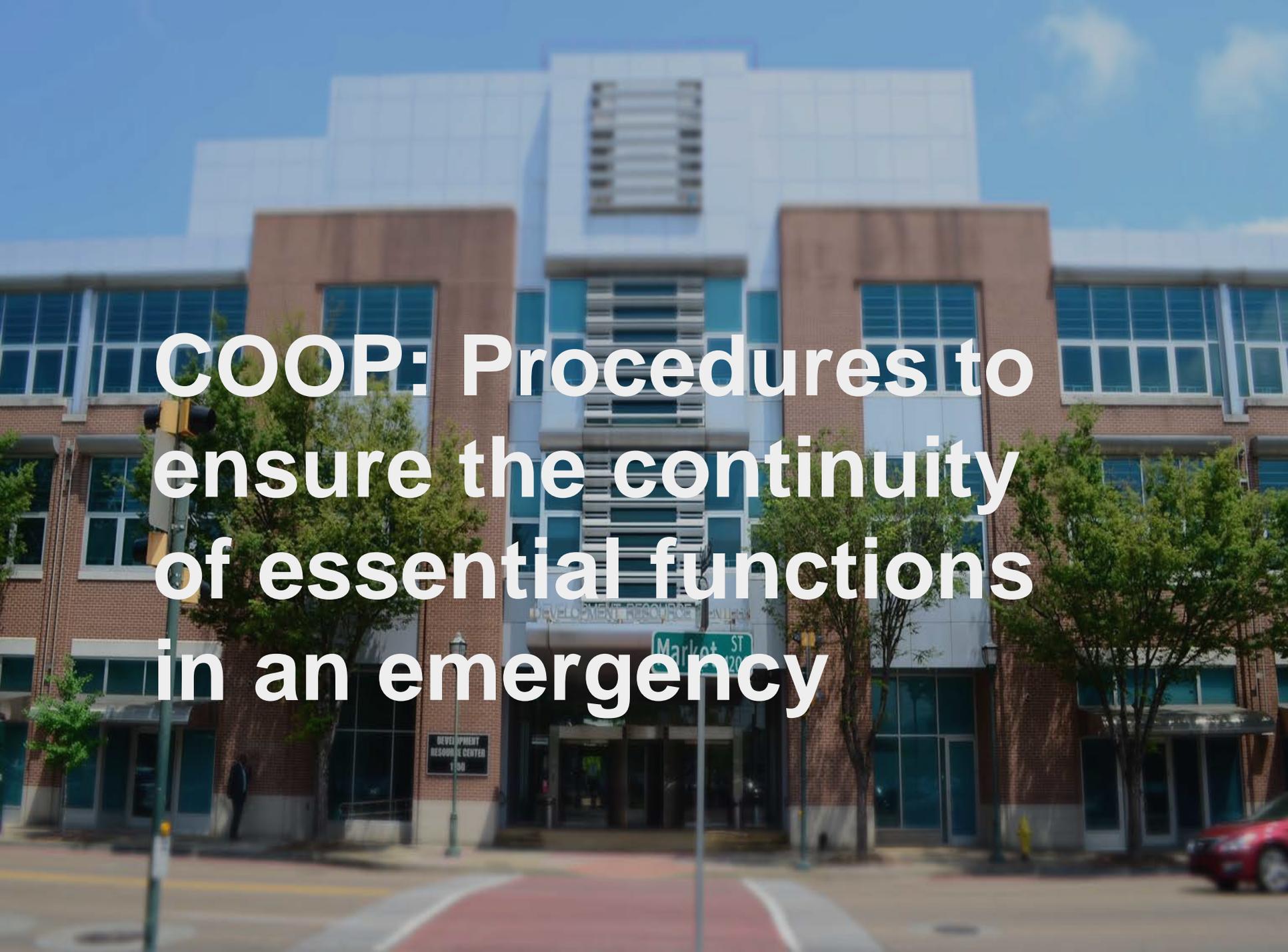


# Continuity of Operations Plan

Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia  
Transportation Planning Organization



