



SECTION: Administrative

POLICY: AD 10

Revised Date: July 2022

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February 2017; September 2015; November 2014

BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

PREAMBLE

Creating and maintaining a Business Continuity Plan will ensure that Contact Brant has the resources and information needed to deal with emergencies. An emergency can impose overwhelming demands and/or significantly restrict access to resources. Resources include human, material, information, and expertise. Every organization is at risk from potential disasters including natural disasters (e.g., tornadoes, floods, blizzards, fire); accidents and threats; sabotage; power and energy disruptions; communications, transportation, safety, and service sector failure; environmental disasters (e.g., pollution, hazardous material spills); or cyber-attacks and hacker activity.

An Emergency Response Plan is also part of this Business Continuity Policy to ensure compliance with the Ontario Regulation 191/11 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

POLICY

Employees will be familiar with and prepared to follow the Business Continuity Plan to ensure service delivery to clients as soon as possible following any emergency and/or disaster.

Employees will be familiar with and prepared to follow the Emergency Response Plan to ensure human safety, minimize damage to property, and ensure rapid, responsive communication to all parties involved.

PROCEDURE

1. Annually, the Chief Executive Officer will review with the Board the potential risks that are most likely to occur. Following are those risks deemed most likely to occur, and requiring risk management through the Business Continuity Plan:
 - 1.1. Natural and Other Disasters including tornadoes, earthquakes, blizzards, and fire
 - 1.2. Accidents and Threats
 - 1.3. Power and energy disruptions
 - 1.4. Pandemics
 - 1.5. Technological disruptions
2. Employees are responsible to mitigate any risks by identifying any potential threats and solutions, both in the on-going risk management and in the case of an actual emergency, to their Supervisor.

3. Following are the sections of the Business Continuity Plan to be addressed:

- A. Governance to outline roles and responsibilities
- B. Business Impact Analysis
- C. Plans for Business Continuity
- D. Readiness procedures
- E. Quality assurance
- F. Emergency Response Plan

A. Governance

1. The Chief Executive Officer will annually review the Business Continuity Plan with the Board of Director's and ensure the Plan addresses the risks most likely to occur as well as the essential services and resources that are required to continue operations.
2. The Chief Executive Officer, Manager of Service Coordination and the Executive Assistant supporting the Board will be responsible for the oversight, initiation, testing and audit of the Business Continuity Plan in communication with the Chair of the Board or alternate.
3. During any emergency, the Board of Directors should be prepared to meet more frequently to address issues arising from the emergency. The Board should make recommendations on the overall course of action based on the information regarding operations received from the Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, who is responsible to monitor the situation daily; act as an emergency resource to the Chief Executive Officer, or alternate; and help to determine the substance of news releases for on-going interruptions.
4. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure information is up to date and provided to the Board of Directors to help inform decision making.
5. It is the intention of Contact Brant to operate in accordance with existing policies and procedures, both governance and operational.

B. Business Impact Analysis

1. The Chief Executive Officer will annually ensure employees review a Business Impact Analysis to recommend to the Board the organization's critical business services and the priority of services for continuous service delivery and rapid recovery, as well as identifying internal and external impacts of disruptions.
2. Identifying the critical business services that must be delivered is based on the Contact Brant Mission Statement and the severity of impact a disruption could cause; prioritization of the services is also based on the anticipated minimal time of recovery needed to continue these services after a disruption and a potential loss of revenue that otherwise could be caused. Following are the identified critical business services:
 - 2.1 Coordination of services for families may be especially important during a community disaster, especially for those most in need; the Case Resolution function may need to be implemented to address individuals at risk. Coordination supports could be implemented at a minimum once communication systems are available.

- 2.2 Information, especially general information provided by the municipality or province, may be especially important during a community disaster and Contact Brant, as a recognized access point and manager of the Information Database utilized by 211, may be able to play a key role. Information services could be implemented at a minimum once communication systems are available.
 - 2.3 Intake and referral to appropriate services to be responsive to families and community partners, may be especially important during a community disaster where families will experience increased stress. Intake and referral could be implemented at a minimum once communication systems are available, or staff are able to travel to meeting sites.
 - 2.4 Payment of the organization's bills, including employees' salaries, should be completed in a timely fashion. This could be implemented at a minimum once communication systems are available.
3. Internal resources may further impact the disruption and need to be considered in each situation, including but not limited to: employee availability, corporate assets (facilities, computers, computer applications, data), financial (additional expenses related to implementing the continuity plan, length of time of emergency), and intangible losses (damage to reputation).
 4. External factors may further impact disruptions and need to be considered in each situation, including but not limited to: suppliers, support services (security, technology support, phone and internet suppliers), finance institutions, transportation, insurance providers, government services, legal services, health and safety services, other community services).

