

EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER: THE NIMS CITY TABLETOP ICS TRAINING SYSTEM™

Understanding how Public Safety Workers Learn

“Experience is the best teacher” is the best axiom to apply to the education of public safety worker/first responders. This is why training tools should be effective in duplicating critical incident scenarios. These tools must stimulate and enhance desire and enthusiasm while simulating actual field experience. For this reason, the best tool must duplicate actual field experience by allowing the student to interact with it as he or she would at a critical incident scene.

In order to understand what tools a public safety worker will need, it is necessary to understand *how* these first responders learn and assimilate information.



Photo courtesy of racc.edu

- Public safety workers are dynamic assimilators: They learn best when allowed to actively participate, practice and repeat codified sequences of behavior, as opposed to strict book-learning. They are hands-on learners.
- Public safety workers are communication oriented learners: 1) Public safety work requires instant knowledge transmission and reception. 2) The culture of public safety is that of a large family.
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- Public safety workers are “prioritizers”: They focus their attention upon self-survival, search rescue and safety of incident victims, and then the protection of properties.
- Public safety workers are follower/leaders: they respond to authority and expertise of their superiors and those who have lived the skills they wish to learn. Through this they gain confidence and leadership skills.
- Public safety workers learn from peers better than unknown teachers. This is because they view their co-workers as equals. They are “brothers and sisters”, not fellow employees or volunteers. Therefore, to be most effective, the instructors must also be public safety workers who have been “in the trenches”.
- Public safety workers are mindful of learning conscientiously: They view their education as important to themselves and the survival of the communities they serve.

- Public safety workers prefer actual scenarios to abstract training: As hands-on learners, they don't respond well to theory or hypothetical example. As dynamic learners, they respond best to actual critical incident scenarios. Public safety workers thrive on real life situations. They live for the “adrenaline rush” of being on a scene and responding to a crisis. So, the training must somehow re-create incident scenes to be effective.¹



Photo courtesy of www.bucks.edu

“A young firefighter once said ‘If training is not fun or interesting, people do not learn as much or remember it as well.’ ... People learn better by doing rather than just being told how to do it.”² This is sage advice in the public safety training. So, it is best to train your public safety students in a modality that:

- 1) encourages the group dynamic,
- 2) allows the worker to actively work within the training modality,
- 3) encourages teacher student interaction,
- 4) builds confidence and thus leadership
- 5) places the student at a critical incident scene so he get the feeling he is there.

Of course, it is unethical to place a public safety worker in a situation that could be harmful to him or others, due to their lack of knowledge. So, the training tools that closely recreate a critical incident must be three dimensional, interactive and engages the senses of the public safety worker. This kind of tool will help imprint permanent learning and optimal performance in the public safety worker's brain.



¹ Adapted from: Duke Energy. First Responders Beware training guide. Culvero.com, LLC ©2006

² Mike Chiaramonte Instructor Training 101 Fire Chief Magazine © 2005



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Engaging the Senses of the Public Safety Worker

Public Safety Workers tend to use visual and kinesthetic styles of learning and practice the most. One can observe this in many aspects of public safety training and operations. For instance, emergency medical services classes have both classroom and practical components. Then the auditory is engaged by interacting with the instructor and their peers.

Effective learning involves engaging multiple intelligences. According to the multiple intelligence theory, humans are born with seven intelligences: verbal, logical, musical/rhythmic, visual, physical/kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. The intelligences most common in public safety workers are verbal, visual, logical, physical/kinesthetic, and intrapersonal. These intelligences are necessary for and further developed by the nature of public safety work:³

- **verbal intelligence** for effective communications
- **visual intelligence** for assessing situations
- **physical/kinesthetic** for assessing situations and also for acting quickly
such as rendering treatment for patients or rescuing trapped victims
- **logical intelligence** for quick and effective problem solving
- **intrapersonal** for effective teamwork

Therefore, effective experiential training tools for public safety workers must engage these areas of intelligence. The tool must effectively engage the three main learning styles:

- a) **Visual:** Taking in information via sense of sight, such as reading and observing, helps students learn concepts about incident scenes, assessment of critical incident scene-scapes, the human body, how to assess and treat patients, etc. These skills are then established by instruction demonstration utilizing physical training tools. Therefore the educational tool should have the look of actual incident scenes.
- b) **Auditory:** Auditory learning is also involved during these skill practices such as students listen for breath, lung sounds, etc. taking in information via hearing,

³ Adapted from: Jeffrey Pindelski [Learning Curve](#) Fire Chief Magazine ©2006

such as listening to what is taught by their instructor. The interpersonal communication between peers and instructors helps the student understand the logic behind command structures.

c) **Kinesthetic & Tactile:** Assimilating information practice by physically handling objects, engages the students skill and intellect. By using the same tools they observed instructor has,, the students familiarize themselves with the actions and decision making involved in their craft. Thus the educational tool encourages repetitive use.

Therefore the educational tool should create the “feel” of an actual incident scene. This means that it has the best possibility of recreating the emotional and crisis reaction within the student. It should allow the instructor to show possibilities, correct mistakes and to show the student the “what, when, where and why” certain actions and decisions are made in critical incident scenarios.

Students then apply the skills they’ve learned and practiced in class and “practicals” in the field. They use their senses of sight, hearing, and touch to assess critical situations and act with immediacy and calm. Their experience in the field reinforces this process each time they encountering a scene, whether it be assessing a structural fire or treating a patient. This is why it is important that experiential learning be provided for public safety workers to perform at optimum levels and successfully handle emergency incidents.

Engaging the Mind of the Public Safety Worker

To have an effective organization of first responders, it is necessary to educate their minds. This means, training the student to react, follow orders, work in harmony with his colleagues, make split second decisions and to learn leadership skills. These aspects of public safety workers education require training in identifying clear objectives, intuitive understanding, and interactive learning.

Objectives Training: When working on incidents, public safety worker protocols target clear objectives such as rescuing victims from a fire, ensuring an open airway for patients to breathe, or extricating a patient as quickly as possible from a vehicle involved in an accident. Thus, it is essential that the classroom and hands-on learning experiences include this objective/goal oriented element.