**COOP: Procedures to ensure the continuity of essential functions in an emergency**

# Assessing the Vulnerability of Tennessee Transportation Assets to Extreme Weather

Revised Final Report

May 28, 2015

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Subcontract No. A14-0539-S001



## Why a COOP?

Addressing security of the  
transportation system

Recommendation from  
FHWA

RPA: Records retention



**For Official Use Only**

Name

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan

Date

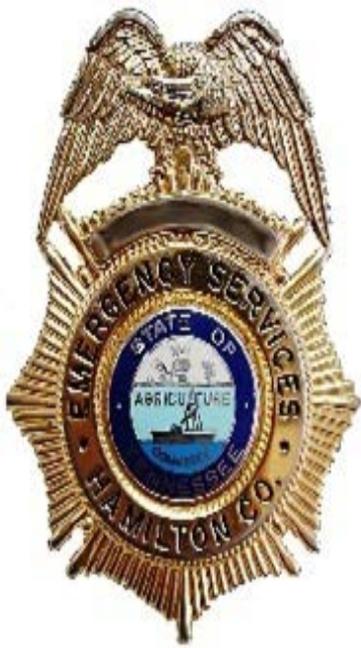
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# Resources

COOP template (sent to MPOs 02/16)

FEMA

State and local emergency  
management agencies



Hamilton County:  
Emergency  
Services

Hamilton County  
Health  
Department:  
Emergency  
Preparedness  
and Planning

City of  
Chattanooga: IT,  
Finance, Legal

Chattanooga-  
Hamilton County  
Regional  
Planning Agency

# Elements of a continuity plan

**Essential Functions** –critical activities

**Orders of Succession** –assumption of senior agency positions

**Delegations of Authority** – identification of authority

**Continuity of Facilities** – alternative locations/options

**Continuity of Communications**

**Vital Records Management** – information, documents, technology

**Human Capital** –emergency employees

**Tests, Training, and Exercises**–plan supports essential functions

**Devolution of Control and Direction** – transfer essential functions outside the agency

**Reconstitution** –resume normal agency operations

# Purpose

TPO function only

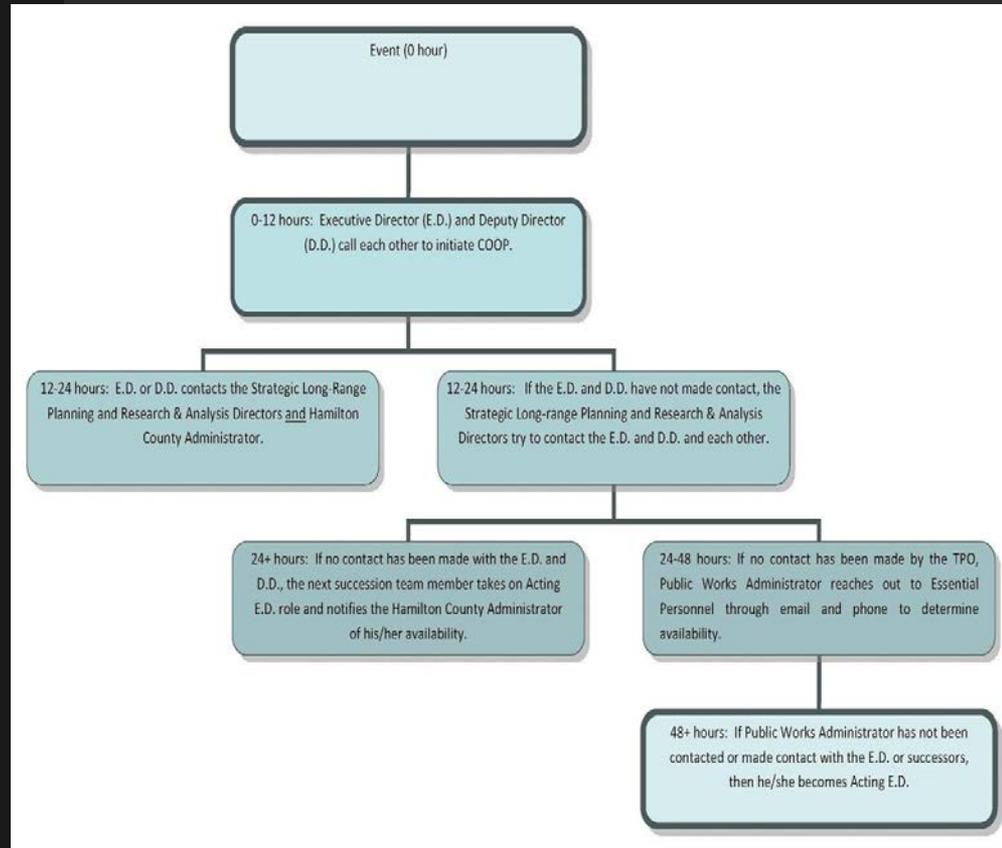
Ensure the continuity of essential office functions in the occurrence of a major event/emergency/disaster

