



Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc.
Continuity of Operations Plan

Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc.

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....2

Executive Summary.....3

Privacy Act.....3

Section 1 - Introduction.....4

Section 2 - Purpose4

Section 3 – Applicability and Scope4

Section 4 - Threats5

Section 5 - Assumptions5

Section 6 – Organization and Assignments of Responsibilities6

Section 7 – Concept of Operations8

Section 8 – Essential Functions8

Table 1 – Essential Functions Table9

Section 9 - Scenarios.....11

Section 10 - Recovery13

Executive Summary

Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc. (PEMS Council) has always been prepared, to the greatest extent possible, to respond to all-hazard disasters and events. However, the PEMS Council has become increasingly aware of how events could interrupt or destroy the ability to effectively perform essential functions. Consequently, the PEMS Council has determined it should develop and maintain a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). COOP planning preserves, maintains, and reconstitutes the ability of the Council to continue to function effectively in the presence of extended disruptions caused by a real or potential event.

The PEMS Council COOP encompasses the magnitude of operations and services performed by the PEMS Council. The COOP is tailored the Council's unique operations and essential functions performed.

Privacy Statement

Public disclosure of this document would have a reasonable likelihood of threatening public safety by exposing vulnerabilities. It contains sensitive and confidential information not subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under Virginia Code §2.2-3705.2. Accordingly, the Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc. is withholding this plan from full public disclosure. Refer any request for a copy of this document to Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc. legal counsel or the Virginia Attorney General's Office.

Section 1 - Introduction

The PEMS Council has grown increasingly aware of how all types of events can disrupt operations and jeopardize the safety of the PEMS Council personnel, emergency first responders, hospital and medical staff, and government employees. Emergency planning, including COOP, has become a necessary and required process for the Council.

The all-hazards approach to COOP ensures that regardless of the event, essential functions and services will continue to operate and function in some limited capacity. This approach includes preparing for natural, manmade, or technological emergencies.

The PEMS Council is committed to the safety and protection of its personnel, contractors, constituent regional EMS system partners, and visitors. This plan provides the PEMS Council with a framework designed to minimize potential impact during an event.

Section 2 - Purpose

The purpose of this COOP is to provide the framework for Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc. to restore essential functions in the event of an emergency that affects operations. This document establishes the PEMS Council COOP program and identifies procedures for addressing three types of extended disruptions:

- Loss of access to a facility (as in fire); or
- Loss of services due to a reduced workforce (as in pandemic influenza); or
- Loss of services due to equipment or systems failure (as in information technology (IT) systems failure)

This plan details procedures for implementing actions to continue essential functions within the recovery time objectives established by the COOP Team to maintain these essential functions.

Additionally, in times of disaster, the mission of the Council might include support and assistance to the various EMS agencies, localities, hospitals, other public safety organizations and personnel, and the public to help them recover from disaster.

Section 3 – Applicability and Scope

This document applies to Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc. personnel in all locations where essential functions are conducted. It also applies to the array of events and hazards that could threaten the Council and the performance of its essential functions.

The COOP does not apply to temporary disruptions of service including minor IT system or power outages and any other scenarios where essential functions can be readily restored.

However, redundancies in key systems and process workarounds may help minimize such temporary disruptions.

This COOP has been distributed to staff (full and part-time Council employees) and senior leadership (President, Vice-President and Treasurer of the Board of Directors) in the Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc.

Training has been provided to Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc. personnel with identified responsibilities.

This plan outlines the actions to be taken to activate a viable COOP capability within 12-hours of an emergency event. The COOP can be activated during work hours and non-work hours, without advance warning.

The COOP covers all facilities, systems, vehicles, and buildings operated or maintained by the PEMS Council or provided by the Council to other entities by contract or other formal agreement. The COOP supports the performance of essential functions from alternate locations (due to the primary facility becoming unusable for a period exceeding established Recovery Time Objectives (RTOs)) and provides for continuity of management and decision-making at the Council in the event staff, senior leadership or technical personnel are unavailable.

Section 4 – Threats

The following is a representative list of situations that could affect the PEMS Council COOP:

- Environmental Hurricanes
 - Flooding Conditions
 - Winter Storms
 - Severe Thunderstorms
 - Earthquakes
- Man-made
 - Crimes, Terrorist Events (Some crimes, such as robbery, burglary, and vandalism are covered under our insurance policies.)
 - Accidents
 - Local Interruption of Critical Infrastructure

Section 5 – Assumptions

- Staff and senior leadership will continue to recognize responsibilities to emergency services coordination and exercise their authority to implement this COOP in a timely manner when confronted with events impairing PEMS Council essential functions.
- All PEMS Council staff, volunteers and contractors will provide for the safety of their person and family.

