



Energy, Sustainability, and Infrastructure

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About Guidehouse

Guidehouse is a leading global provider of consulting services to the public and commercial markets with broad capabilities in management, technology, and risk consulting. We help clients address their toughest challenges with a focus on markets and clients facing transformational change, technology-driven innovation and significant regulatory pressure. Across a range of advisory, consulting, outsourcing, and technology/analytics services, we help clients create scalable, innovative solutions that prepare them for future growth and success. Headquartered in Washington DC, the company has more than 7,000 professionals in more than 50 locations. Guidehouse is led by seasoned professionals with proven and diverse expertise in traditional and emerging technologies, markets and agenda-setting issues driving national and global economies.

Protecting and Managing Your Organization Through Disruption

Continuity of operations planning and best practices can help utilities weather the pandemic storm

A new approach to disruption

Major disruption to operations (whether from natural disasters, violent events, cybersecurity incidents, or public health emergencies) causes upheaval in organizations. Today, organizations must rethink how they perform critical functions; engage with customers, citizens, and stakeholders; protect their workforces; and protect their assets. Guidehouse has supported numerous clients through continuity of operations planning (COOP), helping them prepare for, respond to, and recover from major disruptions. Such disruptions include floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, the September 11 attacks, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the 2008 financial crisis, and now COVID-19.

Key challenges for utilities

Disruptions such as the coronavirus outbreak find many leaders without a playbook, or with preparedness plans that fall short, are outdated, or are not encompassing of the disruptions that could occur or are occurring. For utilities, this includes revising field work processes, handling emergency repairs, and changes to payment policies, requirements, and ways of working.

How Guidehouse can help

Guidehouse's approach to COOP follows best practices preparedness and response standards promulgated by the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We tailor our approach based on our deep knowledge of the utilities industry and operations. Because clients are in various stages of maturity with their continuity plans and infrastructure, we help them strengthen the most critical aspects of their planning shortfalls. Guidehouse delivers proven risk management methodologies and best practices to enhance preparedness and organizational resilience.

Guidehouse's COOP framework includes the following steps:

- Identify and validate the most essential functions an organization must conduct to protect its employees, assets, customers, and reputation for maximum resiliency during and after the disruption.
- Identify how to continue operation of critical infrastructure, including helping organizations understand the upstream and downstream dependencies required to operate.

Protecting and Managing Your Organization Through Disruption

- Conduct a business impact analysis to assess how vulnerable the essential functions and critical infrastructure are to hazards and the impact of disruption.
- Identify the timeframes for unacceptable loss of functions and critical assets.
- Prepare strategies to protect critical assets, including facilities, personnel, information technology, and vital records.
- Make risk-informed decisions using scenarios and forward planning.
- Ensure critical infrastructure is available to minimize disruption to employees and customers.
- Identify governance through massive disruption to ensure proper decision making and control.
- Communicate with stakeholders (employees, customers, investors, local authorities, and regulators) with appropriate messaging in terms of content, timing, and channel.
- Assess and update (if applicable) the current practices and assets an organization has or must reconsider (e.g., telework policy, system access considerations, contingency plans, financial assets and cashflow, and supply chain disruption).

Guidehouse’s framework has four phases and is supported by tools and templates to quickly operationalize an organization’s preparedness and response.

Phase 1 Discovery	Phase 2 Business Impact Analysis (BIA)	Phase 3 COOP Development	Phase 4 Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess governance and communications cadence • Identify key performance indicators • Identify stakeholders • Gather policies, emergency procedures, recovery plans • Collect critical dependences such as IT systems, personnel requirements, vital records holdings, facilities, infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing BIA and identify mission essential functions (MEFs) and the systems, processes, and human assets that support the MEFs • Perform rapid risk assessment on MEFs to identify risks and impacts • Identify mitigation strategies informed by organization’s risk tolerance and current conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop COOP policies, processes, and procedures with organization leadership • Define COOP components based on industry best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out policies, processes, communication, and tracking of key performance metrics • Ensure knowledge transfer and training to the organization • Conduct training and tabletop exercises for key leadership and staff
Outcomes: Rapid understanding of the current state and gaps.	Outcomes: Impacts on employees, customers, systems, assets. Identification of highest impacted activities, risks, and mitigation options.	Outcomes: COOP; updated policy, guidance, templates.	Outcomes: Operational continuity procedures.
Project Management and Communications			
Stakeholder Engagement and Change Management			

Why Guidehouse?

Guidehouse will help you protect your people, customers, and business through these trying times. We combine our experience with continuity planning and implementation with a deep knowledge of the utilities industry. We are a long-standing consultant to FEMA, helping them evolve their role as a lead agency for the federal government in continuity. Guidehouse also helps FEMA provide guidance to federal, state, and local governments, communities, and businesses in resiliency. We operate side by side with FEMA and state and local governments before, during, and after disasters, helping communities plan for, respond to, and recover from disasters, including pandemics. Guidehouse has also assisted private sector entities, federal entities, and state agencies in the development and implementation of their continuity plans. We also conduct our own continuity plans and simulations to ensure Guidehouse and our people will be safe and productive in the event of emergencies. Contact us today to discuss how we can help your organization prepare for and overcome disruption.