

Mission Assurance

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 20 (HSPD 20) establishes a comprehensive national policy on the continuity of Federal Government structures and operations and a single National Continuity Coordinator responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of Federal continuity policies. This policy establishes "National Essential Functions," prescribes continuity requirements for all executive departments and agencies, and provides guidance for State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector organizations in order to ensure a comprehensive and integrated national continuity program that will enhance the credibility of our national security posture and enable a more rapid and effective response to and recovery from a national emergency.

Federal Continuity Directive 1 (FCD1) This Federal Continuity Directive (FCD) provides direction to the Federal executive branch for developing continuity plans and programs. Continuity planning facilitates the performance of executive branch essential functions during all-hazards emergencies or other situations that may disrupt normal operations. The ultimate goal of continuity in the executive branch is the continuation of National Essential Functions (NEFs).

This Federal Continuity Directive 2 (FCD 2) implements the requirements of Federal Continuity Directive 1, ANNEX C. It provides guidance and direction to Federal Executive branch departments and agencies for identification of their Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) and potential Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs). It includes guidance and checklists to assist departments and agencies in assessing their essential functions through a risk management process and in identifying potential PMEFS that support the National Essential Functions (NEFs) – the most critical functions necessary to lead and sustain the nation during a catastrophic emergency. The FCD provides direction on the formalized process for submission of a department's or agency's potential PMEFS that are supportive of the NEFs. It also includes guidance on the processes for conducting a Business Process Analysis (BPA) and Business Impact Analysis (BIA) for each of the potential PMEFS that assist in identifying essential function relationships and interdependencies, time sensitivities, threat and vulnerability analyses, and mitigation strategies that impact and support the PMEFS.

It's just good business sense

Beyond the NSPD-HSPD and FCDs requirements, Mission Assurance planning is just *good business sense* that will assist in safeguarding personnel, records, and facilities; planning for emergency acquisition of emergency resources; and ensuring the capability to perform at alternate or virtual work sites until normal operations can be resumed.

From point solutions to a budget-smart, holistic and phased approach to Mission Assurance

Most agencies have numerous Mission Assurance plans in place for individuals, buildings, records and IT components. But these point solutions will need to be expanded and coordinated into an effective, integrated end-to-end backup capability that extends throughout the entire organization. An Agency's IT migration and/or associated re-capitalization of information technology (IT) and facilities infrastructure initiative presents an excellent opportunity to embed or "bake-in" necessary and flexible Mission Assurance planning from the outset. This will enable an agency to prioritize its threats, map them to their business impacts and scale remediation efforts to its unique operational and budget constraints. The result: a holistic and phased approach to developing an overarching investment strategy that will deliver a mature Mission Assurance capability across an agency and all of its operating locations.

Lifecycle flexibility is key

An embedded Mission Assurance plan will also include *check points* for comparing planned milestones of each program against actual progress based on measurable results. It will allow for adjustments to be made based on *triggering circumstances* including program shortfalls, improved technological capabilities, changes in operating requirements and evolving mission mandates. These *checkpoints* will allow sufficient program flexibility throughout the IT/infrastructure lifecycle ensuring continuous, cost-effective Mission Assurance process improvement

Compatibility of Existing Mission Assurance Plans

In recent years, many Agencies have undertaken an aggressive initiative to develop and implement a robust and comprehensive Mission Assurance- Continuity programs. When implemented, these programs should ensure that those pre-determined Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) and their resultant products continue to be available to the full Federal community and supporting private sector. However, when this initiative is undertaken in parallel with an IT/infrastructure modernization program all Mission Assurance budgets and funding requests can be included and mapped appropriately to current and future infrastructure, technological and personnel requirements. This is the Mission Assurance *Compatibility Review*, and it requires several key actions:

- Review existing and future Mission Assurance Plans to ensure that all elements of the modernization program have been considered and integrated as appropriate

- Review budget requests and funding plans to ensure that adequate financial resources will be available commensurate with Mission Assurance initiatives
- Perform a Gap Analysis of the Mission Assurance Plans and the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) proposed by the agency to identify areas of incompatibility and ensure interoperability
- Review Mission Assurance Plans to determine the relationship and support to the agency's Essential Functions (MEFs)
- Review existing vulnerability analyses of MEF and Mission Assurance related facilities, systems/networks and processes. Vulnerability analyses and risk assessments may need to be updated contingent on time and events
- Review internal lines of communications to ensure that interdependencies between developmental initiatives and emerging pragmatic and technological changes are shared and considered in the Mission Assurance planning process

Mission Assurance Integration

A systematic Mission Assurance integration protocol/process must be implemented throughout the agencies program to ensure plan compatibility with the appropriate levels of redundant capability. The present austere financial climate may not afford the luxury of purchasing or developing duplicate facilities or capabilities that stand ready to be *brought-on-line* only when the primary system fails or becomes unavailable. Therefore, a balance must be struck between the degree of criticality of an activity and the fiscal resources available. It is incumbent upon senior decision makers to establish *Primary* and *Secondary* MEFs and understand the impact on their business operations in the event of their disruption. Only then can critical *Single Points of Failure* (SPOF) be identified, threats prioritized and contingency plans established to minimize the consequences of SPOF exploitation. In addition, these actions must be taken in the most effective and efficient manner possible, minimizing disruption to the normal work processes while funding is scaled in accordance with resource limitations. Key action steps of the Mission Assurance Integration phase are:

- Initial activities must address the agency's Mission Assurance Plan as influenced by the overarching agency Primary and Secondary MEFs
- In the event that a Mission team member or supporting team member working at the agency or operating facility is deployed or has possible schedule changes due to an emergency, the family left behind must take on the duties and responsibilities that are normally those of agency's Division Team Member. A comprehensive Family Support Guide should be provided as a guideline for helping the family set up a Family Plan in case of just an event.

