



**Administrative Office of the Courts
Court Security and Emergency Preparedness**

Continuity of Operations Plan

Date of Completion: _____

Name of Building/Facility: _____

Building/Facility Address: _____

County: _____

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Security Notice.....	iii
Executive Summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Purpose.....	1
Applicability and Scope.....	2
How to Use This Plan	2
Section 1 - COOP Plan Implementation (Concept of Operations)	3
Decision Process	4
Planning Assumptions	5
COOP Plan Phases.....	6
Phase I - Activation.....	6
Phase II – Alternate Site Operations.....	8
Phase III – Recovery/Reconstitution	8
Section 2 - COOP Plan Templates.....	9
COOP Plan Elements.....	9
1. Alert and Notification	9
2. Essential Functions	9
3. Order of Succession	9
4. Delegations of Authority.....	10
5. Alternate Facilities.....	10
6. Communications	10
7. Interoperable Communications.....	10
8. Vital Records, Databases, and Information Systems.....	10
9. Human Capital	11
10. Devolution.....	11
11. Recovery/Reconstitution.....	11
Training.....	11
Training.....	11
Tests	12
Exercises	12
Multi-Year Strategic Plan	12
COOP Plan Templates	14
1. Alert and Notification	14
2. Essential Functions	15
3. Order of Succession	17
4. Delegations of Authority.....	18
5. Alternate Site(s)	19
6. Communications	20
7. Interoperable Communications.....	22
8. Vital Records, Databases, and Information Systems.....	23
9. Human Capital (No Template).....	23
10. Devolution.....	23
11. Recovery/Reconstitution (No Template)	24

Security Notice

Disclosure of some or all of the information in this Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan could endanger the lives and/or privacy of court employees, and compromise the security of the court's essential equipment, services and systems. Distribution of this plan is limited to those individuals who need to know the information to activate and implement the COOP plan.

The decision to release or to withhold information in this plan must be approved by and coordinated with the Co-Chairs of the Local Court Security Committee.

Co- Chair Signature

Co-Chair Signature

Title

Title

Date

Date

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Continuity of Operations Plan (Plan) is authorized under the authority of the [*name of the court*] and is one of the preparedness and operations plans (e.g., IT disaster recovery, shelter-in-place, critical incident, evacuation plans) used to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster.

This Plan encompasses the [*name the court offices that comprise the “parent” court*] and all personnel and operations of those court offices. It presents a management framework to establish operational procedures to sustain each court office and judicial essential functions if normal operations performed at the courthouse(s) or other court related buildings are not feasible. It also guides the recovery and reconstitution of the court’s operations to pre-event status, focuses on actions that must be initiated after an incident to ensure continued operations of essential functions, and provides for sustained essential functions operations, which could be 30 days or more. The plan recognizes that full recovery and reconstitution of the court’s activities may take weeks or months.

INTRODUCTION

A broad range of disruptive events have, in recent years, affected court operations and staff at the state and federal level. For this reason this court has an increased focus on emergency management, preparedness and response planning, and training.

Although the [*name of court*] is not required to adhere to guidance for federal or state executive branch agencies, such guidance provides a widely recognized, useful and practical foundation for the courts’ planning efforts. In particular, Federal Preparedness Circular [\(FPC\) 65](#) was used as guidance for COOP planning efforts that are relevant within this court.

PURPOSE

The purpose of establishing a COOP plan within this court is to ensure that the capability exists for each court office and the court as a whole to respond effectively to a broad array of potential operational disruptions. The key purposes of this COOP plan are to:

- Ensure continuous performance of essential functions and operations, whether in the courthouse, at an alternate site, by telecommuting, or some other electronic means.
- Protect court facilities, equipment, records, and other assets.
- Reduce or mitigate disruptions to operations.
- Identify and designate principals and staff to serve as the Emergency Response Team (ERT) to be relocated to alternate facilities or assigned to the primary court facility to perform essential functions.
- Train and cross-train all key personnel responsible for the execution of this plan.

APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

The plan applies to all court operations and personnel in the [insert court name] and is designed to help court offices respond to any threat, disaster, or emergency that may affect court operations. A broad array of disruption or emergencies may occur within or near the [court name] as a result of natural hazards, human-induced hazards or terrorism incidents such as those listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Potential Threats That May Require an Emergency Management Response

Natural Threats	Manmade Threats	Terrorist Threats
√ Pandemic flu	√ Explosions	√ Conventional weapons
√ Hurricanes	√ Hazardous materials	√ Incendiary devices
√ Floods	√ Transportation accidents or incidents	√ Biological and chemical devices
√ Fire	√ Arson	√ Cyber-terrorism
√ Tornadoes	√ Assaults/acts of violence	√ Weapons of mass destruction
√ Ice storms	√ Power grid failure	

