



**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-
DOWNTOWN**

**CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN
2026-2027**

For Official Use Only

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Disclosure of certain information in this Plan could endanger the privacy and safety of employees, compromise the security of essential equipment, services, and systems of UHD or otherwise impair its ability to carry out essential functions. Distribution of the UHD Continuity of Operations Plan in whole or in part will be limited to those personnel who need to know the information to successfully implement the plan. The Office of Emergency Management will maintain copies of the Continuity of Operations Plan.

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PROMULGATION STATEMENT

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) all-hazards Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is the underlying framework for Continuity of Operations, ensuring operations are performed efficiently with minimal disruption during an emergency. The plan falls under the authority outlined in the UHD Emergency Management Plan (EMP), which outlines how UHD manages emergencies, providing guidance for implementing the COOP and programs to ensure the University can conduct its essential missions and functions under all threats and conditions.

To execute this plan effectively, essential personnel must have knowledge and familiarity of the procedures set forth in this plan. Departments with roles and responsibilities established by this plan are expected to develop plans and procedures supporting it.

Key personnel relocated under this plan are collectively known as the UHD Emergency Relocation Group (ERG). Upon plan activation, these members may move to a virtual environment or deploy to a continuity facility and establish operational capability to perform essential functions within 12 hours from the time of plan activation up to a 30-day period or until normal operations can be resumed.

This plan is a statement of policy regarding continuity of operations and assigns roles and responsibilities to university organizations and individuals. Revision of this plan and its promulgation occurs on an annual schedule.

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PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The UHD COOP was developed by the Director of Emergency Management in coordination with:

- Academic Affairs
- Administration and Finance
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Facilities Management
- UHD Police Department
- Risk Management
- Environmental Health & Safety
- University Relations (Communications)

The President of the University has final approval of the plan and any substantial changes following annual review.

Purpose

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) must ensure operations are performed efficiently with minimal disruption during the response to and recovery from any incident, disaster, or emergency, regardless of the nature, origin, or complexity. An *all-hazards* approach relies on effective contingency planning that will minimize the impact of an emergency on the University's mission, personnel, and facilities.

The UHD Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is a roadmap for implementing and managing the Continuity Program in supporting resilience of critical business functions, recovery and/or restoration of business functions that fail, and contingency actions that establish a readiness to cope with disasters, incidents, or emergencies. COOP will be implemented to ensure the continuation or rapid resumption of the most essential functions during a continuity event. This plan addresses prompt recovery of services provided by UHD.

The continuity plan ensures that University of Houston-Downtown:

- Has the capability to implement the continuity plan with and without advance warning
- Identifies critical infrastructure that must be robust/resilient to support the recovery of other essential functions
- Can restore urgent or short-term essential function no later than 12 hours after activation of the continuity plan
- Can reinstate academic classes within 2 weeks of the disruption either through traditional or alternative methods/locations
- Can maintain alternate operations for up to 30 days

- Includes regularly scheduled testing, training, and exercising of university personnel, equipment, systems, processes, and procedures used to support the University during a continuity event
- Supports the location of alternate facilities in areas that enhance the ability to initiate, maintain and terminate continuity operations
- Supports the identification and documentation of temporary operating procedures which enable the performance of essential functions
- Promotes the development, maintenance, and annual review of division/department continuity capabilities

Scope

This plan applies to the functions, operations, and resources necessary to ensure the continuation of UHD's essential functions in the event normal operations at the University are disrupted or threatened with disruption. This plan applies to all University personnel and students since there may be situation(s) that call for activation of individual division, department, or college continuity plans, but not the continuity plan for the University. All personnel should be familiar with continuity policies and procedures and their respective roles and responsibilities.

This plan covers all facilities, systems, vehicles, and buildings operated or maintained by UHD. This plan supports the performance of essential functions and the maintenance or restoration of critical infrastructure from alternate locations (due to a facility becoming unusable) and provides continuity of leadership and decision making at UHD, if senior administration is unavailable.

This plan does *not* apply to temporary disruptions of service, such as minor IT systems or short-term power outages and any other scenarios where essential functions can be quickly restored.

The University of Houston-Downtown is located in the fourth largest city in the United States. Houston has a population of approximately 2.4 million and over 2 million in the surrounding area. The campus is situated on 40 acres of land in the heart of downtown. The university also has instructional sites at UHD Lonestar College-Northwest, UHD at Lonestar College-CyFair, and UHD at Lone Star College – Kingwood. The current enrollment for the University of Houston-Downtown exceeds 13,000 with 46 bachelor's and 11 master's degrees offered on campus and online. UHD has four colleges: Marilyn Davies College of Business, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Public Service, and College of Sciences and Technology.

Situation Overview

UHD is subject to natural, technological, and human-caused hazards that may require activation of the Continuity of Operations Plan. Some emergencies may provide advanced warning (hurricanes), while others will be immediate no-notice events. A Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) for major emergencies or disasters that are most likely to occur and affect the University can be found in the UHD Emergency Management Plan.

Assumptions

Continuity planning requires both a commonly accepted set of assumed operational conditions and an honest, reasonable assessment of the threats faced by the entity/organization. Collectively these constitute the planning assumptions, and the standard practice is to plan with the assumption that a disaster or catastrophic incident will one day occur.

This Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is based on the following assumptions:

- Threat or damage to critical infrastructure on campus and/or to the surrounding communities/jurisdictions may result in limited resources such as fuel, utilities, telecommunication, information systems, financial services, public health services, security services, and transportation for an extended period of time resulting in a disruption of UHD essential functions.
- Personnel and other resources from the University of Houston System outside the affected zone will be made available if required to continue essential operations.
- Emergencies and threatening events will differ in order of priority or impact.
- UHD Emergency Relocation Site (ERS) would not be adversely impacted by the crisis creating a continuity event for UHD.
- When a continuity event is declared, implementing the COOP will ensure the continuity of essential UHD operations with an incremented return of critical functions during the crisis.
- Essential function prioritization will be flexible to fit the circumstances of each continuity event.
- There will be enough available administrators with adequate supporting personnel to continue the University's essential functions.
- Recovery of a critical subset of the University's functions and application systems will occur and allow essential functions to continue.
- Colleges, divisions, departments, and other areas completing a department level Continuity of Operations Plan will report their dependencies and the business processes needed to maintain business operations for their departments. The process of Business Impact Analysis (BIA) for each department enhances recognition of possible disruptions which may occur during a continuity event. Each area/department will complete a continuity plan, which will in turn be utilized to create college/division plans, resulting in a comprehensive assessment tool for the Department of Emergency Management needed for continuity events affecting the campus.
- A disaster may require students, faculty, staff, and the public to function with limited support services and some degradation of services, until a full recovery is made.
- The computer systems at UHD are backed up regularly and access to vital systems and records will be available to the ERS.
- In the event of disaster, the University will work in cooperation with the Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD), City of Houston, Harris County and other authorities having jurisdiction.

Emergency conditions may require moving UHD Emergency Relocation Group (ERG) members to the continuity facility known as an Emergency Relocation Site (ERS) at one of the University of Houston System component campuses which have agreed to the following:

- The University of Houston includes student classrooms, faculty facilities, advising space, computing resources, a library, and large public meeting spaces.
- The University of Houston-Clear Lake includes student classrooms, faculty facilities, advising space, computing resources, a library, and large public meeting spaces.
- The University of Houston Sugar Land campus includes student classrooms, faculty facilities, advising space, computing resources, a library, and large public meeting spaces.
- UHD operates teaching centers in partnership with Lone Star College at University Park/NW, CyFair and Kingwood locations. These facilities offer classroom space, computer labs, testing center, faculty offices, and student support/advising staff.
- The University of Houston System campuses will support ERG members and the continuation of information systems within 12 hours or less from the time the Continuity of Operations Plan is activated for the potential of up to 30-days or until normal operations can be resumed. Each facility will review their plans and facilities annually to ensure continuity requirements are met.
- If UHD is unable to deploy an ERG to an ERS due to loss of personnel, UHD will devolve to one of the University of Houston System campuses.

