios have been included below. Review and modify the scenario to best suit the needs of the State Organization. Delete other scenarios. Peripheral information for the scenario can be incorporated from the Supplemental Scenario Information document, as determined by the Planning Team. While participants should be encouraged not to fight the scenario, peripheral information can be incorporated to enhance realism.]

## Mold

For the past few weeks, an increasing number of employees within the [insert State Organization primary location] building have become ill with respiratory symptoms, including severe asthma, stuffy nose, wheezing, and red and itchy eyes. Earlier today, while environmental clean-up crews were conducting an inspection, they discovered evidence of black mold. Upon further inspection, extensive mold was observed throughout the length of the building’s HVAC system, on furniture, and within the wall insulation. At [insert time of day or evening], leadership was notified that due to the extent of the mold and the health hazard it presents, the building must be vacated. Personnel must prepare to activate their COOP Plan.

## Earthquake

This morning at 11 a.m., employees at [insert State Organization primary location] experienced a sudden, strong shaking of the building that lasted for approximately 15 seconds. Recognizing an earthquake, employees took cover under desks and tables. Books and equipment were thrown off shelves, and some windows shattered, and [insert number] employees were injured. Once the shaking stopped, employees observed large cracks in the building’s masonry. Due to the extent of the damage and the life safety hazard it presents, the building must be vacated. Personnel must prepare to activate their COOP Plan.

## Winter Storm

Earlier this week, the National Weather Service (NWS) and local meteorologists predicted an incoming winter storm likely to deliver minimal to moderate snowfall. Forecasts indicate that the storm will not arrive until late this evening and will have little impact on commutes. Based on the forecast, employees of [Insert State Organization Name] report to work as usual.

Despite the forecast, heavy bands of snow, sleet, and freezing rain arrive at approximately 11 a.m. and begin to coat vehicles, trees, and power lines in snow and ice.

At 2 p.m., employees hear a loud crash, and the electricity goes out temporarily. The backup generator quickly restores basic lighting to the office. Moments later, it is reported that a large tree fell into the building. While no one was injured, the tree created a substantial hole in the roof and side wall and damaged office, file storage, and meeting space. Due to the extent of the damage and the life safety hazard it presents, the building must be vacated. Personnel must prepare to activate their COOP Plan.

[The following sections contain scenario updates, key issues, and discussion questions for each module. Modules may require minor customization, where indicated.]

# Module 1: COOP Plan Phase 2 – Activation and Notification

## Scenario Update

Due to the extent of the [damage/health risk], the [Insert State Organization Name]’s entire primary location is deemed immediately uninhabitable. Initial estimates indicate that repairs may take up to one month to complete. Personnel must prepare to activate their COOP Plan.

## Key Issues

The following key issues need to be considered when developing response actions to this scenario:

* Initial activation and notification of COOP procedures
* Incident management
* Critical customers/partners and vendors
* Identification of essential functions/critical business processes and their dependencies
* Resource requirements (vital records, equipment, software)

## Module 1 Activity/Discussion Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in a group discussion concerning the key issues raised in Module 1. The following questions are provided as suggested general subjects that could be addressed as the discussion progresses. These questions are not intended to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed nor is there a requirement to address every question.

1. What is the process for activating the COOP Plan?
2. Who can authorize the building closure?
3. How will staff be notified?
4. Would any other State Organizations, vendors, or businesses be notified of your COOP Plan activation?
5. What critical vendors or coordinating entities will be notified?
6. How will external partners or customers be notified?
7. What essential functions/critical business processes are impacted?
8. What software or critical applications are needed?
9. What vital records would potentially be unavailable?
10. What resources are required to ensure delivery of essential functions/critical business processes?
11. What equipment, procedures, guidance, and plans are included in the COOP Kit?
12. Who comprises the Damage Assessment Team?

# Module 2: COOP Plan Phase 3 – COOP Operations

## Scenario Update

[Insert State Organization Name] leadership, in collaboration with building safety professionals, have determined that employees must relocate to the designated alternate facility for at least 30 days.