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Appendix A is organized into two sections:

- **Section 1:** COOP Plan Implementation
- **Section 2:** COOP Plan Templates Overview

This appendix also underscores the importance of a robust and defined training program, for without it, there is no assurance the COOP plan is viable

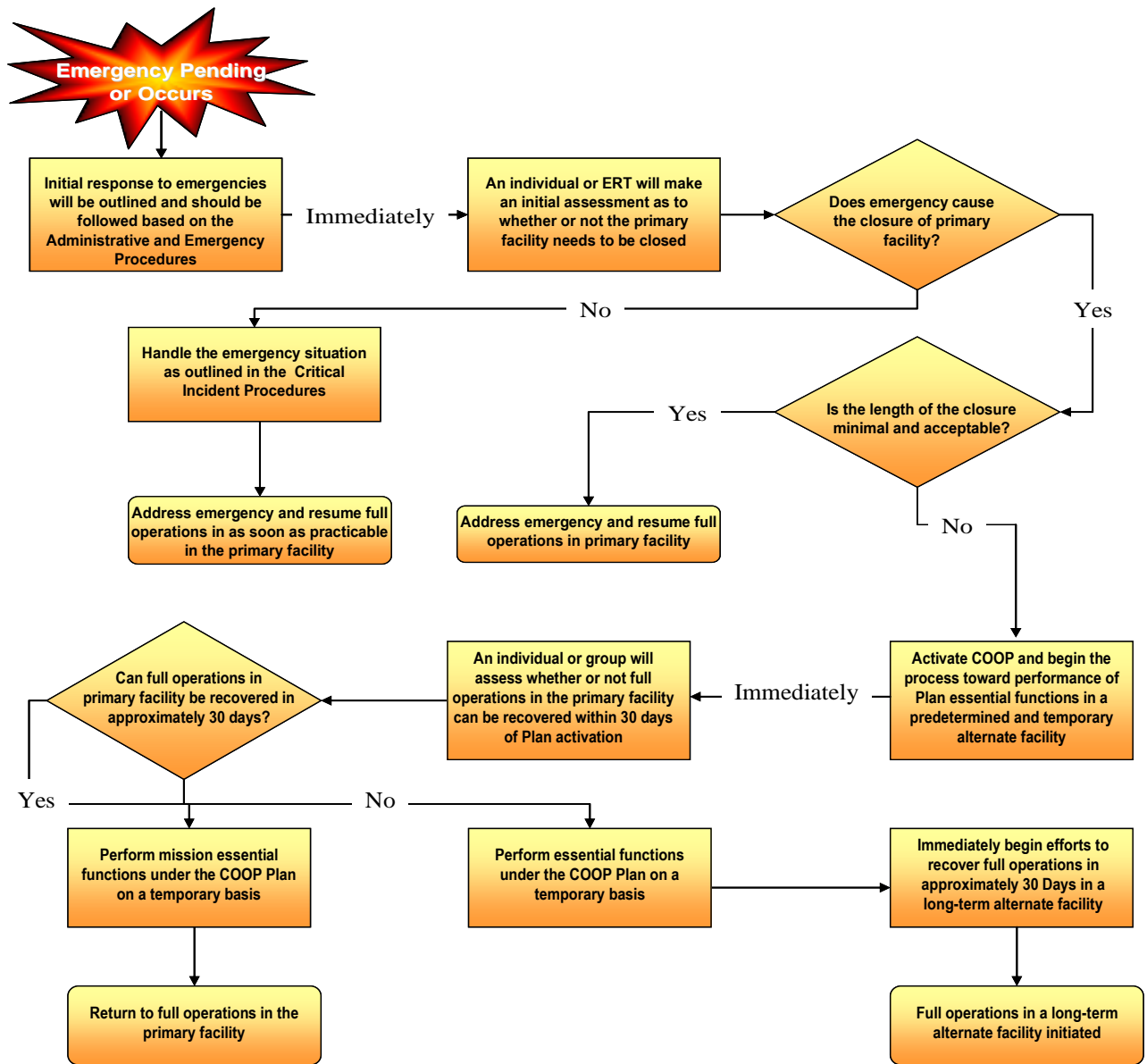
Appendix B contains the blank COOP plan templates for the court as a whole and each court office covered by this plan.

Accompanying appendices offer references such as a glossary, checklists, maps to alternate sites, memoranda of understanding, draft orders and scripted messages.

SECTION 1 - COOP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS)

This section provides an overview of the framework to implement the COOP Plan. It includes high-level information particular to [court name] operations and the essential functions of each court office required to be performed in a disaster or other disruption. It also provides the framework and decision process for how the court will implement the plan and how it will address each of the 11 COOP Plan elements. Figure 2 graphically illustrates the COOP Plan activation decision and response process.

