<u>Business Continuity Plan Template for Alberta Region</u>

Introduction

A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is key for maintaining the operations of essential services and programs, along with administrative and business functions, during unanticipated disruptions caused by an emergency. This may be a result of any number of hazards such as environmental, health, social, or technological, to name a few. In addition, the BCP outlines procedures for mitigating risks, steers recovery, and protects infrastructure. The following outline offers areas to consider in a check-list format for the creation or execution of a BCP for communities or operational entities.

Mechanism

An all-hazards approach to emergencies and health emergencies requires an effective application for identifying likely hazards and assessing their impact on the community. The Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) model allows for prioritization of attention and promotes the processes associated with mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery (see Appendix).

This process can be used as a template for the all-hazards approach to emergencies. To ensure clear collaboration and comprehension in planning, the process should be continuous and methodical, involving all key partners, with open discussion on evolving conditions and possible emerging Hazards.

<u>Risk assessment</u>

As described above, and in the appendix, though an all-hazards approach to emergencies is important, identifying those hazards with a greater risk depending on geographical, environmental, social, or political influence is key. This may include:

- Environmental hazards (floods, earthquakes, hurricanes)

- Health emergencies (infectious disease outbreaks)

- Technological hazards (power outages, data breaches, cyberattacks)

- Social crises (civil unrest, workplace violence)

<u>Impact analysis</u>

As part of the HIRA model, infrastructure and services are assessed to ensure mitigative measures are realized. This may include considering impacts of hazards on areas such as:

- Emergency services and First Responders

- Utilities (water, electricity, gas)

- Communication system

- Grocery and supply chain

- Education facilities and childcare

- Public transportation

- Social, health, and mental health supports

- Community social services

- Community wellness events and recreational activities / infrastructure

- Emergency shelters and evacuation provision

Objectives and Response

Community Leadership

- Ensure continuity of health, safety, and protection of community members, personal and public property, and key infrastructure

- Minimize economic loss

- Maintain critical functions of the community

- Enable seamless recovery and quickest return to sense of normalcy

- Ensure quick, honest, and valuable communication

- Monitor events to identify and mitigate potential risks that may impact response and recovery phases

- Reemphasis community resilience

Essential Services

- Identify key essential services and relevant partners

- Protect the health and safety of staff

- Ensure accessibility of urgent healthcare services throughout response and recovery phases

- Maintain critical operations with minimal disruption

- Implement procedures for rapid response, recovery, and communication

- Monitor situational awareness to promptly mitigate potential risks that may impact operations

Post-Response / Recovery / Planning

As the paradigm of emergency management is cyclic, the Recovery phase often includes the early conversations of planning for the next event that will see the BCP actioned. Recovery from the installation of the BCP requires an assessment and subsequent methodical reintegration of "normal operations". This includes:

- Review of backlogs due to service disruption

- Restore processes where and as soon as possible

- Ensure that any ongoing response and recovery projects continue to be prioritized frequently as the event evolves, such as continuous assessment of damaged infrastructure

- Development of a methodical plan for staff reintegration

- When time allows, a gradual introduction of After-Action Report (AAR) assessments. This can be established via interview, questionnaire, or debrief format to better promote future outcomes. This will evaluate what areas of the BCP response should be sustained, as well as those areas that should be improved

Preparedness

Upon thorough collection and interpretation of findings through a post-response AAR, further planning through the preparedness phase allows experimental execution of lessons-learned prior to future BCP actions.

- Training sessions through table-top or discussion format on policies, protocols, and procedures relevant to the BCP from a community and operational position

- Staff and community reassurance that essential service providers are capable of ensuring well-being, productivity, and operational continuity

Governance and Roles

A Business Continuity Plan should be considered upon confirmation of an emergency. To ensure an effective BCP is in place, key partners are required to oversee execution of the plan and all pertinent communication is distributed. A BCP should be administered by, but not limited to, the following positions:

- Executive Leadership: for overall control, implementation, and decision-making

- IT: to ensure adequate infrastructure and backup ability, technology capability, and remote work capacity is available

- Facilities Manager: ensures that physical facilities are operational, safe, accessible, and functional

- HR: maintains staffing requirements and ensures that employees are informed about their roles within the BCP

- Crisis communications team: ensure internal and external communications strategies are met, coordinating with widest lens of partnerships, and in coordination with a published comms plan

- Health and safety operations: ensures the physical well-being of essential services, staff, and public when necessary, while taking into account appropriate preventive health (to include any requirement to quarantine, practice social distancing, or provide personal protective equipment (PPE))

Conclusion

A comprehensive Business Continuity Plan is crucial for ensuring that a community, business, or operational entity has the capacity to identify, establish, and maintain emergency

essential services in the event of an emergency. By continuing a cyclic process of mitigating / planning, preparing, responding, and recovering, the risk of hazard on a community can be decreased. This process maintains trust and minimizes the emergency's impact on the human dynamic, influencing resilience and quicker recovery.

Appendix – Pressure and Release model of Risk

Risk can be best assessed by use of the "Pressure and Release Model", in which *Risk = Vulnerability x Hazard*. In this equation, *Vulnerability* is the combination of *Root Causes* (limited power, structure, resources, and most political and economic systems, etc), *Dynamic Pressures* (lack of institutions, decreased biodiversity, increased urbanization, etc), and *Unsafe Conditions* (physical, socioeconomic, and institutional conditions, etc). *Hazards* may be identified as any number of those previously mentioned in the Introduction. The exertion of *Vulnerability* and *Hazards* each force pressure onto the *Risk of Disaster*. This pressure remains in constant until either a disaster occurs, or the *Hazard* is mitigated and the *Root Causes, Dynamic Pressures*, and *Unsafe Conditions* are addressed, thereby decreasing the *Risk*.