

Examples of Good Practice in Public Sector Business Continuity Management

BCM Awareness and Training

Introduction:

Chapter 6 of Emergency Preparedness highlights the need to have a training programme so that effective business continuity management arrangements can be implemented by staff when an organisation is disrupted. Chapter 5 of Emergency Preparedness also states that the 'Regulations require a plan to include provision for the carrying out of exercises and for the training of staff or other persons. This means that the relevant planning documents must contain a statement about the nature of the training and exercising to be provided and its frequency' (5.41 – 5.44). This document seeks to outline some of the approaches to training that will help support the statutory guidance. When considering the training needs of an organisation a useful starting point is to ask three questions:

What does a new member of staff need to know when they join the organisation?
How might their competence be developed?
What knowledge does the organisation need to capture when an individual leaves the organisation?

The generic training strategy below provides a useful framework that will help scope the programme of work.

Identify relevant competences (what are the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed by individuals who undertake BCM roles?)
Cluster and sequence the competencies
Define specific learning objectives (state what will participants be able to do after their training)
Determine the amount of time and resources needed (this may already exist, i.e. if you have a training department, BCM could become part of the established training programme)
Choose learning methods and providers (see below)
Decide how to monitor and evaluate progress (how will you know you've achieved the training objectives?)
Set up an administrative system

This document provides a framework to address the training implications of a BCM programme by looking at **who** needs to be trained, **what** they might need training in, and **how** this training might be undertaken.

Who needs training?

The first issue here is what do we mean by training? We use the term here in its broadest sense encompassing general awareness training to Master Classes for senior managers. It could be argued that whereas emergency planning requires certain people in an organisation to have the competence to respond to an external emergency, business continuity requires all staff to know what their role is in order to maintain critical services in the event of a disruption.

The table below seeks to identify who needs training and at what level.

Role in organisation			
Who needs training	Operational <i>Bronze "doers"</i>	Tactical <i>Silver "co-ordinators"</i>	Strategic <i>Gold "thinkers"</i>
All staff	General awareness	General awareness	General awareness / Crisis Management
BCM team		Role development Project Management (based on the BCO BCI's Good Practice Guidelines 2007)	Programme management / Crisis Management
BCM Champion / SRO (senior responsible owner)			Providing leadership Supporting BC manger Embedding BCM culture
BC Manager / Co-ordinator	Needs to have relationships with key personnel at all levels in the organisation		

What training is required?

The short answer is to provide a staff development programme to ensure staff are competent to play their role in BCM arrangements. By competence we mean they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Exactly what is provided will depend on what their role is and their current level of competence. A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) can help ensure training resources are directed. Examples of specific training include:

BCM awareness – where it fits in with corporate governance arrangements and the general business cycle of the organisation. Awareness of what BCM is, the organisations commitment to it (BCM Policy etc.) and what the organisation's critical services and functions are.

Software training – if a particular software programme is used to support BCM arrangements staff will need the competence to use it.

BCM methodology – relevant staff will need to be able to complete a business impact analysis (BIA) and understand the BC lifecycle.

Writing a BCM plan – the collection of documents required that will enable an organisation to deliver its critical services when interrupted.

Validating BCM arrangements – the skills needed to run an exercise to test the plan.

Incident management skills – generic skills such as communicating effectively, team working, recording decisions, assessing options, etc. but in the context of having limited resources, being under pressure, and experiencing significant organisational disruption.

How this training might be delivered

A range of options can be considered such as:

- Team briefings
- Cascade training
- E-learning packages (either on CD Roms or on organisational intranets)
- Nationally recognised course such as EPC that are CCA compliant.
- Locally delivered courses – by EPC or private organisations.
- As part of new staff induction programme

The starting point would be to assess how BCM training might fit within existing staff development arrangements. Then to explore additional options by assessing what is being offered in the market place.

A key point to remember when addressing training needs to build a BCM capability is that such work will be ongoing. Just as the BCM lifecycle is an iterative process, so too must the BCM training programme develop until it becomes part of the organisations normal staff development programme.