

# QHP811

## BUSINESS CONTINUITY TESTS AND EXERCISES PLAN

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## 1. POLICY INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to facilitate test planning, test execution, test review, and corrective action to business continuity plans developed for National Ambulance Critical location(s).

This document can be considered a “plan” throughout the phases of the exercising process, independent of the type of exercises being performed.

## 2. SCOPE

Testing the plan is a vital part of the business continuity plan. A plan must be tested as soon as it has been created. Doing this in details to verify if your BCP is going to work or not is crucial to the success of the test. When executing the plan for real, this testing will be the base to the success of the recovery if a disaster occurs, this will help us to find any parts of the plan that need to be changed or improved before it is too late.

Instead of waiting for a real disaster to happen, it is a good idea to execute the plan using a simulated emergency. This should be done with as much staff as possible, knowing in advance that it isn't a real emergency. This approach to testing business continuity will give us the best guarantee of success, as it will highlight any areas of improvement. Ideally, this will be regularly conducted with different scenarios that test different parts of the BC Plan. For example, the first scenario could test what happens if staff need to leave the premises following a fire and being unable to get back into the building. The second scenario could simulate transport issues where only half the staff are able to get to the offices.

## 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Job Title	Roles and Responsibilities
Top Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Business Continuity tests and exercises.</li> <li>Support the team with necessary resources, needs and requirements for the implementation of the Business Continuity Tests and Exercises plan</li> <li>Provide support to the recommendations received post tests and exercises.</li> </ul>
QHSE & Business Continuity Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervise and coordinate with the concerned departments to hold tests and exercises for business continuity plans, and report the results and lessons learned to senior management.</li> <li>Review post tests and exercises report and raise recommendations as needed.</li> <li>Oversee the implementation of the tests and exercises plan</li> </ul>
Business Continuity Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist in the preparation of exercises and tests and actively participate in the exercises according to the needs of departments.</li> <li>Coordinate with Business Continuity Representatives and department heads to develop an annual BC exercise and test plan</li> <li>Ensure tests and exercises are conducted as scheduled</li> </ul>
Business Continuity Representatives & Administrative/ Operations Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in determining the tests and exercises needs for their respective department</li> <li>Prepare for exercises and tests and actively lead in the exercises and tests</li> <li>Ensure post tests and exercises report is completed</li> </ul>

## 4. PRE-TESTS AND EXERCISES

### 4.1. TEST PLANNING BACKGROUND

These tests are conducted to support National Ambulance Business Continuity framework

## 4.2. MEETINGS

Pre-test planning meetings must be scheduled in advance of the desired exercising date for the specific business continuity plans.

The business continuity team should maintain the annual tests and exercises in the **QHFXXX Tests, Exercises, and Drills Register**. The BC representatives with the overall responsibility of the planned testing should chair the pre-test planning meeting.

Any other parties who will be involved in the testing should be selected in the scope of BC testing should attend pre-test planning meetings.

These meetings may be conducted face-to-face, by teleconference, or by other electronic means (e.g., e-mail, video conference).

## 4.3. SCHEDULED DATE AND TIME OF TEST

Start Date/Time	Finish Date / Time

## 5. TESTS AND EXERCISES METHODS

### 5.1. TABLETOP EXERCISE/ TEST

Tabletop Test is a scenario-based exercise conducted with an intention to discuss plans for managing a simulated emergency situation systematically. The basic objective of conducting this test is to ensure all personnel responsible for actionable measures are aware of the relevant process and procedures pertaining to the BCP. The test typically involves discussion of one or more disaster scenarios, during which the potential response and procedures will be reviewed, and ensure responsibilities outlined are appropriately handled by concerned areas. This will help National Ambulance identify shortcomings in processes.

### 5.2. WALK-THROUGH DRILL/SIMULATION TEST:

Walkthrough Drill/Simulation Test is a practical version of the tabletop exercise. The test goes beyond talking about the process and actually gets the team out to conduct the recovery process. So, while a Tabletop Test involves sitting around the table discussing plan details, the Walk-Through/Simulation Test involves the team responding to a pretend disaster as stated and act as directed by the BCP. This would include restoring backups, live testing of redundant systems, and implementing other relevant processes. The test will involve validation of response, processes, systems, and resource mobilization.

### 5.3. FULL RECOVERY TEST:

A Full Recovery Test involves a complete process of practically running up the backup systems and processing transactions or data, considering the simulation as a real-life disaster. It is a functional test that checks how quickly a system can recover after a crash or failure.

