



LINE OF SUCCESSION PLANNING

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LINE OF SUCCESSION PLANNING



Description: This tool provides resources and a process for your local health department (LHD) to identify and train backups for leadership and mission-critical staff in case of a key staff member's absence.

If done properly, completion of this tool should result in:

- Completion of each mission-critical position's line of succession (LOS) for your agency
- Documentation of the skills and credentials each role in the line of succession requires
- A record of staff and any out-of-organization members needed to fill your line of succession
- Training of line of succession staff in the duties of their alternate roles

What You Need Before Starting This Work:

- Your agency's mission-critical services list (the list you just completed in the Prioritizing Services sections).
- Any legal mandates your agency may have. **Note that some leadership positions, such as health officer, require legal credentials.** You will need to be aware of these before creating your LOS.
- Any related memoranda of understanding (MOUs). For example, any agreement you may have with a neighboring department's health officer to serve as your county's health officer in an emergency event. **Make sure you understand how these agreements impact your LOS planning.**

Steps to Completion:

1. Make a list of the roles that need succession planning and the skills each role requires.
2. Figure out how deep you need to go in a LOS for each role, this will most likely depend of the size of your agency. For a small local health department, one or two successors will work. For a larger agency three to five successors is better.
3. Identify those individuals that will act as successors for each mission-critical role. Sometimes, for example, in the case of a MD role, the right successor may be external to your agency.
4. Once your lines of succession are mapped out, look at them side-by-side (use the LOS – How Deep to Go? Worksheet). If one person is appearing in several different lines of succession it could pose a problem if that person is called upon to perform multiple roles during an emergency. If you do have the same person in the LOS for multiple roles, you may want to include more people in those lines of succession.
5. Notify all the individuals in your LOS and create a plan to cross-train them.
6. Make note of the operational procedures you will need to follow to activate your LOS as well as any procedures that need to take place during its activation (see Public Health–Seattle & King County's LOS Activation procedures for an example).
7. Document your LOS in your Continuity of Operations plan using the Line of Succession template and notify the top-level managers at your agency of the addition.

If You Only Have a Little Time: While it's always recommended that you take time to thoroughly complete each step in your Continuity of Operations planning, if you only have a little time to spend you can distribute a shorthand version of your LOS plans to key people. Here's how to set it up:

- Using your list of mission-critical services (created in the Prioritizing Services section), create a LOS for leadership of each. Ensure that the people in line for each role have the skill set that role requires.
- Name the incumbent's deputy or subordinate number one. (You can ask the incumbent to assist you in this process).
- Name someone who used to hold the position (if still applicable) number two.
- Name a comparable manager number three.

At minimum, contact the people in your LOS to inform them they could possibly be called on to act in these alternate assignments.

If You Have More Time to Spend:

- Use any extra time to thoroughly go through your LOS and figure out which skills are needed for each role. Then pair people with those skill sets to that LOS. Make sure to take into consideration who will actually be available in an emergency.
- Have even more time? Great. Try putting your LOS into action with a test run. This test can be as simple as testing notification procedures to activate your LOS or having various members in your LOS step in and act out their alternate roles.

Where This Leads You: Once your line of succession is in place you can:

- Create delegations of authority for those in your line of succession (see the Delegations of Authority section;).
- Train all LOS staff members how to step into their alternate roles during emergencies. If cross-training isn't feasible for your organization, ask incumbents to document the job procedures needed to fulfill their mission-critical roles and have them store those documents where they can be accessed by other staff members for reference.
- Create a list of the operational procedures that need to be taken to enact your LOS. This list should include, who gets notified and how successors get keys/passwords/signature authority, etc., to fulfill their roles.
- Keep in mind that some individuals in the LOS may have regular roles that need to be performed. Make sure there is someone who can perform these roles in case those LOS staff members are called into action.
- If someone in a mission-critical role takes an absence, use this time to test your LOS.

Pitfalls to Avoid:

- Don't fall short. When creating your LOS, ensure your succession planning goes deep enough to avoid gaps in roles.
- Don't fail to cross-train. Make sure that everyone on your LOS list knows the roles they may need to perform in an emergency and knows how to perform those roles.
- Don't fail to document procedures. Always document activation and deactivation procedures. Everyone in the LOS needs to know how it will be activated and how it will be deactivated – if not everyone understands these processes there could be confusion regarding when someone is responsible for their regular duties or when they are supposed to take over other duties.
- Don't over-activate. There is no need to activate your LOS every time a leader has a brief, planned absence, only during unexpected absences or periods of long leave.

How You Know You Got it Right: If a mission-critical staff member takes an unexpected leave, medical or otherwise, and your operations can continue with minimal disruption and stress, then you got it right!

Considerations for Rural Health Departments:

- If you are a rural health department, your small staff may mean you can only train one backup for each mission-critical role.
- Since it may be challenging to allot the time and resources needed for cross-training, have mission-critical staff develop a job checklist to assist anyone who may have to temporarily fill their role. Encourage cross-training, when possible, by having staff compile procedures needed to fulfill their roles and have others try those procedures out. For example, have reception staff create a procedures list for handling the phones and have other staff members practice these procedures.