Figure 2: Sample Decision and Response Flow Chart*



*Courtesy Florida Supreme Court Workgroup on Emergency Preparedness.

Decision Process

A sudden emergency, such as an explosion, fire, act of violence, or prisoner incident, may require the evacuation of a courthouse with little or no advance notice. Courthouse evacuation and response to other critical incidents will be accomplished in accordance with existing critical incident, evacuation, and other emergency procedures for the building.

The COOP is not an evacuation plan; rather, it is a deliberate and pre-planned movement of designated staff (Emergency Response Team) to an alternate site. In the event of a pandemic, only the Emergency Response Team likely will remain in the court facility to ensure delivery of essential functions. The outline that follows provides an overview of the sequence of events for the [*insert court*] COOP plan activation and execution.

An Emergency Response Team (ERT), comprised of [*insert name of positions e.g., the chief justice/judge and court leadership*] serves as the leadership group. This team is comprised of an Advance Team responsible for preparing and maintaining the alternate site(s) for the arrival of the leadership group and the Essential Functions Team. The Essential Functions Team is responsible for the performance of the prioritized essential functions identified in this plan.

Court Emergency Response Team

Team	Team Members	Responsibilities
Advance	[enter names/position/court office]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate alert and notification system • Deploy to alternate site • Set-up IT and communications at alternate site
Leadership	[enter name and title]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make decisions
Essential Functions	[enter name/position/court office]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform prioritized essential functions by court office

Emergency Team Roster

Court Office/ Chambers	Position	Person	Alternate	Contact Numbers Home/office/ cell/alternate	Email/home and office

Following an incident so severe that the courthouse [*courthouse location*] is rendered unusable or inaccessible, or if such an event appears imminent, the [*insert name of position e.g., chief justice/judge*] will direct the [*insert name of court executive position e.g., court administrator*] to activate the COOP Plan. The [*insert name of position e.g., court administrator*] will notify the [*insert name of position e.g., court administrator*] in each court office that the plan is to be executed.

Following a decision to activate the court COOP plan, the [*insert name of position of court executive*] and designee will ensure that all judges and office managers are notified, and that office managers execute their respective internal alert and notification plans. Simultaneously the [*insert name e.g., justices'/judges'*] chambers will execute their internal alert and notification plans.

The [*insert name of court executive*] has the responsibility for the [*insert court name*] COOP Plan execution which includes:

- Phase I–Activation and Relocation
- Phase II–Alternate Site Operations
- Phase III–Recovery and Reconstitution

Based on alternate site capacity, it is unlikely that all judicial officers and the Emergency Response Team will move to the same relocation site. Some [*justices/judges*] and court personnel may be relocated to multiple alternate sites or they may perform the functions from home.

Court personnel who are not part of the Emergency Response Team may be directed to remain at home pending further instructions.

Planning Assumptions

This plan assumes four basic scenarios that may cause a disruption of normal court operations. Examples of these scenarios are contained in Figure 3. The scenarios are:

- Courthouse only is affected
- Courthouse and immediate vicinity are affected
- Geographic region is affected
- Pandemic Influenza

Figure 3: Examples of Planning Scenarios

Scenario	Circumstances
Courthouse Only	Building fire
Courthouse and Immediate Vicinity	Gas main explosion that affects areas near and around the court facility
Geographic Region	Heavy regional floods
Pandemic Influenza	State-wide impact (world-wide)

Building on these planning scenarios, the plan incorporates the following assumptions:

- The worst-case scenario is the loss of access to *[insert court location]*.
- Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, and the Trial Court COOP Plans will be coordinated if the courts are co-located in one alternate site.
- The Emergency Response Team will be available to provide leadership, and continue court office essential functions.
- The sheriff's office will provide security to the judges, staff, and court facilities.
- Once relocated to an alternate site(s), judges will adjust their dockets to assume matters from others who may not have survived or are unavailable.
- Activation of the COOP plan may be required at any time e.g., business hours or non-business hours. Following activation, the Emergency Response Team members may be required to travel from their home or other non-duty location(s) directly to an alternate site.
- Some or all information and communications systems may be degraded or unavailable
- COOP activation does not affect the pay or benefits of court personnel.

COOP Plan Phases

Phase I - Activation

The COOP plan is activated by a significant event or by the receipt of information regarding a credible threat that jeopardizes the safe and continuous operations of the court and/or the court's ability to continue to perform essential functions at the primary facility. The extent to which activation will be possible depends on the warning received, whether personnel are at the court or another location, and the extent of damage to the affected court facility and surrounding areas.