Objectives

The University of Houston-Downtown continuity objectives are:

- Reducing the loss of life and minimizing property damage and loss
- Executing an effective order of succession with accompanying authorities in the event a disruption renders the leadership of UHD unable or unavailable to perform their responsibilities and authorities
- Reducing and mitigating disruptions to operations
- Ensuring that Mission Essential Functions (MEF) can be performed under all conditions
- Verifying possible Emergency Relocation Sites (ERS) and availability
- Protecting personnel, facilities, equipment, records, and other assets critical to the performance of essential functions in the event of a disruption
- Achieving timely and orderly recovery of reconstitution from an emergency
- Confirming and validating continuity readiness through a campus Test, Training, and Exercise (TT&E) program

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The identification and prioritization of essential functions are a prerequisite for continuity planning and establish parameters that drive the University of Houston-Downtown's (UHD) efforts in other planning and preparedness areas. These functions are activities conducted to accomplish UHD's mission and vision. During a continuity event, the resources and staff available may be limited and UHD will not be able to perform all its normal functions. Therefore, a subset of the functions determined to be critical activities are defined as UHD's essential functions. These essential functions are used to identify supporting tasks and resources that must be included in UHD's continuity planning process.

While many functions are important during a disruption, UHD must focus efforts and limited resources on those functions that cannot be deferred. When identifying these functions, it is important to consider the following:

- If UHD identifies too many functions as essential, limited resources and/or staff availability during the emergency may not be sufficient to enable performance of all identified essential functions.
- If UHD fails to identify functions as essential and does not include them in emergency and continuity plans, these functions may not be performed during an emergency.

Identifying the highest priority functions is the key with the required resources and capabilities to ensure that they can be performed. During less severe disruptions, it may be possible for UHD personnel to accomplish many non-essential functions as well, and this is to be expected and encouraged, if this does not interfere with the performance of essential functions.

University of Houston-Downtown Mission Statement and Vision

MISSION:

The University of Houston-Downtown is a community of diverse faculty, staff, students, and regional partners dedicated to nurturing talent, generating knowledge, and driving socioeconomic mobility for a just and sustainable future.

VISION:

The University of Houston-Downtown will be an inclusive university of choice for Houstonians seeking to contribute to the social, intellectual, and cultural lives of their communities.

Identifying essential functions can be challenging since a university's essential functions are complex and can be influenced by the type and magnitude of a continuity event as well as the academic calendar. During every crisis, emergency, or disaster, UHD emphasizes preserving life, property, and process.

The Continuity of Operations Planning process at the college, division, and department levels in conjunction with the Business Impact Analysis (BIA), determines essential functions that support the mission of UHD. Essential functions within the colleges, divisions and departments are found in their respective Continuity of Operations Plans.

Essential Functions for the University of Houston-Downtown

- **EF #1 - University Leadership:** to provide support for the university and maintain leadership to manage an emergency impacting the University of Houston-Downtown; leadership positions include the President, Provost, and Vice President for Administration & Finance. This function has a recovery time of four (4) hours.
- **EF #2 - Public Safety:** to maintain the safety and security of all students, faculty, staff, visitors, facilities, research, intellectual property, research animals, public health, and environmental hazardous components where feasible. This function does not have a recovery time because it requires continuous operations.
- **EF #3 - Communications:** to maintain communication capabilities for the University of Houston-Downtown's Emergency Alert Notification System, UHD Police Dispatch System, executive leadership, and media relations. The recovery time objective for the tools needed to communicate is 30 minutes while the recovery time objective for the content needed to communicate is four (4) hours.
- **EF #4 - Basic Services:** to maintain and provide basic services such as food service, emergency maintenance needs, access control and transportation. The recovery time objective is 6-12 hours.
- **EF #5 - Fiscal Operations and Functional Processes:** to provide continued service for financial operations (payroll, purchasing, contracts) and critical data. The recovery time objective is three (3) hours.
- **EF #6 - Academic Continuity:** to maintain and provide academic instruction, research, and space when feasible during an emergency. In addition, to transition to a virtual environment when conditions on campus are untenable. The recovery time objective is three (3) days; however, certain critical research could require continuous service depending on the type of interruption.

Summary

The University of Houston-Downtown is in the heart of Houston, Texas – the fourth largest city in the state. The 40-acre university campus sits at the confluence of two rivers (White Oak Bayou and Buffalo Bayou) and is prone to flooding. The campus is bordered on the east by a Metro rail line. Additionally, the campus is bisected by the Union Pacific rail line and by interstate 1-10. These transportation hazards pose unique threats to the campus community. A formal threat and hazard assessment is conducted annually and included in the UHD Emergency Management Plan.

The university is also vulnerable to cyber-attacks and internet disruptions. This poses a significant threat since 30% - 99% of the universities students and workforce may be functioning in the virtual environment. Due to the significant role that IT plays in delivering the university's services and communication, the UHD General Continuity Plan is supplemented with an extensive IT COOP Plan included in the UHD Departmental COOP Section of this Plan. The IT COOP Plan is an essential record that is maintained by the Associate Vice President of Information Technology.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Continuity of Operations Plan provides the overall guidelines to ensure continuity of services can be maintained, when at all possible, for all University of Houston-Downtown campus locations, colleges, departments, and divisions before, during and after an emergency incident. The overarching goal is to identify all Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) to the university and ensure that those functions can be maintained throughout a continuity event, not only during the event and/or quickly after the event with minimal disruption. While the University of Houston-Downtown Emergency Management Plan addresses all four phases of emergency planning: Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery; the Continuity of Operations Plan addresses the four phases of continuity planning; Phase 1: Readiness and Preparedness, Phase 2: Activation, Phase 3: Operations, Phase 4: Reconstitution.

Phase 1: Readiness and Preparedness

Phase I - Readiness and Preparedness: This phase establishes the ability of an organization to respond to continuity activation. Although readiness is a function of planning and training, it is ultimately the responsibility of an organization's leadership to ensure that an organization can perform its essential functions before, during and after all-hazards, emergencies or disasters.

The University of Houston-Downtown participates in the full spectrum of readiness and preparedness activities to ensure its personnel can continue essential functions in an all-hazards risk environment. The University of Houston-Downtown's readiness activities are divided into two key areas: organizational readiness and preparedness and employee readiness and preparedness.

Organizational Readiness and Preparedness:

The University of Houston-Downtown follows the campus Emergency Management Plan to ensure readiness and preparedness. The University of Houston-Downtown Emergency Management Plan lays the framework for handling incidents, including levels of readiness, policies, procedures, and communication alerts.

Personnel Readiness and Preparedness

All personnel of the University of Houston-Downtown should always be prepared for a continuity event. All colleges, divisions, departments, and other areas must complete the department Continuity of Operations Plan Template annually. Each area/department will complete their continuity of operations plan, which in turn will be utilized to create the college/division plans which result in a comprehensive MEF assessment tool for the University of Houston-Downtown needed for continuity events affecting the campus. The Department Continuity of Operations Plan Template can be found on the Office of Emergency Management website.

Phase 2: Activation

Phase II – Activation: *The phase is the implementation of a continuity plan, in whole or part.*

To ensure the ability to attain operational capability at continuity sites and with minimal disruption to operations, the University of Houston-Downtown has developed activation and relocation plans.

Declaration of Campus Emergency

The University Levels of Readiness, as outlined in the University of Houston-Downtown Emergency Management Plan, define the magnitude of a campus incident, which allows for an assessment of the impact on campus facilities, its services, and its impact to students, employees, and visitors.

