Unit III – State of Florida Requirements and the Essential Elements of a Viable COOP Program

This Unit presents the State guidance requirements and the methodology for establishing a viable COOP program. The essential elements of a COOP program are outlined with specific details for each component. In addition, current State activities are discussed with particular attention to the amendment to Florida Statutes 252.365 which was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Bush on April 16, 2002. Chapter 2002-43, Florida Law (Relating to Disaster Preparedness) establishes the essential elements of COOP planning for Florida’s agencies and mandates completion by July 1, 2003.
Unit Objectives

At the conclusion of this unit, participants will be able to:

1. Summarize State policy/guidance documents including Senate and House Bills.

2. Identify the essential elements of a viable COOP program.

3. Describe in detail components to ensure each COOP element is effectively developed and thoroughly coordinated.

4. Explain current COOP activities in the State of Florida.
State Policy and Guidance

- Florida Statutes Section 252.35 (2) (k), 252.35 (2) (n), and 252.365 ensure the coordination of Federal, State, and local emergency management activities before, during, and after emergencies; establish necessity for State agencies to have emergency operating procedures; provide for consistency with Florida's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and periodic review; and, require the appointment of primary and alternate Emergency Coordination Officers (ECOs) and the development/review of disaster preparedness plans. Amendment ensures development of COOP plans by July 1, 2003.

- Executive Order 80-29 is a predecessor document to the Florida Statutes 252 which directed that State agencies and counties develop disaster preparedness capabilities.

- Executive Order 87-57 established the State Emergency Response Commission, directed the formation of Local Emergency Planning Committees, and provided for the implementation of the Federal Community Right-to-Know legislation.

- Executive Order 01-262 was released on September 11, 2001. It declared a State of Emergency, and established Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) as the coordinating authority. This EO was designed to allow the coordination of activities amongst many agencies to ensure the protection of the citizenry of Florida and property against possible future terrorism events. The DEM Director acted as the State Coordinating Officer for the event and activated the State Emergency Operations Center.

- Executive Order 01-300 was issued on October 11, 2001, continued the State of Emergency, and released the findings of a joint FDLE and DEM assessment of State and local capabilities in regards to counterterrorism and response operations in emergency services, human services, infrastructure, and public information and awareness. The assessment demonstrated the need for immediate and sustained action to safeguard Florida from terrorist acts. The EO presented recommendations that culminated in the development of
STATE POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Continued –

- Chapter No. 2001-361, Florida Law (Public Records/Security System Plan), 12/01
- Chapter No. 2001-365, Florida Law (Domestic Security/Counter-terrorism), 12/01
- Chapter No. 2001-366, Florida Law (Domestic Security/Counter-terrorism), 12/01
- Chapter No. 2002-43, Florida Law (Relating to Disaster Preparedness)

State Policy and Guidance – Continued

multiple legislative acts which were signed into law by Governor Bush on December 10, 2001, at an interagency Bio-terrorism exercise.

- Chapter No 2001-361, FL Law (formerly Senate Bill 16-C) provides a public records exemption for security system plans of any property owned or leased by the state.

- Chapter No 2001-365 (formerly Senate Bill 24-C) requires FDLE to coordinate and direct responses to acts of terrorism, establishes in law the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces that were created by Executive Order #2001-300, and creates the position of Chief of Domestic Security Initiatives within FDLE.

- Chapter No 2001-366 (formerly Senate Bill 26-C) creates the Florida Domestic Security and Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Center within FDLE and allows for the creation of the Florida Domestic Security and Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Database.