The following positions, in order of priority, are each authorized to direct responses to emergencies including evacuation (partial or total), and closing of court operations: *[insert names of positions e.g., Chief Justice/Judge, court administrator, clerk of court, sheriff, building manager.]*

- Chief Justice/judge
- Court Administrator
- Sheriff
- Building manager

The positions listed above are referred collectively as the "Leadership Group." They will report to *[insert pre-designated location]* as they learn of an emergency which may require any evacuation or activation of the COOP plan. The team should first report to *[insert*

location]; if that site is unavailable the second location is [*insert location*]; and the third location is [*insert location*].

If the disruption or crisis event occurs during office hours and the COOP plan is activated, all court personnel will be alerted and notified by [*insert position/IT system*], and the Emergency Response Team will be directed by the [*court executive*] to relocate immediately to an alternate site. Non-essential personnel may be directed to go home or move to other designated location(s) to await further instructions. Each court manager must account for personnel within his/her court office.

If the event occurs during non-office hours, most court personnel will be located at home, which also requires alert, notification, and accountability procedures.

The [*court leader*] is responsible for communicating with staff so they know what to do, where to go, and what to expect. Emergency notification may be communicated through a variety of means including:

- Public announcement system
- Court website(s) [www.]
- Electronic mail (email)
- Recorded telephone messages [telephone #]
- Public [1 -800 -xxx-xxxx]
- Announcements on local radio and television outlets.
- During an emergency, the [court leaders] will continue to keep court personnel and the public informed on specific topics using a variety of the mechanisms.

Initial Actions Following Emergency Notification are as follows:

- [Court leader] verifies the availability of a selected alternate site, and notifies the host site to expect the arrival of the Emergency Response Team.
- The team ensures that Go Kits are accessible, complete, (pre-positioned when possible) with current documents, supplies, and equipment.
- The team gathers documents required for the performance of essential functions, including checklists.
- Personnel and the IT team coordinate the immediate transfer of the most recent version of essential documents, databases to online system(s) to be accessed from the alternate sites. Essential files may also be transferred to removable storage media (flash drive, CDs) or transported in hardcopy.
- Each court office secures the vacated work areas in the main court facility if possible.
- The sheriff should take appropriate measures to ensure security of staff, courthouses, and equipment or records remaining in the courthouse.
- If a trial is in progress during an emergency, it may be necessary to relocate all individuals, including the jury.

The [Court] COOP plan has [list number of facilities] relocation sites from which essential court operations may be conducted. Because space and support capabilities at these sites are limited, the number of personnel to be relocated must be restricted to the Emergency Response Team. Some personnel may move to another site to continue to support essential functions, while others may be asked to work from home. As the crisis situation stabilizes, additional essential functions and personnel to support them will be acquired.

The order in which the Emergency Response Team will relocate to an alternate site is as follows:

- Advance Team
- Leadership Group
- Essential Function Team

Phase II – Alternate Site Operations

Upon arrival at the relocation site, the [name position] will evaluate the capabilities and take appropriate action to correct deficiencies and prepare the facility/facilities for the arrival of leadership and the essential functions team. The [name position] disseminates administrative and logistics information to arriving court members, who will then move to designated spaces and commence essential operations. As appropriate, court members begin to retrieve pre-positioned information and data and activate information, data systems, and equipment.

During COOP plan activation, it is expected that the working hours of the Emergency Response Team most will be similar to normal non-emergency periods. Some support operations may be required on a 24-hour-per-day, seven-day-per-week basis and work schedules will be adjusted accordingly.

The performance of essential functions is the key focus for operations at the alternate site. It is important to establish priorities prior to an emergency to enable the Essential Functions Team to perform essential functions. To make certain that essential functions continue as soon as possible, each court office has identified and prioritized the essential functions, and designated those who will perform the functions. Tasks deemed not essential will be deferred until normal operations are feasible. Resource and staffing requirements, critical data, and systems necessary for conducting the essential functions were identified and integrated so that essential functions can be performed seamlessly.

Phase III – Recovery/Reconstitution

Depending on the nature of the emergency or disaster, there may be loss of life and/or destruction of physical property, and it may be necessary to rebuild or reconstitute the court. The options include:

- Continue to operate from the current alternate site(s)
- Begin an orderly phased return to the [courthouse] and pre-event status

- Begin to establish a reconstituted court at another location in [courthouse location]

A recovery and reconstitution procedure commences when the [name position] confirms that the emergency has ended and is unlikely to recur. It is the responsibility of the [name position] to ensure coordination of recovery and reconstitution decisions with appropriate state and local authorities.

SECTION 2 - COOP PLAN TEMPLATES

This section provides a description of operational actions for activation and recovery activities. The templates form the completed COOP Plan that provides a combination of detailed and operational information critical to the successful implementation of the Plan.

COOP Plan Elements

1. Alert and Notification

This Element sets forth policies and procedures for the formal emergency notification to employees through a system or variety of systems that an incident may or has occurred. The alert and notification system also provides response directions to employees and external stakeholders regarding acquisition of future information. The systems may include, but are not limited to, an organization's emergency telephone notification system; public announcement system; broadcast email; automated telephone messaging; call trees; in person contacts; or use of contracted alert and notification services.