Activation of the University of Houston-Downtown Continuity of Operations Plan

Only the President or his/her designee of the University of Houston-Downtown may initiate the university-wide continuity activation. Prior to the decision to activate the continuity plan by the President, the President's cabinet, and the Emergency Management Board, in consultation with the Emergency Management Director, will make a recommendation to the President on activation. Continuity plan activation and relocation are scenario driven processes that allow flexible and scalable responses to a full spectrum of emergencies and other events that could disrupt operations with or without warning. The decision to activate the Continuity of Operations Plan and corresponding actions to be taken are tailored for the situation, based upon projected or actual impact and severity.

Departmental Continuity of Operations Plans can be activated at any time as determined by said departments' leadership.

UHD Emergency Alert Notification System

The emergency alert notification process is defined in the University of Houston-Downtown Emergency Management Plan. The notification to the campus community will be done through the UHD Emergency Alert Notification System in accordance with the UHD Mass Notification Plan.

Relocation Process

Procedures about campus relocation are documented in Appendix C of the Continuity of Operations Plan. This Appendix includes maps and directions to potential continuity facilities. Procedures for accounting for all students, faculty and staff will be handled at the alternate facility.

Phase 3: Operations

Phase III –Operations: *The phase where organizations implement and execute strategies identified in the continuity plan to ensure the essential functions are accomplished.*

Continuity operations include:

- Performing essential functions
- Accounting for personnel, including identifying available leadership
- Establishing communications with interdependent organizations and other internal and external stakeholders, including media and the public
- Providing guidance to all personnel
- Preparing for recovery of the organization

Upon activation of the Continuity of Operations Plan, the University of Houston-Downtown will continue to operate at its primary operating facility until ordered to cease operations by the University of Houston-Downtown President. At that time, essential functions will transfer to the designated continuity facility. The University of Houston-Downtown must ensure that the continuity plan can become operational within the minimal acceptable period for Mission Essential Function (MEF) disruption, but in all cases within 12 hours of plan activation.

Phase 4: Reconstitution

Phase IV – Reconstitution: *The process by which surviving and/or replacement organization personnel resume normal operations.*

Each area of campus should report their dependencies and the business processes needed to maintain business operations not only for their department, but for the campus departments that depend on their services. The Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and departmental Continuity of Operation Plans (COOPs) assist in the process. All departments, areas, colleges, divisions, and off-campus locations must have a Continuity of Operations Plan to acknowledge and document any disruptions that may occur during a continuity event. Each area/department will complete their continuity of operations plan, which in turn will be utilized to create the college/division plans which result in a comprehensive MEF assessment tool for the University of Houston-Downtown needed for continuity events affecting the campus.

Devolution of Control and Direction

Devolution of Control and Direction – Capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from an agency's and organization's primary operating staff and facilities to other agency and organizational employees and facilities, and to sustain that operational capability for an extended period of time.

The University of Houston-Downtown is prepared to transfer all essential functions and responsibilities to personnel at a different location should emergency events render leadership or staff unavailable to support the execution of University of Houston-Downtown essential functions. This process is referred to as Devolution. Devolution will be needed in the event a catastrophic crisis occurs, and the University of Houston-Downtown's staff and facilities are no longer available to operate the essential functions of the agency. The University of Houston-Downtown will transfer statutory authority and responsibility for

essential functions from the University of Houston-Downtown's primary operating staff and facilities to one of the University of Houston System campuses' employees and facilities, and to sustain that operational capability for an extended period.

LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

This section outlines the plans, procedures, and policies to safeguard and protect leadership and staff, including orders of succession, delegations of authority and human resources. The National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan lists leadership and staff as two of the four key pillars that enable organizations to perform essential functions.

Direction and Control

During activation of the COOP, the President maintains responsibility for control and direction of the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD). Should the President become unavailable or incapacitated, UHD's order of succession and delegation of authority will be followed.

Orders of Succession

This section identifies orders of succession to the University's leadership and is accepted as a statement of policy upon signing of the COOP Promulgation Statement. Pre-identifying orders of succession is critical to ensuring effective leadership during an emergency. In the event an official is unavailable or incapable of fulfilling essential duties, successors have been identified to ensure there is no lapse in essential decision-making authority.

The University of Houston-Downtown is a component university of the University of Houston System (UHS). The Executive Officers of the System are the Vice Chancellors, the Presidents, and the General Counsel. The Vice Chancellors are responsible for the management and operation of the System under the direction of the Chancellor. The Chief Executive Officers of the component universities bear the title of President. Each President is responsible for the management and operation of the component University to which he/she is appointed under the direction of the Chancellor. The General Counsel is responsible for overseeing legal services for the System.

The University of Houston-Downtown orders of succession are:

- At least three positions deep, where possible, ensuring sufficient depth for managing and directing essential functions and operations.
- Include devolution counterparts, where applicable
- Geographically dispersed, where applicable
- Described by positions or titles, rather than names of individuals holding those offices
- Reviewed by the organization's legal department if significant changes occur
- Included as an essential record, with copies accessible and/or available at both the primary operating facility and continuity facilities

OFFICE of the PRESIDENT	
Position	Designated Successors
President	1. Vice President for Administration & Finance
	2. Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

OFFICE of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS	
Position	Designated Successors
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost	1. Associate VP, Faculty Affairs & Faculty Development
	2. Associate VP, Programming and Curriculum

OFFICE of ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE	
Position	Designated Successors
Vice President for Administration & Finance	1. Associate VP, Business Affairs
	2. Associate VP, IT & Chief Information Officer

OFFICE of ADVANCEMENT & UNIVERSITY RELATIONS	
Position	Designated Successors
Vice President for Advancement & University Relations	1. Assistant VP, University Relations
	2. Executive Director, Communications

OFFICE of ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT	
Position	Designated Successors
Vice President, Enrollment	1. Associate Vice President, Enrollment Services
	2. University Registrar

OFFICE of HUMAN RESOURCES	
Position	Designated Successors
Vice President, Human Resources	1. Executive Director, Human Resources
	2. Director, Payroll Talent Acquisition

OFFICE of STUDENT SUCCESS & STUDENT LIFE	
Position	Designated Successors
Vice President, Student Success and Student Life	1. Assistant VP, Student Life & Dean of Students
	2. Assistant VP, Student Success

Each order of succession will follow UHS and UHD policies. In the event of a change in leadership status, UHD must notify successors, as well as internal and external stakeholders. Should essential personnel in a leadership role become unreachable or incapable of performing their authorized duties, roles and responsibilities, a member of the Emergency Management Board (EMB) will initiate a notification of the next successor in line in person, by use of electronic communication or telephone, whichever is the most expedient. University stakeholders will be notified of the succession(s) via email and/or text. External stakeholders will be informed of the change in leadership by the UHD Department of Emergency Management.

UHD Human Resources (HR) will maintain Job Analysis documentation which involves detailed information about the duties and responsibilities of a job, skills and abilities required to do the job, level of education, internal and external relationships, and work environment. This information may be used to ensure the successor has appropriate qualifications for the duties, roles, and responsibilities. Continuity personnel, including successors, participate in UHD's Test, Training, and Exercise program. Documents of training are maintained by the Divisions or Departments and submitted annually to the Continuity Coordinator.

Delegations of Authority

UHD has pre-determined delegations of authority which take effect when normal channels of direction are disrupted. The delegations of authority will terminate when the channels resume. Orderly succession will occur when personnel in a leadership position is absent or unable to act during an emergency.

UHD delegations of authority:

- Are included in Essential Records
- Are written in accordance with applicable codes/laws and UHS policies ensuring that Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) are performed
- Outline the authority of an official to re-delegate functions and activities, as appropriate
- Delineate the limits of and any exceptions to the authority and accountability for officials

Personnel who might be expected to assume authority during a continuity situation are informed and trained annually. Successors participate in UHD's Test, Training, and Exercise program. Documents of training are maintained by the Divisions or Departments and submitted annually to the Continuity Coordinator.

