

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

Sample Template for Schools

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Developing a Continuity of Operations Plan for your School

Given the increased awareness of the potential for both natural and man-made disasters to occur in our area of the world, it is very important that schools develop strategies to deal with potential emergencies in an effort to protect students, staff and property and to maintain educational services. A timely response to an emergency, a clear plan on how to move forward, and open lines of communication will help ensure that families and staff are supported emotionally and physically and that normal school operations can resume as quickly as possible.

An emergency management plan (referred to in the insurance industry as a disaster recovery or business continuity plan) is a vital addition to an organization's safety and loss control program, as it attempts to control the effects of a disaster and minimize the disruption resulting from such an event. The development of the School Emergency Management Plan ("SEMP") is addressed in the ***SCSBC Emergency Handbook – Responding to a School Emergency*** and in the province's ***[Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, Districts and Authorities](#)*** (see ***[Additional Resources](#)***).

While the SCSBC Emergency Handbook focuses primarily on the protection of students and staff, there are certain emergencies which do not threaten the safety of people within the school but can cause significant disruption to school operations, such as ransomware, malware, theft or loss of data, denial of service, or disruptions to communications systems. These are more often the responsibility of the business and IT departments, and planning a response to these incidents is also important. The purpose of this template is to act as a supplement to the SCSBC Emergency Handbook, specifically addressing in more detail Section 5 – Recovery – Continuity of Operations Plan ("COOP") and some of the insurance considerations related to business interruptions and cybercrime.

A SEMP template can be found in the SCSBC Emergency Handbook. The completed plan, along with the COOP, may be requested by the school's insurance carrier, so it is important to ensure that all aspects of the plan are collected in one location for insurance purposes.

Note that not every emergency will require all aspects of the SEMP to be implemented but having a framework in place will provide guidance on what actions may be needed in a particular circumstance. For example, ransomware holding the school's accounting data would not require an evacuation of the building, but the aspects of the SEMP relating to data backup and recovery can be put into action.

The SCSBC wishes to acknowledge and thank Westland Insurance and CapriCMW Insurance for providing sample documents that were used in the preparation of this template for schools.

Risk Management

It is unrealistic to protect every aspect of a school's operations against every conceivable disaster - the cost would be prohibitive and the probability of occurrence of some types of disasters may be minimal. However, it is important to identify the risk exposures that do exist and disasters and/or emergencies that are more likely to occur and to prepare a SEMP that addresses those types of events. Each school should have a risk management program in place which identifies areas of risk and implements policies and procedures to monitor, reduce or eliminate potential exposures to loss. The SEMP is just one component of that program. Although it is difficult to predict and develop all recovery procedures before a disaster, the development of procedures in the middle of a crisis is far more difficult. Contingency planning is therefore the key to effective recovery.

The SEMP Template

A SEMP template is provided in the SCSBC Emergency Handbook. The template covers the following areas related to emergency management planning:

1. The Emergency Management Team
2. The school profile
3. Community key contacts
4. Emergency response procedures
5. Critical incident response plan
6. Student release plan
7. Equipment and supplies
8. Staff education and training
9. The Emergency Communication Plan
10. Hazard-specific responses
11. Recovery steps (including the COOP)

Additional Resources

1. SCSBC Emergency Handbook: access to this is through the SCSBC Portal
2. Provincial Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery information:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery>
3. The Disaster Recovery Guide:
<http://www.disaster-recovery-guide.com/>
4. BC Emergency Management Planning for Schools, Districts and Authorities:
Includes the Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, the BC Education Sector Integrated Response Plan to a Catastrophic Emergency, and various forms and templates
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/safe-caring-and-orderly-schools/emergency-management-planning-guide>

