

Backup CAD Readiness Checklist

A quick continuity self-assessment for public-safety communications centers

How to use this checklist

Check each item your agency can confidently complete today. Use any unchecked items to guide your continuity planning, tabletop exercises, and backup-CAD implementation priorities.

1 CAD fallback essentials

- A designated backup method is available if the primary CAD becomes inaccessible.
- The backup captures essential call details, priorities, comments, timestamps, and dispositions.
- Unit assignments and status changes can be tracked during the outage.
- Common call natures, priority rules, and frequently used locations are maintained.
- Staff know when to activate the backup and who has authority to do so.

2 Access and availability

- The backup can be reached from alternate workstations or a secondary location.
- User permissions are configured before an outage occurs.
- Shared logins are avoided or tightly controlled.
- A procedure exists for limited-connectivity or internet-loss scenarios.
- Staff know the exact access path and have practiced logging in.

3 Communications continuity

- Radio continuity procedures are documented and accessible.
- Phone and 911 reroute procedures are documented.
- Internet-loss procedures identify available alternatives and limitations.
- Key IT, vendor, supervisor, and mutual-aid contacts are current.
- A backup method exists for notifying staff and partner agencies.

4 People and workflow

- Dispatch responsibilities are clearly assigned when the backup is activated.
- Staff have a consistent method for entering and updating calls.
- Paper forms are available as a last-resort fallback.
- A supervisor activation checklist is available.
- Shift-change and handoff procedures are defined for extended outages.

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Use this page to assess recovery planning, testing, and facility readiness

5 Data recovery and documentation

- A process exists to reconcile outage records after the primary CAD is restored.
- Backup records can be exported, reported, or transferred for follow-up.
- Entries include enough timestamps and user information to support an audit trail.
- Records-retention expectations are defined.
- Vendor documentation and support contacts are available during recovery.

7 Power and facilities

- UPS and generator procedures have been validated.
- An alternate dispatch location or relocation plan is documented.
- Charging options exist for critical devices.
- Maps, forms, codes, and reference materials remain accessible during outages.
- A printed continuity kit is maintained for extended disruptions.

6 Testing and maintenance

- The backup process is tested at least annually.
- Exercises include both partial and full-outage scenarios.
- New staff receive backup-procedure training.
- Issues found during exercises are documented and corrected.
- The backup is reviewed whenever the primary CAD workflow changes.

QUICK READINESS SCORE

Count the boxes you checked across both pages. This is a conversation starter, not a formal compliance score.

0 - 12

Prioritize a continuity review and identify immediate gaps.

13 - 24

You have a foundation. Focus on testing, access, and recovery steps.

25 - 35

Strong start. Validate the plan through regular exercises and updates.

Ready to strengthen your backup plan?

Willow Operations helps agencies build practical backup-CAD and continuity solutions around the workflows their dispatchers already know.

[SCHEDULE A WALKTHROUGH](#)

This worksheet is intended for preliminary planning discussions and is not a substitute for agency policy, legal requirements, or formal continuity standards.