



Florida Department of Transportation
Office of Inspector General
Kristofer B. Sullivan, Inspector General

Continuity of Operations Plan

Report No. 26P-006

DocuSigned by:
Kristofer B. Sullivan
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July 9, 2026

What We Did

The Florida Department of Transportation's (Department) Office of Inspector General conducted an audit of the Department's Emergency Management Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The purpose of this audit was to determine whether the Department's COOP is in accordance with applicable state statutes, administrative rules, the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) guidance, and Department procedures. Additionally, the purpose was to determine whether the Department has established and implemented a comprehensive test, training, and exercise program in accordance with Department Topic No. 956-060-001 Section 6.0. This audit was conducted as a part of our Annual Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

What We Concluded

We concluded the Department is in compliance with all applicable requirements governing COOP development and maintenance, including state statutes, administrative rules, FDEM guidance, and internal procedures. The Department has also put in place and carried out a comprehensive test, training, and exercise program aligned with Department Topic No. 956-060-001, Section 6.0.

We determined the Department's COOP is in accordance with all 70 requirements from the applicable state statutes, administrative rules, the FDEM guidance, and Department procedures we tested.

We determined the Department has established and implemented a comprehensive testing, training, and exercise program in accordance with Department Procedure No. 956-060-001, Section 6.0.

What We Recommend

We have no recommendations at this time, as all areas reviewed were found to be in compliance.

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Transportation's (Department) Emergency Management (EM) coordinates the agency's overall response to disasters and emergencies affecting Florida's intermodal transportation system. Working closely with Department offices and Districts, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE), and local, state, and federal partners, Department EM:

- delivers operational products and services;
- creates and participates in planning, training, and tabletop, discussion-based exercises;
- develops, improves, and manages modern electronic tools;
- produces financial reimbursement packages; and
- provides situational awareness and incident monitoring 24 hours a day.

When activated for an emergency, the Department Emergency Coordination Officer, Department EM staff, and other trained personnel work at the State Emergency Operations Center to direct statewide activities in concert with agency and state leadership. In addition to activation operations staffing, Department EM provides mission management, meteorological decision support, situational reporting and intelligence, internal and external coordination and communication, and resource tracking.

During non-emergency periods, the Department EM is responsible for maintaining the agency's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)¹ and comprehensive emergency management plans, developing after-action reviews, reporting on Tier 2 hazardous materials, making annual updates to damage assessment tools and emergency shoulder use plans, and giving presentations and providing training to agency staff and partners.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) is responsible for developing and distributing guidelines for developing and implementing disaster preparedness plans to ensure that all departments, agencies, and organizations can maintain the ability to continue and support their essential functions during an emergency.

¹ Essential functions during disruptions such as natural disasters, cyberattacks, facility loss, or staff shortages.

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RESULTS OF REVIEW

We concluded the Department is in compliance with all applicable requirements governing COOP development and maintenance, including state statutes, administrative rules, FDEM guidance, and internal procedures. The Department has also put in place and carried out a comprehensive test, training, and exercise program aligned with Department Topic No. 956-060-001, Section 6.0.

The purpose of this audit was to determine whether the:

- Determine whether the Department's COOP is in accordance with applicable state statutes, administrative rules, the Florida Division of Emergency Management guidance, and Department procedures; and
- Determine whether the Department has established and implemented a comprehensive test, training, and exercise program in accordance with Department Topic No. 956-060-001 Section 6.0.

Finding 1 – Policies and Procedures

We determined the Department's COOP is in accordance with all 70 requirements from the applicable state statutes, administrative rules, the FDEM guidance, and Department procedures we tested.

Since this is a positive finding, there is no significance or priority.

Section 252.365, Florida Statutes, (F.S.) (2025), indicates state agencies are to select an emergency coordination officer and an alternate to manage preparedness, response, and recovery activities. These officers will work with the FDEM to maintain disaster agency plans, train personnel, and ensure every state facility has a coordinated and approved preparedness plan.

Specifically, each plan must support the continuity of essential functions during any disruption, including pandemics, by identifying critical operations and staff, outlining authority and succession, securing alternative facilities, protecting vital records and databases, ensuring access to protective equipment, and establishing testing and training procedures. In addition, agencies must update plans to align with statewide public health emergency guidelines.