- The Crisis Response Team plans will be reviewed to ensure that the immediate responses focus on the key elements of personnel safety, damage containment, continued performance of MEFs and (as necessary) actions required by the agency's leadership's decision to implement the Mission Assurance Plan either in whole or in part.
- Each Operating Entity has individual Mission Assurance Implementation Plans that support the continued performance of their necessary activities and essential functions. These plans will be viewed from multiple perspectives intended to ensure consistency with the agency's Mission Assurance Plans, support for MEFs, availability of mandatory enablers (facilities, networks, personnel, etc.) and identification of potential areas of competition for scarce and/or limited resources.
- Should Mission Assurance Plan activation require devolution of functions or relocation of activities, it must support two critical elements: First, the plan needs to ensure that the agency's facilities can continue conducting its individual MEFs. Secondly, it must encompass all those operational and/or support functions required upon the activation of the agency's/HQ COOP Plan. A comprehensive review will be conducted to determine the COOP relationship between agency and each department.
- A critical aspect that must be reviewed and addressed in the Mission Assurance planning continuum is the need to ensure that relocation sites and devolution entities' physical and cyber infrastructures, IT and human capital resources are kept current and commensurate with the capability expectations of agency plans. As the agency's IT and/or infrastructure migration plan progresses, an ongoing comparative analysis must be conducted to ensure a continuing compatibility.
- An integrated Mission Assurance Plan must be de-conflicted internally and externally. The agency should ensure that resources are not being used by another organization. Priorities should be understood during the planning phase and the Mission Assurance Plan may need to be adjusted, or additional resources identified.
- All critical success factors necessary for the agency's MEFs to be satisfactorily performed must be available at relocation and devolution locations. Current and future modernization plans should include a mandatory section that provides a comparative analysis of the agency's capabilities. Current funding needs and projected out-year budget requirements would be required elements of information for each agency/department analysis.
- As the roles, responsibilities and functional capabilities of the agency change, Mission Assurance plan modifications need to be made and revalidated. Key assets must also be examined and certified as to their continued applicability and availability. Resultant costs should be identified and explained.
- Tests, training and Exercises (TT&E) need to be an ongoing agency enterprise to ensure that Mission Assurance Plans can be activated, implemented, viable as designed and MEFs performed as intended.

- An agency-wide qualitative and quantitative measurement system needs to be developed/identified and applied to the entire Mission Assurance process. Physical and cyber infrastructures need to be evaluated periodically to determine Mission Assurance readiness and compatibility agency finance requirements. In addition, Mission Assurance personnel both primary and alternates need to be challenged on their continuing ability and readiness to carry out their Mission Assurance roles, responsibilities and functions.

Mission Assurance Planning, Development & Maintenance

Many Agencies conduct worldwide operations with the support of numerous large and small installations. In some areas of Mission Assurance planning and development there are generic business and functional areas where standard, proven Mission Assurance procedures can be employed. This concept is applicable to satellite/extended operations as they assume greater mission and budget support responsibilities. Other Agencies, however, have a multitude of unique missions and functions that require tailored Mission Assurance plan elements—definitely not a *one size fits all* approach. Current organizational strategies may call for distributed operational capabilities utilizing multiple locations with a diverse workforce. In today's *information sharing* environment previous problems resulting from location and availability of personnel an expertise can now be minimized. In addition, because of the advent of shared databases and real-time network connectivity, constituent support is no longer location constrained. The need for site-specific network systems and database implementations will soon be minimized, greatly enhancing the productive capacity and survivability/continuity of an agency MEFs.

A number of areas will need to be considered in the development of and maintenance of Mission Assurance Plans as a result agency diverse operations:

- Key assets will need to be identified with requisite backup and redundant capabilities available.
- Infrastructure support and business process responsibilities will need to be included in state facilities Mission Assurance.
- Human Resource allocations will influence and impact on the construct of the COOP relocation strategies and activation timelines.
- In the event of rotation and/or turnover of personnel at most operating facilities will necessitate frequent Mission Assurance roster changes, additional specific Mission Assurance functional training and more general Mission Assurance awareness training.
- A robust Mission Assurance TT&E program will be required to ensure an acceptable Mission Assurance readiness/operational posture.

- The geographic distribution of previously centralized business and support functions, while it will improve Mission Assurance capabilities, will require additional administrative scalable funding and to a certain extent redundant capabilities.
- Agency Mission Assurance Management and Plan maintenance will require greater emphasis and senior level involvement to ensure that devolution and relocation strategies remain viable and that critical resources/personnel are not located at a single site or same risk area.