Tapping Instinctual Skills; Intuitive skills are commonly used by public safety workers to get a sense of the environment as to volatility and safety, and public safety workers commonly describe this as their “gut feeling” or instinct. It takes time to develop on-the-job intuition, as the workers run more calls and work more incidents. Over time, they learn to “get a feel” for the work. Therefore, the more experiential learning they can have before they begin running incidents, the better they will be able to apply these skills.

Habituating Organizational Interaction: Interaction and team playing is an important element of learning during training. Public safety workers must interact with each other frequently when working incidents both in person and over the radio. On large incidents, interaction occurs not only between crew members but between crew members, crew officers, other crews on scene, the incident command officer, and the municipality dispatch/communications center. Thus, effective experiential training tools must include practicing interaction. This interaction encourages teamwork and develops leadership.



Photo Courtesy of www.ephrata.org/258.html

Teamwork & Leadership

One of the most important cultural values of public safety workers is teamwork. Every public safety worker on a crew plays a vital role in getting the job done safely and successfully. Not only do they hold in their hands the lives of the people they serve, but also the lives of fellow crew members. So, any modality used in training these individuals must foster this value by providing the tools to build cohesion and high performance teamwork.

Though it is important to train individuals so they gain the self-esteem and confidence to “act on their feet” in the field, such action is all for naught if they do not perform in concert within the organization they are working. Effective leadership is not gained unless a well trained individual can also follow a chain of command. As a result, all persons in the organization must be educated to act as a team. Therefore, training must be based not only on developing individual knowledge and actions, but group protocols and hierarchies as well.



How does the NIMS City ICS Tabletop Training System create a direct experience of field operations for public safety workers?

The basis of the NIMS City ICS training system is to duplicate in miniature an actual critical incident event scene. It is flexible enough to create a virtual urban or suburban environment with literally thousands of possibilities of scenarios. However, the “virtual” portion of this is specifically hands on; there are no costly electronics or mechanics. The toolbox also includes transparent highway incident flash cards with classic highway incidents, so the student can memorize critical incident scene models that are most often encountered by public safety workers. ICS functions the same way table-top board games do, using objects representing the scene:

- **Model 1/87 scale vehicles for Highway traffic simulation:** 18 vehicles included: Fire Engines, Ladder Truck, Ambulances, Police Car, Tactical unit, & cars.
- **Visual aids include:** 100 separate 3D pictures of vehicle for large incident management. 3D pictures of buildings and homes. Highway incident lane closure overlays (MUTCD) traffic barrels and cones. ICS command boards, ICS 201 & 203 forms, Mass Casualty victim cards for triage and law enforcement interaction, and ICS Organizational Chart and Initial Company Officer Work Charts.



The visual aspect of NIMS City is that it looks like a scene, creating a top down visual of an event scene. The safety worker can move all around the scene to see if a certain scene management plan is functional, and then can site any peculiarities and difficulties with immediacy and with functional ease.

The tactile and manipulative aspect of NIMS City begins with its flat board replicating almost any event scenario. It is then enhanced with three dimensional toy sized vehicles, buildings, geographic features, human and animal figures, and more. The student can manipulate these on the board easily. Once the student has evaluated the scene, the student can then manipulate the objects on the incident scenario.

At any time during the exercise, the instructor can interact with the students and the scenario, instruct or query the students. Thus the auditory aspect of incident training is engaged.



The NIMS City ICS Toolbox System is preferable to electronic media and Blackboard/ Whiteboard training for public safety workers

The NIMS City ICS Toolbox Training system creates a manipulative scenario where the public safety worker can make mistakes. Rather than making crucial, dangerous and possibly life threatening mistakes in real incidents, corrections are assimilated by the responder within the safety of the classroom.

Decision making in critical incident scenes can be stressful. With NIMS City, the student can experience some of that stress, without the fear that his mistakes could do harm to others. His instructor can take him back and walk him through his successes and failures, instructing him as they go, at their own pace. Then the student can apply what he has learned in actual incidents. But, unlike on-scene training, the student can then continue her/his learning experience by practicing incident response with the Toolbox on his own or with the instructor.

The blackboard is great for quickly jotting down information and note taking, but a public safety worker cannot be browsing his notes while reacting to a fire. A computer is great for viewing simulations of incident scenarios. But, you cannot obtain the kinesthetic learning aspect engaged through use of computers or writing down rules that are already available in texts.

It is necessary to place the student public safety worker in scenarios that closely replicate actual critical incidents. This is why the sensory aspect of the ICS Toolbox Training System makes it superior to media based, theoretical and initial on-scene training.

Because of it's interactive capabilities, all three senses are engaged in working within the ICS environment. The NIMS City board is much larger and much more sophisticated in its possibilities, and is much more cost effective than hi-tech training tools.



ICS Toolbox's NIMS City ICS Tabletop Training System is the only off-scene system available to Public Safety Organizations to fully train their staff, replicating Incident Field Training.

Public safety organizations have an increasing need to further their knowledge and create leaders from within. This is why the NIMS City system is invaluable in training and refining accurate decision making and developing leadership skills for public safety workers. The NIMS City ICS Training system is "must have" tool for all EMS, Fire and Rescue departments. Hands-on experience cannot be achieved by any software or electronic device available.

"Experience is the best teacher." NIMS City is the best public safety training tool available to help public safety workers gain that experience.

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Emergency Preparedness Training and Exercise Guide for Nursing Homes

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The federal Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) provides specific standards for emergency preparedness training and exercises that complies with the National Incident Management System. To assist its many health and medical partners to become proficient in the HSEEP standards, the Florida's Department of Health Division of Emergency Operations developed a handbook called the Mechanic's Manual: a Handbook for Becoming HSEEP-Compliant. This manual assists health and medical partners such as nursing homes and hospitals, to become proficient in developing, conducting and evaluating preparedness exercises that meet the HSEEP standards. The Florida Department of Health gave permission to the Florida Health Care Association to use the Mechanic's Manual as a primary source document for this training and exercise guide for nursing homes. Additional materials and resources developed by the Florida Health Care Association under a grant awarded by the John A. Hartford Foundation have also been used extensively in the preparation of this guide.