- Chapter No 2002-43 (Relating to Disaster Preparedness) amends Florida Statutes 252.365 to include specific language requiring that each State agency ECO prepare disaster preparedness plans. The bill establishes requirements for the essential elements of a COOP plan and directs that each state agency and facility, such as prison, office building, or university have a disaster preparedness plan. In addition, it mandates that the plans be coordinated with applicable local emergency agencies and approved by DEM. Finally, it establishes a deadline for completion, July 1, 2003. This law was formerly, House Bill 0727 which was identical in language to Senate Bill 1634.
Essential Elements of COOP

To ensure that all COOP plans have a baseline of preparedness and are capable of execution across the full range of potential emergencies, there are requisite elements each COOP program must have. The names and possible combinations of each element may vary by jurisdiction and level of government, but the principles of contents remain constant. The elements which are being discussed are:

- Plans and Procedures
- Mission Essential Functions
- Delegations of Authority
- Orders of Succession
- Alternate Facilities
- Interoperable Communications
- Vital Records and Databases
- Logistics and Administration
- Personnel Issues and Coordination
- Security
- Test, Training and Exercise
- Program Management
Initial Actions for COOP Planning

Before you can begin the COOP planning process several actions are necessary to establish a solid framework on which to base the development of the capability. All agencies should take the necessary actions, prior to the onset of adverse conditions or an emergency, to prepare organizations and personnel performing vital operations for the possibility of relocating to an alternate facility.

The functions that are determined to be mission essential for each organization is the foundation on which every other component of the program is based. Typically, this process is difficult and requires the assistance of senior management to make the final selections. A worthy exercise for the planning committee is to begin with those functions that are performed when the threat/arrival of a hurricane or tropical storm is imminent. Before the plan can be prepared, each organization must:

- Identify mission essential functions that must continue to be performed;
- Ensure proper staffing of those functions;
- Assess current operational capabilities;
- Identify mission critical data and systems necessary to support mission essential functions, including communications;
- Assess alternate facility capabilities and capacity based on functions, staffing and system capabilities.
Plans and Procedures

The purpose of the COOP plan is to establish policy and guidance to ensure the execution of mission essential functions and to direct the relocation of personnel and resources to an alternate facility capable of supporting operations. The plan should develop procedures for alerting, notifying, activating and deploying employees; identify mission essential functions; establish an alternate facility; and roster personnel with authority and knowledge of functions.

The COOP plan should be developed and documented that when it is implemented it provides for the continued performance of the organization’s critical operations under all circumstances. Each COOP plan will vary by organization, however the following are components recommended for inclusion:

- Provide purpose, applicability and scope, and authorities and references
- Describe the Concept of Operations (CONOP)
  - Key Staff
  - Mission Essential Functions
  - Direction and Control
  - Alert and Notification
- List responsibilities and procedures
- Outline Phases of COOP: Activation, Alternate Operations, and Reconstitution and Termination
- Contain Annexes with detailed information on each of the essential elements
**Plans and Procedures – Continued**

Within each of the preceding components the following objectives should be included: delineation of mission essential functions; a decision process for activation; a staff roster; additional procedures to ensure readiness – duty and non-duty hours, with and without warning; provisions for personnel accountability; reliable processes to acquire additional resources to sustain operations for 30 days; and provisions for attaining operational capability within 12 hours of activation.

Document any assumptions and constraints derived from the planning process, such as unusual operational issues, unique technology or personnel factors, special implementation characteristics, and/or resource limitations which affect the COOP plan.

In addition to the organizational COOP plan, it is also necessary to prepare accompanying Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). SOPs establish applicable processes for coordinating activities with appropriate internal units and external organizations with the requisite resources. Each SOP should ensure compliance with applicable statutes and authorities and remain consistent with the policy and guidance established in the organizational COOP plan. Mechanisms for implementation according to the magnitude of the incident should also be included. In addition, the SOPs should:

- Plan to notify customers of new work location, phone numbers, re-route US mail;
- Prepare procedures for acquiring resources necessary to sustain operations for up to 30 days;
- Develop Site-Support Procedures for alternate facilities; and,
- Ensure building evacuation and COOP plans are amalgamated.
Plans and Procedures – Continued

In addition to the COOP plan, other documentation is also required and can be prepared in various forms – plans, procedures, and checklists. These support documents record the operational processes and implementation actions required to execute the COOP plan.