## Key Issues

The following key issues need to be considered when developing response actions to this scenario:

* Alternate facilities
* Resource requirements (software, equipment, finances)
* Critical customers/partners and vendors

## Module 2: Activity/Discussion Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in a group discussion concerning the key issues raised in Module 2. The following questions are provided as suggested general subjects that could be addressed as the discussion progresses. These questions are not intended to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed nor is there a requirement to address every question.

1. Is an alternate facility identified?
2. What agreements are in place to occupy the alternate facility? What is the contact information for the alternate facility? Are there any limiting factors that may prevent you from occupying the alternate facility?
3. How will the alternate facility be set-up?
4. Are there any modifications that need to be made to the alternate facility prior to staff using it (e.g., additional office supplies, IT equipment)?
5. How long will it take for the alternate site to be active?
6. What essential functions/critical business processes will be delivered at the alternate facility?
7. How will the COOP Kit be accessed?
8. How will financial or accounting considerations at the alternate facility be handled?
9. How will personnel be accounted for?
10. What is the procedure for employees relocating to an alternate facility?
11. What is the process for transferring in-office assets to the alternate facility? How will the primary facility remain secured?
12. How will staff access the alternate facility?
13. Are there any orientation materials provided to employees working at the alternate facility (e.g., parking restrictions, mass transit routes, local daycare centers, local eateries, etc.)?
14. Would telework be warranted/implemented?
15. Given the potential dispersal of employees between alternate facilities and telecommuting, how will routine communication be established?

# Module 2A: COOP Plan Phase 3 (cont.) – Advanced COOP Operations

## Scenario Updates

### Incident Command Changeover (Succession and Delegation of Authority)

An automobile accident has occurred that has incapacitated [insert the names of 2-3 leadership staff]. These individuals are not responding via cell phone.

### Supply Chain Disruption

Due to labor strikes, DELL has been decreasing desktop and laptop production. Meanwhile, weather-related disasters have occurred in Maryland and New Jersey, which have resulted in increased demand for these products. You are unable to acquire additional computers at this time.

[A customizable supply chain disruption scenario is provided below. Delete if not needed.]

Due to labor strikes/product recall/weather-related manufacturing damage, [Insert manufacturer] has been decreasing [Insert supply] production. Meanwhile, weather-related disasters have occurred across the mid-Atlantic, which have resulted in increased demand for this product. You are unable to acquire additional [Insert supply] at this time.

### Network Disruption

Construction has been going on down the road from your alternate facility. At 11:00 a.m. five days into your relocation, your employees report that they are unable to connect to the state network. All internet activity is offline. Cisco phone lines are also offline, and personnel cannot be contacted at their work numbers. After 1 hour, you are informed that a fiber cut has occurred during the offsite construction and it is estimated 36–72 hours for repairs to be completed.

## Key Issues

The following key issues need to be considered when developing response actions to this scenario:

* Identifying, authorizing, and initiating lines of succession
* Manual work-around procedures
* Alternate vendors/supply management

## Module 2A Activity/Discussion Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in a group discussion concerning the key issues raised in Module 2A. The following questions are provided as suggested general subjects that could be addressed as the discussion progresses. These questions are not intended to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed nor is there a requirement to address every question.

### Incident Command Changeover (Succession and Delegation of Authority)

1. What are the potential impacts if the missing personnel cannot be located?
2. Are lines of succession in place?
3. What are the parameters for initiating succession actions?
4. Who can authorize them?
5. Do the procedures or authorizations change if someone is killed vs. injured, perhaps severely?
6. Would these considerations be different for an elected official? [May not be applicable to all State Organizations – delete if not applicable.]
7. In the absence of key personnel, how will decisions be authorized?

### Supply Chain Disruption

1. What resources are available at the alternate location?
2. Who is authorized to make resource purchases or leasing decisions?
3. How quickly can resources be procured?
4. What vendors will be used to obtain resources?
5. How will vendors be contacted?
6. If primary vendors are unavailable, how will resources be acquired?
7. What work-around options are available for performing critical business processes with limited resources?
8. How will employees be informed about limited resources or updated procedures?

