



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

Texas Department of State  
Health Services



**OKLAHOMA**  
www.ok.gov

# Keeping the Continuity in COOP

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On April 22, at 4AM the OK state public health laboratory took a direct hit from a tornado.

At the time the laboratory director is out of the country.

**5:00AM:** the acting laboratory director is notified that the laboratory building is inaccessible and laboratory staff should not report to work.

**5:30 AM:** the acting laboratory director notifies the continuity activation team to report to the alternate facility.

**5:45AM:** All other laboratory staff are instructed not to report to work but to await more further information.



Note:

There are different issues involved if the tornado hit at 4am vs 4pm. In Oklahoma, specimens that have been picked-up by the courier from our submitters are delivered to the PHL in the evening. So, if the tornado hit at 4am, the specimens delivered to the PHL the night before may not be retrievable. In that case we would contact all pick-up sights to inform them to send additional specimens where possible. If tornado hit at 4pm, prior to delivery of specimens to PHL, we would only need to contact the courier (provided they were not taken out by the tornado as well) and have the specimen delivery redirected to the alternate site.

In other words, when planning for a continuity event, one must plan for all hazards (different disasters/events), different days of the week, and different times of day. The plan doesn't have to be the same for every event, but a planner must take all hazards into account.

## A COOP in action



### Acting Laboratory Director

- Orders of Succession
- Delegations of Authority



### Continuity Activation Team

- Relocation, support, continuity teams
- What functions must occur & who will perform those functions?



### Alternate Facility

- Where will functions now be performed?



### Staff Are Contacted

- Up-to-date contact information
- Defined methods of communication

### Notes:

Orders of succession affect the different COOP teams. Planning should include succession planning for normal job responsibilities and responsibilities during a continuity event.

Each PHL has different approaches to who is part of the continuity activation team(s). Oklahoma has elected to have relocation, support, and continuity teams. The management group plays roles in all teams while supervisors are part of the relocation team. In Texas, there is an emergency relocation group responsible for relocation and performing continuity operations; few supervisors and managers are part of this group. Instead, managers and supervisors will largely fulfill their responsibilities via telework.

## 8:00AM:

The continuity activation team arrived at the alternate facility and began:

Preparing to receive packages and prepare them for send out.

Contacting laboratories with existing memorandum of agreement.

Contacting couriers and re-directed them to alternate facility.

Submitters are contacted and notified of current status.



Notes:

Things to think about :

Who needs to be present during continuity activation?

Are there specimens that have been received the night before? Can they be salvaged?

Have you recently discussed testing methodology changes with your partner laboratories?

Have you already decided how results will be reported?

Have clear instructions for arriving at the continuity facility been given to couriers?

# A COOP in action



## Memorandum of Agreement

- To whom will samples be sent for testing?
- Are there existing agreements?



## Couriers & Submitters contacted

- Courier contact lists
- Submitter contact lists
- Methods of communication already defined?



## Continuity Team Prepares for Receipt and Send out

- Documented procedures?
- Access to those SOPs?

## 4:00PM the next day

Several issues have made their way to the acting director's attention:

- Contact information for 20 staff was out of date.
- A new courier was never contacted; specimens fell out of temperature range
- A submitters fax number was out of date so they did not receive instructions
- One continuity team member couldn't remember where alternate facility was





# A COOP in action



## Plan Maintenance

- Keep contact lists up to date
- Maintain up to date lists of equipment/supplies/documents/ vendors/ software/critical records/computer system reports



## Train, Test, and Exercise

- Ensure team members know their roles and have practiced them
- Share the plan

## **Primary COOP Elements**

**Delegations of Authority**

**Continuity Facilities**

**Orders of  
Succession**

**Tests, Training & Exercise**

**Human  
Capital**

**Essential Records**

**Essential Functions**

**Reconstitution**

**Continuity  
Communications**

**Devolution**



What is your laboratory's most valuable asset?



<https://image-store.slideshowcdn.com/dd73abeb-f76-45c4-8d80-68dd6c8fd512-original.jpeg>



# Preparing your staff for COOP activation

## Continuity staff need a family emergency plan!

- Families know what to do in an emergency
- Phone numbers & other contacts readily available
- Confidence that staff can locate and contact family
- Knowledge about what to do about pets and family with special needs



## Help your staff build a Personal/Family Preparedness Plan



Great Resources:

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

### **Personal/Family Preparedness:**

<https://community.fema.gov/>

[www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps)

<https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php>

<http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/be-red-cross-ready/make-a-plan>

<https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/index.htm>

# National Preparedness Month Activities

- Guest Speakers
  - National Weather Service Meteorologist
  - Animal Health Organization
  - Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters
- Activities
  - Selfie with your pet contest
  - Preparedness kit bingo



An awesome resource:

<https://www.ready.gov/september>



## Special groups to consider

- Infants
- Children & Teenagers
- Pets
- Senior Citizens
- Persons with Disabilities
  - Health
  - Emotional health
  - Disability
  - Medication dependencies



### Preparedness for infants/children/teens

<https://www.ready.gov/infants-young-children>

<http://www.marchofdimes.org/Are-you-ready-emergency-preparedness-for-pregnant-women-and-infants-December-2014.pdf>

<http://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/advice/emergency-preparedness/>

<https://www.phe.gov/ASPRBlog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=36>

<http://cshcn.org/resources-contacts/emergency-preparedness-for-children-with-special-needs/>

### Individuals with disabilities:

<https://www.aahd.us/initiatives/emergency-preparedness/>

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/disabilities>

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/emergencypreparedness.html>

<https://www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs>

**Pet preparedness:**

<https://www.ready.gov/animals>

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/disaster-preparedness>

[http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal\\_rescue/tips/pets-disaster.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal_rescue/tips/pets-disaster.html)

**Preparedness for Seniors:**

<https://www.ready.gov/seniors>

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/seniors>

<https://www.cdc.gov/aging/emergency/>

<http://www.aarp.org/aarp-foundation/our-work/housing/info-2012/emergency-disaster-preparedness-plans-for-seniors.html>





thank you!