The following is a list of support documents to consider when developing a viable and executable COOP plan. This list is not totally comprehensive, and each organization should determine at what level and specificity support documents should be developed. Examples include:

- COOP Alert and Notification Checklist and Procedures
- COOP Activation Checklists and Procedures
- Site-Support Procedures
- Resource Acquisition SOP
- Building Evacuation Plan
- Assembly Site(s) and Deployment SOP
- Family Preparedness Plan
- Protection and Safeguarding of Vital Records/Databases
- Order of Succession Implementation in Emergency Conditions SOP
- Communication to Critical Customers SOP
- Contingency Procedures for Availability of Vital Records and Databases
- Annual Review and Remedial Action Plan
- Pre-positioned Resources and Drive-away Kit Standards
- Advance Team COOP SOP
- COOP Team SOP
- Facility Vulnerability Assessment
- Unit COOP Implementation Plans
- Relocation Group Rosters and Updates
- Logistical Support SOP
- Mobile Communications Support SOP
Mission Essential Functions

Mission essential functions are those that enable an organization to provide vital services, exercise civil authority, maintain safety and well-being of general populace, and sustain industrial and economic base in an emergency. Any functions not deemed mission essential should be deferred until additional personnel and resources become available. The COOP plan should integrate support activities to ensure that essential functions can be performed efficiently during emergency relocation.

The identification of mission essential functions is a difficult process within organizations because it is presumed that any function which is not selected is not necessary. This presumption is false. It is worthwhile to begin the selection process with organizational charts, mission statement, list of daily responsibilities/activities, and staff rosters. The following are steps necessary for the selection of mission essential functions:

- Compile all organizational functions
- Determine criteria for selecting critical activities
- Identify mission essential functions
- Prioritize those functions
- Roster personnel to complete those functions based on skills and knowledge
- Assess alternate facility capacity based on functions and rosters
- Determine requisite resources and equipment
Delegations of Authority and Orders of Succession

The delegations of authority and orders of succession are usually simply developed if the organization maintains and documents its processes regularly. These should be prepared in coordination with legal counsel and updated when key personnel change.

Delegations of authority ensure the rapid response to any emergency requiring COOP implementation. Each organization should pre-delegate authorities for making policy determinations and decisions and identify the circumstances under which they would be exercised. Document the necessary authorities, delineate the limits of authority and accountability, and state explicitly the authority of designated successors. Be sure to include circumstances in which authorities would become effective and when they would terminate.

Orders of succession are a critical part of the COOP plan. Organization’s are responsible for establishing, disseminating, and maintaining the succession to key leadership positions. The orders should be of sufficient depth and geographical dispersion is encouraged. At a minimum the delegations of authority and order of succession should:

- Establish rules and procedures addressing
  - Conditions for succession
  - Method of notification
  - Time, geographical, organizational limitations
- Identify which authorities can/should be delegated
- Identify to whom authorities should be delegated
- Identify limitations of delegations
- Ensure officials are prepared to perform their emergency duties
- Establish succession for key leadership positions
- Revise and distribute orders as necessary
Alternate Facilities

The COOP plan should designate an alternate operating facility. The facility may be identified from existing organization infrastructures or external sources. The facility should have sufficient space and equipment to maintain the COOP team and be capable of sustaining operations for up to 30 days (with resource acquisition). The alternate facility should have reliable logistical support, services, and infrastructure systems (water, electrical power, HVAC, etc.). Consideration for the health, safety, and emotional well-being of the COOP team should be used when selecting the facility. In addition, the selection process should include deliberations on the appropriate physical security and personnel access control measures.

Organizations should consider pre-positioning minimum essential equipment at the alternate facility. In addition, organizations should coordinate with the alternate facility manager to develop Alternate Facility Support Procedures to ensure that the alternate facility is able to accept the COOP team and prepared to support COOP operations for up to 30 days.