Readers are strongly encouraged to visit the website of the Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (<https://hseep.dhs.gov/>) for additional education about developing and conducting emergency preparedness exercises.

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The Preparedness System

It is important to recognize preparedness as a system, requiring the continuous integration of plans, training programs, exercises, and evaluations. It is a system that functions like a machine.

Turning the *planning gear* (writing or revising a plan) sets in motion the *training gear* (making sure all staff understands the plan). After training, the *exercise and evaluation gear* kicks in, helping to identify weaknesses in the plan as well as areas where additional training is needed.

If you have a comprehensive emergency plan for your facility, you've put the preparedness machine into motion. The next step is to set the training gear into motion by training your staff on the plan. After training, follow up with exercises to give staff a chance to practice the procedures about which they've been trained and evaluate each exercise to determine needed plan changes or additional training.



The goal of this guide is to help you design and maintain a preparedness system for your facility, keeping the gears turning and the preparedness “machine” running smoothly.

Key Concepts

People generally respond to an emergency in the way that they have been trained. By using an ongoing process of training, exercising, and evaluation, nursing homes have a greater assurance that their staff will know what is expected of them in an emergency situation and act accordingly.

Following are several key concepts essential to developing an emergency preparedness training and exercise program for your facility.

- Make “disaster preparedness” a part of new employee orientation and ensure that all employees receive the training.
- Provide refresher training on disaster preparedness for all staff on a routine basis, recognizing that some will require more frequent training because of their specific roles and responsibilities.
- Exercise all portions of your facility’s emergency management plan, in accordance with the training and exercise schedule described in the plan.
- Use a variety of training and exercise approaches, including discussion-based tabletop exercises and operations-based drills. This guide provides additional information about how and when to use various methods.
- Conduct exercises that include representatives from the fire department, local law enforcement, the local health department, the emergency management office, the Red Cross and your utility provider.
- Exercise all vendor and mutual aid agreements identified in your emergency plan to be sure of their continued viability, particularly evacuation transportation agreements, receiving facility agreements, and energy/generator agreements.
- Evaluate all training and exercise activities and use the information to make improvements to your emergency management plan and training and exercise schedule.
- Develop relationships with your local emergency management office and health department and participate in training and exercise opportunities they might sponsor.

Step by Step Process for Planning an Exercise

Following is a recommended step-by-step process for developing an emergency preparedness exercise plan for your facility. These steps are based on the Florida Department of Health's Mechanic's Manual: Handbook for Becoming HSEEP-Compliant.

Step 1. Synchronize your exercise with your emergency plan and training programs.

Determine the emergency management plan or capability or training competency that you want to exercise and evaluate. Ask these questions:

- Will all of the exercise participants be knowledgeable of the plan? If not, then you must distribute the plan and ensure that it is read and understood before considering the type of exercise you want to conduct. See page 3-4 for exercise descriptions.
- Does the plan or parts of the plan that will be exercised and evaluated require first-time or refresher training? If so, ensure that you conduct training to an established standard of proficiency *before* conducting an exercise. Drills are very useful as intermediate exercises to validate specific training proficiency standards.
- What if there is no existing plan? You can effectively use seminars and workshops to review issues requiring writing of new plans and to determine what needs to be included in the plans they are developing. Types of exercises are discussed in **Step 3**.

Step 2. Determine which topic to use in developing exercise objectives. The topic can be anything from a simple, single-task activity or process involving a few people to a complex, multi-tasked activity involving multiple departments and organizations. Some topics to consider:

- The roles and responsibilities of key staff members during an emergency
- The Incident Command System and how it relate to the nursing home staff
- The physical layout of the facility and the location of the nearest stair exit, alternate stair exit(s) and the direct route to each exit
- The location of fire extinguishers and how to use them (some fire extinguisher companies provide free in-service training during the regular annual equipment servicing)
- The location of emergency equipment such as E-tanks, concentrators, Ambu-bags, suctioning equipment, and other supplies used in a medical emergency
- Emergency telephone numbers and call-down procedures as defined in the facility's emergency management plan
- How to assume control, minimize rumors, and prevent panic
- Managing decedents when routine services are interrupted
- Evacuation priorities, e.g. ambulatory, wheelchair, and bedfast residents
- Procedures for protection of residents during an evacuation
- Response procedure to a missing resident
- Minimizing resident vulnerability to extreme temperature due to power outage when the generator is inoperable or does not maintain air conditioning/heating
- Responding to staff injuries during an emergency event
- Basic First Aid/CPR training
- How to help staff prepare personally for a disaster, with a goal of maintaining a viable workforce for the facility during a disaster (resource: www.redcross.org)

- Localized Fire Response
- Procedures for utility and water shut-offs
- Sudden power outage
- Procedures for switching to and/or troubleshooting the generator
- Sudden water loss or water contamination
- Sudden flooding
- Significant structural damage to a section of the facility
- Violent resident, family member, staff member or other guest/visitor

Step 3. Determine the type of exercise which would be the most appropriate to evaluate the selected topic objectives. Build exercises to correspond with the topic's objectives, plans and/or training programs that are to be evaluated, and the level of the nursing homes' current capabilities.

IMPORTANT: Do not immediately jump into a full scale exercise or even a tabletop exercise unless your plan is mature and your participants have the appropriate level of training.



Discussion-based exercises familiarize participants with current plans, policies, agreements, and procedures. They may also be used as a forum to develop or revise plans, policies, agreements, and procedures. Discussion-based exercises include: seminars, workshops, tabletops, and games. Discussion-based exercises typically require facilitators in lieu of controllers and may also require evaluators.

- Seminar. A seminar is an informal discussion that *orients participants* to new or updated plans, policies, or procedures (e.g., a seminar to review new family notification procedures). It is also a good method for informing and training staff on changes that have been made to the facility's emergency management plan.
- Workshop. A workshop resembles a seminar, but it *builds* specific products, such as a draft plan or policy. Workshops can also be used effectively to bounce canned scenarios off a

new plan to see where it will break (e.g., a workshop to create a new and improved policy for responding to a missing resident event).