2. Essential Functions

Essential functions are those court functions that, if not performed, would result in failure of the court or court unit's mission. When considering which functions are essential, they should be prioritized according to their impact on life, death, and freedom (vis-à-vis detention), and those that are required to maintain civil authority and public safety. Each court office/department should identify and prioritize its essential functions, and essential functions team including alternates.

3. Order of Succession

Order of succession ensures a seamless court command structure so that all internal and external stakeholders always know who is in charge. While Order of Succession and delegations of authority are often closely linked and are considered vital records of the court because they identify the leadership or 'next-in-command' structure, and provide for specific authorities, they do not serve duplicate purposes and should be treated separately. For example, the successors, who most often are in decision making positions and effect policy, may not be the same person delegated authority to address administrative matters such as payroll or procurement. Orders of Succession

should be written and are in effect only until the primary command structure is resumed.

4. Delegations of Authority

Ensures seamless transfer of leadership decision-making, administrative approval, and procurement powers and are limited to the period of COOP Plan activation. To facilitate an immediate response to an emergency situation, the courts should pre-delegate authority for making administrative decisions at all organizational levels, but particularly at the procurement and human resource levels. Delegations should be written and be effective only until the primary authority is resumed.

5. Alternate Facilities

With the exception of a pandemic, essential court functions may be relocated to pre-screened and pre-approved alternate facilities because the primary facility is unavailable. Where necessary, memoranda of understanding should be executed with the alternate site managers and updated annually.

6. Communications

Notification of COOP Plan activation must be conveyed to external agencies, e.g., the public, bar, state, local and federal authorities. Internal communications involve notifying employees that activation of the COOP Plan occurred. Procedures must be established to gather and verify information (situational awareness) to ensure that judicial officers and court leadership have credible information on which to base decisions. A designated person(s) should be assigned to disseminate information to employees and external constituents to ensure the continuity of message.

7. Interoperable Communications

The ability to communicate with internal (court personnel) and external stakeholders (e.g., law enforcement, first responders, emergency management agencies) is imperative. Multiple and redundant technologies should be employed when possible because communications failures are inevitable in a disaster.

8. Vital Records, Databases, and Information Systems

The protection and availability of vital records, databases, and information systems such as orders of succession, delegations of authority, financial, budget, personnel, case files, and property and procurement records required to support the court's essential functions.

9. Human Capital

This Element addresses the plans and procedures that apply to court staff who are not directly involved with emergency response teams or operations particularly at an alternate facility. It also addresses available crisis management services and any court sponsored network of services for employees and their families.

10. Devolution

Element 10 ensures that the capability exists to transfer authority and responsibility for essential functions from a specific court office and primary work locations to other court personnel in another court or at an alternate facility to sustain that court office's operational capability for an extended period of time if the primary office and/or personnel are unavailable or incapacitated.

11. Recovery/Reconstitution

The element lists the steps to return operations to pre-event status. This may include a phased activation of HVAC systems, voice and data systems, mail services, personnel, and operational and administrative activities.

Training

Training encompasses tests of plans and emergency operating procedures, simulated and scenario based exercises to rehearse the response plans, and training and education of all staff and the ERT. Training, testing and exercising COOP plan capabilities are necessary activities to identify gaps, improve the ability of the court to execute its essential functions, train all personnel to create a culture of preparedness, and rehearse plan activation through simulated disaster exercises.

Training

To maintain a viable COOP plan, court staff will be trained to perform designated essential functions at an acceptable level of proficiency, particularly if the essential function is not the person's primary, routine function. Proficiency in COOP plan activities is achieved by selecting and training key individuals; then by training the group that will be involved in COOP plan activation; and finally, by training the court as a whole. Training and educating the entire staff about response plans and precautionary activities such as those that relate to security and a pandemic are important and help create a culture of preparedness. The training portion of the program includes:

- An emergency preparedness (including a pandemic) and COOP plan awareness workshop for all court staff
- A COOP plan senior leadership orientation

- A comprehensive readiness program to ensure the preparedness of court personnel assigned to carry out essential functions during COOP plan activation.

Tests

The court will conduct regularly scheduled testing of the court's plans and procedures, equipment and information systems that will support the essential functions during COOP plan activation to identify and correct gaps and weaknesses. The testing portion of the program provides the following:

- Quarterly evaluations of "alert systems," including instructions for relocation to pre-designated facilities, with and without warning, and during business and non-business hours.
- Evaluations of the court's ability to access vital records, information systems, and the data management software and equipment necessary to perform essential functions.
- Evaluations of Alert and Notification and communication systems.
- Evaluations of the support services at the alternate site (e.g., water, electrical power, IT infrastructure, and HVAC) at the alternate facility(s).

