

To determine time criticality for each essential function, it is necessary to determine the RTO for the critical processes or services that support it. The second question on Worksheet #13, Essential Function Questionnaire, began this process. Use this information in combination with the suggestions below to determine the RTO for each essential function.

IT Disaster Recovery Plans (DRP) usually have RTOs for vital systems that can be used in estimating the RTO for an associated critical process or service. Operational dependence on other processes or services upon also deserves attention. If a critical process or service is necessary to keep another operating, then it should have a RTO.

Use Worksheet #16 to complete this task.

Once the RTOs have been determined for each essential function, list them in ascending order—shortest RTO first. Those functions upon which others depend should also receive a high priority in the sequence of recovery.

After the prioritized list of essential functions is complete, the COOP Planner needs to present the list to senior management for their input and concurrence.

B. Identifying Vital Records, Systems and Equipment

Vital Records are those records (regardless of media) that, if damaged or destroyed would disrupt agency operations and information flow, cause considerable inconvenience and require replacement or recreation at substantial expense. In COOP planning, vital records are those records to which personnel must have access to carry out essential functions. They are typically in one of three forms: paper, electronic, or microfilm.

A COOP plan should address not only a system for protection and recovery of vital records in an emergency, but also a vital records program for normal operations. COOP planning for vital records includes assessment of existing vital records programs and improvement or development of a program to provide for the optimal protection, duplication, and preservation of records. This maintenance program, as well as procedures for the recovery and restoration of records, forms the basis of a vital records program.

There are five major tasks in COOP planning for vital records:

- Write an assessment sub-plan.
 - If a vital records program is in place, the plan should lay out the steps for reviewing the current status of the program.
 - If there is no program in place, the plan should outline how the program will be developed and administered.