C. Plans for Business Continuity

1. At a minimum, the following business options should be maintained or resumed as soon as possible:
 - Phone reception
 - Provision of Information, including management of the Information Database to ensure updated records for the community and 211
 - Intake and Referral
 - Service Coordination including Case Resolution for complex needs, and
 - Financial Accountability including payments and financial statements.
2. In the case of any temporary closures of the Contact Brant office, employees are expected to complete work at home or an alternate location wherever possible:
 - Employees will leave voice mails indicating they will be checking their messages and returning calls, and will follow-up regularly throughout the day.
 - Resource Coordinators, Service Coordinators, Urgent Response Coordinators, Community Navigator and Peer Support Navigator can complete calls by telephone or their agency-provided cell phone.
 - The Administrative Assistant, or alternate, will ensure that the answering machine message is changed and a sign is posted on the entrance door, wherever possible, to reflect that the office is temporarily closed and the reason, with anticipated timelines for re-opening.

- The Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, will contact the local radio station to have announcements made regarding the office closure, wherever possible.
 - The Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, will communicate with staff about the temporary closure and when the Contact Brant office will re-open.
3. Employees should consider recovery arrangements already in place such as internal and external telecommunications, backup systems, and alternate modes of services and facilities:
 - 3.1 The contracted IT Support, as well as web-based databases EMHware and Community Information, provide offsite backup and should be expected to make systems and records available to employees as soon as possible, according to the contractual agreements.
 - 3.2 Employees already can access email and the databases from off-site with passwords through agency home office equipment, which may make it possible to carry on services quite quickly if access to the office site is limited. Employees should work from their home if the Contact Brant office site is not accessible or usable.
 - 3.3 Some employees are provided with mobile phones that can be used by any employee in case of interruption in phone services at the Contact Brant office.
 - 3.4 Intake information including the Common Tool for Intake and associated information and forms can be completed utilizing paper copies if access to the database is not available. Data can be input at a later date; additional administrative resources may be required to assist with this data input.
 - 3.5 Referral packages to agencies can be handwritten or typed as a Word document if the database is not available.
 - 3.6 Meetings can be held by teleconference or at other sites.
 4. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure an alternate location for services if the office site is not accessible for an extended period of time after any emergency or disaster.
 - 4.1. In the short term, all employees will be expected to complete work at home, or in another location, wherever possible.
 5. The Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Board of Directors, will ensure adequate insurance, health and safety policies and procedures, staff training, and workplace health and safety measures are in place to minimize the organization's risks, as well as to minimize the time that services are not available.
 6. Following are procedures for business continuity related to the potential risks identified by the Board of Directors:
 - 6.1. **Natural and Other Disasters**
 - Weather and Environmental Conditions:
When the local school boards cancel school transportation and close schools in the City of Brantford due to weather or environmental conditions, including but not limited to tornadoes, earthquakes and

blizzards, the Contact Brant office will be temporarily closed so employees do not have to travel into work. The Chief Executive Officer or alternate will identify when the office will re-open.

Employees should plan ahead when weather forecasts implicate poor weather the next day, to be prepared to work at home in case of office closure.

Employees will follow procedures outlined in this policy under 'C. Plans for Business Continuity', item 2, regarding temporary closures of the Contact Brant office, where employees are expected to complete work at home or an alternate location, wherever possible.

Note: The Contact Brant lease identifies that snow removal is the landlord's responsibility.

- **Fire:**
Following a fire, employees should not access the office site unless the Fire Department authorizes the safe access to the building. If the building is deemed accessible and workmen are required in the building, the Chief Executive Officer or an alternate should be on site to ensure protection of resources.

Employees must implement reasonable precautions to avoid fire hazards and follow the Health and Safety Policy to reduce risk. Fire alarms, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are part of the risk management and detailed in the Health and Safety Policy.

6.2. Accidents and Threats

- All employees are expected to be knowledgeable on health and safety policies and procedures, and take all reasonable actions and responsibility for ensuring the work environment is safe to minimize risk of accidents and threats.
- All employees are expected to be knowledgeable on the possibility of potential threats and allegations to staff, and take all reasonable actions and responsibility for ensuring their safety, according to the Staff Safety Policy, AD-11.
- All employees will receive crisis intervention training.

6.3. Power and Energy Disruptions

- Power and energy disruptions may not affect cell phones and laptops, which should be utilized as needed.
- If power and energy disruptions are only limited to the Contact Brant office, employees should work at home.
- The Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, should use best judgment regarding temporary closure of the office depending on the projected length of the power or energy disruption, temperature especially in winter months, or the lack of lighting or water in the office.
- All employees will follow procedures outlined in this policy under 'C. Plans for Business Continuity', item 2, regarding temporary closures of

the Contact Brant office, where employees are expected to complete work at home or an alternate location wherever possible.

