

The Business Continuity Management Standard Jointly developed by ASIS and BSI

What Is It and Why Is It Needed?

ASIS International (ASIS), as an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited Standards Developing Organization (SDO), assembled a group of technical experts in 2008 to begin work on the development of an American National Standard for Business Continuity Management (BCM).

The ideas were to enhance the reputable British Standards (BS) 25999-2 standard to:

- address some of the unique needs of US based organizations, both large and small
- provide a unified approach to BCM on both sides of the Atlantic, effectively eliminating marketplace confusion and using a model consistent with any future ISO BCM Standard
- offer a standard that is both auditable and scalable for consideration by the DHS for the Title IX (PS-PREP) voluntary certification effort

Overall, the business continuity professionals involved in the BCM standard development process represent the public and private sectors, significant numbers are certified by DRII and BCI, and they have experience with other standards, including BS 25999 and NFPA 1600. In fact, nearly 200 people volunteered to be on the ASIS BCM technical committee.

It's important to know the joint ASIS and BSI BCM standard isn't a prescriptive standard, or a detailed how-to guide. Rather, it is constructed using the ISO management systems standards approach and processes applicable to any organization in any sector, using the Plan-Do-Check-Act model. This approach makes the new standard consistent with other international standards that rely on management systems principles, like ISO 9001, 14001, 27001, and 28000. For more information on management system standards, reference: <http://www.avalution.com/Perspectives/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?List=84617ae8-ef98-4ebb-9dda-b6f73f4b5466&ID=64>.

Additionally, with the planned reciprocation between the standards, US companies can begin building their BCM programs immediately by using the already mature BS25999 framework. The new American National Standard will allow domestic as well as international certification. Perhaps most important, it is written using clear language that a business executive with little business continuity understanding will understand.

One last point to mention, ASIS published an ANSI approved American National Standard entitled, "Organizational Resilience: Security, Preparedness and Continuity Management Systems – Requirements with Guidance for Use". It is important to note that those familiar with the "OR" standard, as well as the new BCM standard, would be right to point out that the "OR" standard could be perceived as an umbrella risk management standard addressing adaptive, proactive and reactive risk treatment measures – one of which is business continuity. This is a true statement. However, as many organizations may not want to go so far as to achieve true organizational resilience, the new business continuity management standard must address some of the same issues and controls. As a result, business continuity practitioners and their sponsors would benefit from reading both standards and identifying which best meets their organization's strategic objectives, particularly from a holistic view.

Additional information regarding this initiative can be directed to standards@asisonline.org.