Exercises

Exercises are a variety of simulated disasters designed to keep the COOP plan viable and to improve the ability of court staff to execute the plan. The exercise portion of the TT&E program includes:

- Bi-annual activation of the COOP plan requiring notification and verbal walk-through of the activation procedures
- Annual activation of the court COOP plan for physical relocation to an alternate facility
- Annual tabletop exercises for the court staff which also may include select external stakeholders

Multi-Year Strategic Plan

This long range plan is designed to ensure that adequate resources (e.g., people and equipment) necessary to build and strengthen essential functions capabilities are identified and obtained. The plan also sets forth the annual COOP plan maintenance schedule to ensure the plan remains viable. Figure 4 sets forth the maintenance schedule.

Figure 4: COOP Maintenance Schedule

Action	Cost	Tasks	Responsible Position	Frequency
Update and certify the Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Review entire plan for accuracy •Incorporate lessons learned from real-life activations of the plan and from testing and exercises •Incorporate changes in policy and philosophy • Manage distribution 	[Name/ Position responsible]	Annually
Maintain and update Orders of Succession and Delegations of Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Obtain current incumbents •Update rosters and contact information 	[Name/ Position]	Semi-Annually
Revise checklists and contact information for Emergency Relocation Team members		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Update and revise checklists •Confirm/update information for members of the Emergency Relocation Team 	All Court Offices	Annually
Appoint new members to the Emergency Relocation Team		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Train new members on their responsibilities •Integrate new members into team training 	[Name/ Position]	As needed
Maintain alternate facility readiness		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Check all systems •Verify accessibility •Cycle supplies and equipment, as necessary 	[Name/ Position]	Monthly
Monitor and maintain vital records management program		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Monitor volume of materials •Assist court staff with updating/removing files 	All Court Offices	Ongoing
Train new court staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Include in new employee orientation 	[Name Position]	Within 30 days of appointment
Orient new policy officials and senior leadership		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brief officials on existence and concepts of the COOP plan •Brief officials on their responsibilities under the COOP plan 	[Name Position]	Within 30 days of appointment
Plan and conduct exercises		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Conduct internal COOP exercises •Conduct joint exercises with other courts •Conduct joint exercises with judges and staff 	[Name Position]	Semi-annually As needed

COOP Plan Templates

1. Alert and Notification

This template identifies the specific means to alert and notify staff that a crisis or disaster is about to occur, or has occurred, and that the COOP plan was activated.

Name the person(s), and their position, responsible for initiating the alert and notification process and the processes used. (Note: this could be a public information officer or information technology officer, upon direction from the chief justice, coordinating the activation of an automatic or electronic messaging system.) Pre-scripted messages are helpful in crisis situations because they disseminate the same information and directions to all staff.

One person should be responsible for the alert and notification activities to ensure consistency of information. Messages should provide information about the event and instructions to staff and the response teams. Electronic alert and notification systems should be coordinated with the IT staff. If call trees are used, provide detailed information about who initiates the call, the cascade order, and contact information. Similarly, if a combination of methods is used, check that box and describe the combination system in a brief narrative.

One template may be completed for the overall plan if there is only one Alert and Notification system for the entire court (all court offices). If each court office has a separate system, a template should be completed by each office and incorporated into the overall plan.

**Template 1 Sample
Court Office: Family Court**

Person/ Position Responsible	Alternate Responsible Persons/ Position	Telephone Messaging/ Office	Telephone Messaging/ Remote Phone Numbers	Email Broadcast/ Office	Email Broadcast/ Remote Addresses	Call Tree	Combination
John Jones, Automation Specialist	Mary Smith, automation specialist	X	X	X	X		X
Name Each court office supervisor	Name Supervisor designees					X	X

2. Essential Functions

Essential functions are those tasks, functions or activities that, if not performed, would result in the court failing to meet its legal and constitution requirements. Each court office completes an essential function template. For a pandemic, sufficient alternates should be identified and trained to perform the essential functions and entered into the template because of anticipated high absenteeism (perhaps 40% over 18-24 months).

