



# Continuity of Operations Plan

## Garfield County, Colorado



February 2012



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## **Overview**

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Garfield County is responsible to provide programs and services in support of the well being of County residents and the stability of the local economy. To ensure that the essential needs and safety of the public are continually met, Garfield County must be operationally prepared to continue providing the core of these services during any type of threat or emergency, and be able to effectively resume essential operations if they are interrupted.

This Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is promulgated under the authority of the Garfield County Manager. It provides information for the continuity of functions for the following departments: Airport, Building and Planning, Engineering, Finance, Human Resources, Human Services, Information Technology, Oil and Gas, Public Health, and Roads and Bridges.

The Garfield County Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan was developed using the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Headquarters Continuity of Operations (COOP) Guidance Document template dated April 2004. Based on that framework, Garfield County tailored this Plan to meet its own needs and requirements.

The guidance included in this plan meets all requirements of Federal Preparedness Circular (FPC) 65, Federal Executive Branch Continuity of Operations, Executive Order Number 12656.

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## **Purpose**

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This COOP provides the strategic guidance, objectives, performance measures, and resource requirements for implementation of the County's Continuity of Operations Program. It is part of a suite of plans and documents that together form a framework for risk reduction and resilience in the County, and define the actions that the County will take to reduce its risk, respond to disasters when they occur, and recover after the incident. This COOP document plays a critical role in that suite of plans. Its goal is to define the tasks, activities, and programs that the County must continue to provide to and for the public even in a disaster situation, and to outline the specific steps that the County will take to maintain these functions.

The Garfield County Continuity of Operations Plan is designed to be both flexible and scalable. Should County resources become limited or interrupted, the COOP can be activated for all departments or for only a small number of work groups as deemed appropriate by county leadership to address the resource shortfall. The County Manager and department directors have the authority to activate the COOP in the face of a crisis and in doing so, reassign available resources along the lines of the prioritized functions.

The COOP is intended to be updated on a regular schedule, so that in a disaster event it can be activated to assure the continued delivery of critical and essential functions. Using the guidance provided in this COOP, elements of the Garfield County government have developed, and can continue to develop, department-specific COOP plans and programs that provide for the continuity of essential functions. Department level plans supplement the broad analysis and inventory of this COOP and further enable Garfield County to provide vital services in the event of an emergency. Additionally, while this COOP encompasses only the departments under the

jurisdiction of the County Manager, all departments will need to understand the implications of COOP activation as it may impact intra-departmental relationships.

## **Situation**

COOP planning is a good business practice and part of the fundamental mission of agencies as responsible and reliable public institutions. Today's changing threat environment and recent emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, technological emergencies, and military or terrorist attack-related incidents, have increased the need for COOP capabilities and plans that enable agencies to continue their essential functions across a broad spectrum of emergencies.

Garfield County is located in west central Colorado and is the largest county in the State of Colorado. Garfield County has an estimated population of 56,389 (2010), and is composed of six incorporated communities: Carbondale, Glenwood Springs, New Castle, Parachute, Rifle, and Silt, while many smaller communities are spread out around the county. With about two-thirds of the land in the county under federal ownership, the main industries are government, energy development (oil and gas), tourism, ranching, and farming.

Like any public agency, Garfield County may experience an emergency situation that significantly impacts its ability to perform typical daily functions. The nature of the emergency could vary greatly, including but not limited to natural hazards (e.g., fires), human-caused events (e.g., acts of terrorism), and widespread illness (e.g., pandemic flu). Additionally, the duration of the emergency may vary, perhaps ranging from a few hours to days, or even longer.

This leads us to the purpose of COOP planning. We can plan and prepare for emergencies, but we cannot always prevent them. COOP planning improves the ability of departments, units and the County as a whole to continue or quickly resume critical functions when faced with limited resources during and after an emergency.

## **Assumptions**

What all emergencies have in common is an unexpected loss or limitation of critical resources—work space, supplies, equipment, technology, people—that support the work of the department or unit. For the purpose of COOP planning, the following general assumptions were made:

- In an emergency, all or part of county administrative offices, records, and equipment may be inaccessible.
- Data networks, communications, and utility services may be disrupted to county facilities or throughout the county.
- Critical hardcopy and digital records may be damaged or destroyed.
- An emergency event may directly impact county staff members, limiting their ability to participate in response and recovery activities.
- Priority functions must continue, even at a lower level of service.