ESSENTIAL RECORDS

The identification, protection, and ready availability of Essential Records, databases, and hard copy documents needed to support continuity of operations under the full spectrum of all-hazard/threat emergencies are critical elements of a successful continuity plan and program. Any vital state record is considered an Essential Record. UHD's Essential Records are digitized and accessible through virtual means. For this reason, the UHD IT Department, in collaboration with UHS IT operation, is tasked with maintaining access to UHD's extensive Essential Records and networks. Essential Records specific to each department are listed within department specific COOPs (Continuity of Operations Plans).

UHD IT personnel responsible for institutional records management receive training in accordance with state standards. UHD personnel receive information security training and have access online to Policies and Information Security (<https://www.uhd.edu/hr/policies/hr-information-systems-policy.aspx>). The colleges, divisions and departments which make up the University must annually train their personnel on their COOP, exercise it and submit documentation of both to the Continuity Coordinator by April 1 of each year. The training includes identifying, inventorying, protecting, storing, accessing, and updating the Essential Records.

Since UHD will use University of Houston System (UHS) component universities as continuity facilities, it has the advantage of using hardware, software, and systems like that of UHD to access Essential Records. UHS has a network of component ISOs which collaboratively work together on security initiatives, creating a familiarity which enhances the identification, protection, and access of Essential Records (vital state records) for UHD at the continuity facility.

Within 12 hours of activation, continuity personnel at the continuity facility should have access to the appropriate means for obtaining Essential Records, including:

- Local area networks
- Electronic versions of Essential Records (vital state record)
- Supporting information systems and data
- Internal and external email and email archives
- Paper copies of Essential Records

A "state record" means any written, photographic, machine-readable, or other recorded information created or received by or on behalf of a state agency that documents activities in the conduct of business or use of public resources. (Texas Government Code 441.180 (11))

Texas Government Code 441.180 defines the University of Houston System and its components as a state agency and defines "**vital** State record" as any state record necessary to:

- The resumption or continuation of state agency operations in an emergency or disaster
- The re-creation of the legal and financial status of the agency
- The protection and fulfillment of obligations to the people of the state

Any state record may be created or stored electronically in accordance with standards and procedures adopted by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. UHD has identified institutional “vital state records” and has assigned responsibility for the security and recovery of those records, in digital format, to Information Technology (IT). Hard copies of Essential Records specific to a college, division or department should be scanned to create a digital copy and saved on the network or a secure portable hard drive. The UHD IT COOP and Disaster Recovery Plan outlines the roles, responsibilities, and procedures for processes that must be followed to achieve disaster recovery for critical systems and prevent the loss of UHD’s resources such as hardware, data, and physical IT assets.

Defined as a state agency, the University is directed to:

- Establish and maintain a records management program on a continuing and active basis
- Create and maintain records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions to furnish information to protect the financial and legal rights of the state and any person affected by the activities of the agency
- Identify and take adequate steps to protect confidential and vital state records

The Texas Administration Code (TAC) 202 directs each institution of higher education to “develop, document, and implement an institution of higher education-wide information security program.” The program is to include protections, based on risk, for all information and information resources owned, leased, or under the custodianship of any department, operating unit, or employee of the institution. This also includes resources outsourced to another institution of higher education, contractor, or other source.

As mandated by TAC 202, the UHD Information Security Officer (ISO) or his/her designee conducts periodic assessments of the risk and impact that could result from the unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction of information and information systems that support the operations of UHD. (TAC 202.70 – 76). UHD submits monthly security reports to the Department of Information Resources (DIR) as required and documents mitigation actions in the UHD IT Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan.

Texas Government Code 441.182 addresses State Records Management Program under which the State will provide mandatory or optional training and continuing education program to records management officers in each state agency and with the cooperation of the (DIR), training records management and information technology staff to assist them in managing records in an electronic format.

UHD’s Insurance policies are essential records. The administration and overview of the university’s insurance policies are the responsibility of the Executive Director, Administrative and Finance – who reports directly to the Vice President of Administration and Finance.

UHD’s comprehensive Business Impact Analysis (BIA) is considered an essential record. The BIA is maintained by the Office of Administration and Finance under the purview of the Vice President. This document is maintained with the university’s other risk management records and is stored, backed up

and protected as described in the essential records section of the continuity plan and in alignment with University of Houston System requirements.

ALTERNATIVE FACILITIES AND REMOTE/TELEWORK

Upon activation of the COOP, the University will continue to operate at its primary operating facility until ordered to cease operations by the President of University of Houston–Downtown or an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) as given by the State of Texas. Should operations be ceased at the primary facility, essential functions will transfer to a continuity facility and become operational within the minimal acceptable period for Mission Essential Function (MEF) interruption or within 12 hours. Continuity of operations includes:

- Reception, in-processing, and accounting for all personnel
- Transition of responsibilities to the Emergency Relocation Group (ERG)
- Guidance for non-deployed personnel
- Identification of replacement personnel
- Execution of MEF at the continuity facility
- Activation of processes to acquire resources needed to continue essential functions and sustain operations
- Redeployment plans for the return to the primary facility

Emergency conditions may require moving the UHD’s Emergency Relocation Group (ERG) members to the continuity facility known as an Emergency Relocation Site (ERS) at one of the University of Houston System component campuses which have agreed to the following:

- The University of Houston includes student classrooms, faculty facilities, advising space, computing resources, a library, and large public meeting spaces.
 - Campus map: <https://ssl.uh.edu/maps/>
- The University of Houston–Clear Lake includes student classrooms, faculty facilities, advising space, computing resources, a library, and large public meeting spaces.
 - Campus map: <https://www.uhcl.edu/maps/>
- The University of Houston Sugar Land campus includes student classrooms, faculty facilities, advising space, computing resources, a library, and large public meeting spaces.
 - Campus map: <https://www.uh.edu/sugarland/visitors/>
- UHD operates teaching centers in partnership with Lone Star College at [UHD Northwest](#), [CyFair](#), and [Kingwood](#) locations. These facilities offer classroom space, computer labs, testing center, faculty offices, and student support/advising staff.
- The University of Houston System campuses will support ERG members and the continuation of information systems within 12 hours or less from the time the Continuity of Operations Plan is activated for the potential of up to 30-days or until normal operations can be resumed. Each

facility will review their plans and facilities annually to ensure continuity requirements are met.

- If UHD is unable to deploy an ERG to an ERS due to loss of personnel, UHD will devolve to one of the University of Houston System campuses.

UHS component universities have agreed to provide the following in sufficient quantities to sustain operations for up to 30 days or until normal business operations can be resumed:

- Space and equipment, including computers and software
- The number of UHD personnel to be relocated will determine the number of facilities and locations within the UHS component universities
- Capability to perform Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) within 12 hours of plan activation
- Reliable logistical support, services, and infrastructure systems
- Consideration for health, safety, security, and well-being of personnel
- Interoperable communications
- Capabilities to access and use Essential Records
- Systems and configuration that are used in daily activities
- Emergency/back-up power capability

Details on the above provisions will depend on the location(s) used by UHD within UHS for continuity operations and will be documented as part of continuity operations.

Relocation Process

Following activation of the plan and notification of personnel, UHD will move personnel and vital records to a continuity facility to perform essential functions and other continuity tasks. A listing of potential Emergency Relocation Sites (ERS) is provided in Annex D of this document and aerial maps for the ERS can be found via the web links listed.

- Emergency procedures during duty hours with or without warning:
 - Continuity personnel will depart to their designated continuity facility from the primary operating facility or their current location using approved transportation.
 - Individuals who are not continuity personnel will receive instructions. In most circumstances, they will be directed to proceed home or to other facilities to wait for further instructions.
 - At the time of notification, information will be provided on routes to use during departure from the primary facility, if available, or other safety precautions.
- Emergency procedures during non-duty hours with or without warning:
 - Continuity personnel will depart to his/her assigned continuity facility from his/her current location using approved transportation.
 - Individuals who are not continuity personnel will remain at his or her residence to wait for further instructions *unless* doing so presents a safety hazard.