- **Tabletop Exercise (TTX).** A tabletop exercise involves key participants discussing simulated scenarios in an informal setting. TTXs can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures (e.g. unplanned power outage). Tabletop exercises provide an excellent opportunity for a nursing home to identify, assess and correct/strengthen their emergency management plan. This guide includes detailed information about developing and conducting a tabletop exercise, including a template for nursing homes.
- **Game.** A game is a simulation of operations that involves two or more teams in a competitive environment, using rules, data, and procedures and scenarios designed to depict an actual situation and test whether training is sufficient (e.g. create a list of tips for how to best notify residents of an emergency event and how to keep them informed of what's going on).

Operations-Based Exercises *validate* plans, policies, agreements and procedures, clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify resource gaps in an operational environment. Types of Operations-based Exercises include drills, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises. Operations-based exercises typically require safety officers, controllers, evaluators, and may also require actors, and simulators. Operations-based exercises require *much* greater logistical support, cost, and planning time than discussion-based exercises. See **Step 6**, Exercise Staffing.

- **Drill.** A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to test a single, specific operation or function within a single entity. In nursing homes, the fire drill is the most common drill conducted, although many other aspects of the emergency preparedness plan can be practiced using a drill. For example, a drill would be an effective way to test the responsiveness of the facility's evacuation transportation provider or the facility's ability to switch to the generator when the person responsible for the generator is not accessible.
- **Functional Exercise (FE).** A functional exercise examines and/or validates the coordination, command, and control between various multi-agency coordination centers (e.g., sister nursing homes, emergency operation center, etc.). A functional exercise does not involve first responders or emergency officials responding to an incident in real time at an actual location with actor-simulated victims. For example, a facility might develop and conduct a functional exercise to test its capacity to evacuate a portion (or all) of its residents.
- **Full-Scale Exercises (FSE).** A full-scale exercise is typically a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, multi-discipline exercise involving functional (e.g., sister nursing homes, emergency operation center, etc.) and first responders or emergency officials (e.g., a medical response team decontaminating actor-simulated victims) in *real* time, *real* place scenarios.

Step 4. Determine exercise cost.

Seminars, workshops, and drills can usually be executed at low cost. They can be and should be developed in-house without relying on contractors.

Tabletop exercises with multiple objectives and scenarios and functional exercises may require contractor support. But, you can avoid major expense by using existing tools to develop the exercise basis. The more work that can be done in-house, the less contractor support will be needed and less cost will be incurred.

Step 5. Set the Exercise Date.

Allow yourself enough time to:

- Identify and organize the planning team
- Reserve a meeting space for the planning team
- Schedule planning meetings
- Identify the type, scope, objectives, and purpose of the exercise
- Assign responsibility to planning team members
- Create supporting handouts as needed
- Take care of administrative tasks, such as creating attendee sign-in sheets, ordering refreshments, etc.
- Notify players (exercise participants)
- Invite observers or external partners

Step 6. Assemble the Exercise Planning Team.

The most important factor for a successful exercise is organizing a skilled and experienced exercise planning team. The exercise planning team oversees, and is responsible for, exercise foundation, design, development, conduct, and evaluation.

Functions of the Planning Team:

- A team leader directs and coordinates all exercise planning activities. He or she assigns exercise activities and responsibilities, provides guidance, establishes timelines, and monitors the development process.
- A subject matter expert (SME) provides technical or functional expertise, e.g., nurse practitioner or facility director, to develop the scenario and potentially serve as evaluators during the conduct of the exercise.
- Someone will be responsible for compiling and developing all exercise documentation. This team member collects and reviews policies, plans, and procedures that will be validated in the exercise.
- A team member will serve a logistical function, providing or arranging for the supplies, materials, facilities, and services that enable the exercise to function smoothly without outside interference or disruption.
- The exercise will require administrative support throughout development. This team member coordinates schedules for the planning team, participating partners and agencies, and registers exercise participants on the day of the exercise.

Step 7. Identify the Exercise Staffing Roles.

Depending on the type of exercise being conducted, identify who is expected to serve in these roles on the day of the exercise:

Safety Officer. During an operations-based drill or functional exercise, he or she looks out for the safety of all exercise participants and must have no other duties. The Safety Officer briefs participants on any safety concerns before the start of the drill or functional exercise.

Facilitators. During a discussion-based exercise, the facilitator is responsible for ensuring that participant discussions remain focused on the exercise objectives and making sure all issues and objectives are explored as thoroughly as possible within the available time.

Evaluators are chosen based on their expertise in the functional areas they are to evaluate. Evaluators have a passive role in the exercise and should only record the actions/decisions of players; they should not interfere with exercise flow. Evaluators often use formal forms to record observations and make notes, which contribute greatly to the exercise After-Action Report. For large and complex operations-based exercises, appoint an experienced Chief Evaluator to lead the evaluation team.

Actors simulate specific roles, such as disaster casualty victims, adding realism to an exercise.

Players are members of the organization(s) being evaluated; they have an active role in responding to an incident by either discussing (in a discussion-based exercise) or performing (in an operations-based exercise) their regular roles and responsibilities.

Observers may request to view all or selected portions of exercise play. Observers may include corporate representatives, sister facility administration, or other invitees. Observers must not participate in exercise play or in exercise evaluation and control functions. However, they may be solicited for comments about their observations.

Step 8. Identify Exercise Partners.

Determine the outside partners and agencies that need to be involved in the exercise. Depending on the objectives and scope of the exercise, here is a list of external partners you may consider when building an exercise team:

- Law Enforcement Representatives
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire and Rescue
- Hospital
- County Emergency Managers
- County Health Departments
- School Districts
- Volunteer and Faith-Based Organizations
- Utility Managers, especially your local electricity provider
- Generator Supplier or Manufacturer
- Transportation Provider
- Sister Facilities
- Management Company

The listing of agencies and organizations above is not meant to be mandatory or exhaustive. Examine the context of the plan you will be exercising. All agencies that have a part in your plan should have a part in exercise planning even if their particular part will not be included this time. If the purpose of the exercise seminar or workshop is to develop a plan, consider all who will be potentially included when the plan is completed. Be inclusive rather than exclusive.

