

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS (COOP) PLAN

Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences



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APPROVALS

This Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan was prepared by the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation to develop, implement and maintain a viable COOP capability. This COOP plan complies with applicable internal department and university policy, local and state regulations, and supports recommendations provided in Federal Preparedness Circular 65. This COOP plan has been distributed internally within the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and to the Director of Emergency Management at Virginia Tech.

Approved: _____ Date _____
Interim Department Head

Approved: _____ Date _____
(Title)

PRIVACY STATEMENT

Public disclosure of this document would have a reasonable likelihood of threatening public safety by exposing vulnerabilities. It contains sensitive and confidential information that is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under Virginia Code §2.2-3705.2. Accordingly, the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation is withholding this plan from public disclosure. Refer any request for a copy of this document to Virginia Tech's legal counsel or the Virginia Attorney General's office.

RECORD OF CHANGES

Submit recommended changes to this document to Steve McMullin,
smcmulli@vt.edu.

Virginia Tech
Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation
Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation is the Virginia Tech department responsible for undergraduate and graduate education, research, and engagement in the sustainable management of fisheries and wildlife populations.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation has grown increasingly aware of how all types of events can disrupt operations and jeopardize the safety of faculty, staff and students. Emergency planning, including COOP planning, has become a necessary and required process for Virginia Tech. Under Executive Order 44, all executive agencies and institutions of higher education are required to develop COOP plans. This plan was developed using many authorities, references and best practices in COOP planning. For a complete list of authorities and references, please refer to Virginia Tech's Basic COOP plan.

The all-hazards approach to COOP planning ensures that regardless of the event, essential functions and services will continue to operate and be provided in some capacity. This approach includes preparing for natural, man-made or technological emergencies.

The COOP Coordinator is the individual responsible for developing, updating, and maintain the COOP Plan as a viable means of operations and reconstitution. The Department has designated Eric Hallerman as the COOP Coordinator.

PURPOSE

This COOP plan for the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation, hereinafter called Department, presents a management framework and establishes operational procedures to sustain and restore essential functions if normal operations in one or more of the Department's locations are not feasible.

This document establishes the Department COOP program procedures for addressing three types of disruptions:

- Loss of access to a facility (as in a fire);
- Loss of services due to a reduced workforce (as in pandemic influenza); and
- Loss of services due to equipment or systems failure (as in Information Technology (IT) systems failure).

It also details procedures to continue essential functions within the recovery time objectives (RTOs) established by the Office of Emergency Management and to maintain their performance for up to 30 days. The Virginia Tech Primary COOP sets overarching RTOs.

The Department is committed to the safety and protection of its faculty, staff, students, operations, and facilities. This plan provides the Department and its personnel with a framework that is designed to minimize potential impact due to an incident.

APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

This Department COOP plan focuses on basic COOP elements: essential functions; vital records, systems and equipment; alternate facilities; orders of succession; delegations of authority; and communications. It applies to all faculty and staff in all locations of the Department. The plan works in concert with Virginia Tech's Primary COOP plan, which provides information on university-wide planning assumptions, goals and processes.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A COOP plan must be maintained at a high level of preparedness and should be ready for implementation without prior warning. It should be implemented fully no later than 12 hours after activation and provide guidance to sustain operations for up to 30 days. The broad objective of this COOP plan is to provide for the safety and well-being of Department faculty, staff, students, and visitors. In addition, it facilitates the execution of essential functions during any event that threatens their performance. Specific COOP plan objectives include the following:

- Enable staff to perform essential functions despite the full spectrum of possible threats or emergencies including terrorism, technological failures, natural or man-made disasters and other crises;
- Identify key personnel and supporting staff;
- Ensure alternate location(s) can support operations; and,
- Protect and maintain vital records, systems and equipment.

An emergency, such as an explosion, fire or hazardous materials incident, may require the evacuation of one or more Department locations with little or no advance notice. Building evacuation, if required, is accomplished via implementation of the Emergency Action Plan for each location. *This COOP plan is not an evacuation plan*; rather, it facilitates deliberate and preplanned movement of selected personnel and supporting staff to an alternate location if the emergency requires it.

In the event of an incident or threat that jeopardizes the Department's essential functions, the Department Chair/Director instructs the COOP Coordinator to activate the Department's COOP plan. This activation can be a full or partial implementation of the COOP plan, depending on the situation.