Personnel not identified as continuity staff may be required to replace or augment the identified continuity personnel during activation and should remain available as required. These activities will be coordinated within the department as appropriate.

An activation of the COOP may require procurement of necessary personnel, equipment and supplies that are not already in place for continuity operations on an emergency basis. The processes for procurement will not change unless directed by the President or his/her designee(s).

An emergency may require integration and coordination with other component universities of the University of Houston System, the private sector, as well as governmental and non-governmental responding entities to promote interoperability, prevent redundancies and conflicting lines of authority. Such collaboration builds relationships and ensures unity of effort. Examples of coordination may include:

- Collaborating to incorporate capabilities of other entities into the organization's continuity planning and exercise activities to the extent possible.
- Coordinating risk assessments to identify hazards relevant to the organization's mission and location.
- Partnering with these entities to develop continuity plans that are coordinated to the extent possible.
- Participating in information sharing, training, and exercises, as appropriate.
- Working together to identify interdependencies and ensuring resiliency with critical infrastructure and services at all levels.
- Coordinating continuity resource and security requirements, as appropriate.
- Participating in other coordinating activities, as appropriate.

Continuity Facility Logistics

UHS component universities have agreed to offer operational capability within 12 hours of notification for a component university that has activated a continuity plan. Site selection and preparation is dependent on the scope and needs of UHD at the time of activation.

Transportation to a continuity facility may vary due to availability of personal vehicles and public transit resources. Continuity personnel are encouraged to use reliable, safe, and secure transportation.

If housing to support continuity personnel at or near the continuity facility is needed, UHD will request assistance from the component university providing the continuity facility and/or obtain accommodations for personnel at local hotels.

Continuity Facility Orientation

UHD will be using UHS component universities' facilities for continuity operations and choice of facility will be determined on need, scope of operations and availability. Due to the number of resources which may be available, training to familiarize continuity personnel with continuity facilities is not practical.

COMMUNICATIONS

In the event normal operations are interrupted or if an incident appears imminent, UHD will take steps to communicate the University's operating status with students, staff, faculty, Office of the UHS Chancellor, response partners, interdependent entities, and the community regarding continuity activation or to reconstitute following an event. All UHD personnel, both continuity and non-deployed, will be given instructions and guidance regarding the continuity activation and relocation.

The University notification system has many types of publication modes. The decision to use all or a selection of the modes will be based on the classification of the message to be issued. Combining standardized descriptions for urgency, severity, and certainty with society dominant "warning" labels, creates quick message classification for the sender and fast label recognition by the recipient.

Observing two primary features of Incident Command, common terminology, and consistent messaging, UHD notifications incorporates values from the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for definitions and style of labeling. Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) is a simple but general format for exchanging all-hazard emergency alerts and public warnings over many different communication systems for interoperability.

More detailed information regarding the modes of publication used to communicate between senior leadership members only, the University to staff communications, the community and/or the media may be found in the Emergency Management Plan, Appendix F: Emergency Communications. Web based modes can be accessed off-site and are therefore available for use at continuity locations if internet is available.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND IDENTIFICATION OF CONTINUITY PERSONNEL

The University's essential functions are complex and can be influenced by the type and magnitude of a continuity event as well as the academic calendar. The COOP process at the college, division, and department levels in conjunction with the Business Impact Analysis (BIA), determines essential functions that support the mission of UHD. Information on personnel found to have essential function(s) within the colleges, divisions and departments is found in the respective department level COOPs. Each college, division or department is required to submit a copy of their updated COOP annually, or when significant changes occur, to the Continuity Coordinator for inclusion in the general Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

Each continuity member is selected based upon:

- Predetermined essential functions that must be performed, regardless of the operational status of UHD's primary operating facility
- The member's knowledge and expertise in performing these essential functions
- The member's ability to rapidly deploy to the relocation site in an emergency

People are critical to the operations of any organization. Selecting the right people for an organization's staff is vitally important, and this is especially true in a crisis. Leaders are needed to set priorities and keep focus. During a continuity event, emergency employees and other special categories of employees will be activated by the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) to perform assigned response duties. UHD maintains a searchable document listing essential personnel that can be found in Appendix J.

Continuity Roles and Responsibilities

This section provides general information related to the roles and responsibilities in continuity planning, activation, and reconstitution. This information may be modified as needed to fit the continuity event to ensure essential functions for the University are maintained. The lists provided are not representative of the entire role an individual or department may have during the planning process of or activation during a continuity event. The continuity roles should be reviewed annually within departments/divisions before the COOP's annual review.

University President

- Provide overall direction of continuity activities for all departments/divisions
- Authorize activation of the UHD Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
- Authorize cancellation of classes or a campus closure, if necessary

Emergency Management Board (EMB)

- Determine level of Readiness and Response by considering certain criteria

- Provide recommendations to the President on activation based on projected or actual impact and/or severity
- Develop a priority-based plan and schedule for continuity operations, reconstitution, and devolution (if necessary)
- Participate in the After-Action Review (AAR), Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and remedial action plan processes

General for All Departments

- Develop, maintain, and exercise departmental COOP plans to ensure essential university function can continue during a continuity event
- Provide copies of the department COOP plans to the Department of Emergency Management by annually no later than April 1 for electronic filing
- Print a hard copy of the department COOP for emergency readiness
- Store an electronic copy of the department COOP to be accessed via VPN (Virtual Private Networking) or direct means to a computer via portable hard drive or USB device
- Ensure personnel have been trained and are clear on their roles and responsibilities during a continuity event

Advancement and University Relations

- Provide updates to the campus community during a continuity event
- Lead department for campus side and crisis communications
- Develop accurate, accessible, and timely information for use in press/media briefings
- Monitor media information for rumor control

Academic Affairs

- Make recommendations for class cancellation to the President during a continuity event
- Distribute and coordinate decisions within academic units
- Coordinate teaching and course content delivery, assessment, and grading during a continuity event
- Provide student advising via electronic means or off-site locations
- Protect research assets

Human Resources

- Ensure payment of employees and processing of benefits via PeopleSoft or other means through University of Houston System (UHS) if PeopleSoft is unavailable for an extended period
- Maintain standard employee reports and implement a process to store the reports off-site
- Process new employees using PeopleSoft and People Admin systems if available. If the systems are not available, coordinate with UHS to use manual processes

Administration and Finance

- Manage financial operations for the University during an emergency and/or continuity event, including procurement, vendor payment, employee reimbursement, asset management, contracts, and accounting
- Monitor current continuity events for additional fiscal needs

Police Department

- Ensure safety and security of campus facilities, students, staff, faculty, and the public
- Protect intellectual property, research, public health, and the environment

Information Technology (IT)

- Identify, protect, and ensure availability of Essential Records
- Supply training on protection of systems and records
- Maintain communication capabilities for UHD, UHD Police Dispatch, executive leadership, and media relations
- Advise the EMB of hardware, software, and virtual requirements for continuity

Facilities Management

- Review contracts for needed recovery efforts and ensure the contracts are up to date
- Advise the EMB on the ongoing status of primary facilities and infrastructure during response, recovery, and activation of the Emergency Management (EMP) and Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans
- Provide guidance in the planning process of the EMP and COOP

Emergency Management

- Assist in the Business Impact and Business Process Analysis
- Lead the annual review and revision process of the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
- Coordinate with colleges, divisions and departments with department COOP plan development, maintenance, review, revision and exercising
- Submit a copy of the COOP to the State Office of Risk Management (SORM) on odd number years
- Monitor the incident and advise EMB
- Coordinate Emergency Relocation efforts
- Conduct After Action Review (AAR), Corrective Action Plan (CAP), and submit report to SORM on even numbered years

Continuity Personnel

University of Houston-Downtown has:

- Identified and designated those positions and personnel determined to be critical to UHD operations in any given emergency as continuity personnel. A roster of continuity positions

is maintained by the Divisions or Departments and is located within their department-specific COOP.

