

7.13 Business Continuity Policy

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Government of Nova Scotia to implement business continuity practices that will support organizational and service resilience by sustaining and/or resuming the operation of critical business functions impacted by disruptive events.

Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services (SNS-IS) is mandated to provide supervision, direction, and control of matters relating to business continuity planning and management for the Government of Nova Scotia. The Business Continuity Management Office (BCMO) oversees the Business Continuity Policy and identifies business continuity practices and requirements. BCMO is responsible for coordinating across government when disruptive events impact multiple government departments.

All departments are responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining their department business continuity plans in alignment with the Business Continuity Policy. BCMO assists departments in developing, exercising, validating, and maintaining their business continuity plans and processes in order to promote effectiveness and efficiency in sustaining and/or resuming the operation of critical business functions.

Definitions

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

Holistic management process that identifies potential threats to a department and the impacts on business operations (especially critical business functions) that those threats, if realized, might cause. It provides a framework for building organizational capacity and developing resilience, supporting an effective and efficient response to disruptive events.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN (BC PLAN)

A documented collection of procedures and information that is developed, compiled, and maintained in readiness for use in a disruptive event, which will enable the department to recover and continue to deliver its critical products and services at an acceptable predefined level.

BUSINESS IMPACT

The effect, acceptable or unacceptable, of a disruptive event on critical business functions.

BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSIS (BIA)

A process of prioritizing business functions by assessing the potential quantitative and qualitative impacts that might result if an organization were to experience a disruptive event. The BIA identifies resources required to restore a business function to a minimum level of service.

CRITICAL BUSINESS FUNCTION (CBF)

High priority business activities, programs and services that are essential in meeting the department or government mandate, and which have the highest priority in terms of business continuity and recovery time objective.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Transfer of responsibility, as appropriate to each department, to support the restoration and recovery of critical business functions and other business activities following a disruptive event.

DEPARTMENTS

All Government of Nova Scotia “Departments” as listed under Category I in Appendix I-A of Policy 1.2, Corporate Administrative Policy Manuals Policy,

DEPUTY HEAD

The deputy of the member of the Executive Council presiding over a department and all others whom the Governor in Council from time to time designates as having the status of deputy head.

DISRUPTIVE EVENT

An event or incident that impacts or could potentially impact a critical business function resulting in a reduced level of functioning/service delivery or an interruption of service.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Personnel assembled by the Business Continuity Local Incident Commander to execute a business continuity plan during a disruptive event. This team may also include supporting resources from other departments such as Public Works and SNS-IS.

RECOVERY TIME OBJECTIVE (RTO)

The period of time following a disruptive event, within which a product or activity must be resumed, or resources must be recovered to ensure critical business functions resume operations.

RESILIENCE

The ability for a department to adapt or recover from a disruptive event, providing an acceptable level of service for their critical business functions.

RISK

The effect of uncertainty (such as potentially disruptive events) on objectives (such as those directly supported by critical business functions).

Policy Objectives

The Business Continuity Policy is designed to support departments by outlining responsibilities and providing a framework and practices as they relate to business continuity management.

The central objectives of the Business Continuity Policy are:

- To provide a standard framework, including roles and responsibilities, for the development and maintenance of BC Plans, which will enable prioritization and resumption of critical business functions across government.
- To enhance government's capacity to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptive events.
- To mitigate the possible immediate damage and harm to people (employees and public), critical infrastructure assets and data from a disruptive event.
- To mitigate political, social, economic, and environmental impacts of a disruptive event.
- To maintain public confidence in government.
- To promote overall efficiency and effectiveness in the government response to disruptive events.
- To enhance individual awareness and develop a supportive business continuity culture within departments.
- To assign responsibility for monitoring, measuring and evaluating government business continuity practices.

