

Business Continuity Plan (BCP): Template with Guidance

This comprehensive Business Continuity Plan (BCP) template provides step by step guidance for completing each section and supports you in developing a robust plan for approval by your senior leadership team or colleagues.

Business Continuity Plan for [Organisation Name]

Version: [Insert Version Number]

Last Updated: [Insert Date]

Plan Owner: [Insert Name and Job Title]

Distribution: [Insert Departments or Names as appropriate]

1. Executive Summary

Purpose of this section:

Provide a concise overview of the plan, its purpose and key objectives

Guidance:

Keep it brief but impactful to grab the attention of the key stakeholders. Summarise the criticality of continuity planning and outline the commitment to protecting people, assets, and operations.

Template:

This Business Continuity Plan outlines the strategies and actions [Organisation Name] will implement to ensure the continuity of essential business functions during and after a significant disruptive event. The plan supports our commitment to resilience, employee safety, and stakeholder confidence.

2. Plan Objectives

Guidance:

Clearly state what the plan aims to achieve. Link it to operational stability, regulatory requirements, and reputational protection.

Template:

- Ensure the safety of personnel and visitors.
- Maintain and rapidly resume critical business operations.
- Minimize financial loss and operational downtime.
- Comply with legal, regulatory, and contractual obligations.
- Protect [Organisation Name]'s reputation and stakeholder trust.

3. Governance

Guidance:

List key roles and responsibilities. Clarify decision making authority / responsibilities during disruptions.

Template:

| Role | Name | Responsibilities |
|------------------------|----------------|---|
| SLT Sponsor | [Name / Title] | Provide oversight, allocate resources. |
| BCP Coordinator | [Name / Title] | Manage plan development, testing, and updates. |
| Dept. Heads/Leads | [Name / Title] | Implement department-specific continuity actions. |
| Crisis Management Team | [Name / Title] | Coordinate emergency response and communications. |



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4. Business Impact Analysis (BIA)

Guidance:

Identify critical processes, resources, and the impact of their loss (temporary or otherwise). Engage with all department leads to ensure you are aware of all of the risks and what they identify as business critical. Avoid underestimating dependencies or ignoring third party risks.

Template:

For each critical process, you will need to identify the following:

- **Critical Process** – Process
- **Owner** – Name / Department
- **Dependencies** – Systems, staff, suppliers etc.
- **Recovery Point Objective (RPO)** – is the maximum acceptable amount of data / operations loss an organisation can tolerate as a result of an adverse event
- **Recover Time Objective (RTO)** – is the maximum acceptable downtime before resuming normal or limited operations after an adverse event
- **Impact if disrupted** – Financial, operational, reputational impacts

5. Risk Assessment

Guidance:

List key threats and vulnerabilities. Include both internal and external risks. Avoid vague, generic risks; be specific and realistic.

Template:

| Risk/Threat | Likelihood | Severity | Controls |
|----------------------|------------|----------|--|
| Cyberattack | Med | High | Regular backups, security monitoring, firewalls, security policies |
| Power Loss | High | Med | Generators, alternative sites, preventative maintenance |
| Supply Chain Failure | Med | High | Multiple suppliers, alternative suppliers, stock holding |

6. Business Continuity Strategies

Guidance:

Describe how critical functions will continue or be restored. Avoid over reliance on a single solution.

Template:

- Remote work capabilities for essential staff
- Alternative office locations
- IT system redundancies and backups
- Pre-arranged contracts with key suppliers
- Manual workarounds for critical processes

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7. Emergency Response Procedures

Guidance:

Provide step by step actions for immediate response to emergencies (fire, evacuation, medical incidents).

Template:

- Evacuation routes and assembly points
- Contact numbers for emergency services
- Responsibilities of fire wardens and first aiders
- Immediate communication protocols

8. Communication Plan

Guidance:

Define who communicates what, to whom, and how. Pre-prepare templates for different scenarios. Avoid ad-hoc, uncoordinated messaging.

Template:

- Internal communications via [Phone, Email, Apps, other media platforms]
- Designated spokesperson for media: [Name, Contact, Department]
- Template messages for:
 - Service disruptions
 - Facility closures
 - Data breaches

9. Information Technology (IT) Recovery

Guidance:

Coordinate with IT to ensure alignment with broader BCP objectives. Avoid assuming IT recovery is the only continuity consideration.

Template:

- IT emergency contact list
- Critical systems prioritised for recovery
- Data backup locations and restoration procedures
- Recovery testing schedule

10. Training

Guidance:

Training must be ongoing and role specific, refreshing the training syllabus as required. Avoid assuming people will remember procedures from a single briefing or meeting.

Template:

- Annual BCP awareness sessions for all staff
- Role specific training for key personnel
- New employee induction includes BCP overview

11. Testing

Guidance:

Test regularly using various methods: table-top exercises, simulations, technical recovery drills. [Contact us](#) to discuss simulations and real time tests.

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12. BCP Review

Guidance:

Schedule regular reviews. Update after significant organisational changes, incidents, or test findings. Never assume that your plan is complete, there will always be elements that will need to be updated, based on your business, and the people that have responsibilities, as well as changes in regulatory requirements.

Template:

- Review annually or where there is a significant change
- Track all updates through version control systems
- Ensure all changes are clearly communicated to all stakeholders
- Update both local hard copy and digital versions

13. Best Practice

- Always involve all departments
- Know what interdependencies there are
- Ensure that the end product can be understood at all levels
- Align the plan with your organisations objectives, they determine the business critical functions
- Document your progress, when developing the plan
- Ensure the plan is available and up to date at all times
- Be realistic, know your organisations limits
- Demonstrate to the organisation the benefit of having a plan in place
- Don't focus solely on IT, it is generally only part of your business
- Regularly test your plan and update it based on your learning
- Training is the key, don't assume that people will know what to do

Business Continuity Plan Key Steps Diagram



Risk Assessment

Identify potential disruptions and vulnerabilities



Strategy Development

Define recovery objectives and action plans



Plan Implementation

Allocate resources and train teams



Testing & Review

Conduct drills and update plans annually



Crisis Response

Activate plan and communicate with stakeholders