

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Safety
AREA: Emergency Preparedness

Number: 06.01.02

SUBJECT: Continuity of Operations Planning

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Continuity of operations planning ensures that critical operations and essential functions of the University of Houston continue to be performed during an emergency. Continuity of operations planning is an ongoing process which includes the following elements: identification of essential functions, delegations of authority, orders of succession, communication, vital records and data, continuity facilities, reconstitution, testing, training and exercise, risk assessment, recovery strategies, and a disaster recovery plan.

The campus-wide Continuity of Operations Plan is a requirement of the [State Office of Risk Management's policy on Continuity Planning for Texas State Agencies](#), as stated in [Continuity Planning Guidance Letter dated April 19, 2022](#), and the [Texas Labor Code, Section 412.054](#).

The University of Houston will maintain a University of Houston campus-wide Continuity of Operations Plan per the above regulations and guidance. In addition, this policy outlines the requirements for colleges, divisions, departments and areas regarding continuity planning. The individual department Continuity of Operations Plans will contribute to the development of the College/Division Continuity of Operations Plan and the identification of risks that will impact the College or Division. The College/Division Continuity of Operations Plans will contribute to the development of the [University of Houston Continuity of Operations Plan program](#).

II. POLICY

The University of Houston will create and maintain a Continuity of Operations Plan. The [UH Office of Emergency Management](#) is responsible for designating a Continuity of Operations Planning Coordinator as required by the State of Texas and will coordinate the review process for the plan annually.

Each college and division, as well as departments of the University of Houston will complete a Continuity of Operations Plan. All Continuity of Operations Plans will be submitted annually to the UH Office of Emergency Management.

Continuity of Operations Plans and records that are produced or maintained as part of their development or review, are confidential and are exempt from disclosure under [Texas Government Code, Section 552.156](#).

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Continuity of Operations Planning – Effort within the agency to ensure that primary essential functions continue to be performed throughout, resume quickly and return to normal operations during a wide range of emergencies.

B. Continuity of Operations Planning Coordinator – Individual that is trained in continuity planning and certified by a recognized organization such as the FEMA Emergency

Management Institute ([Continuity Practitioner Level I or Level II](#)), or Disaster Recovery Institute International (Certified Professional, such as ABCP, CFCP, CBCP or MBCP). The Office of Emergency Management will designate the Continuity of Operations Planning Coordinator.

- C. Continuity of Operations Planning Program – A program of the university that establishes continuity plans, completes the necessary steps to identify the impact of potential losses, maintains viable recovery strategies and recovery plans, and ensures continuity of services through personnel training and continuity plan testing and maintenance for all divisions, colleges, essential departments, and/or units.
- D. Continuity of Operations Planning Liaison – Individual selected by the college/division that will be responsible for coordinating Continuity of Operations planning for their college or division and also serve as a liaison to the UH Office of Emergency Management.
- E. Continuity Planning Leadership Group – A group of key university partners in essential departments of the University of Houston. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following actions:
- assisting in the creation and maintenance of the University of Houston Continuity of Operations Plan,
 - ensuring university compliance with state and federal regulations,
 - developing and reviewing the plan sections,
 - developing and reviewing the plan appendices, and
 - performing as the Emergency Relocation Group for the University of Houston.
- F. Essential Functions – Functions that must continue or rapidly resume after a disruption of normal activities.
- G. Veoci – A virtual incident management system with a continuity planning tool which serves as the compliant, electronic platform where all department, college and division level continuity of operations plan are to be completed and submitted.

IV. CONTINUITY PLANNING PROCEDURE

- A. The [UH Office of Emergency Management](#) is responsible for the oversight of the Continuity of Operations Planning Program for the University of Houston. The UH Office of Emergency Management responsibilities include the following:
1. Creating and maintaining the University of Houston Continuity of Operations Plan.
 2. Designating a Continuity of Operations Planning Coordinator for the University of Houston to perform the coordinator role to the State Office of Risk Management regarding continuity of operations planning.
 3. Chairing, leading and directing the Continuity of Operations Planning Leadership Group for the University of Houston.
 4. Conducting exercises to test the University of Houston Continuity of Operations Plan annually.
 5. Creating and maintaining the Continuity of Operations plan template, within

Veoci, for use by campus divisions, colleges, departments and units.

6. Maintaining the Continuity of Operations training program.
 7. Maintaining a primary annual repository, via Veoci, for all division, college and department Continuity of Operations Plans.
 8. Following all required [policy](#) guidelines dictated by the State Office of Risk Management.
- B. The college and division responsibilities include:
1. Assigning an individual to be responsible for coordinating Continuity of Operations planning for the college or division. For the purpose of this policy, that individual will be listed as the college or division Continuity of Operations Planning Liaison.
 2. Ensuring that a College or Division level Continuity of Operations Plan has been completed by the Continuity of Operations Planning Liaison, as well as approved by the Dean or appropriate Vice President.
 3. Ensuring that the executed plan is submitted to the UH Office of Emergency Management, via Veoci, on or before June 1st annually.
- C. The College/Division Continuity of Operations Planning Liaison responsibilities include the following:
1. Serving as the liaison for their respective college/division with the UH Office of Emergency Management regarding Continuity of Operations planning matters.
 2. Ensuring that all departments within their college/division complete a Continuity of Operations Plan using the Continuity of Operations Plan template, within Veoci.
 3. Ensuring that the department plans have been approved by the appropriate department head.
 4. Ensuring that all department plans are submitted to the UH Office of Emergency Management, via Veoci, on or before June 1st annually.
 5. Ensuring that the information gathered from the departmental Continuity of Operations plans has been reviewed and prioritized for use in the College/Division Continuity of Operations Plan if need be.
 6. Compiling the information gathered in the "Vulnerability/Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies" section of the department Continuity of Operations Plans to assist in identification of vulnerabilities/risks for the College/Division.
 7. Ensuring that a College/Division level Continuity of Operations Plan has been completed and approved by the Dean or appropriate Vice President.
 8. Ensuring that an executed College/Division Continuity of Operations Plan is submitted to the UH Office of Emergency Management, via Veoci, on or before June 1st annually.
- D. The Continuity of Operations Planning Leadership Group will:

1. Review and amend the University of Houston Continuity of Operations Plan under the direction of the Continuity of Operations Planning Leadership Group Chair.
2. Create, review and amend the appendices of the University of Houston Continuity of Operations Plan under the direction of the Continuity of Operations Planning Leadership Group Chair.
3. Act as the subject matter expert for the area/group they represent within the Continuity of Operations Planning Leadership Group.

V. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Assistant Vice President for Campus Safety

Review: Every five years

VI. APPROVAL

/Raymond Bartlett/

Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance

/Renu Khator/

President

Date of President's Approval: July 16, 2024

VIII. REFERENCES

[UH Continuity of Operations Plans website](#)

[UH Office of Emergency Management website](#)

[State Office of Risk Management \(SORM\) website](#)

[SORM Continuity of Operations website](#)

[Texas Labor Code, Section 412.054](#)

[Texas Government Code, Chapter 552.156, Exception: Confidentiality of Continuity of Operations Plans](#)