## **Background**

### **COOP and Comprehensive Emergency Management**

In 2009 Garfield County began the development of a comprehensive Emergency Management program. This COOP is one of several plans and other efforts that have the goal of increasing the capacity of the county to be resilient to disruptions from natural, technological, or human induced disasters. In addition to this COOP, components of Garfield County's Comprehensive Emergency Management program currently includes:

- A county-wide Hazard identification and Risk Assessment that serves as a baseline of information for the Emergency Management Program
- A Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) (expected adoption date of February 2012). The NHMP meets the requirements set forth in the Disaster Mitigation act of 2000 and 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 201. The NHMP entails outreach to the community, public and private sector stakeholders, and coordination with existing planning processes to identify specific actions that might reduce the risk of disaster or impact of a hazard on the county
- A Long Term Recovery Plan (in development) following guidance provided by the National Response Plan which outlines Emergency Support Function #14, Long-Term Recovery.



## Plan Development and Maintenance

This continuity of Operations Plan contains a department level assessment of the functions that make up the administrative and programmatic aspects of the departments under the jurisdiction of the County Manager including: Garfield County Airport, Building and Planning, Engineering, Finance, Human Resources, Human Services, Information Technology, Oil and Gas, Public Health, and Roads and Bridges. This section describes the process used to develop the COOP and how Garfield County intends to maintain and update the plan.

### Identifying Functions

The COOP development process began with interviews of the department directors. These individuals described the administrative and programmatic tasks, called functions in the COOP, that are accomplished by staff on a daily or cyclic basis under normal conditions. The directors then divided the functions into three categories: Critical, Essential, and Recover as Needed.

Critical functions are functions that, even in the immediate response to an emergency, cannot be set aside. A function can be critical for several reasons. It may directly or indirectly support the life and safety of citizens, or it may be that failing to accomplish the function will exacerbate security issues, incur penalties or fines due to regulatory requirements, or because the continuation of that service is a cornerstone of other, related functions.

Essential functions can be delayed or continue with reduced service for up to several weeks after a large scale incident. Additionally, some functions may have a different level of criticality depending on when in the business calendar an interruption occurs.

- **Critical Functions** cannot be down under any circumstances or must be operational within 12 hours
- **Essential Functions** are not needed in the first 12 hours but do need to be operational and sustainable at some level within 30 days
- **Recover as Needed Functions** can relocate and resume business as resources permit

Grouping the functions in this way provides an important base of information to direct the prioritization and allocation of County resources during the critical hours and days following a hazard incident.

The category of the function (Critical, Essential, or Recover as Needed) implies a specific time frame for which the function can be suspended, or the Maximum Allowable Downtime (MAD).

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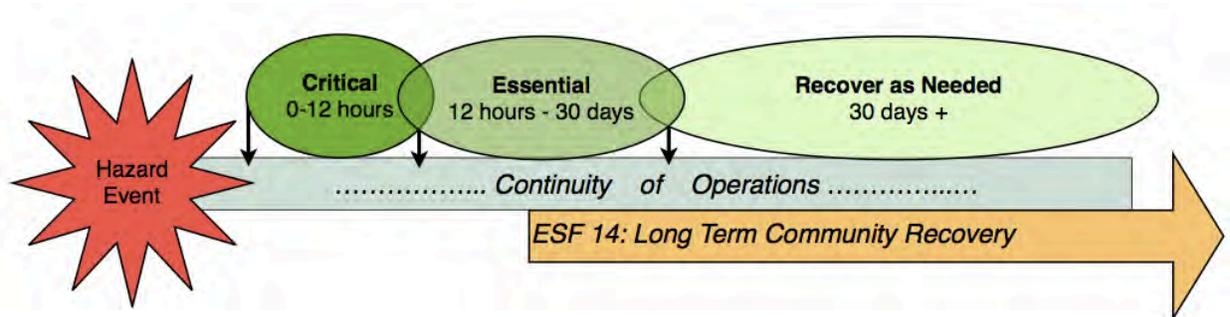
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#### The 4 COOP Questions

- 1: Describe the function (What do you do? Where and when does it get done? How critical is it? What resources do you need to do that task?)
  - 2: What would you do if you didn't have the staff?
  - 3: What would you do if you didn't your building or space?
  - 4: What would you do if you didn't have your resources?
-

While all of the functions fit into one of the three categories, each function can have a unique MAD as determined by the department director and applicable staff. Unlike a situation wherein regulations or requirements cause a function to be deemed critical, functions (such as reporting) may be somewhat flexible in the wake of a disaster but still have a time beyond which they cannot go unattended. Detailed descriptions of each function, including the Maximum Allowable Downtime, is included in the body of this COOP.