- Identified and documented its continuity personnel. Continuity personnel possess the skills necessary to perform essential functions and supporting tasks. A roster of continuity personnel is maintained by each Division or Department and is located within their department specific COOP.
- Continuity personnel have been informed by their supervisors of their roles or designations which is documented to ensure that continuity personnel know and accept their roles and responsibilities. Copies of this documentation is maintained by each Division or Department.
- Provided guidance to continuity personnel on individual preparedness measures they should take to ensure response to a continuity event using presentations, seminars, videos, and digital media. Copies of this guidance is maintained by the Department of Emergency Management.

All Personnel

It is important that UHD keeps all personnel, especially individuals not identified as continuity personnel, informed, and accounted for during a continuity event. UHD has established procedures for contacting and accounting for employees in an emergency, including operating status.

- UHD employees are expected to remain in contact with their supervisors during any facility closure or relocation situation using digital, telephony or other communication methods as determined by availability of communication resources.
- UHD ensures personnel are aware of and familiar with Human Resource (HR) guidance to continue essential functions during an emergency. UHD uses the following methods to increase awareness: telephony, text, email, social media, and publishing information to the UHD web page.

Accounting for all personnel during a continuity event is important. To account for all staff, UHD will use available technology including telephone, text, social media and/or email.

Personnel will provide status information to their supervisor or his/her designee. The supervisor, or his/her designee, is responsible for contacting those unaccounted for. The overall department accountability information will be reported to the division vice president or designee at intervals to be determined by the length of the operational period for response, recovery and/or COOP activation.

An event that requires the activation of the Continuity Plan may personally affect UHD personnel. Therefore, the Emergency Management Board (EMB), and/or designee(s), has the responsibility to create procedures to assist all staff, especially those who are disaster victims, with special Human Resources concerns following a catastrophic disaster. Victims may find sources for emergency provisions by visiting their county of residence office of emergency management, the Red Cross and/or the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) web sites.

Human Resources Considerations

UHD continuity program, plans, and procedures incorporate existing organization-specific guidance and direction for human resources management, including guidance on pay, leave/time off, work scheduling, benefits, telework, hiring, authorities, and flexibilities. The Office of Human Resources (HR) is responsible for UHD human resources issues. Copies of policies and guidance are located at <https://www.uhd.edu/hr/policies/index.aspx>.

The UHD Continuity Coordinator works closely with HR to resolve human resources issues related to a continuity event. The Vice President of HR or his/her designee serves as liaison to work with the Continuity Coordinator when developing or updating the organization's emergency plans.

UHD has developed organization-specific guidance and direction for continuity personnel on human resources issues. [This guidance](#) is maintained by HR and includes but is not exclusive to:

- Additional staffing
- Work Schedules and Leave/Time Off
- Employee Assistance Program
- Benefits

The Vice President of HR communicates human resources guidance for emergencies (pay, leave/time off, staffing, work scheduling, benefits, telework, hiring authorities and other human resources flexibilities) to the Emergency Management Board in an effort to help continue essential functions during an emergency. The process for communicating this information includes UHD website, Telegram, text, email, telephone, MS Teams, Zoom, or face to face communication.

RECONSTITUTION

During continuity operations, **UHD Facilities Management (FM)** will assess the status of the facilities affected by the event. Upon obtaining the facility's status, UHD will determine how much time is needed to repair the affected facility and/or acquire a new one. After replacement facilities are identified and acquired, personnel will be notified through various means of continuity communications. The reconstitution process will begin when the President, or his/her designee, ascertains that the emergency has ended and is unlikely to reoccur. Once this determination has been made, one or a combination of the following options may be implemented:

- Continue to operate from the continuity facility
- Reconstitute the UHD primary operating facility and begin orderly return to the facility
- Begin to establish a reconstituted UHD in some other facility in the metro area or at another designated location
- Personnel, equipment, and documents will return to the normal operating facility or move to another temporary or permanent primary operating facility upon verification that the required capabilities are available and operational, and all essential functions can be accomplished. The phase-down and return of personnel, functions and equipment will follow a priority-based plan and schedule established by the Emergency Management Board (EMB).
- Following incidents that require the closing of campus, UHD will implement a phased return to campus. Essential personnel will be notified by the leadership group for the initial phase. This group is responsible for securing the university, identifying any unsafe conditions, and initiating the process for creating a safe campus environment.

Information Technology (IT) will identify any records affected by the incident and will effectively transition or recover vital records and databases, as well as other records that have not been designated as vital records. The critical systems recovery process is found in the University of Houston-Downtown Information Technology Department Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan.

The Office of Human Resources will be responsible for developing a process for receiving and processing employee claims during the continuity event, including but not exclusive to, workman's compensation and overtime pay.

The Department of Emergency Management will conduct an After-Action Review (AAR) once it is back in the primary operating facility or established in a new operating facility. The Director of Emergency Management is responsible for initiating and completing the AAR. All members of the EMB and/or their designees will have the opportunity to provide input to the AAR. The AAR will study the effectiveness of the continuity plans and procedures, identify areas for improvement, document these in the UHD Corrective Action Plan (CAP), and then develop a remedial action plan as soon as possible after the reconstitution. The AAR for activation of the COOP may be combined with the AAR for the incident which prompted response and recovery. This will ensure cohesive efforts for improvement in all phases of emergency management and continuity.

Devolution of Control and Direction

Devolution of Control and Direction is the capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from an agency's primary operating staff and facilities to other agency employees and facilities and to sustain that operational capability for an extended period.

The University of Houston-Downtown is prepared to transfer all essential functions and responsibilities to personnel at a different location should emergency events render leadership or staff unavailable to support the execution of essential functions. The University of Houston-Downtown will transfer statutory authority and responsibilities of essential functions from the University's primary operating staff and facilities to one or more of the University of Houston System component university campuses' personnel and facilities in order to sustain that operational capability for an extended period.

BUDGETING AND ACQUISITION

Continuity planning is a good business practice and part of the fundamental mission in being a responsible and reliable public institution. It is critical for an organization to identify the people, communications, facilities, infrastructure, and transportation requirements necessary for the successful implementation and management of the organization's continuity program. In support of the program, it is necessary to align and allocate the budgetary resources needed to acquire and implement these requirements. Through the budgeting and planning process, the leaders and staff will ensure the availability and resilience of critical continuity resources needed to perform essential functions before, during and after a continuity activation.

UHD considered the following in developing the continuity budget and in making acquisition decisions:

- Identifying the budgetary requirements for addressing organizational resilience and continuity interdependencies in the performance of essential functions
- Providing for the acquisition of the resources necessary for continuity operations on an emergency basis
- Additional continuity factors such as probability of occurrence, mission priorities, and impact assessments
- Consider cost to have informed decisions about acceptable and unacceptable levels of risk and mitigation

To provide for the development, maintenance, and annual review of continuity capabilities, the UHD Multi-year Strategies and Program Management Plan (MYSPMP) must consider:

- Performance of essential function
- Both short-term and long-term goals and objectives for plans and procedures
- Issues, concerns, and potential obstacles to implementing the program, as well as addressing these when appropriate

- Planning, training and exercise activities and the milestones for accomplishing them
- Emergency Relocation Groups (ERG), infrastructure, communications, transportation, and other resources needed to support the program
- Budgetary requirements to support the program
- Risk management principles and primary operating facility and continuity facility risk assessments
- Geographic dispersion into normal daily operations
- Security strategies addressing personnel, physical, and information security to protect personnel, facilities, plans and capabilities
- A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) that draws upon evaluations, after-action reports, and lessons learned from tests, training, exercises, and real-world events

TEST, TRAINING, EXERCISES AND REAL EVENT SUMMARIES

All organizations must develop and maintain a continuity Test, Training, and Exercise (TT&E) program for conducting and documenting TT&E activities and identifying the components, processes, and requirements for the identification, training and preparedness of personnel needed to support the continued performance of essential functions.

