ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNERS AND TEAMS

A major storm, power failure, water main break, hazardous material exposure, structural failure or fire could damage buildings on campus, in some cases forcing closure for weeks or months, and will certainly interrupt the activities of those in the affected area. Departmental Continuity Planners (DCPs) and Department Continuity Planning Teams (if developed) have the responsibility of preparing for, responding to, and recovering from any event that affects your department’s ability to perform its mission.

Department Continuity Planner
The Department Planner is responsible for the development, training, testing and maintenance of the departmental Business Continuity Plan. This is accomplished by assembling key staff and information that would be needed in an emergency situation affecting your department, including: identifying critical functions; assembling contact information for staff, vendors and customers; identifying key equipment, supplies and support needed; identifying alternate arrangements for working during a disruption and developing ways to communicate in an emergency.

The Departmental Continuity Planner reports to departmental management and works with the Boston College Emergency Management Executive Team (EMET) in a disaster situation to coordinate information and support from the University if needed.

In an Emergency
The Department Continuity Planner is responsible to ensure the following actions are assigned/completed:

- Notify Department Management, Continuity Team and Emergency Management of emergency situation and activate the Department Business Continuity Plan if needed
- Determine if the Department Operations Center (DOC) or conference call activation is required. If so notify Department Management and the Continuity Team to report to the pre-defined location. Notify Emergency Management of its location and contact information.
- Assess the estimated length of time of the disruption and report the assessment to Department Management, Continuity Team and Incident Commander at the University Emergency Operations Center (EOC) if necessary (St. Clements Room 149).
- Review the scope of the problem, noting areas affected, probable duration, location to resume operations, numbers of users involved, plan for recovery, staff requirements and staff availability.
- Coordinate and communicate with the various continuity team members and the University EOC if additional resources are required. Establish a liaison with the Incident Commander if appropriate
- Coordinate the return of processing to the usual functional area, or to a new site, if necessary
- After the recovery effort, meet with the Department Continuity Team members. Analyze the recovery procedures, and make any necessary additions or modifications to this plan.
Plan Updating and Distribution

To ensure that your plan remains current, schedule regular updates, departmental and broader organizational tests, and train the personnel responsible for actual implementation of the plan. In addition, promote the Plan to maintain and enhance awareness of the Plan within the organization. Ensure that your Plan is updated at least annually or more often if major changes occur in the organization. A good time to update is after tests, exercises or real emergencies when items are still fresh in your head about what needs to be changed. Also be sure to update items such as contact information on a quarterly basis as they can change regularly.

Ensure that the updated document is distributed to Department Continuity Team members, organization management, the Emergency Management Office and placed in the on-line Contingency Planning Library in MyFiles. A copy of the Departmental Plan should also be sent to an off-site storage location. Two copies are sent to each member of the recovery team so that the recipient can store one copy in the office at BC and one at home for safekeeping.

Test the Plan

At least annually conduct a test of your Plan. This could include a table top discussion where you walk through a scenario; conduct a notification and communication exercise to test contact information and/or a remote exercise using only data from off-site storage that includes recovery documentation, procedures, programs, and files and other support services. Deficiencies in these recovery tests will be noted, and corrected as soon as possible after the test is concluded. A report on test results will be sent to the Office of Emergency Management.

Mitigation Steps

Identify any deficiencies and/or vulnerabilities in your plan, and solutions to correct or better prepare these issues. Review with Continuity Planning Team members and change or update the plan to correct these identified items. Prevention is better than recovery; follow safety and emergency procedures and ensure everyone is trained!

Train Personnel and Promote the Plan

Promoting your plan means keeping it viable and visible to all members in your organization’s staff. You should conduct an orientation program for personnel on the Continuity Planning Team outlining the actions planned for response to and recovery from a disaster and semi-annual or quarterly briefings on planning status at departmental staff meetings. All staff should have some basic familiarity with this plan such as notification and communication strategy, meeting locations, critical functions, etc.

Remember; all staff should take preparedness to heart and take steps before an emergency to be ready in case of emergency. This should include personal and family preparedness at home including a family disaster and communication plan and a disaster supply kit. Further information and assistance can be found at www.bc.edu/emergency or by contacting the Office of Emergency Management at 617-552-4316.