

# Things to Know as You Develop Your Continuity Plan

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## **Introduction**

To plan effectively, we need to know what we can expect from other units and from the campus in the event of a disaster. The information which follows will help you coordinate your planning with others. Please send email to [Continuity@brown.edu](mailto:Continuity@brown.edu) if you feel that information is missing or incomplete.

## **How can I communicate with other continuity planners at Brown?**

Email directed to [Continuity-Planners@brown.edu](mailto:Continuity-Planners@brown.edu) will be received by all Brown continuity planners. This is a Google Group created to facilitate communication with and between departments involved in developing continuity plans. If you wish to communicate only with the Brown Ready Continuity Planner local system administrators, send mail to [Continuity@brown.edu](mailto:Continuity@brown.edu).

## **Enhancing Readiness**

Departments with operational responsibilities should anticipate their need for goods or services in the event of a disaster and proactively enter into contracts so that they can fix prices and set clear expectations for response in the event that they need to engage these services quickly. The expectation is that these contracts would have no charge or a nominal administrative fee unless services were required.

## **Emergency Call Lists**

Each department should establish and maintain an emergency call list which will enable them to contact all members of their department. Call lists should include mobile and home phone numbers and personal email address in addition to an individual's Brown phone number and email address. Emergency call lists should be uploaded -as related documents- to a department's continuity plan. We suggest that sensitive information, e.g. home address not be included.

## **Remote Conferencing Options**

In advance of a disaster, department leaders should decide how they will conduct meetings when some or all participants are not on campus. Experience has shown that the use of cell phones is not ideal for this purpose. There several options at Brown which you may want to try.

[Webex](#) web-based conferencing is available for no charge. You must set up a host account in order to schedule meetings. This is easily done from the [website](#) by clicking the 'Request Host Account' link in the upper left hand corner of the page. for each scheduled meeting, participants will receive both a URL and a toll-free number to call.

Meet Me audio conferencing is a no-frills, audio conferencing service which is now available for free. The first person who calls into the conference will hear their phone ring until another conference attendee joins. You must request use of this service through the [Telecommunications Office](#) but scheduling will be moving to a Google calendar so that you can see free/busy times in advance.

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Telecommunications is in the process of contracting for a new audio conferencing service which offers the option of setting up to 30 numbers that will be automatically dialed to establish a conference. Once this service is offered a link will be provided here.

## **Temporary/Alternate Work Locations**

In the event of a disaster, the Core Crisis Committee - or a member of that group - will assign temporary work space for staff who must work on campus. Spaces in Sharpe Refectory, the CIT and at Davol Square have been identified by the Continuity Planning Steering Committee for this purpose. These spaces will be provisioned with wireless access points and VoIP phones.

In the event that multiple departments have been displaced, it is unlikely that sufficient temporary space will be available for all staff. Therefore, it is important for departments to identify those staff who really need to be on campus and those with the equipment and Internet access which will enable them to work from home.

## **Availability of Computer Equipment**

In the event that a department loses some or all of its computers, a limited number of desktops and laptops may be available from Computer Facilities and Repair Services. Requests for equipment should be directed to [Computer\\_Service@brown.edu](mailto:Computer_Service@brown.edu) or 863-7329.

## **Power Generation**

Most university buildings have emergency power only to provide lighting for building evacuation and for life-safety systems such as fire alarms. Typically, this emergency power supply is of a limited duration, usually 90 minutes. A select number of university buildings have on-site emergency generators which provide emergency power for building life safety systems and fire pumps, as well as for other critical systems such as lab and animal care ventilation systems, outlet power for critical lab equipment such as research freezers and critical IT data systems.

## **Network & Phone Back Up Power**

Individuals should expect that they will not have campus network/ Internet access in the event of a campus-wide power outage. Even buildings with a dedicated generator may not have campus network/ Internet access.

In the event of a campus-wide power outage, most University telephones have a minimum of 90 minutes back up power. The University voice mail system has back-up power so individuals will be able to retrieve their messages. Emergency phones should have continuous uptime.

## **Payroll**

The Payroll Office is prepared to keep paychecks flowing. All campus departments should make every effort, in times of crisis, to process and report payroll data to the Payroll Office. Under a worst-case scenario, the Payroll Office is prepared to issue current payroll checks using prior period data

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maintained by ADP, with the understanding that corrections will be necessary when systems are back running. The Payroll Office will make every effort to meet payroll deadlines but there may be delays, depending on the severity of the crisis.

Direct deposit of paychecks is an important strategy in times of crisis. Depending on conditions, distribution of paper checks may encounter difficulties and delays. Presuming that the financial institutions are functioning, employees utilizing direct deposit will have a higher assurance of being paid on time. In view of this, it is recommended that all departments doing continuity planning include an action item to urge any faculty or staff still receiving paper checks to sign up for direct deposit.

### **Accounts Payable**

Critical payments to vendors will continue through the expanded use of the PCard and the use of manual checks. Accounts Payable policies and procedures will continue during this period of business interruption. Campus departments must be familiar with policies and procedures and have the required invoices and supporting documents required to initiate payment.