The test conducted is to ensure that that live and backup systems can run in conjunction assuring free transitioning of operations to backup systems in case of a sudden system failure or crash. National Ambulance will review the effectiveness of the system recovery every time it upgrade systems. BCP drills, including recovery testing, should be done on a periodic basis to make sure everyone involved is aware of their roles and responsibilities, and ensure smooth functioning of critical business operations when there is a failure or disaster.

## 6. TESTS AND EXERCISES REQUIREMENTS

### 6.1. INVOLVE EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

During the course of the BCP, testing organizations should ensure their critical external providers partners are included in the process as much as possible. This will not only facilitate accuracy in testing but also get valuable feedback from external providers about the current Business Continuity Plan and testing process. It will also facilitate possible suggestions for improvement from the external provider.

Third Party Name(s)	Contact Person / Position	Role in the Tests and Exercise

### 6.2. POST TEST REPORT

National Ambulance will document the results of the tests conducted with findings of tests. This is the most important part of the BCP testing process. The document should also have recommendations detailing key actions/ measures to be taken for improvement and building resilience. It will also contain considerations for the next periodic review of Business Continuity Planning.

Types of Tests and Exercises (Highlight Box Indicating Test Being Conducted)
Drill
Tabletop Test
Full Recovery Test

### 6.3. PLANS TO BE TESTED

BC Plan Name(s)	Scope of Execution

### 6.4. TEST GOALS

Enter a brief and clearly stated goal of what you want the test to accomplish. Test goals and objectives drive the test and keep the process on track.

Goals

### 6.5. TEST OBJECTIVES

Clear, measurable objectives should be defined here. Write at least 3-5 overall objectives.

#### 6.5.1. OBJECTIVES DEFINED:

- Establish the direction of the test
- Control the direction of the messages
- Narrow the scope of the test plan
- Keep the test and participants on track

### 6.5.2. WRITING OBJECTIVES

- Simple
- Concise
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic and challenging
- Task-oriented (oriented to specific business functions)

Objectives

## 6.6. EXECUTION SCENARIO

### 6.6.1. TEST BASIC PREMISES

Equipment, policies and procedures or conditions needed to conduct the test but exist only for the purpose of the test need to be defined here. Examples:

- The weather is hot and humid and temperatures will exceed 50 °C.
- Change the date, the time, and put people on vacation and make them not available.
- The only valid phone numbers are those listed in the communications directory found in this document.

No.	Test Basic Premises
1	
2	
3	
4	

### 6.6.2. TEST EXECUTION ASSUMPTIONS

Design criteria that further define the scope of the test by placing assumed limits on the participants are described here. These answers address questions that often hold up the test. Examples:

- The city will be isolated for 24 hours.
- The telephone systems are operating normally.
- All employees who are "supposed to come to work" show up.

No.	Assumptions
1	
2	
3	
4	

### 6.6.3. TEST SCENARIO

The event or incident scenario for this test can be as simple as a basic technology disruption or as complex as a simulated, major crisis event.

- This section prepares participants for the test
- This is the overview of the event, the beginning of the process
- Describe the environment at the time of the test
- Provide necessary background information
- Launch the event – is it realistic?
- Discovery – how do you find out?
- Details: time, location, extent of damage
- Sequence of events
- Initial damage report, if possible
- Weather conditions
- Where are we in the timeline of response and recovery?
- Who is missing? Who is there?
- Are there injuries? Fatalities?
- What communication has taken place?
- Leave nothing to assume – this just creates chaos with the participants

Example:

“A major earthquake struck at 9am. The epicenter has not yet been determined. Electrical power and phones are out. Your emergency generator did not turn on. The shaking was severe, causing glass breakage and furniture to topple. You hear moans and screams of fellow employees. You do not know the status of your building or the city.”

Segment	Planned Date & Time	Actual Date & Time	Message Content	Delivery Method	Delivered By
A					
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					
G					
H					
I					
J					
K					

## 6.7. INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS

Describe here what you expect of the test participants. Explain decisions and actions to simulators as if they were the “real” people. Simulators are reality (e.g., Imagine if you will...). Explain that the test is not a “fault-finding” activity. Explain time outs – and how that would work. Also discuss the fact that there will be mistakes. Be sure to note that the more mistakes, the better, as learning comes from making mistakes. Example:

- This is a training test designed to assess existing plans and procedures as a tool to manage the response. It is understood that plans are always evolving and are not “perfect”. Questions regarding the test should be directed to the test facilitator.
- The test design team has designed the situations to be as realistic as possible. If we have missed the mark, work through the problem to the best of your ability. The value is in the process, the dialogue, and the experience.
- Actions and decisions should be consistent with your existing plans.
- Stay in the role the entire time. Don’t get into the future; stay in the moment.

