30-Day Ghost Audit

Continuity and succession exercise

What if a key leader were gone for 30 days?

Imagine the department has to continue without its most experienced supervisor for 30 days. No calling that person for routine answers. Which service, approval, handoff or cultural standard would be at risk?

Four places to look

- Critical services: Work that residents and the organization depend on.
- Decision authority: Approvals, escalation rules, and boundaries.
- Knowledge transfer: Instructions, system access, records and contacts held in approved systems.
- Culture and people: What behaviors and expectations continue without the usual leader?

How to run the exercise

- Choose one department or team and identify five essential functions.
- For each function, list a primary owner, a trained backup, and an authorized procedure location.
- Rate continuity: 0 = no workable backup; 1 = partial or untested; 2 = ready and tested.
- Select the most consequential gap, assign an owner, and schedule a practical handoff test.

What this exercise is not

It is not a validated risk score, an employee evaluation, a business continuity plan replacement, or permission to bypass public-sector policies. Keep passwords, personnel details, resident information and restricted procedures in authorized systems, not in this PDF.

Start with one simple question

"If I could not contact this leader for the next 30 days, which decision or service would depend on their memory?"

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Working worksheet • Use non-sensitive descriptions

Department and scenario

Department / team

Role or function being tested (not a person name)

Date / review owner

Essential work and continuity gap

1. Critical service or decision

2. What breaks or slows if the usual lead is absent?

3. Authorized primary role and prepared backup role

4. Where is the approved procedure / knowledge stored?

5. Backup readiness: 0 / 1 / 2 and supporting evidence

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Action plan • Close one gap

Prioritize one repair

Highest-risk gap to address first

Specific improvement (cross-train, document, test, assign)

Accountable role / trained backup role

Target date for a handoff test

Safe test and evidence of success

Follow-up reflection

What still depends on one person?

What will change by the next review?

Monday morning: identify one missing backup, one unclear approval boundary, or one undocumented handoff. Improve that one thing before expanding the exercise.