- If workmen are required in the building, the Chief Executive Officer or an alternate may be required to be on site.

6.4. Pandemics

- A flu pandemic occurs when a novel virus which is virulent and easily transmitted infects humans. Contact Brant will recognize a pandemic that is confirmed by public health authorities, and follow the directions communicated by the public health authorities.
- The Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, should closely monitor the health of employees, and use best judgment regarding flexible scheduling of hours or sending an employee home due to infectious disease symptoms. Employees would be expected to use sick benefits, including longer term benefits, if required.
- The Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, should closely monitor the health and safety of employees, and use best judgment regarding the closure of the office to the general public and/or employees in consultation with the Brant County Health Unit/Medical Officer of Health.
- If employees are directed not to attend the office, employees will follow procedures outlined in this policy under 'C. Plans for Business Continuity', item 2, regarding temporary closures of the Contact Brant office, where employees are expected to complete work at home or an alternate location wherever possible.
- The Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, is responsible for directing the organization on a day to day basis. The Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, will need to consider the following in having the office remain open, and/or continuing services:
 - Employee sickness, or employees staying at home to care for family members who are ill, or children not in school due to closures. The Sick Leave and Leave of Absence Policies should be considered; vacation time can also be used.
 - To address employee's fear of coming into work due to possible exposure to the virus, information from the Brant County Health Unit will be utilized to inform employees. The Telework Policy may be considered to allow work flexibility, and the Health and Safety Policy/practices should assist in helping employees proceed with their jobs. Employees can also use vacation time.
- If an employee is quarantined by Public Health officials, the employee must provide the employer with a written confirmation from a Public Health official including the quarantine period. A leave may be paid through consideration of the following policies: Sick Leave, Leave of Absence, Telework, or Vacations and Holidays; additionally, the long-term disability benefit plan may be accessed.
- As a known access point for information and manager of the Information Database, Contact Brant could be utilized to disseminate information, as directed by the City of Brantford and the Brant County Health Unit, and as required by 211 for their services.

- Employees are expected to follow health and safety policies and procedures; additionally employees should follow guidelines by the City of Brantford and the Brant County Health Unit to reduce risk of infection (e.g., washing, limiting face-to-face contact/interviews, coughing/sneezing guidelines).
- All employees should consider vaccinations as recommended by the Medical Officer of Health and their own doctor.
- Employees should report any evidence of a communicable disease that could seriously endanger the health of others to the Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, as well as the Brant County Health Unit.
- In the event that the CEO or designate are unavailable due to a pandemic, the Board of Directors may need to designate a decision maker. Additionally, the other Contact agencies could be available for consultation.

6.5. Technological Disruptions

- Technological disruptions could occur due to IT provider services, IT maintenance services, or cyber-attacks and hacker activity.
- The Chief Executive Officer will ensure the following are in place to minimize risk: adequate back-up systems, firewalls, policies regarding computer and internet use, use of passwords, and frequent password changes.
- Employees will ensure use of passwords and will bring any concerns regarding IT resources or access to the attention of the Administrative Assistant, Executive Assistant, and/or IT maintenance services.

D. Readiness Procedures

1. The Chief Executive Officer will annually review the Business Continuity Plans with employees to ensure preparedness in case of an emergency.
2. All employees are expected to use reasonable judgment on how to respond in case of an emergency, follow Contact Brant policies and procedures, and participate in an annual review of the Business Continuity Plan to be prepared for emergency situations to assist in the organization's response.
3. Disaster recovery plans may need to be considered following an emergency; all employees are expected to participate in the process of rebuilding following an emergency, to the best of their ability.

E. Quality Assurance

1. Following any emergency, the Chief Executive Officer will facilitate a review of the response by both employees and the Board, and incorporate recommendations into new business practices, policies, and procedures.
2. Employees and the Board should build on any experiences in disruptions of service, including occasional interruptions or closures due to weather, brief power outages, and the agency's 2008 and 2012 moves to new sites.
3. The Chief Executive Officer will facilitate an annual review with both employees and the Board regarding the business and operational practices.

F. Emergency Response Plan

1. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that an Emergency Response Plan is posted (Appendix 1). The Emergency Response Plan shall apply to Contact Brant employees, volunteers, visitors, and clients on, in, or around the premises.
2. The Emergency Response Plan will include procedures for Fire, Natural Disasters, Bomb Threats, Water/Heat/Utility Disruptions, and Missing Persons.
3. Employees and volunteers need to be aware that the Emergency Response Plan may need to be provided in a format that takes into consideration individual needs, as well as that supports may be required to some individuals in emergency situations.
4. Contact Brant employees and volunteers will work with the individual, as soon as practicable, to identify solutions and options that take into consideration their needs.
 - 4.1 Alternative options include but are not limited to enlarged text; communication support either in person or over the phone; documents provided via email; ensuring the individual's support person is aware of the Plan.
5. **Emergency Survival Kit:** One of the best ways to prepare for an emergency, regardless of the type, is to prepare an Emergency Survival Kit. As a best practice, emergency survival kits should include enough supplies for employees, volunteers, visitors, customers and guests to survive for 72 hours. The Emergency Survival Kit includes:
 - Flashlights (located in hallway and CEO's office)
 - Cell phones that will work in a power outage
 - A well-stocked First Aid kit (located in copier area)
 - Manual can opener (located in the kitchen)
 - Bottled water (located in the kitchen).



