Are You Prepared?

What if you tuned into the local news this morning and found out a disaster at your workplace was the lead story?

State Agency Operations Come to a Halt

Would you know what to do in such a situation? Are you able to be reached in an emergency? How will you get information about what to do? Do you report or stay home? How will you do your work if everything is disrupted?

This is not just a hypothetical situation. On February 21, 2018, the Colorado Department of Transportation had a significant incident which impacted access to e-mail, electronic files, data, and computer applications. Read more about it.

As with any incident, and especially with one not encountered before, there are always lessons learned. Colorado DOT shared some of its learning. Below are two highlights:

- Personnel actions are highly dependent upon electronic data, which could not be accessed during the incident. Many work around processes had to be created during the incident because they were not part of the business unit standard operating procedures, or part of the Agency Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan.
- The morning of February 21st notification of staff (advising them of what actions to take) was relatively easy – word of mouth. However, because of the uncertainty of what infrastructure and applications were impacted by the incident, communication became more difficult. Not all employees were notified in a timely fashion after hours.

State agency continuity plans must allow for continuing of priority services for all incidents which may threaten to impact services (see the Governor’s Executive Order 19-23 on the mn.gov website). This includes ensuring your agency has work around procedures, and the ability to communicate with staff through varying means.

The MMB Continuity of Operations Team and the Internal Control and Accountability Team are working together to develop internal control checklists for many common continuity functions. Watch for this information in the coming months.

Suggested action steps:

- Make sure you know your role during a continuity event.
- Make sure your supervisor can contact you after hours, or during an emergency. If needed, update your contact information in Employee Self-Service.
- Work with your supervisor to document the manual work around processes for the services you provide.
- Contact your continuity coordinator for further guidance or questions about your agency continuity plan.

Questions?

Contact Cathy Hockert, Enterprise Continuity Coordinator