Business Continuity Tips for Municipalities Responding to Covid-19

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In Partnership with SafetyNL and Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador
April 2020

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Objectives

- Provide a high level overview of business continuity
- Highlight how to maintain your essential/critical functions and services during the Covid-19 crisis
- Discuss how important Covid-19 municipal communications can help ensure the continuity of essential services, public health and safety

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Covid-19 Response Advice



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What is Business Continuity?

- Business continuity is the **capability** of a municipality to continue to deliver services or functions after an incident occurs
- It is also **common sense** and is it a good best practice
- Who in your community would feel the **impact** if services were disrupted suddenly and when? (e.g. wastewater services, snow clearing, etc.)
- How quickly should you get a **service or function** back in operation before there are major impacts to your municipality and its residents? 4 hours, 24 hours, 2 days or longer???

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Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

..a document containing procedures and guidelines to help recover and **restore government's essential services** to normal operations status within an acceptable time frame following an emergency or disruptive event

Emergency Services Act (2016)

Government of Newfoundland & Labrador

In your municipality:

- **Who** is responsible for response and recovery actions?
- **What** is required to continue, resume, recover and restore your essential services/functions?
- **Where** do you go to resume operations if your main work site is not available?
- **How** do you manage the response and recovery from a business disruption in your community?

Do you have a BCP and is it up to date?

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Your Response to Covid-19

As the leadership responsible for the operations of your town or city, including support for the well-being of your residents, to maintain the continuity of your operations, you now need to:

- Implement your municipality's **emergency management plan**
- Liaise with your provincial government or MNL to determine which **essential services** must continue to operate in your community
- Establish or utilize an existing **response structure** (e.g., incident/emergency response committees, BC Team, Operations team, Pandemic Team) to complete and manage business continuity activities
- **Validate** your municipality's essential services and critical functions
- Determine **how long** your essential services and critical functions can be disrupted before it causes severe impacts on your operations

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Your Response to Covid-19

- Identify **back up resources** for essential roles:
  - Conduct some cross-training to perform critical duties as many cannot be done from home (e.g. water testing, public works)
  - Share any procedures information or make a video to share when needed
- Connect with your **neighboring municipality** about BC approaches
- Make sure any of **your contractors** can still deliver services and products you depend on (traffic light maintenance, fuel delivery, IT support, etc.). Consider alternate suppliers if there is a supply chain management risk.
- Purchase or obtain any **critical products** you see that may be in short supply
- Reassign **non-essential resources** to more essential roles if possible
- Work closely with your labor unions on the **health and safety of your workforce**

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Make some quick BC progress during Covid-19!

If you do not have a BCP, you should:

- Access **BC planning tools** from Fire and Emergency Services or MNL
- Run a half day planning session – Get the **right people** in the room!
- Discuss **key risks** to your essential services right now!
- Use a **scenario** to work through how an incident would impact your operations and resources
- Develop **BC strategies** to respond to and recover from an incident
- Provide interim BC strategies and plans to **key resources**
- **Update** the interim BC Strategies and Plans as you go

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Make some quick BC progress during Covid-19!

If you already have BCPs in place, you should:

- Review and **do a walk through** with your team if time permits
- Re-validate your **recovery times** and strategies
- Assess if you have **enough personnel** coverage for your critical functions
- Assess your capabilities to **work from home** for the longer term:
  - Do administrative support need a laptop or have their computer moved home?
  - Do you need a virtual platform like Skype or Hangout to communicate?
- Ensure all **communications** for staff and dependencies are updated
- Communicate to **residents** that you have taken necessary efforts to ensure you are prepared if services are interrupted for whatever reason

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Ensuring the Continuity of Municipal Essential Services

- Focus on the **health and safety** of your communities
- **Remind residents** about the safe disposal of sanitation products, such as wipes and other products, that could impact wastewater operations
- **Communicate** messages internally and within your community about social and physical distancing as your essential resources, your employees, are at risk!!!
- **Coordinate** your response efforts with your provincial government, the federal government and fellow municipalities
- Be prepared to **respond to and recover from** incidents beyond Covid-19 – annual flood season, spring thaw, day to day operations, etc.

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Social and Physical Distancing Tips for Municipal Essential Services Workers

- Practice good hygiene with regular hand washing
- Use of hand sanitizers in key locations within the workplace
- Cleaning of widely used equipment and public work place spaces
- Work from home (WFH) if your function can be delivered remotely
- Practice physical distancing through use of additional vehicles if possible
- Check in with your team on a regular basis
- Provide mental health resources or online support tools
- Promote social and physical distancing to your residents

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Remember

- Re-evaluate what's essential to maintain in your community or city each day
- Pace yourselves – this situation could last for weeks or months
- Monitor staff fatigue and wellness, as well as yours
- Utilize Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where you can
- Implement new shift arrangements if you can
- Maintain a regular surface cleaning routine in your workplace
- Provide documentation to your employees to acknowledge they are essential workers in case social movement restrictions are enacted by governments

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Key Resources

- Guideline on essential services - https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/crtcl-nfrstrctr/esf-sfe-en.aspx
- Business continuity –CV-19 https://www.thebci.org/knowledge/coronavirus.html
- Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador - https://municipalnl.ca/
- SafetyNL - https://www.safetyservicesnl.ca/
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities - https://fcm.ca/en/resources/covid-19-resources-municipalities
- Mental Health Resources - https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/resources-2/

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Thank you!

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