- It is important to reinforce that the PEMS Council does not have a primary emergency response duty. However, many of its part-time staff are first responders. These employees may be needed by their jurisdictions rather than at a PEMS Council location. Full-time staff should ensure that PEMS Council's operations are secure before tending to duties at emergency response agencies.
- In the event of an emergency, the PEMS Council may need to rely on services of other regional EMS councils and local EMS agencies for assistance during recovery. Thus, this COOP can serve as a basis for future development of a regional plan with neighboring regional councils and local EMS agencies that could incorporate agreements, alternate facility locations, and inter-organizational communications plans to ensure a coordinated response in the event of an emergency.
- When properly implemented, this COOP will reduce or prevent disaster-related losses.

Section 6 – Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

Key Personnel

The PEMS Council COOP Team consists of:

- Executive Committee of the BOD
- Executive Director
- Business Manager
- EMS Planning and Emergency Management Coordinator
- EMS Field Coordinator-Operations

Personnel Contact List

- The team will initially utilize e-mail or messaging by personal handheld communications devices to contact all staff members. Contact information for all staff will be provided to the Council in hard-copy form and for inclusion in Outlook contacts, which can be accessed from any location via the Internet, using the Outlook web interface. The PEMS Business Manager will keep employee information up to date. Additional backup employee contact information will be maintained in the Council's password protected electronic bookkeeping system and in locked personnel files (the backup information is accessible to the Business Manager and the Executive Director).
- During emergencies or any situation which closes the office during regular office hours (examples include prolonged loss of power, localized flooding, etc.), the team will utilize the methods described above to notify all staff members of the situation and anticipated time of resumption of operations. These methods may also be used to notify staff of any other serious office situation or security issue.
- The team will utilize staff members' *vaems.org* exchange email and any existing secondary email addresses to supplement emergency notification information.
- All staff members will use the PEMS Office web-based calendar program to maintain their work schedule. The Executive Director will regularly review PEMS calendars and will be generally cognizant of the current location of each staff member.

External Contacts

External contacts and vendors are identified in Table 1 in “Section 8 -- Essential Functions,” as required resources supporting those functions. These resources include contact information for external vendors, suppliers, or others who would most likely need to be notified if the PEMS Council is threatened or experiences an incident that requires the COOP be implemented.

COOP Implementation Responsibilities

The following lists identify major responsibilities of key personnel and leadership required to implement Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc.’s COOP.

Executive Director:

- Supporting and providing executive leadership for all emergency planning efforts
- Activating the COOP activities
- Providing policy direction, guidance, and objectives during an incident for the implementation of the COOP activities
- Consulting with and advising appropriate officials during implementation of the COOP
- Developing, coordinating, and managing activities required for the Council to perform its essential functions during an event or other situation that would disrupt normal operations
- Coordinating implementation of the COOP and initiating appropriate notifications inside and outside the PEMS Council during COOP implementation
- Preparing site support plans to support the implementation of the COOP to facilitate the smooth transition of direction and operations from the primary location(s) to an alternate location

EMS Planning and Emergency Management Coordinator/Business Manager

- Facilitating communications among team members and overseeing plan and plan tests. Locating temporary office space and coordinating activity around setup. Providing staff briefings on internal emergency preparedness supplies, equipment, security, and procedures.
- Coordinating all activities around information technology recovery and data preservation, security, and recovery.

Business Manager

- Coordinating activity between and among staff members regarding client, customer, vendor, and other party communications to ensure continuation of operations.
- Coordinating all activities around telecommunications recovery and vital record preservation, security, and recovery.

All PEMS Council staff:

- Ensuring that family members are prepared for and taken care of in an emergency situation.
- Understanding their continuity roles and responsibilities within their respective organizations.
- Knowing and committing to their duties in a continuity environment.

The COOP must be ready to be implemented without prior warning. As such, the PEMS Council COOP Team has developed a concept of operations which describes PEMS approach to implementing the COOP.

The plan can be fully implemented within 12 hours of activation. The broad objective of this COOP is to provide for the safety and well-being of Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc. personnel and visitors while enabling the Council to continue operations during any crisis or event. Specific COOP objectives include the following:

- Enable staff to perform essential functions;
- Identify essential personnel and backup and support staff for relocation or for performing essential functions;
- Ensure the alternate facility location can support essential functions;
- Protect and maintain vital records, systems, and equipment.

