



# MONTANA LEGISLATIVE AUDIT DIVISION

## INFORMATION SYSTEMS AUDIT

# Statewide Disaster Recovery Planning for Information Technology Systems

Department of Administration

FEBRUARY 2010

10DP-01

REPORT SUMMARY

Any system outage could limit or completely diminish the state's ability to provide services for the public or conduct basic administrative processes, so it is critical organizations limit downtime by implementing disaster recovery procedures.

### Context

Business continuity (BC) is a series of processes implemented by an organization to ensure the continued availability of services and resources. An important element of business continuity is disaster recovery (DR) planning for information technology (IT) systems. DR planning is a set of steps, communications, and responsibilities that are to be executed in the event of an interruption of services. An effective DR plan is documented and designed to quickly and completely reestablish a system or service following a service interruption or disaster resulting in minimum loss to the organization. We performed audit work to determine the current status of DR planning throughout state government.

Within Montana State Government, many business processes are reliant on computer systems, with over \$120 million in IT expenditures annually. Recently, the Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) at the Department of Administration inventoried 427 computer systems in service throughout state government, each providing varied levels of support for agency business operations. If agencies are not developing DR plans to minimize system disruptions, the result could be extended unavailability of government services critical to the safety and welfare of the general public, as well as the day to day operations of state government.

### Results

To determine the status of DR planning throughout state government, we reviewed the level of planning done for critical systems at multiple agencies, comparing elements in place with established criteria for complete DR planning. Based on our work, we conclude state agencies are aware of the need for DR planning for critical IT systems and most have incorporated some elements of a DR plan. However, we found the level of understanding of DR planning varies between agencies and some are more prepared to deal with extended system outages than others. We believe the inconsistency can be resolved by establishing centralized policy and corresponding guidelines requiring complete and consistent DR planning for critical IT systems.

Recommendation Concurrence	
Concur	1
Partially Concur	0
Do Not Concur	0

Source: Agency audit response included in final report.

For a complete copy of the report or for further information, contact the Legislative Audit Division at 406-444-3122; e-mail to [lad@mt.gov](mailto:lad@mt.gov); or check the website at <http://leg.mt.gov/audit>. Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse to the Legislative Auditor's FRAUD HOTLINE Call toll-free 1-800-222-4446, or e-mail [lad@mt.gov](mailto:lad@mt.gov).