**Exhibit 1: Continuity of Operations timeline.**



**Required resources and key dependencies**

The next step to develop the COOP was to catalogue the resources required by each function at full operating capacity. This included answering the questions of primary and secondary locations; lead and support staff; key dependencies (e.g., minimum staffing requirements, technological needs, equipment, databases, etc), and coping strategies.

Coping strategies are actions that staff can take that ensure that the function continues. A simple coping strategy is overtime, or training multiple people to perform the task. More complicated strategies include modifying the task or relocating it. To identify the coping strategies, department directors and staff were asked three hypothetical questions:

- What if the building or space normally used was unavailable?
- What if the technology (internal networks or program, internet) normally used was unavailable?
- What if the people who normally do the task are unavailable?

**County-wide analysis**

The information about each function was compiled into a database that provides an easy and fast way to cross-reference functions across various departments. The functions can be grouped by criticality or by required resources. In this way, county leadership can see, at a glance, what resources must be restored in the wake of a disaster if the County is to continue to provide the services expected by County residents. The full Garfield County Function Matrix is included as an appendix to this COOP and is included, in part, throughout the COOP.

**Maintenance**

The County Manager will have overall responsibility for updating and managing this plan or delegating the responsibility to the County Steering Committee. The goal is to keep the COOP as

up to date as possible to reflect the daily functions, staffing and protocols of the county departments. As inputs to the COOP are updated, such as a reorganization of a department, modified function due to changes in staffing or mission, or physical relocation of the function, that information should be documented and incorporated into the appropriate section of the COOP.

To ensure that the information in the COOP remains current, the following maintenance process and update schedule has been approved:

- County Steering Committee will conduct a yearly review of the COOP front material, introductory, and summary material. This yearly review will be guided by the following questions: 1) has anything changed that needs to be captured in the COOP?; and 2) What additional information or data is available now that needs to be incorporated into the COOP (e.g., lessons learned from exercises or real incidents, deeper understanding of dependencies due to system analysis, etc)?
- Additionally, each year the review process will include an in-depth review and update of one portion of the COOP (e.g., a department's set of functions, "Vital records, files, and databases", etc). Depending on the changes, the sections can either be updated or rewritten to enhance the functionality of the COOP.
- Contact Information and Succession Hierarchy (Appendix A) will be updated quarterly.

Additionally, the COOP is intended to be a living document and can be expanded upon. The process used to develop the COOP is outlined above and can easily be applied to additional county departments thereby enhancing the resilience of the county.



## **Continuity Plan**

The County Manager is the designated individual with the authority to make emergency response decisions affecting all departments.

### **Leadership and activation**

#### **Orders of Succession and Delegation of Authority**

The following succession of authority applies if the County Manager is unavailable

1. County Manager
2. County Attorney
3. Road Supervisor / General Foreman
4. Director of Building and Planning
5. Director of Public Works and Facilities

When an incident occurs, the County Manager and department directors will take the lead in activating the Continuity Plan and coordinate with the County Sheriff and County Emergency Manager who will lead response.

#### **Reconstitution**

After a hazard incident that is extensive enough to require the activation of the Continuity of Operations Plan, the distinction between continuity activities and recovery activities may not always be clear. An incident could be on such a scale that it alters what the County Administration and Citizens consider a critical or essential function. Therefore, this Continuity of Operations Plan identifies only characteristics of reconstitution while the County Recovery Plan will identify more concrete steps involved in the reconstitution of normal operations and recovery from a disaster.

Signs of the deactivation of the Continuity of Operations Plan may include: .