Application

The Business Continuity Policy defines business continuity development and response concepts and identifies roles and responsibilities. BCMO is responsible for coordinating across government when disruptive events impact multiple government departments. The size and complexity of the provincial government requires

departments to create and maintain their own BC Plans. These BC Plans are flexible and scalable, based on departments' capacity. The BC Plans are used to respond to significant planned or unplanned disruptive events, as determined by the departments.

The Business Continuity Policy applies to all departments.

Policy Directives

GENERAL

- SNS-IS is mandated to provide supervision, direction, and control of matters relating to business continuity planning and management for the Government of Nova Scotia. This includes developing a business continuity management framework, providing guidance, coordination, and information management, and reporting to senior leadership.
- Each provincial department is required to develop and maintain a BC Plan and support training, testing, and reporting of their critical business functions.

DEPARTMENTS

All departments will follow the business continuity management framework and develop and maintain a BC Plan, including:

- Appointing a business continuity executive sponsor, coordinator, and local incident commander.
- Identifying and prioritizing critical business functions and evaluating risks.
- Scheduling and participating in annual business continuity plans, testing and training activities.
- Reporting annually to BCMO on business continuity plans, testing and training activities.

When responding to an incident that has caused a significant business disruption, all departments are required to:

- Activate their BC Plan.
- Prioritize restoration and resumption of critical business functions.
- Restore all disrupted services and recover the workplace to an acceptable level of service.
- Notify the BCMO for additional support as required.

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

- BCMO creates and maintains templates for departments, stores relevant information centrally, and coordinates annual updates.

- BCMO provides training and support to departments on policy, practices, and templates as they update and activate business continuity plans.
- BCMO leads the Inter-departmental Business Continuity Committee and may lead a coordinated government-wide response to major disruptions, as necessary.
- Business Continuity Executive Sponsors for each department are responsible for ensuring the BC Plan is communicated to their department employees.

Policy Guidelines

- Departments should review their critical business functions at least annually and after any significant organizational changes.
- Employees listed in the department's business continuity plan or identified as Incident Management Team members should attend business continuity training and exercises.
- For plan effectiveness, recovery procedures should be at a tactical level, allowing for flexibility under changing disruptive conditions.

Accountabilities

The *Public Service Act* assigns responsibility to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services for “the supervision, direction and control of all matters relating to... business continuity planning and management for the Government of the Province.”

The *Civil Emergency Planning Regulations*, made under Section 25 of the *Emergency Management Act*, assigns responsibility to heads of all departments agencies to “ensure that necessary planning is carried out within their departments to enable their department or agency to continue its proper functions under any emergency conditions.” Business continuity is dependent on the support and commitment from Deputy Heads, and the knowledge and expertise of the employees who develop and implement the BC Plans.

Deputy Heads of departments shall:

- Ensure that necessary planning is carried out within their department to enable business continuity of critical business functions.
- Approve lines of authority for Senior Management Team positions supporting a business continuity response.
- Appoint an executive level employee as a Business Continuity Executive Sponsor.
- Approve the appointment of a Business Continuity Coordinator to develop and maintain business continuity plans.

- Approve Business Continuity Local Incident Commander(s), and alternates where required, to manage and coordinate on-scene response to disruptive events within their predetermined area of authority.
- Appoint a department representative to be a member of the Inter-departmental Business Continuity Committee.
- Promote business continuity planning within the department.

Responsibilities

BUSINESS CONTINUITY EXECUTIVE SPONSOR

The Business Continuity Executive Sponsor will champion business continuity efforts within their department and, in doing so, shall:

- Act on behalf of the Deputy Head, providing overall leadership, delegation of authority and accountability for the execution of the Business Continuity Plan.
- Serve as the main point of contact at the senior executive level on business continuity planning.
- Appoint a Business Continuity Coordinator, and alternates as needed.
- Participate in Business Continuity Senior Official Team Committees, as established to address specific disruptive events impacting all of government.
- Provide business continuity updates to senior leadership.
- Ensure government-wide business continuity responses are communicated and implemented within their department as applicable.
- As required, identify and advocate for resources that support business continuity planning and execution.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY COORDINATOR*