An event, such as an explosion, fire, or hazardous materials incident, might require the evacuation of the building with little or no advance notice. Building evacuation, if required, is accomplished via implementation of the building Evacuation Plan.

Section 7 – Concept of Operations

Order of Succession

The PEMS Council Bylaws grant authority to the Executive Director to conduct the daily affairs of the organization. Should the Executive Director be unavailable or unable to act, the President of the Board of Directors may, at his or her discretion, fulfill these functions or appoint another staff member to do so.

Until a successor is appointed, the Business Manager shall be responsible for continuity of essential business functions and the EMS Planning and Emergency Management Coordinator shall be responsible for continuity of essential program functions.

Section 8 – Essential Functions

The PEMS Council has identified essential functions and personnel who have roles in performing those functions to meet its responsibilities to the PEMS Council Stakeholders.

In addition, the PEMS Council has prioritized its functions by determining the essential functions' recovery time objective (RTO). A listing of the PEMS Council's prioritized

Peninsulas EMS Council, Inc.
Continuity of Operations Plan

essential functions and their RTOs, along with all supporting resources, including essential personnel, vital records, systems, and equipment required to execute them, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Essential Functions Table

Essential Function	Essential Personnel and Backup	Vendors and External Contacts	Vital Records	Equipment	Systems	RTO
Data	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> EMS Planning and Emergency Management Business Manager Executive Director 	VAEMS Network Manager, IT Contractor, Internet Service Provider	Digital Data, Office Files	Server Backup, Quadra Backup, Remote Backup	PEMS Network, Quadra, VAEMS Backup, Internet	12 to 72 hours
Payroll	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Business Manager Executive Director BOD Officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer) 	Middleburg Bank Cash Management System, Quickbooks Online	Payroll Records, Timesheets	PC/Laptop, Admin Kit, Software, Phone	QuickBooks Online, Middleburg Bank Cash Mgt System, Internet	12 to 72 hours
Payables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Business Manager Executive Director BOD Officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer) 	Middleburg Bank	Checks	PC/Laptop, Admin Kit, Software, Phone	QuickBooks Online, Middleburg Bank Cash Mgt System, Internet	12 to 72 hours
Regional Communications and Coordination	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> EMS Planning and Emergency Management Coord Office Manager Executive Director 	Cox, Website, Facebook, Twitter, Listserv Vendor	Contact Lists	PC/Laptop, Admin Kit, Software, Phone	Internet Access, MS Outlook, Listserv, Facebook, Twitter, VAEMS	12 to 24 hours
CISM Team Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> CISM Team Coordinator EMS Planning and Emergency Management Coord Executive Director 	VAOEMS	CISM Answering Service, CISM Contact Lists	Phone	CISM Answering Service)	24 hours
Medication Box Restocking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> EMS Field Coordinator - Operations EMS Planning and Emergency Management Coord 	Regional Hospital Pharmacies, Clearly Inventory	Clearly Inventory Database, Drug Box Forms	PC/Laptop, Admin Kit, Software, Phone, Medication Boxes in System	Internet Access, Clearly Inventory, Pharmacies, EMS Agencies	24 hours
Hospital Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director EMS Planning and Emergency Management Coordinator 	Gately Communications, Motorola Communications, VHHA Website	Regional MCI Plan	Portable Radio, Mobile Radio (CT Truck), Base Radio (Conf Rm), PC/Laptop	800MHz Radio System, EVHCC VHF Base Radio System, VHHA Website	12-72 Hrs 30 Min – 1 hour

There are considerably more vital functions that the PEMS Council must maintain in order to ensure the level of coordination provided on a normal basis. However, these functions may be left unattended for a short period (weeks) without significant impact to our customers and constituent regional EMS system partners:

- Protocols
- Regional Planning
- Consolidated Testing
- Performance Improvement
- Educational Programs
- RSAF

Data Protection, Redundancy, and Recovery

The Council will take steps to preserve critical electronic files and equipment.