## 6.8. COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORY

The directory should be published separately, and included here. It should contain the phone numbers, fax numbers, and/or email addresses of those with whom the participants are likely to have to call. These numbers, of course, will be for phones in the Simulation Room. This closes the communication loop. The directory is the last piece to be done prior to the test.

Name	Role	Cell Phone Number
	Exercise and Test Role	
	External Provider	
	Others	

## 6.9. MESSAGES

Messages drive the test, expose unresolved issues, and address the objectives. They add information to describe the disaster environment and/or situation. Messages stimulate action by the participants. Messages can escalate an initial (primary) problem and create secondary or tertiary problems. Example:

- Primary event – earthquake
- Second event – building collapse
- Tertiary event – building fire

### 6.9.1. MESSAGES SHOULD INFLUENCE ACTION AT LEAST ONE OF FOUR WAYS



- Verification – information gathering
- Consideration – discussion, consultation
- Deferral – place on a priority list
- Decision – deploy or deny resources

#### 6.9.2. MESSAGE COMPONENT EXAMPLES

- Time – what time is it to be delivered within the test?
- Who – who is the source of the message?
- Mode – how was the message transmitted?
- To Whom – who is the recipient?
- What – is the content of the message?
- Acting tips – helpful to note expected action/reaction and acting tips

#### 6.9.3. MESSAGE SOURCES

- Pre-scripted messages provide the story line of the test; they also deliver or announce important information
- Incident response team members
- Simulators in an effort to stress a particular issue

#### 6.9.4. MESSAGE DELIVERY

- Phone
- Two-way radio
- Fax
- Email
- Radio broadcast
- Video
- Actor playing a role

#### 6.9.5. MESSAGE EXAMPLES

- “This is the security guard at the main desk. There is a strong smell of gas in the lobby. What should I do?”
- “This is the floor warden on the 22nd floor. Employees are asking if they should go home or stay. Is there any food or water here at work if we have to spend the night?”

#### 6.9.6. MESSAGE TRACKING

- Keep messages and related test information on a spreadsheet so that you can sort them by location, date, time, or type of event
- Have 4-5 key messages that speak directly to the objectives that you will have passed by the evaluators and simulation room for resolution
- If messages are not adequately or properly resolved, keep the message alive
- Note key messages on the spreadsheet by using bold font.

## 7. PARTICIPANTS

### 7.1. TEST FACILITATOR

The test facilitator must be familiar with the BC plan being tested, ideally independent of both the BC plan developers and standing team members. The facilitator coordinates the test's execution scenario and provides spontaneous input to the test. This helps plan execution throughout the test scope. The facilitator is in charge of all test elements, provides oversight to the process, and is the final arbiter.

Test Facilitator Name

#### 7.1.1. ON TEST DAY

- Review all the major points – timelines, key messages, contact information at all facilities
- Have an assistant if possible
- Cell, pager and landline numbers should be available to reach you
- Facilitators should not get into active problem solving; their job is to delegate and encourage the participants

### 7.2. TEST ASSISTANT

A test assistant supports the facilitator, especially during large and complex tests.

Test Assistant Name

#### 7.2.1. ON TEST DAY

- Name cards need to be distributed to those who cannot participate until later
- Radio announcements (and other audio/video media) need to be planned and recorded in advance and cued for playback
- Plan for the lunch break
- Check in with the facilitator frequently
- Play any media as required in the test plan, e.g., video, radio broadcast.
- Hand out the participant evaluations
- Assist with the debriefing

### 7.3. TEST DESIGN TEAM

The following individuals are involved in designing and planning the test:

Design Team Members

Design Team Members

#### 7.4. SIMULATION TEAM MEMBERS

Design team members make great simulation team members. In-depth knowledge of the organization and departments being tested is a key requirement. STMs should have a positive good attitude and good acting skills. They need to be able to produce “credible scenarios” and yet stay on course with the test plan. Most of all they need to be team players.

