

Business Continuity - Roles and Responsibilities

Businesses and organisations can be impacted by loss events at any time. Effective business continuity planning can help with the resumption of business activities as soon as possible after the loss event.

This Loss Prevention Standard is one of a series of business continuity related documents and looks at the importance of allocating key roles and responsibilities.

Business Continuity - Roles and Responsibilities

Introduction

One of the first steps when developing a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is to document the individuals responsible for implementing, managing, and maintaining business continuity in the organisation.

This includes establishing governance, which is typically assigned to a member of the Senior Leadership Team with overall accountability for business continuity, and helps ensure consistent support, engagement, and resources are made available to the Business Continuity programme.

Having documented roles and responsibilities ensures the teams and individuals involved in implementing the BCP have clear guidelines and expectations around what actions they need to take when responding to a disruptive event.

Note: This Loss Prevention Standard relates to business continuity planning and is focussed on business interruption loss prevention/mitigation and related risk management guidance. It is not intended to address liability exposures. The presumption is that any regulatory requirements relating to business continuity have, or will be, met.



Understanding the Risks

Loss events can happen at any time and having defined roles and responsibilities to help manage the immediate disaster recovery, and ongoing business continuity can help reduce the scale of any business interruption losses.

Common risks and challenges include but are not limited to:

- **Duplication.** Without documenting what activity is required from specific individuals or teams during a disruptive event, there's a risk of duplicated effort, or in the worst-case scenario, where multiple individuals or teams work on the same action, but with conflicting results.
- **Assumptions.** Key actions may be missed if multiple individuals or teams assume someone else is responsible.
- **Coverage.** Individuals or teams who don't know they may be required in a specific situation could result in gaps in coverage and recovery delays.
- **Communication.** Information flowing in multiple directions without clear channels could lead to inconsistent or incorrect messaging, both internally and externally.
- **Key Person Dependency.** With no assigned deputies, the loss of one individual in a team can disrupt operations and lead to further delays, e.g., holiday, illness, departure from the business.

Managing the Risks

In order to increase organisational resilience and help mitigate the impact of a disruptive event, a Business Continuity - Roles and Responsibilities document should be created that clearly outlines high-level roles related to Business Continuity within the organisation, including responsibilities and levels of authority/competence.

For each role, the document should include:

- The name of the role.
- Their position within the organisation.
- The function they will serve in a disruptive event.
- The actions they will be expected to perform in a disruptive event.
- Appropriate deputies with adequate knowledge.

This document should be reviewed when personnel changes and at least once annually. When personnel changes, those new to their roles should be informed of the expectations and responsibilities.

Specific roles and responsibilities will change depending on an organisation's specific requirements; however, please refer to the table below for examples.

Role	Responsibilities
Senior management and leadership	• Determine responsibilities for the business continuity roles. • Provide guidance, support, and resources for business continuity. • Foster and promote a culture of resilience across the organisation.
Business Continuity steering group	• Provide governance and support for business continuity planning. • Liaise with senior management/leadership to make recommendations and remove barriers.
Business continuity professional	• Develop and coordinate business continuity, including managing the BCP. • Carry out business continuity related activities such as business impact analysis, exercising, and BCP reviews.
Business Continuity plan owner	• Manage the BCP, ensuring it is fit for purpose and meets organisational requirements.
Incident management team	• Implement the BCP following disruptive events to help ensure a prompt and effective recovery.
Department representatives	• Provide a departmental view into business continuity discussions, including specific requirements, procedures, and priorities.
All other personnel	• Maintain a level of awareness around business continuity arrangements, including response and recovery steps. • Understand communication and escalation routes, including local and departmental contacts.

Key Actions

- Determine the key roles needed to manage Business Continuity in your organisation.
- Assign Business Continuity responsibilities and authorities to specific groups.
- These responsibilities should be clearly defined, communicated, and understood.
- Choose appropriate teams and individuals and ensure at least a minimum level of competency.
- Delegate the appropriate authority to these groups to carry out the required tasks before, during, and after a disruptive event.
- Document these roles and responsibilities and share the information to all interested parties.
- Review these roles and responsibilities at least once annually or following significant changes to your organisation.

Checklist

A generic **Business Continuity - Roles and Responsibilities Checklist** is presented in Appendix 1 which can be tailored to your own organisation.

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- **Business Continuity** - [Horizonscan](#)

For more information please visit: [Aviva Risk Management Solutions - Specialist Partners](#)

Sources and Useful Links

- [The Business Continuity Institute \(BCI\)](#)

Note: Whilst UK standards and legislation are referenced in this document, other international standards and legislation should be referenced where applicable.

Additional Information

Relevant Loss Prevention Standards include:

- **Business Continuity Management**
- **Business Continuity Planning - Testing and Maintenance**
- **Business Impact Analysis**
- **Supply Chain Risk Management**

To find out more, please visit [Aviva Risk Management Solutions](#) or speak to one of our advisors.

Email us at riskadvice@aviva.com or call 0345 366 6666.*

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Appendix 1 – Roles and Responsibilities Checklist

Location	
Date	
Completed by (name and signature)	

	Title	Y/N	Comments
1	Has ownership/governance for Business Continuity, typically a member of senior leadership, been established?		
2	Have the key roles for managing Business Continuity within the organisation been defined?		
3	Have responsibilities and actions been assigned to these roles?		
4	Have these roles been assigned to specific groups within the organisation?		
5	Has authority been delegated to these groups to carry out the required actions?		
6	Have the roles, responsibilities, and actions been documented and shared with everyone involved?		
7	Are these roles and responsibilities scheduled for review at least annually?		
8	Additional Comments:		

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