- Council policies require all staff to save all work-related electronic files on the network server.
- The PEMS Council network server is configured with the capability to continuously make an off-site backup (VAEMS remote network and email servers). In addition, an on-site backup is maintained at the PEMS site (Quadra Drive).
- The PEMS Council network server is configured such that backup copies may be restored at any time. Each backup site maintains incremental daily backups for a minimum of 14 days.
- All desktop computers, servers, and the main telephone control unit are protected by uninterruptible power supplies (UPS).
- All Council users will be assigned network passwords. All PEMS Council computers shall transition to “sleep mode” after no more than 30 minutes of inactivity. All screen savers shall lock on waking and require the user’s password. The main network server, telephone control unit, related equipment, and on-site backup drives will be maintained in a locked area accessible to the team and IT support technicians.
- All Council computers will have up-to-date antivirus software, firewalls, and other processes to avoid malicious attacks as recommended by IT support.
- Copies of Board and standing committee minutes and Council program reports are maintained on the Council’s network server and will be posted to the OEMS Lotus Notes system (as required by contract).
- The Council’s website and e-mail service will be provided and maintained on off-site servers protected with UPS, physical site security, resistance to high winds, nightly backups, and redundant Internet connectivity. The current vaems.org host and Council IT support is managed under a contract through Western Virginia EMS Council.
- Related “02-002 Computer, Internet, and E-mail Use Policies” are found in the Council’s Employee Policies handbook (a hard copy is provided to each employee and is accessible on the PEMS Council’s network server).

Document Preservation

- In addition to electronic files addressed in the previous section, the Council will identify and take precautions to preserve critical paper documents.

- The Council's Records Retention and Destruction Policy require maintenance and disposal of certain documents at 3- and 5-year intervals, and maintenance of certain documents on a permanent basis. See related Records Retention and Destruction Policy (a hard copy is maintained by the Business Manager and is accessible in the computer network Public folder).
- Storage for permanent and 5-year paper records will be provided in marked file boxes in a secure climate controlled storage facility or designated filing cabinets on-site.
- Critical records (including the IRS non-profit determination letter, articles of incorporation, bylaws, current asset lists, etc.) will be scanned to electronic format and retained on the PEMS Council's network server, which will also ensure off-site backup of these files.
- Copies of critical documents, including vehicle titles, will be stored in the Council's on-site safe with a minimum 2-hour fire rating.

Insurance and Liability

- The Council will maintain general business insurance coverage (includes fire, theft and general liability) for all assets, staff, and visitors. The level of fire and theft coverage will be revised and adjusted annually, if needed, based on replacement costs of furnishings and equipment assets.
- The Council will maintain required automotive insurance for council-owned vehicles and trailers.
- The Council will maintain a general risk management policy (umbrella liability coverage) available through the Commonwealth of Virginia (VA Risk2) to provide staff, Board, and volunteer coverage.
- The Council will maintain employee theft insurance.
- The Council will indemnify the Board of Directors.
- Staff members will monitor general conditions of furnishings, carpets, and other aspects of the Council office and correct or report to the team and/or building management any situation which might cause a hazard.

Section 9 – Scenarios

Mass Illness

The primary objectives related to mass illness, such as pandemic flu, will be to help prevent the spread of the disease, to maintain essential office operations as much as possible, and to take action to help restore normal office operations as soon as possible. National predictions for an event like pandemic flu call for a slowly evolving event that could remove as much as 60% of the workforce for several weeks.

To help prepare for mass illness, staff members are generally paired with other staff members in understanding and performing work functions; that is, at least one other staff member can assume a staff member's duties. All staff, within each program, should frequently work with co-workers to ensure sharing of information, project lists, contract deliverables, contacts, etc. Lists

of all committee members and contact information are maintained in the PEMS Council's network server.

Contact lists may also be maintained in an individual staff member's Outlook. Staff members with responsibility for a committee or program are responsible for the accuracy of the main committee member list.

To help minimize disease spread, staff members are advised to take personal actions such as frequent hand washing, distancing from others with disease, and other actions consistent with recommendations provided by public health directors. To assist with recommendations related to social distancing, the Council will support electronic meetings, teleconferencing, etc. of committee meetings, and other networking necessary to continue council activities.

Hurricanes

The Council's office is located in an area subject to temporary tidal flooding in a category 2 or stronger hurricane with the additional threat of wind damage to windows and roof structures.

Staff will monitor prevailing weather conditions and predictions. In the event of anticipated landfall in the Hampton Roads region of a category 2 or stronger hurricane, the following plan will be implemented. It is anticipated part-time staff members employed elsewhere in a public safety capacity will be recalled to their primary work organization. The following preparations may fall to available staff members.

