BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Implement BCM the UAE Way!

1st EDITION

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
AE/SCNS/NCEMA 7000:2015

Authors
DHIRAJ LAL
DAMAN DEV SOOD

TOWARDS NATIONAL RESILIENCE

Typical contents of each chapter in the book

Additional information

Sample contents from the BCP Chapter

Overview

Clause 8.5 of the NCEMA 7000 document states that the organization shall develop Business Continuity Plans in support of its strategies, as follows:

Clause 8.5.1 - The Organization shall establish, implement and maintain plans detailing its business disruption, to maintain continuity of its prioritized activities at the predetermined performance levels following a business disruption.

Clause 8.5.2 - Each plan should:
♣ Have a defined purpose and scope.
♣ Be communicated to all personnel that need to be aware of it, and to personnel with specific roles and responsibilities for review and update.
♣ Be consistent with the BCM strategy and Business Continuity Plan, capabilities and requirements of interested parties.
♣ Be accessible to and understood by interested parties upon implementation

Clause 8.5.3 - All plans shall contain:
♣ Key obligations and reference information.
♣ Defined roles and responsibilities of personnel and teams during and following an incident.
♣ Identification of people who have the authority to invoke each plan under any given circumstances.
♣ Criteria for invoking the plan and the method whereby the plan is invoked.
♣ Details of primary and alternative locations as applicable.
♣ Contact and other details including service level agreement for the key suppliers, vendors and service providers.
♣ Impact of disruption on prioritized activities over pre-determined timeframes.
♣ List of procedures and actions that need to be performed.
♣ List of the resources required for recovery.
♣ Prioritized objectives in terms of prioritized activities to be recovered, recovery timescale and recovery levels needed for each main activity.
♣ Recovery procedures to be followed to return to normal post emergency, and after minimum business continuity objectives have been met.
♣ "Stand down procedures" – to be kept in mind once the incident is over and organization personnel need to return to their normal duties.
♣ Organization shall have a communication plan governing:
  • Identified lines of communications.
  • Details of who is authorized to communicate.
  • What to communicate.
  • With whom to communicate.
  • How and when to communicate.
♣ Communication procedures shall cover all interested parties (external and internal) and relevant interested parties.

Explanation

The intention of the BCP is that the organization must be able to maintain continuity of its prioritized activities at predetermined performance levels following a business disruption. The stage of Business Continuity Plans directly follows the stage of Incident Response Plans (IRPs), though normally with a slight phase lag. This time delay is due to the time taken by the organization to conduct a high-level damage assessment and make a very quick determination about how long it may take them to resume the delivery of key products and services. Only when the organization has been able to take initial stock of the incident would it typically start focusing to recover, restore and restart the affected products, services and activities.

Objectives

The focus of the BCP typically is to facilitate restoration of the services within the predetermined timelines. An organization that has not fully thought through the detailed recovery or restoration plans, nor practiced them, would probably struggle to restore its operations within the expected RTO. They may not have alternate plans ready, or they may lose valuable time to get ready the infrastructure, make arrangements, sign contracts or get things working. Whereas a well-written Business Continuity Plan (BCP) would help the organization to restart delivering key products and services quickly, ideally in a timeline that is less than the RTO. This, of course assumes also that the organization that has done the needed planning and testing. If so then the organization would have a good chance to quickly start restoring services and manage the incident quickly and effectively. If so, then customers may be willing to retain their trust and faith in the organization and may not move away their business. In this way, the Business Continuity Plan helps organizations to protect their financials, market share, reputation and credibility.

A BCP is typically expected to be a comprehensive document, practically standalone. In case there is an incident such as cyber-attack, or a fire, or an infectious virus situation, IT may be down, and the building may be inaccessible. In which case the BCP may be the only document available, and so it must clearly explain the procedures to follow, to restart and restore operations, at least for the urgent, prioritized services. This is the reason why the BCP is expected to be an actionable, standalone but a flexible document, so that those in organization who need to can know the correct procedures to follow for the current situation.

Since the processes and detailed activities of each department are likely to be very different, ideally a separate Business Continuity Plan would be prepared for each department. For example, the contents of the BCP prepared by the call centre of a bank would most likely be very different from those of the payments unit, or from loan processing, or from treasury. Therefore, just as a large organization would have many BIAs, in the same way, it also has a number of Business Continuity Plans, at least probably 1 per unit, sometimes more. Smaller organizations may be able to manage with just one combined BCP for the full organization.