The Business Continuity Coordinator is responsible for developing and maintaining business continuity plans for their department and, in doing so, shall:

- Collect and coordinate all information related to the development of the department business continuity plan.
- Coordinate the development and ongoing maintenance of the department's BC Plan.
- Coordinate with BCMO on business continuity requirements and best practices.
- Ensure the information contained in the BC plan is accurate and is aligned with the provincial business continuity management framework (e.g., critical business functions identified, contacts and plan checklists up to date).

- Schedule, as required, training and exercises to verify the effectiveness of business continuity plans within the department.
- Attend and participate in training and workshops provided by BCMO.
- Provide progress updates to the Business Continuity Executive Sponsor and BCMO about business continuity activities of the department.
- Be supported by an alternate in case of absence or when additional support may be required.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY LOCAL INCIDENT COMMANDER (LIC)*

Appointed by the Executive Director, the LIC is responsible for executing the business continuity plan in response to a significant business disruption and, in doing so, shall:

- Be responsible for invoking business continuity plans.
- Be accountable to the Business Continuity Executive Sponsor to provide updates during the execution of the BC Plan.
- Develop local business continuity plans for their areas of responsibility, as needed.
- Provide on-scene operational leadership and delegate authority based on the complexity and location of the disruptive event.
- Obtain authorization for organizational resources, as required, to manage or respond to disruptive events.
- Assemble an Incident Management Team, as needed, to respond to disruptive events.
- Collaborate with the BCMO and other Local Incident Commanders, within their department or across government, on disruptive events.
- Attend and participate in training and workshops provided by BCMO.

MANAGERS*

Managers responsible for the delivery of critical business functions shall:

- Respond to the Business Continuity Coordinator in obtaining necessary information and resources to support the development and implementation of department business continuity plans.
- Provide subject matter expertise including recovery-time objective information, the minimum level of service required, and recovery and resumption strategies for their critical business functions.
- Support the LIC during a disruptive event.
- Participate in reviewing, testing, and exercising business continuity plans.

- Communicate business continuity plans to their direct reports.
- Ensure appropriate employees take part in business continuity exercises and training as required.

**In some departments, more than one of these roles may be held by the same person.*

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT OFFICE

The Business Continuity Management Office (BCMO) oversees the Business Continuity Policy and maintains the business continuity framework, and, in doing so, shall:

- Support Business Continuity Coordinators in developing, testing, and maintaining their departments' business continuity plans.
- Maintain a centralized repository for business continuity planning documentation and templates.
- Support invoking business continuity plans for government as required.
- Coordinate across government when disruptive events impact multiple government departments, including with the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office for significant disruptive events.
- Provide subject matter expertise and support departments during disruptive events.
- Maintain an up-to-date directory of department contacts and BC Plans, in support of government-wide business continuity analysis and decision making.
- Maintain situational awareness during disruptive events and report to senior leadership as required.
- Identify and provide training opportunities related to business continuity planning.
- Report annually or as needed to Deputy Heads on the status of departments' BC Plans and on provincial business continuity plan activities.

Monitoring

Departments must complete annual reviews of their BC Plans.

BCMO will conduct annual government-wide reviews of BC Plans, in consultation with departments. This includes monitoring, measuring, and evaluating departments' business continuity implementation, performance, and effectiveness against the Business Continuity Policy.

References

LEGISLATION

- *Public Service Act*
- *Civil Emergency Planning Regulations*, under Section 25 of the *Emergency Management Act*

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Business Continuity Management Program Lifecycle
- Disaster Recovery Institute International Professional Practices
- Business Continuity Institute Good Practice Guidelines

Enquiries

All enquiries on the policy should be directed to the Business Continuity Management Office at: BCMOps@novascotia.ca

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