Run the Exercise

This guide provides detailed information for conducting two common exercises utilized in nursing homes: the drill (operations-based) and the tabletop exercise (discussion-based). For additional education and training on designing and conducting the various types of exercises, readers are encouraged to take the free online independent study courses available at the Department of Homeland Security website, <https://hseep.dhs.gov/>.

Collect Performance Data

Evaluation is the cornerstone of exercises; it documents strengths and areas for improvement in an organization's preparedness.

Hot Washes are always held immediately following the end of operations-based exercises. Hot washes may also be held with discussion-based exercises at the discretion of the exercise planning team leader. A hot wash is conducted by a subject matter expert relevant to the particular activity that is being exercised. A hot wash enables evaluators to identify system successes and failures as well as issues, concerns, or proposed improvements and ascertain players' level of satisfaction with the exercise while the events remain fresh in players' minds.

Debriefs are a more formal forum for exercise planners, facilitators, and evaluators to review observations and discuss the exercise. Debriefs may be held following the hot wash or within a few days, following the exercise. The exercise planning team leader facilitates discussion and allows each person an opportunity to provide an overview of the functional area observed. Discussions are recorded, and identified strengths and areas for improvement are analyzed for inclusion in the facility's emergency management plan.

When writing preliminary analyses/summaries of the exercise, evaluators should consider the following questions:

- Were the objectives of the exercise met?
- What were the key decisions associated with each activity?
- Were players knowledgeable of current plans, policies, and procedures? Did plans, policies, and procedures support performance tasks?
- Did the observations suggest that all personnel were adequately trained to complete the activities/tasks needed to demonstrate a capability?
- Did the observations identify any resource shortcomings that could inhibit the ability to execute an activity?
- Did personnel from multiple agencies or jurisdictions work together to perform tasks, activities or capabilities? If so, are there agreements or relationships in place to support the coordination required? Is any cross-training needed to enhance task performances?
- What should be learned from this exercise?
- What strengths were identified for each activity?
- What areas for improvement are recommended for each activity?

Improve the Process

After-Action reports (AAR) are used to provide feedback to participants on their performance during the exercise. An AAR summarizes exercise events and analyzes performance of the topic's objective tasks. The After-Action Report includes an improvement plan outlining corrective actions needed, along with timelines for their implementation and assignment to responsible parties.

Track the Progress

Once the recommendations, corrective actions, responsibilities, and due dates are clearly identified and agreed upon in the improvement plan section of the After-Action Report, the Nursing Home Administrator ensures that each corrective action is tracked to completion.

Maintaining the discipline to keep the improvement plan activities on track is the most difficult part of the process. Failure to follow improvement plan corrective actions to completion often results in repeated lessons learned, and lack of preparedness improvement.

Resources for Independent Study

Online Study Courses (Free)

For a more in-depth study of designing and conducting emergency preparedness exercises, readers are strongly encouraged to consider taking the free online independent study courses offered by the Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) described in the following paragraphs.

Independent Study. Begin training in basic HSEEP concepts and terminology by reviewing “HSEEP 101” on the HSEEP Internet site at <https://hseep.dhs.gov/>. Then take *IS 120A, An Introduction to Exercises*. This is a self-paced, online course in HSEEP basics. When you complete the course and pass the test, you will receive a certificate of completion. This is a basic prerequisite to additional HSEEP training. You do not have to be an HSEEP-registered user to take online, independent study courses.

Next, take *IS 130, Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning*, for further information and study. This course is also available online at the HSEEP Internet site.

Advanced Exercise Training: Opportunities for FEMA advanced-level exercise training are described at <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/cec/CECCourses.asp>.

Other Training Resources

Florida Readers: If you are based in Florida, two added training resources are available. The Florida Department of Health sponsors an intense, four-hour workshop based on the use of the HSEEP Mechanics Manual, which has been used extensively in this guide. A workshop prerequisite is the HSEEP Independent Study Course IS 120A, discussed above. The workshop consists of HSEEP content training with participants encouraged to share good and bad lessons learned from past exercises, a live on-line walkthrough of the HSEEP Internet site and Toolkit, and a scenario-based, practical exercise in exercise development. Target audience: planners, trainers, and exercise coordinators at county health departments, EMS, hospitals, health and medical centers, long-term care facilities, and all other ESF 8 public health and medical partners. For more information, contact Jack Pittman, Public Health Preparedness, (850) 244-4444, Ext. 3725.

The Florida Health Care Association has additional training resources to offer through the John A. Hartford Foundation’s grant on Hurricane and Disaster Preparedness for LTC Facilities. For more information, contact April Henkel at ahenkel@fhca.org, or (850)-224-3907.

Other States: For readers in other states, contact your state’s ESF 8 lead agency for information about HSEEP training opportunities. Your ESF 8 lead agency will likely be your state’s department of health. In addition, contact your state’s nursing home or health care association and ask for resources on emergency and preparedness resources for nursing homes.

Exercise Examples:

Drills and Tabletop Exercises

The following section provides more detailed guidance for nursing homes on two specific types of exercises:

- **Operations-Based Drills**
- **Discussion-Based Tabletops**

Conducting a Drill

OVERVIEW

This section provides step-by-step guidance for organizing and conducting drills in a nursing home.

The purpose of a drill is to practice the skills that are needed during an emergency situation. The focus of a drill should be the specific non-routine tasks that are critical to the safe management and evacuation of patients and staff in the event of a real emergency. Include facility residents as well as staff in the execution of the drill.

In nursing homes, the fire drill is the most common drill conducted, although many other aspects of the emergency preparedness plan can be practiced using a drill. For example, a drill would be an effective way to test the responsiveness of the facility's evacuation transportation provider or the facility's ability to switch to the generator when the person responsible for the generator is not accessible.

When designing a drill, pick a hazard that is applicable to your geographic area and features of your facility. Not all drills should be announced; a surprise drill helps to reinforce learning. Drills are serious and should not be taken lightly. Regular practice helps instill a sense of calm and preparedness under pressure and staff performs in the way they have practiced.

