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| Business continuity policy  |
| November 2021 |
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Contents

[Document information 1](#_Toc72492079)

[Glossary 2](#_Toc72492080)

[1. Purpose 3](#_Toc72492081)

[2. Key principles 3](#_Toc72492082)

[3. Business continuity management system 4](#_Toc72492083)

[4. Roles and responsibilities 5](#_Toc72492084)

[4.1 The Secretary 5](#_Toc72492085)

[4.2 Deputy secretaries 6](#_Toc72492086)

[4.3 Readiness, Response and Emergency Management division 6](#_Toc72492087)

[4.4 Emergency Management staff 6](#_Toc72492088)

# Document information

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# Glossary

The following terms are used in relation to business continuity management processes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term  | Definition  |
| activity | Set of one or more tasks with a defined output. |
| business continuity | Capability of an organisation to continue the delivery of products and services within acceptable time frames at predefined capacity during a disruption (AS ISO 22301:2020). |
| business continuity plan | Documented [information](https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:22300:ed-2:v1:en:term:3.179) that guides an organisation to respond to a disruption and resume, recover, and restore the delivery of products and services consistent with its business continuity objectives (AS ISO 22301:2020). |
| business impact analysis | [Process](https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:22300:ed-2:v1:en:term:3.180) of analysing the impact over time of a disruption on the organisation (AS ISO 22301:2020). |
| critical business activities | Tasks that if interrupted could lead to a range of risks including financial, health, reputational and legal for the department. Critical business activities include services provided directly to the community by the department, for example, child protection, housing and emergency management.  |
| disruption | Incident, whether anticipated or unanticipated, that causes unplanned, negative deviation from the expected delivery of products and services according to organisation’s objectives (AS ISO 22301:2020). |
| incident response arrangements | Comprehensive, integrated and systematic approach to the department’s management of major business disruptions, which is scaled and resourced proportionate to the size and impact of the disruption. |
| management system | Set of interrelated or interacting elements of an organisation to establish policies and objectives and processes to achieve those objectives (AS ISO 22301:2020). |
| recovery time objective | Set prioritised time frames within the maximum tolerable period of disruption for resuming disrupted activities at a specified minimum acceptable capacity (AS ISO 22301:2020). |

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# 1. Purpose

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) seeks to empower communities to build a fairer and safer Victoria.

The department is committed to an effective business continuity management system and its continual improvement to ensure critical business activities continue and are restored as a priority following a disruption.

The purpose of this document is to outline the governance of the department’s business continuity management system for activities directly undertaken by the department and to ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to business continuity.

This policy is supported by the department’s [Business continuity framework](https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/business-continuity) which outlines the methodology and approach to business continuity management within the department.

This policy is reviewed every three years or earlier if required.

# 2. Key principles

The department’s approach to business continuity management is aligned with:

* Financial Management Act 1994, Standing Direction 3.7 Managing specific risks – business continuity planning, indemnities and immunities
* [Standard: AS ISO 22301:2020 Business continuity management systems — Requirements and related standards](https://www.iso.org/standard/75106.html)
* [Australian/New Zealand Standard 5050:2010 Business Continuity – managing disruption-related risk](https://www.standards.org.au/standards-catalogue/sa-snz/publicsafety/ob-007/as-slash-nzs--5050-2010)
* [Standard 7: Information Security Aspects of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery](https://ovic.vic.gov.au/data-protection/standards/), Victorian Protective Data Security Standards Version 2.0

The department takes an ‘all hazards’ approach to business continuity management, which means planning is to be undertaken for activities giving consideration to the potential impacts of incidents and not the cause.

Impacts to business activities may be caused by a range of issues including:

* loss of information technology
* loss of office accommodation
* loss of telecommunications
* loss of power, water and other resources from third party suppliers
* loss of staff.

In addition to the department’s business continuity management system, other business activities and processes also support the department’s resilience to disruption including:

* information technology disaster recovery
* crisis communications
* corporate risk management outlined in the department’s Risk Management Policy and Framework
* emergency management

# 2. Scope

This policy applies to business activities which are directly undertaken by the department. The business continuity management systems of the department’s funded and regulated providers are out of scope of this policy.