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Template

Emergency Information			
Item	Description	Staff Responsible	Completed
I1	Emergency Management Team: the Incident Command Structure identifies the key personnel responsible for carrying out the various aspects of the disaster recovery plan	Part of SEMP	
I2	List of local emergency contacts (police, fire, ambulance, gas and electric utilities, municipal government, Ministry of Education, etc.)	Part of SEMP	
I3	Current and complete list of all staff and their contact information, including cell numbers.	Part of SEMP	
I4	Current and complete class lists	Part of SEMP	
I5	Current and complete list of all parents and their contact information, including cell numbers.	Part of SEMP	
I6	Current and complete list of key vendors and their contact information, including insurance providers, lawyers, banks and software suppliers. Include contact info for contractors that may be needed during an emergency, such as debris removal, flood restoration, movers, etc.		
I7	Current and complete list (including photos/videos) of all equipment, furniture, vehicles.		
I8	Building plans or drawings including location of utility shut off valves, fire hydrants, chemical storage or other hazardous materials (see also Property Protection section)	Part of SEMP	
I9	Insurance documents including copies of most recent property appraisal		
I10	Office and financial procedures manuals, in the event key staff are absent		

Property Protection

Item	Description	Staff Responsible	Completed
P1	<p>Loss mitigation – implement certain changes or upgrades to mitigate potential losses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seismic upgrades • Flood walls or other flood protection devices • Use of fire-resistant materials and furnishings • Securing shelving to walls • Anchoring water tanks or securing to walls • Securing computer monitors and televisions with Velcro • Moving workstations away from windows • Installing impact-resistant film, curtains, blinds or storm shutters on windows • Ensuring building protection systems are installed, maintained and professionally inspected regularly (e.g. alarms, sprinklers, fire extinguishers, water monitoring, shut off valves, emergency power, etc.) <p>Note that many of the above items should be part of the school’s ongoing facilities maintenance plan.</p>		
P2	<p>Facility shutdown – determine the process for a shutdown of the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions that necessitate a shut down or partial shut down • Who decides on the shutdown • Who carries out the shutdown procedures • Communication to parents, staff, etc. • Securing the building during a shutdown • Impact of a partial shutdown on other operations • Length of time to restart operations 	Part of SEMP	

P3	<p>Records protection - determine which records are vital to operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency information listed above • Financial records • Student records • Employee records <p>Implement methods to protect and access records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent data back-ups stored offsite • Rigorous data security protocols including firewalls, anti-virus protection, multi-factor authentication, vulnerability assessments, penetration testing, intrusion detection, audit logs, etc. • Keep software versions up to date. When using cloud storage, understand responsibilities for updates and patches. • Data inventories and data collection process mapping help you understand when/where data is collected and where it may be vulnerable. Consider both electronic and paper records. • Understand use of third party contractors for digital services. Establish security measures and penalties in those agreements. • Encrypted laptops, USBs and other portable devices • Policies and procedures regarding secure destruction of personal information at end of useful life • Appoint a school privacy officer, promote privacy and security awareness and training for employees, and limit access to personal data on a “need to know” basis. Understand reporting requirements for privacy breaches. • Fire-proof cabinets • Back-up computer systems with all required software available at an off-site work location in the event of a facility shutdown • Back-up power requirements • Use of third-party service providers if required (consider mutual aid arrangements with other schools) • Thorough office and financial procedures manuals and alternate staffing arrangements in case of the absence of key personnel 		
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P4	<p>Building information – building and site maps that include all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility shutoffs • Water hydrants • Water main valves and water lines • Gas main valves and gas lines • Electrical cut-offs and substations • Storm drains • Sewer lines • Location of each building (street name and number) • Floor plans • Alarms • Fire extinguishers • Fire suppression systems • Exits • Stairways • Designated evacuation routes • Restricted areas • Hazardous materials (cleaning supplies, chemicals) • High-value items (e.g. computer server) 	Part of SEMP	
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Recovery and Restoration

Item	Description	Staff Responsible	Completed
R1	Procurement and logistics – create a list of any crucial supplies needed for restoration of school operations and assign responsibility for procurement (purchase or borrowing from other organizations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School supplies • Basic furniture and classroom equipment • Bus transportation for students depending on temporary location • Administrative supplies 		
R2	School operations – determine facilities needed for restoring operations and assign responsibility for organizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for both academic and administrative functions • Other school campus or campuses • Temporary structures (portables/trailers) • Previously arranged offsite locations (library, university, church, etc.) • Consider mutual aid arrangements with other nearby schools or organizations 		
R3	Human resources and planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and communicate ways for staff to work from home until temporary facilities are in place, including possible on-line instruction and email communication with students • Assign staff to new locations, or to new roles if necessary • Adjust class schedules and timetables as needed • Adjust curriculum plans to revised timetables • Provide for manual record-keeping for students if required • Reschedule any planned events, e.g. field trips, athletic events, concerts, graduation, etc. • Maintain payroll operations • Keep staff informed of status/progress and provide ongoing support as needed 		