The alternate facility should be capable of supporting agency operations. At a minimum each organization should:

- Identify from existing agency facilities, if applicable
- Consider cooperative agreements, sharing with other agencies and virtual office technologies
- Ensure sufficient space and equipment to accommodate the relocating personnel
- Provide for reliable logistical support, services, and infrastructure systems
- Ensure the ability to sustain operations for a period of up to 30 days
- Consider pre-positioning assets and resources at facility
- Ensure appropriate physical security and access controls
INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS

- Identify the data and communications systems to support mission essential functions
- Ensure availability at alternate facility at appropriate level
  - Voice and fax
  - Cellular
  - Satellite
  - Internet and email
  - Data systems
  - Emergency systems (NAWAS, EAS, etc), if necessary
  - Secure communications, if necessary
- Provide for both internal and external communications
- Consider mobile communications capabilities

Interoperable Communications

As demonstrated in Hurricane Andrew and the recent terrorist events, the key to success of any emergency operation is the ability to communicate both internally within the organization and also to critical external entities. Communications is even more critical during a COOP activation. The ability of an organization to operate at an alternate facility is absolutely dependent upon the availability and redundancy of essential communication systems to contact critical customers.

Organizations should take maximum advantage of the advances in technology now available and consider the full spectrum of communications – landline, cellular, satellite, wireless, etc. The communications capability should be commensurate with the organization’s operations and provide for access to other data and systems required to perform the mission essential functions. Redundancy of communications is vital and the capability should be developed to sufficient depth to assure availability. Within the COOP plan, interoperable communications should at a minimum:

- Identify the data and communications systems to support mission essential functions
- Ensure availability at alternate facility at appropriate level
  - Voice and fax
  - Cellular
  - Satellite
  - Internet and email
  - Data systems
  - Emergency systems (NAWAS, EAS, etc), if necessary
  - Secure communications, if necessary
- Provide for both internal and external communications
- Consider mobile communications capabilities
Vital Records and Databases

Vital records and databases required to perform mission essential functions constitute a small portion of each organization’s documents, not usually more than two percent. The records and databases that any organization is dependent upon varies according to its mission essential functions. There are certain categories of records and databases that any entity will require – legal, financial, and emergency operations. It is important to give maximum protection to any records or databases deemed vital.

Organizations should provide for the protection and availability of electronic and hardcopy (as applicable) of documents, references, records, information systems, and databases. The COOP plan should account for the identification and protection of vital records and databases at both the primary facility and alternate facility. To the extent possible, organizations should provide for: off-site storage of duplicate records, off-site back-up or electronic records and databases, and pre-positioning of vital records and databases at the alternate facility. A maintenance program to assure the records are current should also be instituted. Safekeeping and pre-positioning systems and data is critical to alternate operations, hence each organization should at a minimum:

• Identify vital records, systems, and data (hard copy and electronic) critical to performing mission essential functions
  – Emergency operating records (plans and directives, orders of succession, delegations of authority, staffing assignments)
  – Legal and financial records (personnel records, Social Security records, payroll records, retirement records, insurance records, contract records)
• Plan for protection, duplication, and movement of records
• Preposition resources and systems prior to deployment
• Ensure accuracy and currency of records, update as necessary
• Ensure procedures for documenting operations when COOP is activated
Logistics and Administration

Organizations should determine to what level they can self-sustain their emergency operations and then develop procedures to acquire services, personnel, resources, and equipment necessary to perform the mission essential functions. Mutual aid and assistance should be considered. Organizations should establish memorandums of agreement/understanding with any entity that will be utilized.

Materials and equipment which will be needed immediately upon COOP activation should be identified and measures to assure their availability under all circumstances should be developed. Best practices for accomplishing this task are – offsite storage, drive-away kits, and pre-positioning. Each organization should ensure the preparation, off-site storage, and regular maintenance of materials and equipment contained in drive-away kits. Offsite storage of materials and equipment is required to ensure availability of assets. The COOP plan should at a minimum:

- Identify, pre-position, and maintain equipment and other resources required at alternate site, e.g.,
  - Computer equipment and software
  - File cabinets, desks, chairs
  - Office supplies
  - Vehicles
- Prepare and pre-position Drive-Away Kits
- Provide for telecommunications and information technology support at an alternate facility
- Establish provisions for personnel transportation (parking), lodging, and dining at alternate facility
- Prepare and maintain Site-Support Procedures which identify the initial requirements for receiving, supporting, and relocating personnel to alternate facility
Personnel Issues and Coordination

Organizations should plan to provide critical information to both essential and non-essential staff and inform employees how to prepare themselves and their families prior to an emergency. Personnel issues have the potential to negatively impact an organization’s COOP performance. It is critical to make provisions for the inevitability of these issues prior to an emergency. Fortunately, this is an issue that is best addressed through training and education/awareness programs. Reinforce personal and family preparedness – materials are already available (hurricane preparedness) and can be easily adapted for this purpose.