TOOLS, SAMPLES AND RESOURCES:

- Line of Succession – Template
- Line of Succession – Sample
- Line of Succession – How Deep to Go?
- Sample Procedures for Activating Line of Succession
- **FEMA Continuity Evaluation Tool – Version 6, “Orders of Succession,”** pages 15–17
www.fema.gov/pdf/government/coop/cet.pdf



[Agency Name]
Department & Division Management Lines of Succession (LOS) and
Medical Advisors Lines of Succession
Updated [date]

Department Leadership LOS		
	Name	Title
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Department Medical Advisors LOS		
	Name	Title
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Public Information Officer LOS		
	Name	Title
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

[Operating Division #1] Management LOS		
	Name	Title
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

[Operating Division #2] Management LOS		
	Name	Title
1		
2		
3		
4		

**Liberty County Health Department
 Department & Division Management Lines of Succession (LOS) and
 Medical Advisors Lines of Succession**
Updated 06.01.10

Department Leadership LOS		
	Name	Title
1	Ian Rowe, MD	Director, and Local Health Officer (LHO)
2	Kathie Hughes	Chief of Staff (COS)
3	William Hines	Chief of Administrative Operations (CAO)
4	Dorothy Thompson	Chief of Health Operations (CHO)

Department Medical Advisors LOS		
	Name	Title
1	Peter Askerov, MD	Chief, Communicable Disease Epidemiology
2	Patricia Patterson, MD	Chief Medical Officer
3	Enrique Phillips, MD	Chief, Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention

Community Health Services Division Management LOS		
	Name	Title
1	Mai Tran	Division Manager
2	Alicia So	Deputy Division Manager
3	Jose Bautista	Special Projects Manager
4	Pamela Collins	Parent Child Health Section Manager

Environmental Health Services Division Management LOS		
	Name	Title
1	Joan Hillman, PhD	Division Manager
2	Angela Gonzales	Asst. Division Manager
3	Todd French	Section Manager, Community Env. Health
4	Shawn Fredrickson	Section Manager, Hazards Section
5	Dawn Drake	Section Manager, Food & Facilities

Line of Succession - How Deep to Go

Line of Succession Planning - How Deep Do You Need to Go?

Instructions:

List all the individuals identified in your agency's lines of successions down the left side. List all the programs/functions with lines of succession across the top. Underneath each program/function, number the people in the line of succession, using number 1 for the person performing the role day to day, 2 for the first alternate, and so on. Once all the numbers are inserted into the grid, examine each name in the left hand column one by one. For each person, assess how many lines of succession that individual is listed in, and how probable it is that they would be needed in more than one of those roles at a time. If a person is listed in several lines of succession that could be activated at the same time, then they're not likely to be available for any one role, and the agency should pick someone else for the LOS or add an additional person to the LOS in case the first few names are unavailable.

Mission-Critical Function		M S S / M C M	Priorit y 1 Medic al Clinic Visits	Clinical Services (Primary Care, Fam. Plan., Immun. & Dental)	Family Support Service s	WI C	Interpretati on	Child Profil e	Profession al Practice Support	CHS Division Management	Area Comman d Liaison
Line of Succession											
Askerov	Peter	1								5	
Bautista	Caresse	2									
Bautista	Jose	3									
Buenafe	Selena	4									
Cassidy	Mary		1								
Collins	Pamela		3								
Diaz	Esther		2								
Drake	Dawn		4								
Fredrickson	Sharon			1						3	*
French	Tara									6	
Gonzales	Angela							1			
Hartman	Yu Jeong									1	
Hillman	Joan			4							
Hines	William			8							
Hughes	Kathie			3							
Matharu	Yousif			6							
Ng	Linda			7							
O'Leary	Paulina								2		
Patterson	Patricia								3	4	*
Phillips	Enrique			5							
Rowe	Ian			2							
Sanders	Linda							1			
Sanusi	Susanna				1		1			2	*
So	Alicia				3						
Sohlberg	Marilyn				4						
Thompson	Dorothy				5						
Tran	Mai				6						
vacant						1					
Veenstra	Peg					2					

Line of Succession Planning

Sample Procedures for Activating Line of Succession

Transfer of Command and Control

Command and Control refers to the management and direction of personnel, mission critical services, functions, programs and facilities during emergencies or disasters. Incidents which threaten key Department dependencies may warrant activation of the Business Continuity Plan. Should key staff be rendered unavailable during a disaster, command and control may be transferred via the Line of Succession (LOS). If key facilities are impacted, command and control of mission critical services, functions, programs reliant on those facilities may be transferred to alternate sites. Protocols for transferring command and control for mission-critical services rely upon LOS and delegations of authority being in place prior to an event impacting continuity of operations.

Key Steps in Transferring Command and Control:

- Department or Division BC Plan is activated
- Impacts to mission critical services, functions, programs, staffing and facilities are identified and reported to Chief of Staff
- Decision making authority is formally transferred via a signed Delegation of Authority
- Command functions are reestablished or relocated, as needed, to alternate sites
- Transfer of authority is communicated to all Divisions

Decisions regarding transfer of command and control via the LOS may be implemented at the Division level according to Division protocols or by the Chief of Staff or their designee. Transfer of command and control of mission critical services, functions, or programs due to impacts to infrastructure, facilities or systems will be made by the Chief of Staff or designee in coordination with the Local Health Officer.