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) maintains a TT&E program that complies with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) mandated National Exercise Program and the State Office of Risk Management (SORM) continuity requirements. UHD uses the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), for exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.

UHD has established an effective TT&E program to support the organization's preparedness and validate the continuity capabilities, program, and ability to perform essential functions during any emergency. The testing, training, and exercising of continuity capabilities is essential to demonstrating, assessing, and improving the UHD ability to execute the continuity program, plans, and procedures.

- Training familiarizes continuity personnel with their roles and responsibilities in support of the performance of an organization's essential functions during a continuity event.
- Tests and exercises serve to assess, validate, or identify for subsequent correction, all components of continuity plans, policies, procedures, systems, and facilities used in response to a continuity event. Periodic testing also ensures that equipment and procedures are kept in a constant state of readiness.

UHD formally documents and reports all conducted continuity TT&E events, including the event date, type, and participants. Documentation also includes test results, feedback forms, participant questionnaires, and other documents resulting from the event. Continuity TT&E documentation for UHD is managed by the department of Emergency Management. Further, UHD conducts a comprehensive debriefing or After-Action Review (AAR) after each exercise, which allows participants to identify systemic weaknesses in plans and procedures and recommend revisions to the organization's continuity plan.

UHD will develop a Correction Action Plan (CAP) to assist in documenting, prioritizing, and resourcing continuity issues identified during TT&E activities, assessments, and emergency operations. The UHD CAP will incorporate evaluations, AARs (After Action Report), and lessons learned from a cycle of events into the development and implementation of its CAP. UHD CAPs are maintained by the department of Emergency Management. UHD submits an Agency COOP Exercise/Real-World Event to SORM on odd numbered years.

UHD performs TT&E continuity tests, training, and exercises on an annual basis and submits a report to the State Office of Risk Management (SORM) every November on odd number years.

AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

Authorities

The University of Houston-Downtown Continuity of Operations Plan is under the authority of the following:

Federal

FEMA National Continuity Programs, Continuity Guidance Circular, February 2018

Executive Order (EO) 12656, Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities

National Security Presidential Directive 51/ Homeland Security Presidential Directive 20 (NSPD-51/HSPD-20), National Continuity Policy

Executive Order 12148, Federal Emergency Management

Executive Order 13618, Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Communications Functions

Presidential Policy Directive 8, National Preparedness

Presidential Policy Directive 40, National Continuity Policy

Presidential Policy Directive 21, Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience

State of Texas

Texas Administrative Code, 202.74, Institution Information Security Program

Texas Department of Information Resources: Continuing Education Guide for State Agency Information Resources Managers

Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, 2021-2025

Texas Department of Public Safety, Letter Dated October 24, 2013, Continuity Performance of Critical Government Functions

Texas Labor Code, Section 412.054, Continuity of Operations Plan

University of Houston-Downtown

University of Houston Board of Regents, Bylaws and Policies

University of Houston-Downtown Emergency Management Plan and Annexes

References

Federal

- FEMA Continuity Guidance Circular, February 2018
- FEMA Continuity Plan Template and Instructions for Non-Federal Governments

University of Houston System

UH System Board of Regents Bylaws and Policies - 02.02 Executive Officers

Administrative Memorandum 03.H.01 Fiscal Affairs Record Management: Records Retention

Administrative Memorandum 07.A.03 Information Technology Computing Services: Responsibilities for Information Technology Resources

Administrative Memorandum 07.A.07 Information Technology Computing Services: Use of Electronic Messaging Services by Employees

University of Houston-Downtown

PS 01.D.03 [Risk Management](#)

PS 01.D.04 [Emergency Closing](#)

PS 02.A.01 [Working Hours](#)

PS 02.A.02 [Employee Time Reporting](#)

PS 02.A.19 [Access to and Maintenance of Personnel Files](#)

PS 05.A.02 [Signature Authority of University Funds](#)

PS 05.A.06 [Contract Administration](#)

PS 05.C.01 [Procurement – General](#)

PS 05.C.05 [Emergency Purchase Orders](#)

PS 08.A.02 [IT Policies, Procedures, Standards and Plans](#)

PS 08.A.04 [Computer Access, Security and User Policy](#)

PS 09.B.02 [Release of Public Information](#)

ACRONYMS

AHJ	Authority Having Jurisdiction
BIA	Business Impact Analysis
BPA	Business Process Analysis
CAP	Corrective Action Program
CGC	Continuity Guidance Circular (FEMA)
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
DEM	Department of Emergency Management
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DIR	Department of Information Resources
EF	Essential Function
EMP	Emergency Management Plan
ERG	Emergency Relocation Group
HR	Human Resources
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
ICS	Incident Command System
ISO	Information Security Officer
IT	Information Technology
MEF	Mission Essential Function
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MYSMP	Multi-Year Strategy and Program Management Plan
NIMS	National Incident Management System
SORM	State Office of Risk Management
THIRA	Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
TT&E	Test, Training, and Exercise
UHD	University of Houston-Downtown
UHD PD	University of Houston-Downtown Police Department
UHS	University of Houston System

GLOSSARY

Activation: Once a continuity of operations plan has been implemented, *whether in whole or in part*, it is considered “activated.”

All-Hazards: The spectrum of all types of hazards including accidents, technological events, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, warfare, and chemical, biological including pandemic influenza, radiological, nuclear, or explosive events.

Alternate Facilities: Locations, other than the primary facility, used to carry out essential functions, particularly in a continuity event. “Alternate facilities” refers to not only other locations, but also nontraditional options such as working at home (teleworking), telecommuting, and mobile-office concepts.

Business Impact Analysis (BIA): A method of identifying the effects of failing to perform a function or requirement.

Business Process Analysis (BPA): A method of examining, identifying, and mapping the functional processes, workflows, activities, personnel expertise, systems, data, and facilities inherent in the execution of a function or requirement.

Continuity Communications: The ability of an organization to execute essential functions depends on the identification, availability and redundancy of critical communications and Information Technology (IT) systems to support connectivity among key leadership personnel, internal and external organizations, customers, and the public under *all* conditions.

Continuity Coordinator: University of Houston-Downtown employee trained in continuity planning and certified by a recognized organization such as FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute as Continuity Practitioner Level I or Level II or the Disaster Recovery Institute International as Certified Professional.

Continuity Event: Any event that makes it impossible for employees to work in their regular facility. This can be in response to a wide range of events or situations such as fire, a natural disaster, or the threat/occurrence of a terrorist attack.

Continuity Facilities: Locations, other than the primary facility, used to carry out essential functions, particularly in a continuity event.

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP): Defined in the National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan (NCP/IP) and the National Security Presidential Directive- 51/Homeland Security Presidential Directive- 20 (NSPD-51/HSPD-20), is an effort within individual executive departments and agencies to ensure that Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs) continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents and technological or attack-related emergencies.

Continuity Personnel: Those personnel, both senior and core, who provide the leadership advice, recommendations, and functional support necessary to continue essential operations.

Corrective Action Program: An organized method to document and track improvement actions for a program. The Corrective Action Program (CAP) system is a web-based tool that enables Federal, State, and local emergency response and homeland security officials to develop, prioritize, track, and analyze corrective actions following exercises or real-world incidents. Users may enter data from a finalized After-Action Report/Improvement Plan, track the progress of corrective action implementation, and analyze and report on trends in improvement plans.

Delegation of Authority: Identification, by position, of the authorities for making policy determinations and decisions at all organizational locations. Generally, pre-determined delegations of authority will take effect when normal channels of direction have been disrupted and will lapse when these channels have been reestablished.

Department Continuity of Operations Plan: Department and College/Division Continuity Plans provide procedures for sustaining essential functions and business operations while recovering from a significant interruption.

Devolution of Control and Direction: The capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from an agency's primary operating staff and facilities to other agency employees and facilities and to sustain that operational capability for an extended period.

Emergency Relocation Group (ERG): University of Houston-Downtown personnel designated to relocate to a continuity facility when the continuity plan is activated.