Each court office should decide how soon after COOP plan activation (also known as recovery time objective) each prioritized essential functions should be available. Essential functions must be ranked according to their priority so the Emergency Response Team knows how to prioritize response efforts. For example, the court offices could categorize essential functions according to priority levels with recovery time objectives that are practical for each court's unique situation: For example, those functions classified as one, may be those that impact life, death, safety, and freedom. The chart below illustrates five priority levels:

Priority	Recovery Time Objective
1	0 - 24 hours
2	24 - 48 hours
3	3 - 5 days
4	5 - 30 days
5	Indefinite

**Template 2 Sample
Essential Functions
Court Office: Family Court**

Priority	Recovery Time Objective	Essential Function	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3
1	24 hours	Hearings - Includes Preliminary Exams/Arraignments/ Detention Hearings	Courthouse B	Courthouse C	Law School
2	48 hours	Mail Services	same	same	same
3	5 days	Authorize and process bench warrants	same	same	same

**Template 2 Sample
Essential Functions Team
Court Office: Family Court**

Essential Function	Primary	Alternate 1	Alternate 2	Alternate 3
Hearings - Includes Preliminary Exams/Arraignments/ Detention Hearings	Mary Jones Family Court Title/Position Contact Info	John Smith Family Court Title/Position Contact Info		
Mail Services				
Authorize and process bench warrants				

3. Order of Succession

Each court unit completes this template to ensure a continuous leadership structure. Orders of Succession should be deep enough to respond to the impact of a pandemic where high absenteeism and mortality rates are expected. The order should be written and revert to the original leadership when conditions return to the pre-event status. When feasible, court offices and judicial officers should consider successors located in other geographical areas to avoid successors being affected by the same disastrous event.

**Template 3 Sample
Order of Succession
Court Office: Clerk's Office**

Primary contact	Contact information	Alternate1 contact	Alternate1 contact information	Alternate2 Contact	Alternate2 Contact information
A.B. See, Clerk of Court	Cell: Office: Home: Out of Area:	X.Y. Zee, Deputy Clerk of Court	Cell: Office: Home: Out of Area:	Elameno Pea, Budget Director	Cell: Office: Home: Out of Area:

4. Delegations of Authority

Each court office completes this template to ensure administrative matters are accomplished seamlessly. Delegations should be deep enough to respond to a pandemic. Contact information should include cell phone, home phone, contact information outside the area, home email, and work email and phone information. Delegations should be written and revert to the original designee as soon as possible following the event.

**Template 4 Sample
Delegations of Authority
Court Office: Clerk's Office**

Delegated Authority (function)	Primary/contact information	Alternate/contact information	Alternate/contact information
Payroll certification	A.B. Jones, Payroll clerk Home: 555-1212 Cell: 555-1234 Alt#: 555-1235 Email: primary and secondary	C.D. Smith, assistant payroll clerk Home: 555-1111 Cell: 555-2222 Alt#: 555-3333 Email: primary and secondary	E.F. Miller, Budget Analyst Home: 555-1235 Cell: 555-3333 Alt#: 555-3444- Email: primary and secondary
New Emergency Case Filing			
Funds Disbursement			

5. Alternate Site(s)

At least three alternate sites should be identified. When possible, two of the sites should be located outside the geographical area of the primary facility. The court should develop a list of criteria required for suitable alternate sites (see Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix C), and identify the location and logistics of each. Maps to each site should be provided to the Emergency Response Team, and where required, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) should be executed and remain current.

**Template 5 Sample
Alternate Sites
Court Office: Court of Appeals/Trial Court**

Priority	Essential Functions	Primary Operating Site	Scenario I: Building Only	Scenario II: Local Area	Scenario III: Regional Area
Court of Appeals					
1	Emergency appeals	Courthouse 1	Courthouse 2	Law School	Law School
1	Detention order appeals (Juvenile/Adult)	Courthouse 1	Courthouse 2	Law School	Law School
1	Motions to Stay (resuscitation; transfusions)	Courthouse 1	Courthouse 2	Law School	Law School
1	Appeal from commitment orders	Courthouse 1	Courthouse 2	Law School	Law School
Trial Court Essential Functions					
1	Hearings - Includes Preliminary Exams/Arraignments; Detention Hearings. Needs to include court room clerks, interpreters, and staffing.	Courthouse	Sheriff's Office	Federal Court	Law School
1	Communications with sheriff's office and law enforcement agencies	Courthouse			
Trial Court Essential Functions					
1	Maintain Internal and External Communications (judges, staff, administrative office, other agencies and courts; and public, media, local, state, and federal partners)	Courthouse			
1	Temporary emergency shelter	Courthouse	Leased space		Law Schools
1	Juvenile intake/conduct interviews/investigation				

6. Communications

The overall purpose of the communications and public information effort is twofold: (1) to provide consistent, timely, accurate, and easy-to-understand information to employees, lawyers and litigants, building tenants, other courts and external agencies, and to the general public during an emergency; and (2) to gather, analyze, and disseminate event information to the court's decision makers. Communications objectives are to achieve the following:

- Provide up-to-date information about the impact of the disaster or emergency on court operations
- Provide current information on revised or amended court processes and procedures
- Instill confidence that the courts will continue to function
- Inform the public on the execution of the court's activities
- Respond to unsubstantiated rumors with accurate information

A single point-of-contact should be designated to disseminate information to the Emergency Response Team, all employees, the media, public, and external stakeholders. The following templates may be used to capture internal, media, and external contact information.