Emergency Response Plan

Employees and volunteers need to be aware that the Emergency Response Plan may need to be provided in a format that takes into consideration individual needs, as well as that supports may be required to some individuals in emergency situations.

Contact Brant employees and volunteers will work with the individual, as soon as practicable, to identify solutions and options that take into consideration their needs. Alternative options include but are not limited to: communication support either in person or over the phone; documents provided via email or website; ensuring the individual's support person is aware of the Plan; documents provided in enlarged text or Braille.

FIRE Emergency Response Plan Procedures:

If you hear a fire alarm, all individuals on, in or around the premises, including employees, customers, visitors, clients, etc. will:

- Remain calm and encourage others to remain calm.
- Evacuate the building immediately, using the nearest and safest exit.
- Close all doors behind you as you leave.
- Report to the designated "Emergency Evacuation Area" (sidewalk on Park Road North).
- Immediately report any employees, clients, visitors, or individuals who have remained in the building or refused to leave.
- Dial 911 to notify the authorities and follow any and all instructions. Provide your name, correct address of the fire (643 Park Road North, Brantford, N3T 5L8) and the location of the fire in the building.
- Use the fire extinguisher *only if deemed safe to use rather than exit the building.*
- *Do not return into the building until it has been declared safe to do so by the Fire Department.*

If you are unable to leave the area or building due to fire or heavy smoke:

- Remain calm.
- Close all doors to prevent the entry of smoke and fire.
- Dial 911 to notify the authorities and inform them of who and where you are.
- Signal to the Fire Fighters, by any means possible, to draw attention to you.
- If possible, seal all cracks where smoke can get in.
- Crouch low to the floor if smoke begins to enter your area.
- Move to the nearest protected location in the room or area.
- Wait to be rescued and remain calm.
- Do not leave the area.
- Do not panic.
- Listen for instructions or information which may be given by authorized personnel.

NATURAL DISASTERS Emergency Response Plan Procedures:

A "weather watch" means that conditions are favourable for severe weather to develop.

A "weather warning" means that severe weather has been sighted in the vicinity.

- Remain calm and encourage others to remain calm in a weather warning.
- Account for all employees, volunteers, visitors, customers and guests ensuring that everyone is safely inside the facility.
- Close all windows, curtains and blinds.
- Instruct all individuals to move away from windows and doors.
- Gather individuals in the basement; if the basement is unavailable, gather in bathrooms or other enclosed areas.
- Listen to weather reports for updates and instructions.
- Do not leave the basement or enclosed area until the weather warning has been lifted.

WATER, HEAT or UTILITY Disruptions Procedures:

In the event of a power outage:

- Remain calm and encourage others to remain calm.
- Gather flashlights and other needed supplies.
- Check on all employees, volunteers, visitors, and clients to ensure their safety.
- If the power outage is prolonged, the Chief Executive Officer or designate shall consider sending everyone home for the remainder of the day.

In the case of other utility disruptions, all attempts will be made to determine the cause of the disruption and the probable length of shutdown. Where required, the local utility provider shall be contacted to assess and resolve the situation. If the shutdown is prolonged, dismissing employees for the day shall be considered by management.

Bomb Threats; Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Hazards Procedures:

In the event of a bomb threat, or if a contaminant, virus, or other harmful agent poses an immediate threat, all threats will be treated as real in order to protect lives and property.

All individuals, including employees, volunteers, visitors, and clients are to:

- Remain calm and encourage others to remain calm.
- Evacuate the building immediately.
- Report to the designated "Emergency Evacuation Area" (sidewalk on Park Road North).
- Dial 911 to notify the authorities and follow any and all instructions.

MISSING PERSON Procedures:

During an emergency, ensure that all necessary steps are taken when an employee, volunteer, visitor, customer or guest cannot be accounted for:

- The CEO or designate and another staff will engage in a systematic search, both inside and immediately outside the premises, when safe to do so.
- Should a search of the premises prove unsuccessful, the authorities will be notified by calling 911 and providing a description of the missing person, or a photograph.
- The authorities will assume control of the search at this point.
- All previously contacted persons and law enforcement shall be notified if the missing person turns up due to search, or of their own accord.