The BCPs taken together, once signed off, should be able to comprehensively enable the organization to effectively recover, resume and restore its prioritized activities within the predetermined timelines.

Deliverables

The key deliverable related to this stage is the Business Continuity Plan, which is one of the 17 required documents per the NCEMA 7000. Just that as stated above, most large organizations would have not just 1 BCP, but many.

Methodology and Tips

BCPs are best prepared by the BCM Department representatives of each department, and then put up to the Department Manager for initial approval. This is because the department would know best the exact steps that it must take to restart delivery of its key products and services within the agreed timelines. Because the BCPs deal with recovery and restoration of services, in almost all cases, it is the line functions that create the BCPs.

It must be noted that when an Incident Reponses Plan is activated, it is not automatic that the BCPs need to be activated. Rather, a judgement would need to be made about how much time it may take to restart the services. Typically, a high-level initial damage assessment is conducted post incident. If it appears that services can be resumed in normal course before the RTO, then there may not be a need to activate the BCPs at all. But if it appears that the organization may not be able to restart its services before the RTO, then the organizations may choose to activate its Business Continuity Plans as a matter of abundant precaution.

So, this brings forth the point about invocation, which is the formal declaration of the activation of the BCM Response. As per the standard, guidelines and criteria have to be specified regarding who has the final authority to invoke these procedures and under what circumstances these can be invoked. This may need to follow defined escalation stages. Normally invocation is a critical decision for any organization and must be decided or ratified at the highest level, being the BCM Sponsor, CMT, certain members of Top Management (as specified), or the CEO.

Needless to say, when an organization resumes service delivery, it must do so at the predetermined level of operations (MBCO). Recovering at less than this level would normally not be adequate to satisfy the expectations of customers or key interested parties, leading to dissatisfaction. If so, then this would make the entire BCM recovery effort futile and a waste, because the objective of the BCM Program is to be able to manage reasonable expectations of interested parties despite the problems. So, it is well advised that as and when the recovery is activated, it must be at least at the predetermined MBCO, if not more.

A good BCP must also state assumptions. For example, it is an assumption that resources would be available and willing to work from the backup site for sustained periods of time. Another such assumption is that the communications infrastructure will be available and working effectively. Such assumptions must be stated and validated. This is in addition to other assumptions such as worst-case scenario planning, etc.

The business continuity plan must be user-friendly. Ideally it should be short, concise and to the point. Templates and checklists may make the plan easy to use, as would integration with smart technologies, handheld devices, automation, etc. BCM Automation software often helps provide easy to use templates that are tried and tested.

Having said that, it is also important to include formal stand down procedures in a BCP, which would clearly define the procedure to rollback any needed actions and be able to get back to Business as Usual once the incident is over. Ideally rollback should be complete and comprehensive, so that the situation is then fully back to what it was before the incident occurred. Incorrect rollback in fact is a major fail-point which itself can cause a new business disruption. In fact, there have been many cases where the infrastructure rollback was not properly executed, and therefore when the process was restarted, it created a fresh business disruption, more severe than the original. This has happened also many times in the case of faulty rollback post testing.

In connection with the BCP The NCEMA Standard also specifically refers to a Communication Plan, in connection with the BCP. As mentioned in the Guidelines document, this Communications Plan provides the details about addressing how and under what conditions the organization will communicate with key interested parties and emergency contacts, and also with employees as well as their relatives. This includes the details of the media response of the organization following an incident, its communication strategy, preferred interface with the media, guidelines or templates for drafting media statements as well as identification of appropriate spokespersons.