**The COOP will be activated exclusively when operations cannot continue at the RPA offices and must be accommodated through telework or moved to an alternate location.**

# Essential Functions – The critical activities performed by organizations, especially after a disruption of normal activities.

- Provide technical support and information to assist in planning and restoration of the region's transportation system.
- Maintain contact with TDOT, GDOT, FHWA and FTA and local partners.
- Ensure that the integrity and compliance of the TPO's planning programs are maintained.
- Continuity of TPO Executive Board meetings.
- Provide compensation associated with TPO agreements and maintain TPO grant invoicing.
- Continuity of TPO projects and recurring activities.

Succession – Provisions for the assumption of senior agency offices during an emergency in the event that any of those officials are unavailable to execute their legal duties.



Delegations of Authority – Identification, by position, of the authorities for making policy determinations and decisions.

COOP initiated

Executive Director or Acting Executive Director

Deputy Director

↳ Strategic Long-range Planning Director

Research and Analysis Director

-OR-

Hamilton County Public Works Administrator

Continuity Facilities – Locations other than the primary facility (or other nontraditional options) used to carry out essential functions, particularly in a continuity event.

- Working remotely
- Temporary office relocation
- Partner: General Services
  - Outside the 100 and 500-year floodplain
  - Located along a CARTA transit route
  - Access to the City's IT systems

Continuity of Communications – Communications that provide the capability to perform essential functions, in conjunction with other agencies, under all conditions.

- Staff cell phones
- Additional cell phones
- Gmail
- General email: [tpo@chattanooga.gov](mailto:tpo@chattanooga.gov)
- Notice to outside contacts
- Partner: IT department's COOP/recovery plan- Emergency cell phone charging stations and emergency cellular tower setup

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

# Vital Records

- Digital files: online, server, offsite server backup
- Hard copy files: state location and labeled “TPO”
- Off-site storage of historic records: stated location and have separate listing of all TPO files in storage
- Partner: IT department’s COOP/recovery plan covers temporary emergency equipment, permanent replacement equipment, software replacement, restoration of important computer/data system access, and safe offsite storage and restoration of server backup data

# City of Chattanooga Records Retention Policy

- Scanned RPA's library
- Scanned all old regulations and ordinances
- Cleared out offices, file cabinets and storage units and consolidated files
- Confirmed off-site storage room for expansion

“If Chattanooga continues to increase in size, the city is certain ultimately to have to strengthen these weak spots of its downtown circulation system. As a matter of economy such work should be considered now in relation to a system of traffic thoroughfares serving the entire region and should be undertaken at the first opportunity.” -*1924 Major Streets Plan*

Human Capital – during a continuity event, emergency employees and other special categories of employees who are activated by an agency to perform assigned response duties.

- First priority is the health and well-being of each employee and their family
- Essential personnel identified

Tests, Training, and Exercises – Measures to ensure that an agency's continuity plan is capable of supporting the continued execution of the agency's essential functions throughout the duration of a continuity event.