Employee contact lists should be reviewed, verified, and redistributed. Remind staff to ensure all organizational files are copied to the network server. Ensure backup of server data and off-site storage of one full backup (see previous Data Protection, Redundancy and Recovery section).

Approximately two days prior to landfall, computers and other electronic equipment should be disconnected, relocated away from offices with windows, and placed in a central gathering area in interior space either without windows or well away from/protected from windows. The gathered electronic equipment will be covered with plastic sheeting material and taped securely. Any electronic equipment which cannot be moved (i.e., that which is secured or bolted down) will be covered with plastic sheeting and taped securely. After electronic equipment is moved and/or covered, all file cabinets and desks near windows will be covered with plastic sheeting and taped securely. All doors should be closed and locked.

Upon return, the COOP Team will assess and document damages if any, report damages to the insurance company, attempt to reestablish the office infrastructure (telephone, computers, other electronics, power, HVAC, etc.), and call for water/moisture removal, repairs, etc. as needed.

In the event of major facility damages that preclude short- or long-term restart of office operations, see next section on recovery, and either short-or long-term relocation.

Other Unannounced Disasters or Infrastructure Outages

Localized versus regional (tornadoes, fire, other office damage) – In general, this plan helps ensure that regardless of the disaster, the Council is prepared to restart operations by restoring data, short- or long-term relocation, or other actions to get back in business as soon as possible. For example, an unannounced disaster such as a fire might prompt immediate evacuation then a return after an “all clear.” Significant fire damage may prompt temporary or permanent office relocation depending on the severity of damage. A tornado may not prompt an immediate evacuation, but resulting damage might require office relocation. In all cases of unannounced disaster, the most immediate plan calls for life safety action ensuring the safety of staff and visitors to the offices. Following the disaster, the team will assess the need for follow up actions and advise remaining staff.

Section 10 – Recovery

Alternative Worksite

The core of our COOP relies on our ability to conduct normal or nearly normal operations from one or more remote locations. The PEMS Council has developed the capability to work from alternate locations and we essentially exercise that capability when telecommute.

For short-term events, we are able to utilize cellular telephones and remote access to our server via the internet. On a small scale, we utilize this technology daily. We have considered the fact that some, or all, of these services may not function in an emergency. During the recovery phase of a natural disaster, we may be faced with limited capabilities until such services are restored. It is not practical for us to consider more hardened infrastructure such as satellite communications and generators.

The PEMS Council’s staff routinely travel with their laptop computers, allowing nearly seamless operation should the office be uninhabitable or inaccessible for any reason.

Should a situation exist that would necessitate vacating our office for the long-term or permanently, we have a verbal agreement with Newport News Fire Department to provide us with office space in their training center, as available, until a replacement facility can be obtained. This temporary space would provide the minimum necessary access to basic services such as power, telephone, and Internet.

Much of the work of the EMS Field Coordinators and other staff would be conducted from their home or another suitable base of operations. The option to allow employees to telecommute will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Director.

In the event remote operations are required, employees may include on their expense reports costs associated with working from a remote location e.g. portion of cell phone and internet service bills used to conduct PEMS Council business.

Teleconferencing Alternatives

Temporary relocation, mass illness, or other factors may prompt the need to conduct Council business, committee meetings, or other networking by electronic means. The Council maintains a teleconferencing capability with a third party vendor which supports audio and web conferencing.

Reestablishment of Mail Delivery

The team will notify the USPS, FedEx, DHL and UPS of any changes in short- or long-term office relocation.

Financial Management

A priority in reestablishing office operations and support to others, will be the continuation of accounts payable, payroll, and accounts receivable. The Council utilizes QuickBooks software for bookkeeping. The program saves its data to the PEMS Server, and is backed up daily. In the event of office disruption, the data can be accessed on any computer with Internet access, and by a number of accountants throughout the region. In addition to the Business Manager and Executive Director, at least one other Council staff member will remain proficient in the use of the accounting software. Payroll is handled via direct deposit to staff members' banks using Middleburg Bank's Cash Management System. The Business Manager has primary responsibility for bookkeeping and the team has responsibility for restoring the Business Manager's computer and Council financial data.

Support to the Virginia Office of EMS

The Virginia Office of EMS's Continuity of Operations Plan calls for restoration of documents such as regional EMS contracts with assistance from the regional EMS councils. The PEMS Council will support the Virginia Office of EMS with document recovery and any other reasonable request to help assess and restore the statewide EMS system.