Emergency Levels

Virginia Tech's Emergency Response Plan (ERP), classifies four levels of emergencies according to their severity and potential impact upon the campus community. The ERP and the COOP plan will typically only be activated for Level II and III emergencies, and the designated level may vary as emergency conditions

change. Departments, however, must be prepared to take immediate action to protect departmental operations, personnel, students and visitors in response to any type or scale of emergency that threatens the immediate area. Please refer to the Virginia Tech ERP (http://www.emergency.vt.edu/ERP_Public.pdf) for more information on levels of emergency and the appropriate University response.

COOP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the COOP plan occurs when an appropriate authority, as defined by this plan, calls for activation. COOP plan implementation is based on three phases of operations:

- Phase I: Activation and Relocation (including alert and notification);
- Phase II: Alternate Facility Operations; and,
- Phase III: Reconstitution.

The COOP Implementation Procedures Checklist found in Annex A, addresses the three COOP planning scenarios:

- Loss of access to a facility;
- Loss of services due to a reduction in workforce; and
- Loss of systems and/or services, as in IT or communication systems failure.

All the procedures listed in the checklist might not be utilized, depending on the scenario that has caused the implementation of the plan. The checklist is a guide for actions to take during COOP plan implementation.

Phase I: Activation and Relocation

Activation is when all or a portion of the plan has been implemented and procedures are followed for alert and notification. Relocation is the actual movement of a department to an alternate facility, which may be required if the incident renders the primary facility unusable for any reason. Effective alert and notification is necessary regardless of the amount of warning received, whether personnel are on-duty at department locations or are off-duty.

See Annex A for the COOP Implementation Procedures Checklist, which includes Activation and Relocation.

Alert and Notification

Once the decision is made to activate the COOP plan, Department staff will be contacted with alert and notification information using the following procedures.

- Interim Department Head Steve McMullin determines need and activates the COOP plan.

- Dr. McMullin activates communication plan ensuring notification of all affected department staff.
 - This notification will occur through the following methods:
 - Telephone contact lists;
 - Email alerts;
 - SMS text-message; and
 - Personal cell phones.

Dr. McMullin, working through bookkeeper Susan Archer notifies all current active vendors, contractors, and suppliers of COOP plan activation and provides direction on activities that will need to be altered, suspended, or enhanced as a result.

See Annex B for Communications Plan.

Phase II: Alternate Facility Operations

During Phase II, essential functions are performed at an alternate facility if the incident has forced relocation from the primary site. An alternate location must be able to safely support operations in the event that essential functions and essential personnel are relocated to the site. A relocation site must have sufficient space and resources to sustain operations for up to 30 days, and include appropriate physical security and access controls. If the COOP plan is being implemented due to a reduction in workforce or loss of IT or utility services, some of these procedures may not apply.

See Annex A for the COOP Implementation Procedures Checklist, which includes Alternate Facility Operations.

Phase III: Reconstitution

Reconstitution focuses on restoring the Department to normal operations. If relocation was necessary, this may be at the original facility, the alternate location, or a new primary facility. As soon as practical, the COOP Coordinator, with the approval of appropriate emergency services, initiates operations to salvage, restore and recover the Department location(s), if necessary. If the COOP plan is being implemented due to a reduction in workforce or loss of IT or utility services, some of these procedures may not apply.

See Annex A for the COOP Implementation Procedures Checklist, which includes Reconstitution.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

This COOP plan is based on the Department's essential functions. The level and manner of support needed to continue essential functions is dependent upon the nature of the event. The Recovery Time Objective (RTO), or the maximum period of interruption before each function is resumed, was considered when the Department Head/Director prioritized department functions.

See Annex C for Essential Functions and Resource Requirements.

Vital Records, Systems and Equipment

Vital records, systems and equipment are integral to supporting the essential functions of the Department. The University Division of Information Technology ensures that electronic files are backed up nightly with weekly back-ups being taken off-site to a secure location. The Department will identify means whereby electronic files critical to essential function continuity are adequately included in off-site back-ups.

The Department maintains and updates all necessary files, computer software and databases required to carry out essential functions.

Department vital records are stored in a properly-equipped, environmentally-controlled facility that is secure but also accessible when needed for records retrieval.