R4	<p>Information technology – determine technology needs for restoring school operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider both academic and administrative functions • Work with the staff member responsible for arranging alternate facilities • Include both hardware and software needs – computers, printers, photocopiers, educational and accounting software, internet, servers • Plan for and regularly test data recovery and restoration from back up files • Redirect email and telephone • Update website – details of emergency event, new locations, new contact information • Complete damage assessment along with insurance company and plan for repairs and replacements as needed 		
R5	<p>Facilities – working with the insurance company, assess facility damage and create plans for repair or replacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider need for professional recovery firm • Arrange for clean-up and debris removal • Secure any hazardous materials • Communicate with municipality regarding necessary permits and licenses • Contact subcontractors for restoration and repair (depending on size and scope, a small committee may be needed for supervision of work) 		
R6	<p>Finances – maintain key financial operations during the interruption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payroll, including government tax remittances and extended benefits premiums • Mortgage payments • Provincial and federal government reporting, such as GST, charity information return, societies registrar, audits, etc. • Contact vendors regarding revised payment schedules, new delivery/mail locations, etc. • Track all expenses for insurance claim, separating costs related to the repair of property & equipment, the interruption of business operations, and any costs under the cybercrime policy 		

Maintenance of the Plan

Item	Description	Staff Responsible	Completed
M1	<p>Conduct drills and exercises periodically to ensure the plan is complete and staff understand their roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation sessions: provide info and answer questions • Tabletop exercises: the EMT meets to discuss possible emergency situations and their tasks • Walk through exercises: the EMT actually performs their emergency functions on a test basis • Functional drills: specific functions such as medical response, communications, or data recovery are tested and reviewed • Evacuation drills: evacuations are conducted, reviewed and modifications made if necessary • Full scale exercises: these simulate real emergency situations and involve all staff and emergency responders 	Part of SEMP (data recovery testing may need to be done separately)	
M2	<p>Train employees – training ensures the fastest responses to minimize injuries and damage. General training should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual roles and responsibilities • Information about threats, hazards and protective actions • Notification, warning and communications procedures • Emergency response procedures • Evacuation, shelter and accountability procedures • Location and use of common emergency equipment • Emergency shutdown procedures <p>Consider training requirements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMT and key personnel • All remaining personnel • Facility visitors: contractors/on-call staff/volunteers/parents 	Part of SEMP	

M3	<p>Annual review of the SEMP – conduct an annual audit of the SEMP to ensure it is still complete and accurate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any changes in the facility or lay out • Any changes in key staff • Any changes in contact information • Any changes in IT systems or software • Any changes in community disaster response plans • Remember to communicate any plan changes in subsequent training 	Part of SEMP	
M4	<p>Insurance - review your insurance policies annually with your insurance broker and consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the property valued? Does the contents value reflect replacement cost? • If co-insurance is in place, is the coverage value adequate? • Which perils or losses are covered? (Earthquake and flood are sometimes limited) • What are the deductibles? • Does the insurance policy cover upgrades to current building codes? • What does the policy require the school to do during a loss? What records are required? • How long is the coverage period for an interruption of business? Does it cover loss of tuition income after an emergency event? • Does the school have a cyberrisk insurance policy in place to protect for losses due to cybercrime, such as ransomware, malware, fraudulent use of data, etc.? Are there any policy exclusions such as social engineering or extortion, or limits on costs for data restoration? <p>Notes: <i>Business interruption insurance</i> provides for expenses incurred during an insurable event to keep the organization running, i.e. payroll, rent of alternate space, purchase of new supplies, etc., and all schools should have this policy in place. Your broker can provide a worksheet to help calculate the amount of coverage your school needs. <i>Cyber risk insurance</i> provides for losses incurred due to cybercrime such as privacy breaches, cyber extortion, hacking, and viruses, and their associated business interruption and regulatory costs. Talk to your broker about the amount of coverage your school needs.</p>		