### **Purchasing**

The ability to make purchases quickly and easily post-disaster is essential for every department's recovery. Following any major disruptive event, the Purchasing Department will proactively inform the campus about the status of purchasing systems.

To the extent that systems are operating normally, the normal procurement policies, procedures, and restrictions will continue to apply. To the extent that systems are not working, the Purchasing Department will rely on expanding the use of the PCard . All departments on campus should examine PCard capacity including ensuring sufficient staff with PCards to cope when some are absent. All campus departments must be reminded that even during times of crisis, proper record-keeping for PCard purchases must be continued.

The Purchasing Department will also be prepared to manually issue purchase orders and emergency purchase order numbers.

### **Depositing Payments**

Campus departments that receive payments (cash, check or credit card) should plan as follows:

- if possible, continue to receive, record and deposit monies using normal processes.
- if that is not possible, expect a communication from [Cashier@brown.edu](mailto:Cashier@brown.edu) instructing you on how to proceed.

The instructions from [Cashier@brown.edu](mailto:Cashier@brown.edu) will depend on current conditions and may include paper recording of information and direct deposit to the bank. Under no circumstances should holding of cash and checks in your department be utilized as a coping strategy.

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## **Personnel Issues**

Performing our jobs under unusual circumstances gives rise to numerous staff issues. Human Resources has prepared an [Essential Position policy](#) to do some advance planning around some of the likely issues, and provide advice to managers & supervisors for handling HR issues during times of crisis.

Because of the wide variability of possible conditions during a time of crisis, and the complexity of some of the issues and processes, HR will do ?just-in-time? training/communicating with campus managers when needed. This will include providing temporary workarounds if recruitment, personnel, and benefits systems should be inoperable.

## **Working from Home**

Working from home is a powerful strategy for functioning during crisis. In practice, much remains to be done to develop this capability.

As you develop your continuity plan, think what your unit (or the campus) could do to increase the number of staff and faculty who could do at least part of their work from home. When some disruptive event befalls us, we'll need to have people working from home but we'd best learn how to do that now, not during the crisis. When planning for computer replacements, departments should ensure that staff who would need to work from home are assigned laptop computers. All staff with laptops should have the [Virtual Private Network \(VPN\)](#) client installed which allows them to work from home as if they were in the office. CIS is actively working to ensure that a high number of VPN connections would be available in the event of a disaster. Staff who are using their personal machines to work from home should have a copy of [Brown's anti-virus software](#) installed as well as the VPN client.

The communications industry (cable and DSL providers) are currently developing technology and capacity to support a large increase in traffic. They understand that unplanned events will generate sustained increases in volume of use, and they want their systems to be ready to support such an increase.

## **MyCourses Course Management System**

[MyCourses](#) is Brown's implementation of the Blackboard Learn course management system (formerly WebCT). MyCourses is accessed via a web browser and has a collection of built-in tools for uploading of content, communication, collaboration, assignments and assessments. This tool can be very useful in situations where classroom space might be temporarily unavailable or where the University wants to enforce social distancing, e.g. a pandemic. Academic departments should evaluate the percentage of its courses which leverage MyCourses.

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## **Child/Adult Care**

The University's backup care benefit provides eligible employees with access to backup care when they experience a temporary breakdown in their normal care arrangements. Employees will be able to schedule care for a child and/or an adult when needed. This arrangement may be helpful in the event of a disaster when normal child or adult care arrangements may not work. More information about this program is available on the [HR website](#).

## **Alternative Meeting Locations for Classes**

In the event that one or more classroom buildings is not accessible for an extended period of time, alternative class meeting locations will be assigned by the Registrar's Office in consultation with the Office of the Provost. These decisions will be guided by the following principles, in the order listed:

1. Find alternative instructional spaces in the current inventory including academic department instructional spaces suitable for existing enrollments in the courses affected with minimal disruption to currently scheduled time slots.
2. In cases where suitable alternative instructional spaces are not able to be identified, designate some university-owned, non-instructional spaces that can be utilized and in which facilities/media services can be provisioned on a temporary basis to ensure that instruction can continue with minimal interruption. This may require that some spaces currently designated as event space be utilized which could in turn have an affect on previously booked events.
3. If #1 & #2 do not suffice to serve the needs of the affected courses, the University may need to seek out temporary rental/lease spaces, non-University owned, to account for the gap in space availability OR alter the existing scheduled time slots of affected/unaccounted courses to times in which University-owned space is available.

In all cases, particularly #3, changing class meeting locations will require constant communication to the affected academic department chairs, managers, and the faculty involved as to time frame to implement changes, ultimate location/schedule changes, and duration of the change.

## **A critical function in our department is laboratory research - how do we account for that in the plan?**

Faculty input should be sought in devoting a section of the plan to the security and preservation of research in progress. Laboratory experiments underway; specialized computer and laboratory equipment; and supplies and materials may be inaccessible during an emergency. Research data should, of course, be backed up and protected as is normal for any critical data and information.