- Communication to staff that threat of an emergency no longer exists
- Return to primary location, established functions in a long term location
- Returned to fully operational level of all functions or assessment of pre-incident functions with determination of their continued relevance / need to be replaced by new functions
- The impact to records and databases has been assessed
- The impact to staffing has been assessed
- The impact to county residents has been assessed
- The impact to county facilities has been assessed

- After action review of the effectiveness of the continuity plans and procedure is underway
- Recovery plan is activated

The County Manager or an individual with the delegated authority will coordinate with the department lead to identify how the Continuity of Operations Plan will be deactivated for each component of the County Administration and communicate that with the appropriate staff.

## **Communication**

This section includes methods or opportunities to discuss business continuity issues.

- Green Acres, Monthly: periodic newsletter from the County Manager to Garfield County Staff.
- County-wide email listserve: allows County administration to communicate via email to all county staff.
- Departmental listserves: managed within each department to disseminate pertinent information among staff.
- Phone Tree: collected within a department if warranted by the manager or director.
- County Website: an information source for County staff and residents.
- Emergency communications methods and protocols are include din the Emergency Operations Plan.

## **Devolution and Relocation**

A catastrophic event could render any, or all, of the Garfield County facilities unusable. This section of the Continuity of Operations Plan includes information that addresses the personnel and planning considerations needed to transfer functions away from the primary facilities.

The rural nature of much of the county, and the dispersed population centers, are challenges when it comes to offering and delivering county services. Winter weather and fire incidents have, in the past, cut off access to some sections of the county. To overcome the potential impacts of those hazards, as well as to better serve the county population under normal conditions, Garfield County administration already operates from several locations throughout the county. These strategic locations, as well as the experience the staff and administration have in dealing with hazards that may cut off access between the communities, means that Garfield County has the capability and capacity to relocate critical and essential functions from a compromised location to an alternate facility.

Through the development of coping strategies, the following devolution plan was identified:

- The County Administration building in Glenwood Springs and the County Airport in Rifle are currently interoperable both in terms of staffing and data infrastructure. Many functions that are based in the County Administration building have staff at the Airport as well or there are reserved workstations at the Airport. This provides built in redundancy and would allow for swift resumption of the function at the other location. Information Services maintains a robust hardware, software, and data

- connection between the two facilities. While the unique airport functions cannot be relocated due to specific facility requirements (e.g, runway), airport staff could be relocated to the County Administration building if the Airport facility was not usable.
- Under normal operations, the Garfield County Roads and Bridges Department maintains two primary facilities. They serve 3 districts, including District 1 (East of Canyon Creek), District 2 (West of Canyon Creek and North of the Colorado River), and District 3 (West of Canyon Creek and South of the Colorado River). The Primary administration offices are at the Hunter Mesa Facility near the County Airport. The location of resource and staff across the County provides redundancy and allows for swift resumption of these functions.

### **Critical Functions**

The following list of functions have been deemed “critical” by Garfield County executive staff. This designation implies that maintaining these functions, even in the face of an incident or emergency, is central to protect life and property and ensure the continuity of governance. Some of the functions are not always critical but could become critical based on the nature of the incident, Additionally, the “critical” designation may reflect the centrality of that function according to guiding rules and regulations and /or for the overall economic or social well being of the County.

<b>Maximum Allowable Down Time</b>	<b>Critical Functions</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>
(3 hours)	Radio Communications (is this just for airport or county wide?)	Public Works
(72 hours)	Rifle Airport Facility	Airport
(72 hours)	Rifle Airport Security	Airport
(6 hours)	Building Evaluation	Building & Planning
(4 hours)	Rapid Assessment	Engineering
(5 hours)	Visa Limits	Finance
(0 hours)	Child / Adult Protection Services	Human Services
(0 hours)	Food Assistance / TANF	Human Services
(24 hours)	Unified Communications	IT
(24 hours)	Computing Hardware Support	IT
(24 hours)	Support Finance Data	IT
(0 hours)	HIPPA Compliance	Public Health
(0 hours)	Epidemiology*	Public Health
(0 hours)	TB Control Program*	Public Health
(0 hours)	Communications	Public Health
(0 hours)	ESF 8: Public Health and Medical Services	Public Health
(6 hours)	Volunteer Coordination	Public Health
(2 hours)	Emergency Medical Supplies Cache*	Public Health
(14 days)	Air Pollution*	Public Health
(6 hours)	Equipment Repair / Mechanical Support	Roads & Bridges
(6 hours)	Infrastructure Inspection	Roads & Bridges