Designing a Drill, Step-By-Step

- 1) Plan the drill.** Each drill should be planned by a team consisting of the staff who, during an emergency, will likely assume the roles of the five key positions in the Nursing Home Incident Command System (See *Introduction to the Incident Command System* in the Addenda section of the *FHCA CEMP Software Application for Nursing Homes* or refer to page 9, Resources for Independent Study). The first planning step for the team is to decide on a goal statement for the drill – what skill or procedure needs to be practiced? For example, a goal statement for practicing the safe evacuation of residents on oxygen would be: *Safely evacuate residents on oxygen*. Identify a subject matter expert to serve as the evaluator of the drill, observing the drill as it unfolds, keeping track of the time that elapses between key functions, and making notes. The evaluator only observes; he/she does not participate in the drill. For all drills, it is important to note the time between the discovery of the emergency situation to staff and the beginning of their response. For evacuation drills, it is important to also note the time that elapses from the order to evacuate/relocate a floor to the last arrival at a safe refuge area.
- 2) Call the drill.** Shortly before the drill is to begin, station designated personnel throughout the floor to observe and record the actions of personnel when the drill begins or the alarm sounds. A designated person should “call the drill” by declaring, “Our drill will now begin.” At this point, the clock begins to tick for recording the time it takes to complete various segments of the drill.
- 3) State the drill scenario and purpose.** Give the designee a cue card that describes the situation and what the drill will accomplish. Example: Scenario - This is a power failure drill; Purpose – demonstrate the facility's ability to recover/manage AC loss.

- 4) **Conduct the drill.** After the situation is announced, emergency procedures should begin immediately. Be certain to note the timing of specific portions of the drill as accurate assessment of time passage may help to evaluate problems.
- 5) **Conclude the drill and document participants and activities.** Immediately following the drill, ensure that all staff has signed the documentation required for training records. Be sure to identify the names of absent staff and schedule a make-up drill date for their participation.
- 6) **Evaluate the Drill and Identify Action Needed.** Immediately following the drill, the planning team leader or designated evaluator conducts a hot wash of the drill, providing an opportunity for participants to discuss the results of the drill and identify concerns and issues to be addressed in the After-Action Report (improvement plan section). The discussion centers around what went right, what did not go so well and a discussion of the root cause of an identified issue needing improvement.
- 7) **After the Drill - Next Steps.** The planning team leader ensures that an After-Action Report is written for the drill, which includes an improvement plan and recommendations for future training and exercises. The nursing home administrator will ensure that each corrective action is tracked to completion.

Conducting a Tabletop Exercise

OVERVIEW

This section discusses steps for developing and conducting a tabletop exercise for your facility. Included are basic steps to developing a tabletop exercise and a sample scenario/injects and corresponding exercise goals and objectives. Facilities are strongly encouraged to visit the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation (HSEEP) website -- <https://hseep.dhs.gov/> -- and click on "About HSEEP" for a quick overview of exercise and evaluation concepts and terminology. Then, take the free online Independent Study Course, IS 120A, An Introduction to Exercises, also on the HSEEP website (<https://hseep.dhs.gov/>).

Important note: Remember that the first gear to turn in the preparedness machine is the development of a comprehensive emergency management plan, followed by training on the plan. A tabletop exercise is *only* recommended for facilities that have developed a plan and have trained staff on its components. If you have an emergency plan but your staff has not been trained on it, start with a seminar or workshop (see page 3-4 of this guide) and add the exercise component as a follow-up to it.

A tabletop exercise or simply a "tabletop," is a staged event where management and/or staff meet in an open forum to discuss actions for response to a specific emergency scenario. The informal format facilitates participation and is structured to explore emergency procedures, recovery plan details, standard operating procedures and personnel resources to recover critical functions.

A tabletop exercise simulates a disaster without interrupting normal facility operations. At the beginning of the exercise, a scenario is presented to participants by a facilitator, who guides participants in a verbal "walk through" of their facility's emergency plan. The length of a tabletop exercise is typically one to three hours.

While only one of many ways to exercise a facility's emergency plan, a tabletop has a number of advantages. The tabletop can have a broad or narrow focus, is economical and flexible, and most importantly, it presents a very real scenario in a non-threatening format. Tabletop exercises are used to:

- determine if participants can realistically "talk through" their critical functions during an emergency;
- help participants become more aware of possible weaknesses and gaps in the plan;
- thoroughly acquaint participants with the contents of their facility's plan.

A tabletop is flexible because the scenario can be structured to exercise particular sections of a facility's emergency plan or the entire plan. If a facility has multiple departments or locations, the disaster scenario can target specific departmental functions or locations. The purpose is to allow for the discovery of weaknesses during a non-threatening exercise rather than during a real disaster.

Key Roles in a Tabletop Exercise:

- The **Exercise Facilitator** presents the scenario, facilitates group problem solving, controls the pace and flow of the exercise and stimulates discussion using injects (problem statements) that occur on a timeline appropriate to the exercise scenario.
- **Exercise Players** (participants) are facility staff and invitees who address the goals and objectives of the exercise and participate in the facilitated discussion.
- The **Exercise Evaluator** does not participate in the exercise, but takes notes during the exercise, making observations about what happens during the exercise specifically related to the group's ability to achieve the stated objectives. The evaluator may also note "Action Items" that should be considered to address weaknesses/gaps revealed during the exercise.
- **An Exercise Observer** is an optional role. Some exercise planners may appoint observers, perhaps from other disciplines or external partners, to observe the exercise and provide feedback.

Designing A Tabletop Exercise: Step-By-Step

Follow the steps below and the sample Tabletop Exercise Planning Worksheet on the following pages to design your own tabletop exercise.

Step 1: Assess your facility's needs. Has your facility had to activate its plan? If so, use that experience to help identify areas of need. What are the training needs of new staff? Review the training logs for your facility – where are the gaps? For each need, identify the corresponding section(s) of your facility's Emergency Plan to which it is related.