The chart below indicates a possible approach by means of which a comprehensive communication plan can be developed:
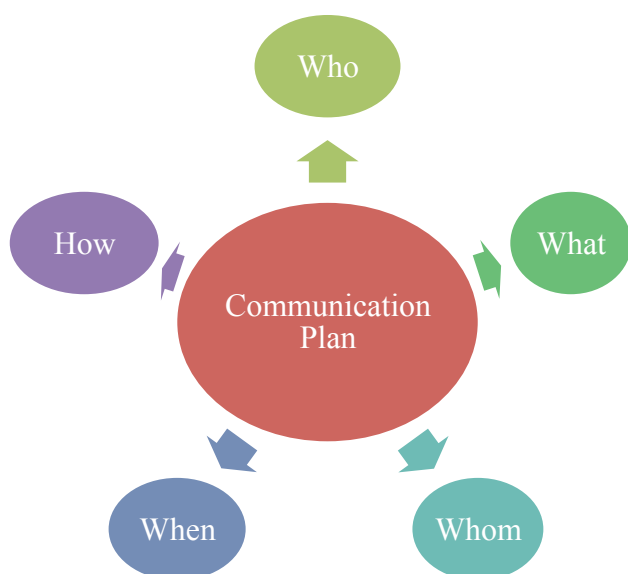
Who	The Author
What	The Content
Whom	The Recipient
When	The Frequency
How	The Medium

END OF CHAPTER SAMPLE

Continuity & Resilience (CORE) provides:

1. Consulting /Implementation – Save money by inviting our experienced consultants to implement for you.
2. Training – high quality instructor led training for all levels of your entire organisation, including senior management. Also, for individual professionals who want to get ahead. Provided online and in classroom (as permitted).
3. Finalise your BCP in 7 days – Typically for SMEs, vendors and small/medium corporates. Implement Basic readiness to meet minimum regulatory and customer expectations.
4. Mandatory annual audits - Annual internal audits as an independent control to meet compliance, regulatory and certification requirements.
5. Temporary and permanent staffing – hire our competent staff to implement your urgent projects.
6. BCM Automation – "Peace of Mind" efficiency tools for a world-class Business Continuity Management System.
7. Emergency Rapid Notification tools – Pass on critical communications in minutes to all your employees, customers, partners and key stakeholders.
8. Workplace Services – Flexibly operate from   any close-by secure location, which can change, based on your requirements.
9. Awareness eLearning – State-of-the-art interactive 1-hour awareness module on BCM, including pandemic. Effective and intensive learning for your entire workforce, vendors and partners.
10. Learn more for less – Low cost Video-based learning for students and professionals.

www.coreconsulting.ae
www.coreonline-certifications.com

	Contents	**Page Number**

The following table shows all the annexures present in the book "Step by Step Guide to NCEMA 7000" to enhance readers' understanding of its chapters.

	Contents	**Page Number**
Annexure 1	Documentation requirements per ISO 9001	340
Annexure 2	Key Steps to Create a Framework Document	342
Annexure 3	List of 17 required documents (per NCEMA)	343
Annexure 4	BCM Project Plan	344
Annexure 5	BCM Policy	346
Annexure 6	Roles and Responsibilities	347
Annexure 7	Interested Parties	355
Annexure 8	BIA Methodology	358
Annexure 9	BIA Template	359
Annexure 10	Risk Assessment Methodology	360
Annexure 11	Risk Assessment Template	361
Annexure 12	Business Continuity Plan	362
Annexure 13	Test Plan Template	364
Annexure 14	Test Plan Report	365
Annexure 15	Annual Maintenance and Improvement Schedule	366
Annexure 16	BCM Program Dashboard (Mindmap)	367

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

DAMAN DEV SOOD
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, CONTINUITY & RESILIENCE (CORE)
FBCS, AFBCI, CBCI, SMIEEE, MAIMA, ISO 22301 LA & Expert, IEEE Ambassador

A former BCI Merit Award (Global) Winner and Business Continuity Manager of the Year in BCI's C&R Awards. Daman is a BCI approved Instructor from 2012 and he also serves as a member of BCI's speakers Bureau. He teaches and consults in BCM (ISO 22301/ NCEMA 7000) and related domains. He had served clients across the Govt sector, Energy, Oil and Gas, Infrastructure, IT, Banking, Finance, Insurance, Retail, Manufacturing, Automobile, Pharma, etc.

DHIRAJ LAL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONTINUITY & RESILIENCE (CORE)
MBCI, CBCP, CBCI, ISO 22301 Technical Expert, CISA, ITIL, ISO 31000, ISO 27001 Lead Auditor

A former BCM Head and Sponsor, Dhiraj Lal is Asia's first BSI appointed BCM Technical Expert for BS25999/ ISO 22301 and has assessed 2 of the top 10 certified organizations globally. A Chemical Engineer with understanding of Oil & Gas and process industries, he has been consulting and teaching in BCM (ISO 22301/ NCEMA 7000) for over 20 years now.