

**a. Identify, Select and Arrange for Protection Methods**

Use Worksheet # 18 to complete this task.

The next step after identification of vital records is determination and selection of protection methods. Consider current methods of protection and preservation. Routine maintenance programs may be sufficient for the protection of information in the event of a disruption to critical processes and services. However, effectiveness of the protection methods should always be evaluated in light of COOP concerns.

The COOP team should examine the current backup and retention schedules for each vital record and determine the necessity of backing up files more often or retaining files for longer periods. Another measure to consider is the replication of an organization's server in an alternate facility or scanning paper records. The team should also consider storing duplicate files off-site or upgrading the current storage facilities to provide greater protection from fire, water, thermal damage, theft, or sabotage. More protection could be established by using security systems and procedures to limit access to records.

Providing an off-site storage for vital records and documentation is an important tool. Records that need to be duplicated and stored off-site should be identified as should be the method of duplication. Further, those records that need to be stored in fire resistant containers/equipment on site along with those records that require other special consideration need to be identified. Facilities immediately able to accommodate electronic records, including programs for running systems and system documentation must be identified, as well as must sites that could quickly be prepared to accommodate these functions in case of an emergency.

Regular back up and transfer of files to an alternate location is an effective method for protecting for vital records. It eliminates the need for extensive recovery; however, the more often it is performed, the more expensive it becomes.

**b. Identify Restoration and Recovery Resources**

Use Worksheet # 19 to complete this task.

There may be situations where protection methods fail, and vital records are damaged or lost. In such a circumstance, an agency needs to use a vital records recovery sub plan. Because vital records are often part of vital systems and equipment, a single disaster recovery plan can address both records and systems/equipment. Every agency's information technology (IT)