\* *Criticality determined by the type of hazard incident.*

## **Shared Dependency Findings**

### ***Damage and facility assessment***

- This includes the ability to triage the situation
- The need will vary based on the incident
- Resources include: Building and Planning (Building Evaluation); Engineering (Rapid Assessment); Public Health (Air Pollution)

### ***Alternate locations***

- Airport listed most often as an alternate site
- Other county buildings could house functions temporarily
- Home offices are viable if set up ahead of time
- Information services, technology, and communications (internal communications) will be key to implementing relocation to an alternate site. Connectivity is paramount for response and recovery
- Self-sufficiencies within departments can ease the tasks of central IS to find alternate modes
- External dependencies on state or federal databases require connectivity via internet, but downtime cannot be controlled at the County level

### ***Public Information / outreach (external communications)***

- Existing communication channels should be used during an incident
- Incident status updates regarding continuity should be shared widely
- Gathering data from the community about their needs related to continuity will ensure effective response
- Key offices include PIO office, Volunteer Coordination (Public Health), Communications (Public Health)

### ***Personnel***

- Trained staff with specific expertise is called for in nearly every function, therefore cross-training is helpful to ensure continuity for large or small incidents
- Cross training facilitated through the development of a task list or procedure manuals
- Staff are not only employees, but also county residents and should take steps to prepare at home

### ***Federal and state regulations and requirements***

- Compliance with codes and regulations must be maintained through an incident; documentation required to support this

- Primarily concerns from programs within Human Services and Public Health

### **Vital Files, Records, and Databases**

County functions require the ability to interact with many different files, records and databases. Some of these are County owned or hosted, while some are under the jurisdiction of other groups such as state or federal agencies. To ensure that Garfield County critical functions can operate normally, connection to this information must be maintained or restored quickly following any interruption.

<b>Vital File, Record, or Database</b>	<b>Form of Record (e.g., hardcopy, electronic)</b>
State Building Regulations	
County Building Permits	Electronic, County hosted
County records of building “as-built” specifications	
State Trails database	Web Access
Colorado Benefit Management Systems (CBMS)	Web Access
Inventory of IT hardware and software	
Inventory of County communications hardware	
New World System & DB Server	
Public Health security monitoring	
Colorado Electronic Disease Reporting System (CEDRS)	Web Access
Air quality database	
Colorado Volunteer Management System	Web Access
Payroll System	Web Access
Purchase Order Database & Accounting program	
Personnel Files	Hard Copy
EBT	Web Access
ACSES	Web Access
CFMS	Web Access
Colorado WIC Database	Web Access
State Public Health Databases	Web Access
Colorado Medicaid	Web Access
Motor Pool register	Electronic, County



## Recommendations

Actions	Justification	Implementation	Timeline	Status
<b>Develop a list of alternate locations and requirements for relocation of each department</b>	A closer look at the space and technical requirements of the critical functions will assist the County to provide services in the event of disruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct needs assessments with each department manager to expand on the COOP date regarding relocation requirements</li> <li>- Utilize GIS to map County offices in various locations to identify the characteristics of that space.</li> <li>- Cross-reference the technical needs and space characteristics data</li> </ul>	1-2 years	
<b>Develop an Information technology continuity and recovery plan</b>	Data and connectivity are central to many of the County's functions. Restoring this critical input will facilitate a quick recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Catalogue current back up procedures</li> <li>- Establish 3<sup>rd</sup> party and/or off-site data back up locations</li> </ul>	1 year	
<b>Conduct tests or an exercise of the IT back up and recovery protocol</b>	Many of the County's functions rely on data and specific networking. Testing the data recovery protocols will ensure that in the event of a disruption that it can be restored as quickly as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with each department to scope and schedule a test of data recovery</li> </ul>	1-2 years	
<b>Conduct a test of the Garfield County continuity and recovery protocols.</b>	Testing the continuity and protocols will ensure that in the event of a disruption, operations can be restored as quickly as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop department-specific schedules for a test</li> <li>- Request volunteer departments or individuals to practice relocation of critical functions</li> </ul>	2-3 years	



## **Appendices**

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### ***Appendix A: Contact Information and Succession Hierarchy***

This information is available from the Garfield County BOCC administration, 970-945-5004.

### ***Appendix B: Evacuation Routes***

This information is available from the Garfield County Property Management Department, 970-625-5921.