# Crisis Leadership: Continuity of Operations Planning

Presented : Friday, 3/27 10am PST

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## Chapter Update - Donald Huling, HWA Geosciences & APWA, dhuling@hwageo.com

The Chapter has moved much of the planned activities for the Spring Conference to the Fall Conference. Regarding our financial status, the Chapter had an emergency plan already in place and as a result the Chapter is very secure in its ability to continue with our mission to educate and connect the public works community. The Chapter will be providing committee chairs with additional online tools for connecting.

## Crisis Leadership - Jeff Byard, Team Rubicon  jeff.byard@teamrubiconusa.org

Team Rubicon deploys nation-wide to assist with natural disasters.
Top Tips:

- Take action now while doing it safely and correctly. Even if it turns out that you need to correct or adjust later, it's better to get moving. Adopting this quarterback mentality of running a play and moving on is best suited to a crisis situation.
- Create a cross-functional team. Make sure to include a broad spectrum of your organization— including all support teams such as HR and IT.
- For a massive upset like COVID don't be afraid to reorganize temporarily in a new way that makes more sense in the current environment. This includes writing new job descriptions and new safety precautions. For example, Team Rubicon now has a Continuous Improvement Team.
- All disasters are fluid but remember that even if you don't have a playbook, you still have players. Remember to trust your team to make decisions.
- As a leader you cannot over communicate. Make sure that you are setting aside time every single day to have an online meeting or group phone call with your entire team. Your team will be feeling the pressure and need to have the additional support. Work habits have been massive disrupted and it's important to have a daily connection with the team.
- Use FEMA's 7 Community Lifelines model to prioritize your crisis response.
- Recommendation read : FEMA's Culture of Preparedness

## Continuity Planning - Kirk Holmes, Perteet, kirk.holmes@perteet.com

**What is Continuity of Operations?**  COOP has been defined in the National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan and the National Security Presidential Directive-20.  It is an effort within individual executive departments and agencies to ensure that Primary Mission Essential Functions continue to be performed during a wide-range of emergencies, including local acts of nature, accidents, technological or attack-related emergencies.  This would also include pandemic events we are faced with now.

# Crisis Leadership: Continuity of Operations Planning

**Why?** First, the goal of continuity is the continuation of your Essential Functions. In order to do that, the objective for organizations is to identify their Essential Functions and ensure that those functions can be continued throughout or resumed rapidly after a disruption of normal activities. It is critical for our Public Works first responders to use these tools and to embrace the planning process it requires to ensure delivery of those essential functions during times of emergencies.

**What tips would give someone as they consider a continuity planning effort?**
First, begin to understand the elements of a viable continuity capability. The plan itself simply provides the roadmap needed to implement in time of need. Federal guidance identifies 10 overarching elements to help maintain consistency across functional areas:

**Essential Functions** – These are the critical "must-do" activities performed by organizations, especially after a disruption. National guidance identifies three categories of essential functions: National Essential Functions, Primary Mission Essential Functions, and Mission Essential Functions.

**Orders of Succession** – These provide the provisions for the assumption of senior agency offices during an emergency if any of those officials are unavailable to execute their legal duties. (i.e. Operators in Direct Responsible Charge)

**Delegations of Authority** – Identification, by position, of the authorities for making policy determinations and decisions at all levels and locations. Generally, pre-determined delegations of authority will take effect when normal channels of direction have been disrupted and will lapse when these channels have been reestablished.

**Continuity Facilities** – Locations, other than the primary facility, used to carry out essential functions, particularly in a continuity event. Continuity Facilities, or "Alternate Facilities" refers to not only other locations, but also nontraditional options such as working at home. Teleworking, telecommuting, and mobile office concepts.

**Continuity Communications** – Communications that provide the capability to perform essential functions, in conjunction with other agencies, under all conditions.

**Vital Records Management** – the identification, protection and ready availability of electronically and hard copy documents, references, records, information systems, data management software and equipment needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation.

**Human Capital** – During a continuity event, emergency employees and other special categories of employees who are activated by an agency to perform assigned response duties.
Tests, Training, and Exercises (TTX) – Measures to ensure that a plan can support the continued execution of the agency's essential functions throughout the duration of a continuity event.

**Devolution of Control and Direction** – This is the capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from an agency's primary operation staff and facilities to other agency employees and facilities. (i.e. - WAWARN)

**Reconstitution** – The process by which surviving and/or replacement agency personnel resume normal agency operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility.
It is also important to understand when to activate a COOP. Guidance offers the following:

- **Phase 1** – Readiness and Preparedness – Everyday life
- **Phase 2** – Activation and relocation – plans, procedures and schedules to transfer activities, personnel, records, and equipment to alternate facilities are activated.
- **Phase 3** – Continuity Operations:  full execution of essential operations at alternate operating facilities has begun.  This is where most of us are at right now.
- **Phase 4** – Reconstitution: operations at alternate facilities are terminated and normal operations resume.

**How does someone get started?**

First, this effort requires a top-down effort.  Without leadership commitment the team needed will not fully commit to providing the needed energy and resources to support a robust planning process.  I do want to tell the listeners that we've learned that the planning process itself has proven to be an amazing team-building exercise and builds a deeper understanding and appreciation for the emergency management discipline. Building off that, if you are waiting for your agency emergency manager to do this for you, you are going to be waiting a long time.  They are often under-funded and only able to focus on response activities, accomplishing required planning to maintain state and federal grant eligibility, and coordinating with partners.  However, your office of emergency management should be engaged in whatever emergency planning your departments are launching.

FEMA's web-based independent study courses on COOP (IS 546a and IS 547) are a great way to introduce you to COOP principals.

## Preparedness - Steven Eberlein, [Tipping Point Resilience](#),
steven@tippingpointresilience.com

Tipping Point Resilience specializes in workplace resilience.

- *What are the common reasons that people don't prepare?* The most common reason that people don't prepare is seeing that others aren't preparing. The culture of preparedness is not often modeled in anyone that we know.

- *How can I create the culture / expectation of preparedness?* It really starts at home. Are you modeling preparedness? Do you have the 6 jugs of water? Have you secured your bookshelves to the wall? If we can start with this seemingly small actions at home - they start to spread. You go to work and think why aren't we more prepared here?

- *What can we expect after this crisis is over?* You are going to see a lot of people look to move on immediately and not look back. Our experience with disasters and human natures shows that people want to forget about how uncomfortable and out of control that experience made them feel. It is in both your own and your organization's interest to resist this impulse and put serious thought into how to better prepare for the next disaster. As time has proved, there will be another one.

## Virtual Tools - Juel Lugo (moderator), LILT & Chapter Communications, lilt.lugo@gmail.com

These are the top products recommended by our panel. Many if not all of them offer a free trial version. We have experienced longer than normal wait times on hearing back from sales staff. Several platforms also have expanded free services to first responders for limited times.

- Team Collaboration with full integration: Microsoft Team, G Suite, Slack
- Small Group Video Calls from Your Phone: Google Duo (works with all phones up to 8 people)
- Video Conferencing with Large Groups (computer or phone):
  - Zoom (stand-alone product, free version - 40 min max, paid version unlimited)
  - GoMeet (Google, G Suite product integration)
  - GoToMeeting (LogMeIn product)