**Template 6 Sample
Court Contact List**

Department	Contact	Emergency Number
- Media Contact		
- Telecommunications/IT		
- Jury Office		

**Template 6 Sample
Media Contact List**

Medium	Telephone	Other Contact Info
Radio		
Television		
Newspapers		

**Template 6 Sample
External Communications Contact List**

Audience	Name/Title	Telephone Number
City Local Level		
• Police Department		
• Fire Department		
• Emergency Management Agency		
• Department of Public Safety		
• Public Defender Service		
• Prosecutors Office		
• Health Department		

The following template may be used to provide staff with resources available to obtain information during an emergency, disaster, or disruption.

**Template 6 Sample
Communications Options for Court Staff**

Target Audience	Warning/Notification of Initial incident	Resumption of services/ directions for accessing them
The Public	Media (local – TV and radio) Court Web Site: Radio /TV News Public Address System	Media (local - TV and radio) Court Web Site:
Judicial Officers and Court Employees	Court Web Site Email Broadcast Internal Contact List Media Cell Phones Satellite Phone Nextel-type Phone/Radios PDA Court Emergency Information Line (e.g., 1-800 number)	Court Web Site Internal Contact List Media Cell Phones Court Information Line

7. Interoperable Communications

During an emergency and the activation of the COOP plan, communications with external agencies and stakeholders will be necessary but may not be available through regular means. Redundancy of communications equipment is essential. Therefore, it is imperative that communications devices be interoperable and redundant, internally as well as externally, pre-programmed with the phone numbers of key internal and external contacts, and that back-up interoperable systems are available. Members of the Emergency Response Team must know how to use the devices and store them away from the court facility. This template provides the court with a means to list each device, to whom it is assigned, and with whom it is compatible.

**Template 7 Sample
Interoperable Communication Devices**

Device	Assigned To	Location of Device	Agency Compatible
Satellite phone #12345	Judge 1	Judge's home	Police, Fire, Rescue
Blackberry #6789	Judge 1	On person	N/A

8. Vital Records, Databases, and Information Systems

The court should take steps to secure and to ensure access to authorized persons of vital records, databases, and information systems including, but not limited to:

- Emergency Operating Records - COOP Plans and procedures for response teams
- Legal and Financial Records - personnel, payroll, contact, and vendor lists
- Classified or sensitive data necessary to perform essential functions and activities and reconstitute operations

This template should capture all information about each court office's vital records, databases, and information systems, and it should be integrated with the IT department's disaster recovery plan.

**Template 8 Sample
Vital Records/Critical Systems/Databases
Court Office: Family Court**

Office	Document Name	Document Description	Supporting Application and/or Information System	Medium	Storage Location	Medium of Backup	Storage Location of Backup	Frequency of Backup
Family Court	Intake Form 1	New case activation	CA-Sys	Server X	Courthouse	Relay/disc	Bank vault	Nightly

9. Human Capital (No Template)

List and describe in narrative form personnel policies and procedures that impact the emergency response team as well as non-essential personnel (e.g., compensation) and how personnel information will be conveyed to staff before and during an emergency. Also provide information about employee assistance programs available in the wake of a disaster and any response team support networks.

To reduce the conflict between family and emergency response team roles and responsibilities, the court might consider developing a support network for response team families. The emergency response team members should also be encouraged to develop a family support plan. Programs should also be in place to help staff return to the court following a disruption.

10. Devolution

Devolution is the process to ensure the capability exists to transfer authority and responsibility for essential functions from one court office to another (or one chambers to another) in the event the primary office/chambers is unavailable. In this section, describe the process and procedures of how and to whom each court office/judicial officer essential functions will devolve. As soon as a catastrophic event renders court facilities and personnel

incapacitated, the devolution plan should address the essential functions that must automatically be transferred to a pre-determined office or chambers.

If a court office or chambers operations are not feasible because of the loss of personnel, temporary leadership of the court office or chambers should be passed to a pre-designated court office or chambers. The devolution office and personnel must be capable of supporting all the COOP essential functions and activities of the devolving court office.

**Template 10 Sample
Court Office: All**

Primary Office	Devolution Office
Clerk's Office/Criminal Division	Clerk's Office/Civil Division
Juvenile Court	Adult Court
Chambers 'A'	Chambers 'B'

11. Recovery/Reconstitution (No Template)

Identify in narrative form the procedures to resume operations and administration to pre-event status such as:

- IT Systems
- Voice and Data Communications
- Business Operations
- Mail Service
- Personnel

In this section the court creates a plan to transition from COOP to pre-event status after the threat or disruption subsides or ends. Where relocation to an alternate(s) was necessary, the procedures should ensure a smooth transition from the relocation site to the original or new court facility.