See Annex C for Essential Functions and Resource Requirements.

LEADERSHIP

Orders of Succession

Orders of succession from the position of Department Chair/Director are established to ensure the Department can perform essential functions and remain a viable part of the University system.

Departments should also consider succession of leadership for positions with specialized duties who carry out essential function operations. For example, the facilities manager may require successors to carry out facilities management tasks if unavailable.

Leadership Personnel	Successor 1	Successor 2
Steve McMullin	Sarah Karpanty	James Parkhurst
Sarah Karpanty	James Parkhurst	Bill Hopkins

Delegations of Authority

Delegations of authority transfer emergency or administrative responsibilities from the incumbent to a designee. These delegations ensure rapid response to situations that may require policy determinations and decisions during emergencies when the incumbent is not available. Some examples include:

- Signatory authority
- Financial commitment
- Departure from established procedures or processes

Authority	Position Holding Authority	Position Delegated to	Triggering Conditions	Limitations
Steve L. McMullin	Interim Department Head	Sarah Karpanty	Incumbent incapacitated or unavailable	none

ALTERNATE FACILITIES

Alternate Facilities

Virginia Tech recognizes that an incident may cause a facility to be unusable for a variety of reasons, which disrupts the Department's normal operations and forces relocation to an alternate location. The Department will coordinate with the University to establish suitable alternate locations.

Alternate facilities cannot be pre-designated for all University units due to the inherent cost and space availability. Rather, departments are encouraged to provide information regarding essential space requirements. As the emergency dictates, space for essential function performance will be determined.

Department Specific Facility Requirements

Describe essential aspects of an alternate facility. The University realizes the need to plan for loss of facilities while continuous 'hot facilities' are not a reasonable financial and logistical viability. If the department has determined an alternate facility, note it in this section as well as any details pertaining to its use.

Departments should describe approximate space requirements for Essential Functions, any specific unique needs, or service/systems availabilities. Some considerations are:

- Approximate necessary square footage;
- Specialized rooms, laboratories, access control, facility security needs; and,

- *Specialized services/systems (e.g. food product delivery, natural gas, ventilation system).*

COOP ADMINISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE

The overall administration and maintenance of the COOP program at Virginia Tech is the responsibility of the Office of Emergency Management. The office develops the testing, training and exercise schedule; the plan maintenance schedule; and the short and long term initiatives for COOP planning. It is the responsibility of the office to ensure the viability and effectiveness of the COOP program. The office will review COOP plans periodically to verify accuracy, completeness, and applicability. This information can be found in the Virginia Tech Primary COOP plan.

The Department responsibilities for administration and maintenance of the Department COOP plan include the following:

- Updating the personnel contact list at least quarterly;
- Maintaining and revising the COOP plan, according to the schedule developed by the Office of Emergency Management;
- Conducting alert and notification tests of internal and external call lists;
- Notifying the Office of Emergency Management and the when there are changes in personnel, equipment, systems and records that would affect the COOP plan;
- Reviewing and understanding department roles and responsibilities related to COOP support functions;
- Assigning a point of contact or COOP Coordinator who will serve as a liaison with the Director of Emergency Management, as appropriate; and
- Preparing back-up copies or updates of vital records.

ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

Please refer to the Virginia Tech Primary COOP plan for a list of acronyms and definitions.

ANNEXES

Annex A: Implementation Procedures Checklist

Annex B: Communications Plan

Annex C: Essential Functions and Resource Requirements

Annex A

COOP Implementation Procedures Checklist

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
Activation and Relocation			
1	Receive notification of emergency		
2	If necessary, conduct evacuation		
3	Conduct a headcount of personnel		
4	If necessary, contact Emergency Responders (Fire, Police, EMS)		
5	Ensure that safety measures are put into effect		
6	Contact Building Maintenance for shutting down utilities to limit further damage		
7	Direct and assist emergency personnel as required		
8	Activate COOP plan		
9	If necessary, invoke Orders of Succession		
10	Initiate notification using Personnel Contact List		
11	Convene department meeting at predetermined site		
12	Assemble supporting elements required for re-establishing and performing essential functions at alternate facility location: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Vital files, records and databases■ Critical software■ Critical equipment		
13	Assemble remaining documents required for performance of all other essential functions to be performed at the alternate facility location		
14	Initiate external communications for applicable external contacts		