The status of pay, administrative leave, and the possibility of layoffs will be foremost in the mind of all of your staff. In addition, depending on the circumstances, life and safety issues are also significant issues to address. It is vital that the COOP plan coordinate these issues with human resources, finance and accounting, office of safety, and any applicable labor unions. A communications plan for essential and non-essential staff should be prepared with the Public Information Officer. Organizations should consider obtaining an 800 number dedicated to personnel issues for a COOP activation.

Personal preparedness kits and plans are essential for all staff. Stress these areas to employees and provide recommendations on items to include, particularly a 30-day supply of medications. Other components to address are:

- Preparation of communications plan to disseminate information to essential and non-essential personnel
- Provisions for the health, safety, emotional well-being of all employees and their families
- Development of personal preparedness for staff through “personal go-kits”
- Information on pay status, administrative leave, and layoffs
- Provisions for medical, special needs, and travel issues
Security

Organizations should ensure that all four types of security are addressed – Operational, Cyber, Physical, and Access Controls. Each measure should be incorporated into a comprehensive plan to assure the security of the COOP program. A COOP plan is not a classified document, but it is extremely sensitive information – distribution should be limited.

Operational Security – measures to deny access to pieces of information which can be assembled to provide overall picture.

Cyber Security – prevention of, or protection against, access to information/systems by unauthorized recipients, and intentional but unauthorized destruction or alteration of that information/system.

Physical Security – layering of physical barriers for site perimeter, protective lighting, and site surveillance, both overt and covert measures are used

Access Controls – measures used to control access to facility or site – ID cards, PINs, etc.

Chapter No 2001-361, FL Law (formerly Senate Bill 16-C) provides a public records exemption for security system plans of any property owned or leased by the State. Every State agency should use this law to guarantee the protection of their COOP plan and also their Building Evacuation Plan. Each organization should:

• Establish Operational Security and Cyber Guidelines for the handling of COOP Plan and SOPs
• Address physical security of current office and at alternate facility
• Enact personnel access controls for employees and critical customers
• Address security of communications, if appropriate
• Be prepared to augment all security levels based on the emergency or the threat
Test, Training and Exercise

Organizations should develop a comprehensive Test, Training, and Exercise (TT&E) program to validate policies, plans, and procedures, ensure that personnel are sufficiently trained, and verify that resources and equipment are capable of supporting operations.

Training and orientation curriculum should be instituted to create awareness and enhance the skills required to develop, implement, maintain, and execute the COOP program. It is recommended that staff also be trained in the Incident Command System (ICS) to assure familiarity with the conduct of emergency operations. Each element of the COOP program should be evaluated through a combination of different tests and exercises. Evaluate COOP programs plans, procedures, and capabilities through periodic reviews, tests, post-incident reports, performance evaluations, and various exercises. Exercises should be designed to evaluate individual elements, inter-related elements, and the entire plan.

Organizations should establish procedures to ensure that the information obtained from the TT&E program is incorporated into a remedial action process. The remedial action plan should identify deficiencies and propose corrective actions/solutions. This evaluation process should include an annual review/update of the COOP plan and all support documents. At a minimum, the organization should:

- Conduct orientation and training for identified COOP personnel (individual/team)
- Periodically test alert and notification procedures
- Plan periodic exercise of operational plans, alternate facilities, interoperable communications
- Plan joint agency exercises
- Periodically validate and test equipment
- Establish remedial action plan/process
- Update plans and procedures as appropriate or annually
Program Management

Organizations should prepare and employ a strategic and multi-year planning process that includes anticipated funding requirements. The plan should define vision, mission, goals, and objectives of program. This document is crucial to the development, maintenance, performance, and operation of the overall program and is invaluable in management presentations to stress the significance of the program.