Step 2: Prioritize the needs and determine the scope of the exercise. Based on your assessment (step 1), prioritize the training needs and determine what should be exercised first. Will it be a focused exercise (a power outage) or will it involve external partners? For example, a test of the viability of your transportation contracts might include external partners. Does the function being tested involve multiple departments?

Step 3: Write a goal (purpose statement) for the exercise. What are you trying to improve/establish? A tabletop exercise can include more than one goal, but keep the one to three hours timeframe in mind when planning goals and objectives for a single exercise. Also, always tie the goal/purpose to the facility's written emergency plan. See the following pages for sample goals and objectives.

Step 4: Write specific objectives for the goal. What are the ideal outcomes for the exercise and how will you know if you have achieved them? For example, if the exercise purpose is to test the access staff have to the emergency contact list, objectives would be both the access that staff had to the list (could they locate it?) and the accuracy of the list (did it contain up-to-date information?). See the following pages for sample goals and objectives.

Step 5: Select or create an emergency scenario. Every tabletop exercise revolves around a specific emergency scenario – wildfires in the area, hurricane warning/watch, nearby chemical spill. Planners can use the sample hurricane scenario provided in this Guide or create a unique scenario appropriate for their facility. Write specific "injects" (problem

statements) to go along with the scenario to be introduced by the facilitator at specific times to direct the discussion. See the following pages for a sample scenario and injects.

Step 6: Identify exercise participants. The scope of your exercise will contribute to the selection of participants. Which facility staff should participate? Should external partners be included, such as the local emergency management office, county health department, law enforcement, fire department, or others? If so, will they be players (participants) or observers? Also, remember to appoint an evaluator to observe and provide written comments (see Evaluator role, described above).

Step 7: Determine date/time/place. A tabletop exercise generally takes 1 to 4 hours to conduct, but can be longer. It should be conducted at a location conducive to the exercise goals and objectives.

Step 8: Invite players (participants) and any external partners if appropriate. Be sure to give plenty of advance notice so that participants can make arrangements in their work schedules to attend.

Step 9: Prepare materials. Provide a *Situation Manual* to each participant at the beginning of the tabletop exercise. A Situation Manual is the participant handbook for discussion-based exercises. It provides background information on the scope, schedule, and objectives for the exercise. It also presents the scenario narrative for participant discussions during the exercise. The Situation Manual gives players in discussion-based exercises the background information about the exercise they will need to fully participate, as well as the scenario narrative which they will be discussing. The exercise facilitator will also need the injects (problem statements) to direct and stimulate discussion. The evaluator will need a copy of the Situation Manual and a form for record their observations and notes. See the following pages for examples.

Step 10: Conduct the exercise. Convene the tabletop exercise, giving each player a Situation Manual. The facilitator presents the first scenario and continues to facilitate the exercise using the injects prepared by the planning team. The appointed evaluator observes and takes notes. At the designated time, the facilitator concludes the exercise.

Step 11: Evaluate the exercise. Immediately following the tabletop, the planning team leader may choose to conduct a hot wash of the exercise, providing an opportunity for all participants to discuss the exercise and identify concerns and issues to be addressed in the After-Action Report. The hot wash process answers these questions:

- What went well?
- What didn't go so well, and what might be the root causes of any concerns?
- What were the surprises, if any?
- Were the exercise goals and objectives met? If not, why not?
- Are there action items for follow-up in an improvement plan?

Tabletop Exercise Planning Worksheet and Examples

A two-page Tabletop Planning Worksheet and directions for its use follow, along with a sample of a Florida-based hurricane scenario, injects and related exercise goals and objectives.

Tabletop Exercise Planning Worksheet

(Page 1 of 2)

Tabletop Exercise Title: _____ Emergency Plan Section Being Exercised: _____	
Exercise Goal & Objectives	Evaluator Notes
	<i>Completed by the Evaluator and Observers, if any.</i>
Action Items for Follow-Up	
<i>Completed by the Evaluator and Observers, if any.</i>	

SCENARIO INJECTS

Problem Statements

(Page 2 of 2)

Inject/Message (list in chronological order)	Exercise Goal & Objective#	Time Issued
		Leave blank for evaluator's use

DIRECTIONS

Tabletop Exercise Planning Worksheet

Tabletop Exercise Title: <u>Type the name you will use to refer to this exercise</u>	
Emergency Plan Section Being Exercised: <u>State the specific section of your emergency plan related to the exercise goals/objectives</u>	
Exercise Goal & Objectives	Evaluator Notes
Goal 1: Write a concise goal that describes what you want to achieve by exercising this section of your Emergency Management Plan. Each goal must have separate measurable objective(s). Objectives for Goal #1: Write at least one objective for the goal to measure its achievement. Multiple objectives are often helpful.	<i>Leave this column blank.</i> <i>The exercise evaluator will use this space to record his/her observations about the exercise and comments about the achievement of the stated goals and objectives.</i>
Action Items for Follow-Up	
<i>Leave this section blank.</i> <i>This section is used by the evaluator to describe actions that need to be taken to correct areas identified as needing improvement during the exercise. This section may also be completed by observers, the facility's risk manager or others. It might also be completed post-exercise, after reviewing the evaluator and/or observers notes and discussing the exercise experience with others whose input might be needed to write the improvement plan section of the exercise's After-Action Report.</i>	

DIRECTIONS

SCENARIO INJECTS

Problem Statements

Injects are used to help direct the discussion about the scenario presented for the exercise.

Inject/Message	Exercise Goal & Objective#	Time Issued
In chronological order, write the injects (messages) that should be given to participants necessary to meet the goals and objectives for the exercise. The inject(s) may be presented verbally, or in other ways to simulate how it might be received during an actual event (e.g., telephone, TV). You may want to create several injects to ensure that all objectives can be met by the exercise. Remember to list the injects in the order that you intend for them to be presented by the facilitator during the exercise.	Write the objective # that correlates to the message you have written.	Leave this column blank. The evaluator will use this column during the exercise to record the time when each inject is presented to the participants.

