



STATE OF FLORIDA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
"Dedicated to making Florida a better place to call home"

JEB BUSH
Governor

STEVEN M. SEIBERT
Secretary

September 9, 2002

«Title» «FirstName» «MiddleInitial» «LastName», «Suffix»
«PositionTitle»
«Agency»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«City», «State» «PostalCode»

Dear «SalutationTitle» «LastName»:

On April 16, 2002, Governor Jeb Bush signed into law House Bill 0727: Relating to Disaster Preparedness, which amends Section 252.365, Florida Statutes (Emergency Management Act) by revising the process for coordination and approval of disaster-preparedness plans to address a full range of potential emergencies – most commonly referred to as a Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan. The amendment stresses the importance of having in place a comprehensive and effective program to ensure continuity of essential functions under all circumstances, and directs each agency to complete their plans by July 1, 2003; however, agencies are encouraged to initiate their plan development process immediately.

Each State agency and facility, such as a prison, office building, or university, is directed to revise their existing mandatory disaster-preparedness plans through their appointed Emergency Coordination Officer (ECO). The amendment specifies that each agency's plan be coordinated with the applicable local emergency management agency and approved by the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Emergency Management (DEM).

DEM is charged with the responsibility to prepare and distribute guidelines for COOP plan development and implementation, and to perform an assessment on each agency's plan. Recognizing the urgency of the requirement for each agency to have viable COOP plans in place by the end of the Fiscal Year 2003, I am issuing COOP guidance (Enclosure 1) to assist you and your organization in meeting your responsibilities under the Florida Statutes, Chapter 252.

I ask that you formally designate a primary and alternate COOP Coordinator for your agency, and request that you provide the names and contact information of your representatives in an official appointment letter, no later than September 16, 2002, to the Governor and DEM. This position shall be staffed at the discretion of the agency head, and may be the agency's designated primary and/or alternate ECO(s). The designated individual(s) should be appropriately senior within your organization in whom you have full confidence to represent and commit your agency on COOP matters. In order to facilitate this process, a current ECO roster is provided at Enclosure 2. On

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September 20, 2002, at 9:00 a.m., a **COOP Coordinator Orientation Session** will be conducted at the State Emergency Operations Center, for your agencies' representatives.

In anticipation of the amendment, DEM developed and conducted detailed COOP training for the ECOs. This training is being offered again on September 24, 2002, at 8:30 am in the State Emergency Operations Center. (*Enclosure 3 contains details on technical assistance and training.*) DEM continues to provide expert technical assistance and planning support upon request.

DEM considers Chapter No. 2002-43, Florida Law to be very important and I encourage each agency to emphasize within your organization the need for complete and expedient implementation. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Mr. Richard Cheek, at (850) 922-7447 or email at (richard.cheek@dca.state.fl.us).

Respectfully,

W. Craig Fugate, Director
Division of Emergency Management

WCF/kd

Enclosures: (1) Continuity of Operations Implementation Guidance
(2) Emergency Coordination Officer Incumbent Roster
(3) Continuity of Operations Technical Assistance and Training Data Sheet

cc: Kathleen Shanahan, Chief of Staff
Executive Office of the Governor

Denver Stutler, Deputy Chief of Staff
Executive Office of the Governor

Steven Seibert, Secretary
Department of Community Affairs