Essential Functions (EF): organizational functions that are determined to be critical activities and used to identify supporting tasks and resources that must be included in the agency's and organization's continuity planning process.

Essential Personnel: Those individuals that support the functions which enable an organization to provide vital services, exercise civil authority, maintain public safety and sustain industrial or economic base during an emergency.

Essential Records: Electronic and hardcopy documents, references, and records needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation. The two basic categories of Essential Records are (1) emergency operating records and (2) rights and interests records.

Human Capital: The emergency employees and other special categories of employees activated by an agency/organization to perform response duties during a continuity event.

Interoperable Communications: Communications that provide the capability to perform essential functions, in conjunction with other organizations/entities, under all conditions.

Mission Essential Functions (MEF): A broader set of essential functions that organizations must continue throughout or resume rapidly after a disruption of normal activities. These functions enable an organization to provide vital services, exercise civil authority, maintain public safety and sustain the industrial/economic base.

Multi-Year Strategy and Program Management Plan (MYSPMP): A plan providing for the development, maintenance, and annual review of continuity capabilities.

Orders of Succession: The order in which individuals are expected to succeed one another in an official position during an emergency if any of those officials are unavailable to execute their legal duties.

Reconstitution: The process by which surviving and/or replacement agency personnel resume normal agency operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility.

Ride Out Team: University of Houston-Downtown personnel assigned to remain on campus during an emergency or incident to ensure essential functions remain operational and uninterrupted.

Risk Analysis: The process by which risks are identified and evaluated.

Risk Assessment: The identification and assessment of hazards.

Risk Management: The process of identifying, controlling, and minimizing the impact of events whose consequences are or may be unknown, or events that are fraught with uncertainty.

Telework: The ability to work at a location other than the official duty station to perform work or emergency duties. This may include using portable computers, personal computers, high-speed telecommunications links, and mobile communications devices.

Test, Training, and Exercise (TT&E): Measures to ensure that an agency's continuity plan can support the continued execution of the agency's essential functions throughout the duration of a continuity event.

Vital Records Management: The identification, protection and ready availability of electronic and hard copy documents, references, records, information systems, data management software and equipment needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation.

Virtual Offices: An environment where employees are not co-located and rely exclusively on information technologies to interact and conduct their work across distance from multiple geographic locations.

PLAN MAINTANENCE AND DISTRIBIUTION

Maintenance

The COOP will be reviewed annually by May 1 and updated or revised as appropriate. The Director of Emergency Management will lead the review and revision process. Units within the organization having roles and responsibilities established by this plan are expected to alert the Director of Emergency Management of any changes regarding those roles/responsibilities that could substantively impact the COOP.

In compliance with Section 412 of the Texas Labor Code, the State Office of Risk Management (SORM) will review continuity plans and provide guidelines and models to state agencies. As necessary, the SORM will publish additional rules in the Texas Administrative Code as required to implement its continuity responsibilities. The SORM review and any additional published rules may result in changes to the COOP.

Additional interim revisions will be made when:

- A change occurs with a UHD site or facility configuration that materially alters the information contained in the plan or materially affects implementation of the plan
- A change occurs with a UHD policies, procedures, or departmental structure that alters the information in the plan or execution of the plan
- There are lessons learned and/or best practices identified from exercises and/or real-world events that should be incorporated
- There are changes in response resources, structure and/or policies of the agencies and/or organizations, public or private, with which inter-local agreements exist
- New laws, regulations or directives are implemented that affect the contents or implementation of the plan

Distribution

Copies of this plan and its appendices will be electronically distributed in compliance with Texas Education Code Subchapter E, Sec. 51.217, Subsection (f) to those campus leadership, departments and organizations tasked in this document.

Due to the sensitive nature of continuity plans and supporting documents, the COOP will be labeled *“For Official Use Only.”* Section 552.101 of the Texas Government Code exempts information from public disclosure if considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision. Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code provides that certain information, including information relating to risk or vulnerability assessments, critical infrastructure, and security systems, is confidential in specific circumstances.

RECORD OF CHANGES

Date of Change	Change #	Summary of Change	Entered by	Approved by
4/30/24	1	Added Attachments C-I to Appendix F: Emergency Communications Plan	Vargas	Davis
4/30/24	2	Added Bomb Threat Procedure and Bomb Threat Checklist to Appendix G: Bomb Threat Annex	Vargas	Davis
4/30/24	3	Updated SSSL Department name changes and added department COOPs for: Upward Bound, Talent Search, Gator Success, Dean of Students, Advocacy & Community, Basic Needs, and Academic Support Center & Supplemental Instruction	Alston	Davis
1/28/26	4	Removal of UH- Victoria campus as an alternate site. Removal of Ovidio Galvan	Ross	Vargas
4/16/26	5	Update information in Appendix A to reflect new department names.	Ross	Vargas

RECORD OF DISTRIBUTION

Date of Delivery	Method of Delivery	Number of Copies	Delivered to: Title/Dept/Name
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	UHD PD, Dispatch Office
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	UHD EOC, S244
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	President's Office, S990
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	President
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	VP A&F
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	VP Academic Affairs/Provost
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	VP Advancement & University Relations
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	VP Human Resources
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	VP Enrollment Management
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	VP Student Success & Student Life
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP Presidential Affairs/Constituent Services
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Chief of Police
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Asst. Chief of Police
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Director Emergency Management
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Director EHS/Risk Manager
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP Facilities Management
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP IT
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP University Relations
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Exec. Director University Relations
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Exec. Director IT
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Manager University Relations
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Emergency Mgmt. Specialist

July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Dean – College of Humanities & Social Sciences
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Dean- College of Sciences & Tech
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Dean- College of Business
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Dean- College Public Service
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP Advancement
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP, Faculty Affairs & Faculty Development
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP Enrollment
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP, Programming and Curriculum
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP for Student Success
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP for Student Life/Dean of Students
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Exec. Director Administration & Finance
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Exec. Director Library
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Title IX Officer
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	AVP Institutional Effectiveness
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Executive Director Academic Affairs
July 2026	Electronic Access - Teams	1	Executive Director Human Resources

Total Electronic Access	38
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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Department Level COOP Plans

Administration and Finance Division

- Accounts Payable and Travel
- Administration and Finance – VP Office
- Auxiliary Services Operations
- Budget Office Business Affairs
- Emergency Management
- Environmental Health & Safety
- Facilities Management
- General Accounting, Financial Reporting, and Property Management
- Information Technology (IT)
- Parking and Transportation
- Police Department
- Procurement and Contracts
- Student Business Services

Academic Affairs Division

- Academic Affairs and Provost – VP Office
- College of Public Service
- Distance Education
- Institutional Effectiveness
- Library

Advancement and University Relations Division

- Advancement and University Relations – VP Office

Enrollment Management Division

- Campus Solutions Services
- Enrollment Communications and Transition Programs
- Financial Aid Office
- Registrar's Office

Human Resources Division

- Human Resources – VP Office

Student Success and Student Life Division

- Academic Support Center & Supplemental Instruction
- Accessible Education Center
- Center for Career & Professional Development
- Counseling Services
- Dean of Students
- Gator Resource Center
- Gator Success Institute
- Sports and Fitness

Student Health
Student Leadership
Testing Services
TRIO Program
Veterans Services

Appendix B - Organizational Charts

Executive
Academic Affairs
Administration and Finance
Advancement and University Relations
Human Resources
Enrollment Management
Student Success and Student Life

Appendix C - Business Impact Analysis

Appendix D – Business Process Analysis

Appendix E - Continuity Facilities

UHD Lone Star College/UHD Northwest
University of Houston Central Campus
University of Houston Sugarland
University of Houston Clear Lake

Appendix F - Communications Plan

Appendix G - Emergency Management Plan

Appendix H – UHD Floor Plans

Appendix I – Pandemic Plan

Appendix J – Essential Personnel List