Simulation Team Members

##### 7.4.1. SIMULATION TEAM GUIDELINES

- Know the test plan and the messages
- Know where the test is going
- Know your resources
- Know your messages
- Follow instructions from the simulation coordinator
- Provide realistic time frames to callers
- Use spontaneous yet realistic messages
- Deliver messages at the stated time
- React convincingly to the message recipient’s comments
- Ensure that key messages are kept active until they have been addressed
- The simulation coordinator monitors messages and keeps the simulation team on track
- Respond to participants’ requests and actions
- Repeat information if asked
- Stay on track with the script and objectives
- Keep the simulation room scribe informed on impromptu stories
- Report issues to the simulation room coordinator
- If a phone is used, answer it with, “May I help you?”
- Keep the test plan and messages in a binder, and highlight your assigned messages
- Keep notes on what you said to everyone
- Be at the test early
- Don’t offer to call anyone back; place the responsibility on test participants. You will be too busy with other calls to keep calling them back.
- Remember you are in control of calls. Don’t let the caller determine how it is handled.
- Try and avoid delivering something in writing

- When following up on a message the team did not complete, and they state it was fixed, challenge them to validate their claims
- When callers into the simulation room demand more information than is necessary or available, state that you don't have any more information

#### 7.4.2. SIMULATION ROOM

- The simulation room should be located near the test room, but far enough away where occupants cannot be heard
- Have a sufficient number of phones
- Have white boards or flip charts for scribes to note the current status
- Key messages need to be noted for tracking
- The room needs to have adequate room and wall space

#### 7.4.3. SIMULATION TEAM ORIENTATION

- Review test plan and key messages
- Plot the strategy for escalation
- Provide any necessary background information that the players will need
- Provide a names list
- Facilitate roles such as scribes and message runners

#### 7.4.4. ON TEST DAY

- Once the test is underway, stay in your assigned role as much as possible
- Check with the simulation team coordinator if you have any questions

### 7.5. TEST EVALUATORS

Evaluators need to understand the plan and test. They must understand the business and processes being tested, and be observant and objective. They should attend pre-test briefing, test and post-test review meetings.

Test Evaluator Name

#### 7.5.1. TEST EVALUATOR ROLE

- Monitor test play
- Evaluate actions, not players
- Determine if the objectives and related actions are being met
- Identify problems to the facilitator
- Track key messages and report findings to facilitator

#### 7.5.2. WHAT TO EVALUATE

- Test objectives – the evaluation form should have each objective written on one page with the evaluator commenting on his/her observations related to that objective.
- Evaluate expected player outcomes
- Track key messages
- Provide objective comments and recommendations

### 7.5.3. EVALUATOR ACTIVITIES

- Attend the pre-test briefing
- Assist in the development of evaluation form
- Review and know the test plan
- Know the objectives, narrative and messages
- Know the test organization
- Report early to the test
- Be positioned near intake phones so you will see where messages go and how they are handled
- If messages are not addressed, notify the simulation team so they can remind the test team.
- If key messages are lost, advise the simulation team coordinator so the message can be resent
- Assign certain messages to specific evaluators so they can track their progress.
- Note message processing on evaluator forms
- Evaluators should be assessing command, control, coordination, and communication activities

### 7.5.4. ON TEST DAY

- Observe participants in key roles (chairs and directors)
- Examine situation boards and forms
- Examine reports
- Discuss issues with participants
- Attend briefings
- Follow key messages into crisis command center for handling

## 7.6. TEST PARTICIPANTS

Test participants must be familiar with the BC plan being tested, and should specifically be named team members of the BC representatives or Administrative/Operation Managers. Individuals involved in executing plan sections and procedures are the following:

Test Participant Name	Comments

## 7.7. THE TEST BRIEFING

- Following completion of the test, the facilitator reviews the test plan with the participants and answers questions
- If possible, use audio-visuals to add realism
- At the briefing conclusion, give participants a few minutes to get ready

## 7.8. THE TEST DEBRIEFING

- The purpose of the debriefing is:
  - To review and evaluate the test
  - To provide feedback
  - To review lessons learned from the test
- Obtain feedback from all participants on what worked and what didn't work
- Note issues of command, control, coordination, and communication
- Have each function chair report on their group
- Evaluators and simulation team members share their observations
- Test facilitator facilitates the session
- The best time for a debriefing is immediately after the test
- Ask two key questions: What worked? What didn't work?
- Simulation team members and evaluators should also debrief to capture their observations and lessons learned for sharing with the test team

## 7.9. WRITTEN EVALUATIONS

- Test participants should evaluate the perceived value of the test and their overall reaction to the experience
- They should evaluate the existing plan
- They should evaluate the test
- They should identify the need for further training and tests
- They should make suggestions for improvement

## 7.10. WRITTEN REPORT

- The test facilitator should incorporate debriefing comments, evaluator observations and participant evaluations into a concise report of the event including lessons learned, issues that need correction, next steps and additional training needed
- Complete the report within five working days of the test and distribute it to all participants

## 7.11. KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL TEST

Measuring the success of tests and exercises is based on:

