

**Communications** – The site will need to support the agency's COOP information technology and communication requirements. The agency will need to acquire any capabilities not already in place. In many cases redundant communications facilities should be considered to reduce the impact of communication line failures. If this type of configuration is needed, it is advisable to request route diversity to the facility from the communication carrier. This will reduce the impact of problems caused by remote network elements such as telephone company central office switching gear. Pre-provisioning and testing of interoperable communications capabilities is advisable.

**Security** – Security measures, such as controlled access, should be an inherent part of the alternate facility.

**Life Support Measures** – Access to life support measures, food, water and other necessities, should be available onsite or nearby.

**Site Preparation Requirements** – The amount of time, effort and cost required to make the facility suitable for the agency's needs is critical.

**Maintenance** – Consider the degree of maintenance required to keep the facility ready for COOP operations. Lower-maintenance facilities offer a distinct advantage in case of no-warning COOP activation.

Another option for an alternate work site is a pre-existing facility already in use by the organization. A tornado may destroy one of the spaces, but leave another building or work area untouched. Those organizations with multiple facilities may find it easier to move into buildings or work areas not damaged.

In determining alternate facility locations, consider the geographic impact of the disruption. An alternate facility should be located in a facility that has a water source and power grid different from the original building. Road access must also be considered when choosing an alternate location. Some general guidelines include:

- Localized Event: 0-60 mile radius from the current location
- Widespread Event: 60-150 mile radius from current location

Often, due to fiscal constraint, operating and maintaining a separate alternate work site is not feasible. If this is the case, consider establishing cooperative or mutual aid agreements, and using virtual office technologies. With a cooperative agreement, an organization can contract for use of another organization's facility in an emergency. A mutual aid agreement involves two organizations agreeing to help each other in the event of an emergency. Several organizations may also opt to contract together with an outside vendor for use of an emergency facility. A word of caution: in making these agreements, be sure to assess whether the potential cooperative/mutual aid partner has similar agreements with other organizations that might conflict. A large-scale disaster could affect many organizations that have contracted with each other or for use of the same space in an emergency.

Any vendor contracts should require that the State has priority with respect fulfilling orders out of existing inventory.