

What is Continuity Planning?

Continuity Planning is a proactive planning process that ensures that essential services are maintained during a disruption. It is not about resuming operations or recovering assets after a disaster but rather about ensuring that essential services continue to be available during the disaster with little or no interruption.

Steps in the Planning Process

1. Appoint a pandemic coordinator/steering committee to oversee the planning process over all service units.
2. Identify the essential services that must be maintained by location and function.
3. Appoint a planning team within each essential service unit to:
 - a. Identify essential employees
 - b. Identify the required skill sets of these employees (certification; licenses)
 - c. Identify opportunities for cross-training/staff relocation/staff containment
4. Prepare a Continuity Plan for each essential service.
5. Write a Pandemic Preparedness Checklist to track the planning process.
6. Monitor, test and revise each plan as required.

Issues to Consider

- Training of an ancillary workforce (volunteers, contractors, retirees)
- The liability, insurance, regulatory and licensing requirements for such a workforce
- Collective agreements with respect to staffing shortages, increased overtime, absence policies, and contract/ancillary workers

- Occupational Health & Safety Legislation/Employment Standards/Labour Act
- The feasibility of flexible worksites and flexible hours
- Enhancing IT infrastructure to support telecommuting/remote access
- Containment measures for highly skilled employees
- Immunization policies and ethical issues
- Provision of infection control supplies
- Infection control measures (i.e., ill employees who report to work)
- Employee access to and the availability of healthcare services during the pandemic
- Employee access to mental health and other community support services during the pandemic
- Employee special needs (medication)
- Sick leave absence policies unique to a pandemic
- Legislative and legal framework - does your Business Continuity Plan conform?