# 3. Business continuity management system

As shown in Figure 1 below, during a disruption the department moves through four stages of activity within the business continuity management system. The cyclical nature of the system drives preparedness, organisational resilience and continual improvement in responding to disruptions. The processes outlined in the business continuity management lifecycle are further explained in the department’s [Business continuity framework](https://intranet.dhhs.vic.gov.au/business-continuity).

Key elements of the business continuity management system are:

* Business impact analysis – a [process](https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:22300:ed-2:v1:en:term:3.180) of analysing the impact of a disruption on the department over time. This analysis will determine the requirement for business continuity plans.
* Business continuity plans (contingency procedures) are required to be in place for all critical business activities of the department with a recovery time objective of up to two weeks.
* Development of formal incident response arrangements are required for major business disruptions.
* Validation (exercising and debriefing) – business continuity plans must be exercised annually to ensure the strategies are practical and achievable and to promote awareness and familiarity with the content of the plan.
* Review – business continuity plans and the business continuity management system must be updated regularly to ensure they represent and support the critical business activities of the department.

Business continuity plans must be updated:

* following a restructure
* when there are significant changes in the environment in which the department operates
* following a significant change in the department’s risk profile
* following activation of the plan during a business disruption or exercise – to apply lessons identified in debriefs
* at a minimum every two years.

##### Figure 1: Stages of the business continuity management system



# 4. Roles and responsibilities

Employees of the department should be aware of the business continuity arrangements within their division, branch and team and as required be prepared to support the response to business disruption.

Business owners are responsible for planning, preparedness and response arrangements to ensure the continuity of critical business activities within their area of responsibility.

## 4.1 The Secretary

The department’s business continuity management system is governed by the department’s Executive Board with the Secretary holding overall accountability for the operations of the department.

The Secretary will:

* ensure priority is given to business continuity in departmental planning and operations
* require members of the Executive Board to demonstrate effective business continuity management within their area of responsibility
* ensure incident response arrangements for major business disruptions are exercised at a minimum on an annual basis
* provide leadership and strategic direction for effective departmental response to major business disruptions.

## 4.2 Deputy secretaries

Deputy secretaries and executive officers of administrative offices are responsible for ensuring effective business continuity planning and response to business disruptions affecting their division. They will:

* promote business continuity activities and requirements within their division/or agency
* identify critical business activities requiring business continuity plans within their division/or agency and ensure that contingency procedures for their division’s/agency’s critical business activities are in place and robust
* maintain an understanding of the aggregation of the business continuity plans and contingency procedures for their division/or agency and any interdependencies
* ensure that the business continuity arrangements serve to protect the security of public sector data in accordance with the [Standard 7: Information Security Aspects of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery](https://ovic.vic.gov.au/data-protection/standards/)
* ensure business continuity plans are updated following a restructure, when there are significant changes in the environment in which the department operates, following activation of their business continuity plans during a major business disruption or following a significant change in the department’s risk profile, or at a minimum every two years
* ensure that their business continuity plans are at a minimum exercised annually and participate, as appropriate, in exercises and debriefs
* lead their division/or agency to support an effective departmental response and enable the continuity and restoration of critical business activities within their area of responsibility
* participate in the department’s major business disruption response structures as appropriate.

## 4.3 Readiness, Response and Emergency Management division

The Deputy Secretary, Readiness, Response and Emergency Management is the sponsor for the department’s business continuity management arrangements and will:

* support the Secretary in their responsibilities and champion business continuity management
* report to the Executive Board on the business continuity management system to ensure the Executive Board has visibility of all critical business activities, dependencies, and interdependencies to consider the department’s overall preparedness for business disruption.

## 4.4 Emergency Management staff

Emergency Management staff support the coordination and delivery of the department’s business continuity management arrangements. Emergency Management directors are responsible for:

* the business continuity management system including this policy, the business continuity framework and associated tools and reporting to support business activity owners and staff
* supporting program areas in business continuity planning, exercising and response
* ensuring the department's cloud-based business continuity IT system which supports planning, reporting and response is maintained
* supporting the department’s response to major business disruptions through the provision of business continuity and incident response expertise and resourcing when required and available.

The Business Continuity and Emergency Management branch within the Community Services Operations Division reports to the Deputy Secretary of the Community Services Operations Division and is primarily responsible for coordinating business continuity for the Community Services Operations Division.