Plan maintenance and after-action review of the plan

Devolution of Control and Direction – 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.

- Hamilton County, TN Administrator of Public Works
  - TPO management team
  - TPO staff
  - RPA management team
- RPA Executive Committee
- Emergency Executive Board meeting

# Emergency Executive Board meeting

- Only to be used in the event of a community or widespread emergency
- Strives to meet both Participation Plan and TN Open Meetings requirements
- Allows voting by conference call
- Partner: City Attorney's Office reviewed and gave input regarding state law requirements

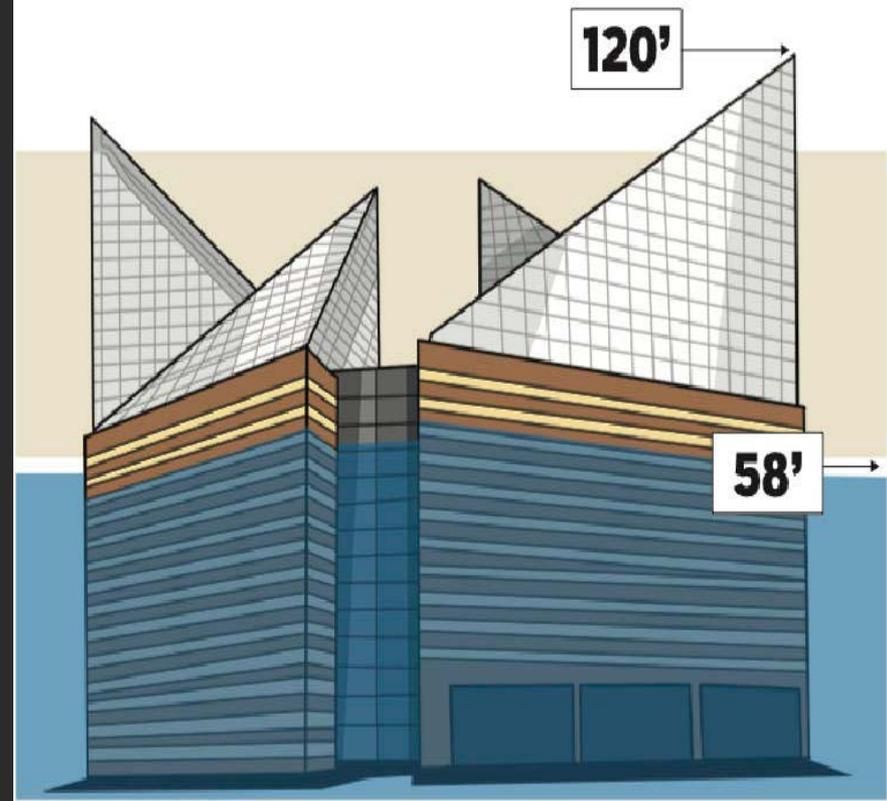
Reconstitution – The process by which surviving and/or replacement agency personnel resume normal agency operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility.

Termination of event

## Other elements...

- Initiation and notification
- Employee Contact List
- Agency Organizational Chart
- Emergency and Nonemergency Contacts
- Evacuation Procedures, including office equipment and records
- Revision History

# Lessons learned



## How deep is 58 feet?

The Tennessee Aquarium measures 120 feet tall. The all-time worst flood in Chattanooga, in 1867, peaked at 58 feet, almost half the height of the aquarium.

STAFF GRAPHIC BY MATT MCCLANE

## Resources:

FEMA COOP Webpage – a collection of COOP-related resources collected by FEMA: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/resources-documents/collections/343>

COOP Training – computer-based training courses; the first few courses provide a good overview of continuity planning: <https://www.fema.gov/continuity-excellence-series-professional-and-master-practitioner-continuity-certificate-programs>

TEMA: Vital Records Management:

[www.tennessee.gov/assets/entities/.../save\\_act\\_vital\\_records\\_mgmt.ppt](http://www.tennessee.gov/assets/entities/.../save_act_vital_records_mgmt.ppt)