Business Continuity and Disaster Preparedness Plan Summary

This is an overview of the main components of the organization’s business continuity and disaster preparedness plan. More information, based on demonstrated need by the requestor, may be available by contacting one of the named individuals below.

The Role of Blood Providers in the Disaster Response Plans of External Agencies

With its size, geographic dispersion and depth of resources, Blood Systems recognizes the critical role it plays in the maintenance of the national blood supply. Blood is recognized as one of the Health and Human Services (HHS)-identified safety and security components within Emergency Support Function (ESF)-8 of the National Response Plan, assuring that blood centers all over the nation are appropriately prioritized for access to fuel, emergency communications equipment and frequencies, and transportation during disasters. Additional information is available at http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/playbooks/Pages/default.aspx

To ensure the adequacy of the national blood supply in the event of an emergency anywhere in the nation, Blood Systems and other members of America’s Blood Centers (ABC) are organized into a hub-and-spoke system for disaster and emergency shipments of blood products. Blood Systems also participates in the AABB Interagency Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism.

Blood Systems is regulated by the US Food and Drug Association (FDA) and AABB (formerly the American Association of Blood Banks). AABB Standards require blood banks to maintain the following: emergency management plans; alternative systems that ensure continuous operation; and, emergency operation policies, processes, and procedures to respond to the effects of internal and external disasters. AABB audits Blood Systems at defined intervals for compliance with these standards. In addition, the Blood Systems Research Institute is subject to the emergency planning requirements of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

On a local basis, our blood centers actively participate in the disaster preparedness efforts of local, county and state agencies.

Internal Business Continuity Plans

Blood Systems’ disaster recovery and business continuity plans have been in place since 2008. In 2009, the organization updated the business continuity plan to include a pandemic preparedness plan.

A key element of the business continuity plan is the Blood Systems emergency response team (ERT). The goal of the ERT is to work in cooperation with emergency services, external disaster relief agencies, media, customers, suppliers and the community to provide blood supplies and necessary support during emergency.

Concurrently, the ERT activates the written business continuity plans to ensure all internal post-loss actions and long term recovery goals are met.
Information Technology Disaster Response Plans

The disaster response plans for Blood Systems’ information technology operations ensure business continuity in our mission-critical applications that are required for our organization to continue collecting blood products from donors and processing and distributing those supplies to where they are needed most. The IT disaster response plans focus on redundancy, failover and backup and restore for hardware and software.

2005: Hurricane Katrina

Operating multiple regional blood centers with collections and distribution channels in 19 states, Blood Systems has minimized risks associated with localized disruptions. Blood Systems is able to quickly draw on blood supplies, staff, equipment and other supplies from unaffected areas in support of external emergencies. Activation of our plans would ensure that appropriate resources for continuing to collect, test and distribute blood can be deployed immediately.

Perhaps the best illustration of coordination among blood centers when disaster strikes was the role the Blood Systems organization played during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Even before the full extent of the devastation was known, Blood Systems transported staff, supplies and equipment from other parts of the country to its blood centers in the Gulf Coast region. Those local United Blood Services centers then coordinated with other, local blood centers and successfully provided uninterrupted service to area hospitals until normal blood service could be restored.

Vendor Disaster Response Qualifications

Just as we are asked to respond to our customers, Blood Systems requires our own vendors to provide disaster response information as part of the vendor qualification process. Blood Systems’ corporate supply chain department has current disaster response plans for each vendor that provides critical supplies to Blood Systems.

Corporate Contact Information

Blood Systems, 6210 E Oak Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85257

Michael Dwiggins
Risk Management Director
mdwiggins@bloodsystems.org

Leslie Miller
Safety and Loss Control Manager
Lmiller2@bloodsystems.org