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
15	Prepare designated communications and other equipment for relocation		
16	Take appropriate preventive measures to protect other communications and equipment that will not be relocated		
17	Make computer connectivity and phone line transfers to designated alternate facility		
18	Ensure go-kits are complete and ready for transfer		
19	Essential personnel begin movement to alternate facility		
20	Develop and deliver status report		
21	Notify remaining faculty and staff and appropriate departments of movement to alternate location		
Alternate Facility Operations			
22	Notify other departments, customers, state and surrounding jurisdictions as appropriate that operations have shifted to alternate facility location		
23	Organize faculty and staff and account for non-essential personnel		
24	Develop shift rotations		
25	Determine which essential functions have been affected		
26	Develop and deliver status report		
27	Prioritize essential functions for restoration		
28	Track status and restoration efforts of all essential functions		
29	Administrative actions to assemble: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Onsite telephone ■ E-mail and telephone directory ■ Workforce office plan ■ Lodging and dining plan, as appropriate 		
30	Occupy workspace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stow gear and equipment ■ Vital files, records and databases 		

Item	Task	Task Assigned To	Date and Time Completed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Test telephone, fax, e-mail, radio and other communications ■ Establish communications with essential support and office elements 		
31	Ensure all vital records, systems and equipment are available at alternate facility location		
32	Coordinate procurement of additional equipment, as required		
Reconstitution			
33	Resume operations		
34	Appoint logistics manager		
35	Inventory and salvage useable equipment, materials, records and supplies from destroyed facility		
36	Survey condition of office building and determine feasibility of salvaging, restoring or returning to original offices when emergency subsides or is terminated		
37	Develop long term reconstitution and recovery plans		
38	Track status and restoration efforts of all essential functions		
39	Conduct transition of all functions, personnel and equipment from alternate location back to designated facility		
40	Determine loss of the department's inventory for insurance report		
41	Schedule and conduct initial debrief with staff		
42	Develop and communicate a press release		

Annex C

Essential Functions and Resource Requirements

Essential functions and resource requirements are developed and revised using a web-based portal designed for the Office of Emergency Management to streamline the revision and distribution of COOP plans to appropriate personnel and entities.

Departmental COOP plans are accessed through the web-based portal where permissions are assigned by the Office of Emergency Management. Departments may elect to give certain individuals read-only access and others the ability to edit. It is recommended that departments assign few editors while assigning read-only permissions to all those who should be aware of COOP planning activities. Departments may designate an unlimited number of personnel with access to the COOP portal. Moreover, departments are able to update their plans without the hassle of redistribution to the entities that require documentation.

The portal can be accessed at www.emergency.vt.edu/coop. For assistance with the COOP portal or with essential function development, contact the Office of Emergency Management at 231-2438.



Communications Plan

Communication with employees and affiliates is critical during COOP activation. The following communications plan will ensure that all personnel will receive communications from the department as appropriate based on the objectives set by departmental leadership. (Departments should expand the list to adequately serve their department. Functions listed in the table are examples to be replaced.)

Personnel Contact List					
Employee Cascade List	Function	Email Address	Work	Home	Cell/Pager
Steve McMullin	Interim Department Head	smcmulli@vt.edu	231-8847	731-3325	818-1670
COOP Coordinator/Team					
Steve McMullin	Interim Department Head	smcmulli@vt.edu	231-8847	731-3325	818-1670
Sarah Karpanty	Assistant Department Head	karpanty@vt.edu	231-4586	(540)343-3636	557-7432
James Parkhurst	Faculty member	jparkhur@vt.edu	231-9283	552-3125	
Key Personnel					
Susan Archer	(finance)	sarcher@vt.edu	231-3983		
(key personnel)	(facility management)				
Dana Keith	(human resources)	dkeith@vt.edu	231-5573	953-3455	
(key personnel)	(IT management)				
Emergency Services					
Virginia Tech Police		911		540-231-6411	
Virginia Tech Rescue Squad		911		540-231-7138	
Blacksburg Fire Department		911		540-961-1175	
EHSS		540-231-3600			
Facilities Services		540-231-4300			
VT Switchboard		540-231-6000			
VT Hotline		540-231-6668			