- Adequacy of strategies
- Top level support and involvement
- Test design team and volunteers
- Realistic test plan
- Thorough preparation and attention to detail
- Clear introduction and instructions
- Participant feedback at debriefing
- Follow-up

## 7.12. SUGGESTED TEST SCHEDULE

Consider the following schedule if two tests are conducted on the same day:

4 weeks prior to test: Design team meets one hour per week

1 day prior to test:

1 hour meeting – Simulation team orientation

1 hour meeting – Assistant orientation

1 hour meeting – Evaluator orientation

Day of test:

9:00 am Test participant orientation

9:30 am Conduct test

10:30 am Break (as needed)

11:45 am Lunch and debriefing

1:00 pm Test complete

## 8. TEST/DEBRIEF SUMMARY

The test took place on <date>. A total of <number> participants took part in the test. Out of <number> participants, <number> people responded to the written evaluation. Out of <number> participants, <number> people gave verbal feedback.

### 8.1. WRITTEN EVALUATION RESPONSES

Question	Response
Do you feel the test goal was achieved?	Yes – No – Comments:
Do you feel that you had the opportunity during the test to participate in at least one of the objectives?	Yes – No – No response –
If you answered YES, then which objective(s) did you participate in?	Objective 1 – Objective 2 – Objective 3 – Objective 4 – None –
What did you like best about participating in this test?	
When did you feel most uncomfortable and why?	
Please reflect on the test and provide an honest opinion about what you have learned today.	
If you have a written departmental or facility plan, do you feel your plan, as written today, will be adequate to recover your business functions?	Yes – No – No response –
Additional comments	
What worked properly?	
What didn't work properly?	

### 8.2. VERBAL EVALUATION

Question	Response
What worked?	
What didn't work?	

### 8.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

No	Description of Improvement	Responsible Party	Due Date	Completion Date

## 9. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

International, federal or local legislation and circulars relevant to this Policy. Full detail on this legislation can be found in QHP109 Legal Register.

Code, Name of Legislation	Jurisdiction
AE/SCNS/NCEMA 7000:2021	UAE

## 10. FEEDBACK

Any feedback or suggestions for improvement to this Policy, Processes or Procedures can be submitted to [qhse@nationalambulance.ae](mailto:qhse@nationalambulance.ae)

## 11. DOCUMENT CONTROL AND OWNERSHIP

A review and update of this document will take place as necessary, when changes occur that identify the need to revise this Policy such as changes in roles and responsibilities, release of new legislative or technical guidance, or identification of a new policy area.

This document ownership for editing is identified as:

- QHSE & BC Manager

### Change Brief

Version No.	Date	Change
1.0	December 2021	New document

CEO Approval

Board Member Verification





## APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
<b>Design Team</b>	<p>The design team develops the test from start to finish. Members should have strong knowledge of the overall business. They should also have detailed knowledge in their area or department. The team usually has 3-7 members, more if needed. The design team is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative</li> <li>• Functional under pressure</li> <li>• Able to stay on schedule</li> <li>• Detail-oriented</li> <li>• Willing to challenge</li> <li>• Good at keeping secrets</li> <li>• Not participating in the test</li> </ul>
<b>Exercise</b>	Controlled activity to train for, assess, practice, and improve business continuity performance
<b>Test</b>	An activity designed to promote emergency preparedness. The test examines the performance of duties, tasks and operations in a way similar to the way they would be performed in a real emergency.
<b>Drill</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test of individual emergency response functions</li> <li>• Involves actual field response</li> <li>• Practice or test under realistic conditions</li> <li>• Involve all levels of responders</li> <li>• Test time: 10-60 minutes</li> <li>• Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fire drill</li> <li>○ Radio test</li> <li>○ Tornado test</li> <li>○ Earthquake test</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Table Top Test</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The basic version seeks to solve problems in a group setting via brainstorming</li> <li>• Advanced table tops will introduce messages and test assistants who can answer questions</li> <li>• A more “reality-based” experience</li> <li>• Test time: 90-120 minutes</li> <li>• Debriefing time: 30 minutes</li> </ul>
<b>Full-Scale Test</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluates the operational capability of systems in an interactive manner over a substantial period of time</li> <li>• Presents complex and detailed events in real-time</li> <li>• Mobilizes personnel and resources and movement of emergency response teams, equipment and resources</li> <li>• Can be expensive; may be disruptive to normal operations</li> </ul>

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Test time: 2-8 hours</li></ul>

## APPENDIX B – RECORD OF TEST PLANNING MEETINGS

Date of Meeting	Meeting Summary (Attach meeting minutes here)