

Vital Records





VITAL RECORDS WORKSHOP SUMMARY

DURATION: 5hrs

This workshop will aid organizations to collect and organize records that are vital to operations, and to establish procedures for protecting and accessing those records.

Recommended Staff: Administrative Officer, Housing Director, Program Director

Having immediate access to documents such as rent roles, employee contact information, building plans, vendor contracts, etc. during and after an emergency event will facilitate your organization's emergency response efforts and increase the speed of recovery.

EXERCISE 1: Records Identification (Duration: 90 min)
Identify which documents should be included in your organization's Vital Records

EXERCISE 2: Procedures (Duration: 30 min)
Establish procedures for updating, protecting, and accessing Vital Records.

EXERCISE 3: Build-out (Duration: 3 hrs)
Collect / create both a physical and an electronic database of your organization's Vital Records.

Items Needed

Included with this training

- Exercises 1, 2, & 3
- Recommended Vital Records Excel File

Organization to provide

- Exercises 1, 2, & 3
- Recommended Vital Records Excel File



EXERCISE 1

VITAL RECORDS IDENTIFICATION

DURATION: 90min

FREQUENCY: Once

Checklist

- Classify operational documents into functional categories that work for your organizational structure: e.g.: finance, residents, physical facilities, etc.
- Determine essential functions for keeping business operations running following an emergency event
- Identify minimum information that must be readily accessible to perform the identified essential functions
- Create a list of records and documents that contain essential information
- Prioritize support documents such as the P-card authorization form
- Identify materials, computer programs, and equipment necessary for accessing stored information

Tips

Use the *Recommended Vital Records Excel File* included with this workshop as a basis for identifying key records that should be considered.



EXERCISE 2

VITAL RECORDS PROCEDURES

DURATION: 30min

FREQUENCY: Once

Checklist

- Designate an individual (or individuals) from your organization to be responsible for maintaining Vital Records.
- Establish intervals for backing up your Vital Records (daily-weekly).
- Establish intervals for reviewing and updating your Vital Records (quarterly-annually).
- Set a password protocol for protecting electronic Vital Records.
- Determine a method for protecting physical documents from threats and vulnerabilities specific to your location and circumstances.
- Determine who in the organization should have authorization to access Vital Records.

Tips

Be sure to consider the following threats, among others, when determining methods for protecting physical documents:

- Fire
- Theft
- Structural Failure of Buildings
- Flood / Moisture
- Rodents & Insects



EXERCISE 3

VITAL RECORDS BUILD-OUT

DURATION: 3hrs

FREQUENCY: Annually

Checklist

- Use the document list created during Exercise 1 as a checklist for assembling existing documents or creating new documents identified as essential for organizational continuity.
- Print documents that only exist electronically, and scan or digitally photograph documents that do not have electronic versions.

Tips

When creating the Physical Vital Records database:

- Have 2 sets of hard documents, and store each set in a different location. The backup location should be off site in a secure facility.
- Create an evacuation plan for moving hard documents to backup facilities in the event of an emergency.
- Look into the feasibility of service providers that automatically create physical copies of back-up data from your server and store them in secure off-site facilities.

When creating the Electronic Vital Records database:

- Store drives and disks in insulated containers
- Store electronic backup data on the cloud or in a secured off-site facility where it would not be damaged by an event affecting your facility.
- Test the system regularly at an established interval.
- The recommended backup protocol should include daily backup of modified files and a full weekly backup of all files.
- Copy the electronic Vital Records database to USB thumb drives that are kept on key chains by key staff members. The USB thumb drives should be password protected or encrypted to protect critical data in the event that the drive is lost or stolen.