The plan will help COOP planners define short and long-term goals and objectives and outline a plan of action to accomplish the tasks within established schedules. When developing the plan, use an out-year budget approach – establish a baseline performance level (minimum basic capability today), forecast upcoming budgets (to achieve an intermediate performance level), and finally project future spending (to ensure and maintain a viable capability). The TT&E program evaluations should be used as performance measures to demonstrate the COOP program’s achievements and effectiveness.

The plan should identify a current inventory of internal/external resources, resource capability shortfalls and steps necessary to overcome them, and operation and maintenance costs. The program’s costs should be calculated for both program dollars and labor. Also address any organizational-specific management and policy issues such as resource requirements, internal policies and guidance, management responsibilities, internal coordination, and applicable mutual aid agreements. Organizations at a minimum should:

- Prepare strategic, long-range plan to ensure consistent and constant development towards full operational capability; include milestones to gauge progress
- Establish a coordinate program management process to ensure maintenance, operation, and funding for a viable COOP capability
- Update plan as necessary
State of Florida Activities

The State of Florida has been vigorously enhancing its policy and activities on terrorism preparedness to address issues in 21st century. These activities began prior to the tragic events on September 11, 2001, and are complimentary activities to the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) mandated by Chapter 252 of the Florida Statutes. Some of the activities are:

- Assistance to counties on CEMP Terrorism Annex development, 7/99
- State Working Group for Domestic Preparedness, 7/99
- CEMP Annex B – Terrorism Incident Response Plan, 5/01
- Statewide assessment of terrorism response capabilities – two-year process, 9/01
- FDLE/DEM assessment of Florida’s Anti-Terrorism Capabilities, 9/01
- US DOJ Equipment Strategy, 9/01
- Technical assistance to State agencies and counties on COOP, 11/01 and Continues
- Assistance to Legislature on disaster preparedness, 01/02
- State ECO training on COOP, 03/02
- Governor’s Hurricane Conference COOP training, 05/02
- Letter to State Agency Heads on COOP from DEM Director, 09/02
- COOP Implementation Guidance from DEM, 09/02
- COOP Training in seven DEM Areas, 09/02 to 12/02

The floridadisaster.org website has information available on most of the aforementioned activities and is a useful tool for the general public and emergency management community. The website contains other useful information on DEM such as: the EOC On-line, a training and events calendar, an emergency management toolbox and library, and a newsletter. In addition, the website has practical sections with information on the current situation, current threats, preparedness section, and special information for emergency managers.
The CEMP establishes a framework through which the State of Florida prepares for, responds to, recovers from, and mitigates the impacts of a wide variety of disasters that could adversely affect the health, safety and/or general welfare of the residents of the State. The CEMP provides guidance to State and local officials on procedures, organizations, and responsibilities. It also provides for an integrated and coordinated local, State and Federal response to emergencies. The plan is operations-based and addresses evacuations, sheltering, post-disaster response and recovery, deployment of resources, communications, and warning systems. The CEMP also has 17 sections on the State’s Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) and four specialized annexes:

- Appendix I: ESF 1 Transportation
- Appendix II: ESF 2 Communications
- Appendix III: ESF 3 Public Works and Engineering
- Appendix IV: ESF 4 Firefighting
- Appendix V: ESF 5 Information and Planning
- Appendix VI: ESF 6 Mass Care
- Appendix VII: ESF 7 Resource Support
- Appendix VIII: ESF 8 Health and Medical Services
- Appendix IX: ESF 9 Urban Search and Rescue
- Appendix X: ESF 10: Hazardous Materials
- Appendix XI: ESF 11 Food and Water
- Appendix XII: ESF 12 Energy
- Appendix XIII: ESF 13 Military Support
- Appendix XIV: ESF 14 Public Information
- Appendix XV: ESF 15 Volunteers and Donations
- Appendix XVI: ESF 16 Law Enforcement and Security
- Appendix XVII: ESF 17 Animal Protection and Agriculture
- ANNEX A – Radiological Annex for Commercial Nuclear Power Plants
- ANNEX B – Terrorist Incident Response Plan
- ANNE C – Emergency Response Team Guidelines for Wildfire Operations
- ANNEX D – Emergency Repatriation Plan