An FDEM checklist is an annual checklist agencies must complete and submit with their COOP to verify they are in compliance with statutory expectations, operational standards, and emergency preparedness guidelines. The checklist ensures each plan includes the following areas: Mission Essential Functions and Personnel; Delegations of Authority; Orders of Succession; Logistics Support and Resource Requirements; Interoperable Communications; Vital Records and Databases; Concept of Operations; Testing-Training-Exercise and Plan Maintenance; and Additional Provisions, Procedures, and Actions.

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Department Topic No. 956-060-001, COOP (2015) guidance defines the roles, responsibilities, authorities, and requirements of Department employees concerning the Department's COOP, for the continuation of essential functions in the event of a disaster or significant disruption to Department operations. This guidance addresses the following elements required by statute:

- A. identification of essential functions, programs, and personnel;
- B. procedures to implement the plan and personnel notification and accountability;
- C. delegations of authority and lines of succession;
- D. identification of alternative facilities and related infrastructure, including those for communications;
- E. identification and protection of vital records and databases; and
- F. schedules and procedures for periodic tests, training and exercises.

We identified 70 COOP-related criteria that the Department should address when developing preparedness plans. We analyzed Central Office (CO), Districts, and the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) COOPs with identified criteria. In addition, we analyzed written policies and procedures supplied by the CO, Districts, and FTE to determine whether the Department's COOPs are in accordance with applicable state statutes, administrative rules, the FDEM guidance, and Department procedures.

Our review determined that all 70 COOP requirements are in accordance with applicable state statutes, administrative rules, the FDEM guidance, and Department procedures we tested.

We have no recommendation at this time, as we found the area under review to be in compliance.

Finding 2 – Comprehensive Testing, Training, and Exercise Program

We determined the Department has established and implemented a comprehensive testing, training, and exercise program in accordance with Department Topic No. 956-060-001, Section 6.0, Training and Exercises.

Since this is a positive finding, there is no significance or priority.

Department Topic No. 956-060-001, Section 6.0, indicates the Department shall:

- develop a comprehensive test, training, and exercise program to validate policies, plans, and procedures;
- ensure that personnel are sufficiently trained; and
- ensure that resources and equipment are capable of supporting operations.

We reviewed the documentation supplied to us by the CO, Districts, and FTE. We confirmed the documentation contained testing and training documentation, including

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tabletop exercises the Department uses to evaluate current plans to determine if there are any gaps between response actions in the event of an emergency.

We have no recommendation at this time, as we found the area under review to be in compliance.

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APPENDIX A – Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

The **purpose** of this audit was to determine whether the Department's COOP is in accordance with applicable state statutes, administrative rules, the FDEM guidance, and Department procedures. Additionally, the purpose was to determine whether the Department has established and implemented a comprehensive test, training, and exercise program in accordance with Department Topic No. 956-060-001 Section 6.0.

The **scope** of this audit included reviewing:

- Florida Statutes;
- Department policies and procedures;
- Department documentation for 2024; and
- FDEM guidance during calendar year 2024.

The **methodology** included reviewing:

- applicable state laws;
- applicable Department policies and procedures;
- CO, Districts, and FTE documentation; and
- the FDEM checklist.

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APPENDIX B – Management Response

The Office of Emergency Management responded on July 1, 2026, indicating they had no comments regarding the report.

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DISTRIBUTION

Responsible Manager:

Rudy Powell, P.E., Chief Engineer of Operations
Irene Cabral, Emergency Coordination Officer
Brian Richardson, Emergency Management Coordinator - Planning

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PROJECT TEAM

Engagement was conducted by:
Keisha Larkin, Auditor

Under the supervision of:
Paul Lowery, Senior Audit Supervisor
Amy Furney, Deputy Audit Director for Performance and Information Technology
Joseph W. Gilboy, Director of Audit

Approved by:
Kristofer B. Sullivan, Inspector General

STATEMENT OF ACCORDANCE

The Department's mission is to provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of our environment and communities.

The Office of Inspector General's mission is to provide independent and objective investigative and audit services that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency within the Florida Department of Transportation and its partners.

This work product was prepared pursuant to section 20.055, Florida Statutes, in accordance with the Association of Inspectors General *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General*, and conforms with The Institute of Internal Auditors' *Global Internal Audit Standards* as a guide.

Please address inquiries regarding this report to the Department's Office of Inspector General at (850) 410-5800.

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OR PEOPLE FOR
PERSONAL GAIN.



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THE DEPARTMENT
FOR FINANCIAL GAIN.



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A BENEFIT TO
"LOOK THE OTHER WAY."



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OTHER TYPES OF FRAUD,
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