### Network Disruption

1. What management decisions are being made as a result of this situation?
2. Who will be contacted regarding this situation?
3. How will critical processes be performed if network access is down?
4. How will staff be notified of the situation?
5. Will any information be communicated to the public?
6. What partners are you working with to mitigate or resolve the situation?

# 

# Module 3: COOP Plan Phase 4 – Reconstitution

## Scenario Update

It has been 15 days since the incident, and personnel are operating from the alternate location(s)/teleworking. Leadership was just notified that repairs will be more extensive than initially believed. Estimates indicate that the primary building will be closed for an additional 45–60 days. Staff identify that supplemental equipment will be needed to replacement worn or used equipment.

## Key Issues

The following key issues need to be considered when developing response actions to this scenario:

* Long-term leasing and operational considerations
* Recovery tracking and communication

## Module 3 Activity/Discussion Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in a group discussion concerning the key issues raised in Module 3. The following questions are provided as suggested general subjects that could be addressed as the discussion progresses. These questions are not intended to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed nor is there a requirement to address every question.

1. Who will approve purchases during COOP operations?
2. What is the process for acquiring additional supplies during COOP operations?
3. Does the extended timeframe trigger any alternate facility leasing requirements?
4. Using the options identified in the COOP Plan, describe the process of recovery and how progress will be tracked.
5. How will employee impacts (e.g., psychological) be addressed?
6. Will an extended relocation impact essential functions/critical business processes?
7. What is the process for updating the COOP Plan based on observations from this incident?

# Annex A: Exercise Participants

[Insert exercise participants].

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| Participant’s Organization | Participant Name | Title |
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# Annex B: Acronyms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ACRONYM | DEFINITION |
| **AAR** | After Action Report |
| **COOP** | Continuity of Operations |
| **DHS** | Department of Homeland Security |
| **EEG** | Exercise Evaluation Guide |
| **FEMA** | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| **FOUO** | For Official Use Only |
| **NCPIP** | National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan |
| **NWS** | National Weather Service |
| **SitMan** | Situation Manual |
|  | [Add additional acronyms as appropriate] |

# Annex C: Participant Feedback Form

Please enter your responses in the form field or checkbox after the appropriate selection.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  | | | **Title:** |  |
| **Agency:** |  | | | | |
| **Role:** | Player | Observer | Evaluator | |  |

## Part I: Recommendations and Corrective Actions

1. Based on the exercise today and the tasks identified, list the top three strengths and/or areas that did not need improvement.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
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1. Based on the exercise today and the tasks identified, list the top three weaknesses and/or areas that need improvement.

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1. Is there anything you saw in the exercise that the evaluator(s) might not have been able to experience, observe, and record?

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1. Identify corrective actions that should be taken to address the issues identified above. For each corrective action, indicate if it is a high, medium, or low priority.

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| --- | --- |
| Corrective Action | Priority  (High/Medium/Low) |
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1. Describe the corrective actions that relate to your area of responsibility. Who should be assigned responsibility for each corrective action?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Corrective Action | Recommended Assignment |
|  |  |
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1. List the applicable equipment, training, policies, plans, and procedures that should be reviewed, revised, or developed. Indicate the priority level (high, medium, low) for each.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Item for Review | Priority  (High/Medium/Low) |
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## Part II: Assessment of Exercise Design and Conduct

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided below, with **1 indicating strong disagreement** with the statement and **5 indicating strong agreement**.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assessment Factor | Strongly  Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | | |
| The exercise was well structured and organized. | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 |
| The exercise scenario was plausible and realistic. | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 |
| Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 |
| The participants included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines. | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 |
| After this exercise, I believe my Organization is better prepared to deal successfully with a continuity-disrupting incident. | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 | |

## Part III: Participant Feedback

Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.

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## Part IV: Additional Comments

Please provide any additional comments.

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1. National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan (NCPIP), National Security Presidential Directive-51/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-20 (NSPD-51/HSPD-20). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)