



## **DIRECTIVE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**25-19**

November 7, 2025

To: Washington State Agencies, Departments, Commissions, and Boards

From: Governor Bob Ferguson

Subject: Statewide Comprehensive Continuity of Operations

To carry out our mission of serving the people of Washington, the government must be able to perform its essential functions during a crisis or emergency that impacts continuity of services (a “continuity disruption”). Essential functions are actions and activities that are required by law, have a life safety or public safety impact, or maintain the economic stability of the state.

To strengthen our state’s ability to perform essential functions and provide critical services during continuity disruptions, state agencies, departments, commissions, and boards (“agencies”) must develop and/or maintain an updated Continuity of Operations Plan. Each agency’s Continuity of Operations Plan must address all mission-essential elements necessary to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, continuity of operations, including but not limited to staff and organization, equipment and systems, information and data, and physical sites.

A successful statewide comprehensive continuity program requires and enables agencies to work collaboratively. To ensure agencies can perform essential functions and provide essential services during continuity disruptions, Continuity of Operations Plans must be coordinated across the state enterprise. This coordination, when combined with periodic reviews, updates, and exercises, will help minimize interruptions to state essential functions when those functions are most needed.

To ensure our Washington state government is prepared to respond to continuity disruptions, and consistent with the elements of a robust continuity capability, agencies must review and, if necessary, update their Continuity of Operations Plans to ensure the following elements are included:

- **Mission-Essential Functions.** Mission-essential functions must be current and must include all agency mission-essential services, functions, and/or supporting activities that must be continued throughout, or resumed rapidly after, a continuity disruption.

- Orders of Succession. Agency orders of succession must be updated and must include defined, predetermined processes to transfer authority from one person to another (i.e., the successor) as necessary to carry out mission-essential functions.
- Delegations of Authority. Delegations of authority necessary to implement current and future policy decisions must be predetermined and must be able to be executed quickly at each level of the agency to sustain mission-essential functions with minimal or no disruption.
- Alternate Sites. Alternate sites necessary for carrying out mission-essential functions when the agency's primary operating facilities are unavailable during a continuity disruption must be identified, documented, and to the extent possible, reserved or secured.
- Communications. Agencies must have plans and procedures necessary to maintain, or rapidly restore, internal and external continuity communications potentially affected by a continuity disruption.
- Records. Essential records must be identified, protected, and readily available for use during a continuity disruption.
- Personnel. Agencies' human resources departments must have a plan and must be prepared to support an employee response activation for personnel needed to perform the agency's essential functions during a continuity disruption.
- Training. Agencies' employees must be trained and must have exercised their respective continuity of operations roles, allowing their agencies to identify areas for improvement and implement corrective actions to improve plans, training, and other elements as necessary.
- Devolution Plan. Agencies' Continuity of Operations Plans must include a devolution plan to ensure that essential functions, and the authority and resources necessary to carry out those functions, can be transferred to another entity, if necessary, during a continuity disruption.
- Reconstitution Plan. Agencies' Continuity of Operations Plans must include a reconstitution plan to guide the agency in resuming normal operations after a continuity disruption.

To promote consistency across our state enterprise, I am directing the Interagency Continuity Committee, chaired by the Adjutant General of the Washington Military Department, to provide guidance and oversight to ensure all agencies complete the above-mentioned tasks. I am further directing the Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division to continue to facilitate and advise the Committee and to regularly update me on the progress.

Additionally, state agencies must:

- By May 1, 2026, conduct an internal evaluation of their Continuity of Operations Plan using the Continuity Assessment Tool (or similar resource) and provide the results to the Military Department.
- Participate in annual reporting to the Military Department beginning June 1, 2026.
- Update and exercise Continuity of Operations Plans by October 31, 2026, and annually thereafter.

- Designate the person(s) responsible for their agency's continuity planning and information technology disaster recovery responsibilities, if not already designated, and provide that contact information to the Military Department.
- Actively participate in quarterly scheduled Interagency Continuity Committee meetings, contributing to the strategic direction of the committee and strengthening state government continuity capabilities.

I invite and encourage all Washington state government agencies, including agencies led by separately elected officials or independent governing bodies, institutions of higher education, and the legislative and judicial branches of our state government to participate in the Interagency Continuity Committee and support the activities in this directive. This cooperative effort will further strengthen the state's continuity capabilities.

A resilient Washington relies on each of us working closely together to guarantee our readiness to perform and deliver essential government functions and services, no matter the disruption or incident.