SAMPLE

SCENARIO & INJECTS

Scenario: Thursday 11:00 am

The National Hurricane Center has issued an advisory stating that Hurricane Chuck has intensified into a Category 1 hurricane with winds of 90 MPH. Chuck is beginning to turn more easterly. As Chuck moves into warm Gulf waters, it is expected to continue to intensify and could become a major hurricane (Category 3 or greater) within 24-72 hours. The west coast of Florida should begin to closely monitor this storm.

The County has been placed under a Hurricane Watch for possible impact of Hurricane Chuck. Local governments along the west coast of Florida are urging residents and businesses to make preparations for possible storm impact.

INJECT #1 <u>Time: 2:00 pm</u>	<i>Identify by name and title, the person in charge during the emergency and one alternate, should that person be unable to serve in that capacity.</i>
INJECT #2 <u>Time: 2:05 pm</u>	<i>A representative from the Attorney General's Office has arrived at the facility and asked how many staff have trained/exercised the hurricane portion of the facility disaster plan this year. What documentation do you have to verify your response?</i>
INJECT #3 <u>Time: 2:10 pm</u>	<i>Are there any other threats from this event that could impact the facility, beyond wind?</i>
INJECT #4 <u>Time: 2:15 pm</u>	<i>The County has requested the facility make 2 spaces available for special needs evacuees.</i>
INJECT #5 <u>Time: 2:20 pm</u>	<i>Evacuation agreement facility has called to tell you they are activating the agreement and will be arriving at your facility in 12 hours with 110 residents.</i>

As of Friday, 4:00 pm:

The NHC's latest advisory states that Hurricane Chuck has intensified into a Cat. 3 hurricane with winds of 120 mph. Chuck is expected to become a Cat. 4 prior to landfall somewhere in the Tampa Bay area. Prepare for the possibility of hurricane force winds for 8-12 hrs. throughout the area. Finalize all preparations; weather is now beginning to significantly deteriorate. Public shelter space is available but filling quickly. Fire & police crews will not be available until winds are below 40 mph. Search and rescue operations will begin when winds are below 40 mph. Only use 911 for an emergency.

Questions & Information: _____ (local county EOC phone #)

Recorded Information: _____ (local EOC # if available)

Internet: _____ (local EOC website, if available)

INJECT #1 <u>Time: 2:35 pm</u>	<i>Is it necessary to call the licensing agency? The nursing home association? Why? What info should they have?</i>
INJECT #2 <u>Time: 2:40 pm</u>	<i>Is the facility vulnerable to storm surge? How would you know?</i>
INJECT #3 <u>Time: 2:45 pm</u>	<i>Commercial power out and the facility emergency generator failed to start. What do you do?</i>
INJECT #4 <u>Time: 2:50 pm</u>	<i>Has anyone beyond the Maintenance Director and his/her staff been trained to restart and troubleshoot generator problems?</i>
INJECT #5 <u>Time: 2:55 pm</u>	<i>Identify legal concerns when host sheltering during a hurricane.</i>

As of Saturday, 2:00 am:

Winds are down below 40 mph. The County has sustained major damage. Search & rescue operations are underway along with emergency road clearance operations. Power lines are down. Power outages are widespread with as much as 80% of the County without power. Be aware of hazardous materials and stray animals. Remain in your shelter and off roadways until daybreak and then, only go out if absolutely necessary. Food, water and ice distribution stations are being setup and should be operational later today. 911 is operational; however only call if it is a dire emergency.

Questions & Information: _____ (local county EOC phone #)

Recorded Information: _____ (local EOC # if available)

Internet: _____ (local EOC website, if available)

INJECT #1 <u>Time: 3:05 pm</u>	<i>A resident died of natural causes during the hurricane. The family and their attorney want to know why you didn't evacuate Grandma.</i>
INJECT #2 <u>Time: 3:10 pm</u>	<i>Describe procedures for providing support to staff and their family members after a disaster.</i>
INJECT #3 <u>Time: 3:15 pm</u>	<i>Sheltering facility has been notified that it will take 45 days to repair their facility. How long can you legally provide them space?</i>
INJECT #4 <u>Time: 3:20 pm</u>	<i>A group of residents want you to notify their families that they are ok. How would you do this?</i>
INJECT #5 <u>Time: 3:25 pm</u>	<i>Your drinking water supply is low and a boiling water order for your area has been issued. What will you do?</i>

SAMPLE

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Exercise Scenario: Thursday 11:00 am:

The National Hurricane Center has issued an advisory stating that Hurricane Chuck has intensified into a Category 1 hurricane with winds of 90 MPH. Chuck is beginning to turn more easterly. As Chuck moves into warm Gulf waters, it is expected to continue to intensify and could become a major hurricane (Category 3 or greater) within 24-72 hours. The west coast of Florida should begin to closely monitor this storm.

The County has been placed under a Hurricane Watch for possible impact of Hurricane Chuck. Local governments along the west coast of Florida are urging residents and businesses to make preparations for possible storm impact.

Exercise Goal #1 *(Related Section of the Plan: Administration)*

Provide support to the community during a hurricane threat.

- *Objective 1a- Support the County's Special Needs Program*
- *Objective 1b- Identify space in the facility for Special Needs Evacuees*

Exercise Goal #2 *(Related Section of the Plan: Situation / Hazard Analysis)*

Facility staff can identify all hazards associated with an event using the situation / hazard vulnerability analysis.

- *Objective 2a- Staff have reviewed and know the location of the facility situation / hazard vulnerability analysis*

Exercise Goal #3 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

The Nursing Home Incident Command Structure (NHICS) is used in the facility during emergencies.

- *Objective 3a- At a minimum, an Incident Commander is identified for every emergency event.*

Exercise Goal #4 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Ensure all written agreements are current and can be fulfilled during a disaster.

- *Objective 4a- Facility can shelter evacuees as stated in all sheltering agreements.*

Exercise Goal #5- *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Ensure all training is accurately documented.

- *Objective 5a- The hurricane preparations section of the plan is exercised annually.*

As of Friday 4:00 pm:

The NHC's latest advisory states that Hurricane Chuck has intensified into a Cat. 3 hurricane with winds of 120 mph. Chuck is expected to become a Cat. 4 prior to landfall somewhere in the Tampa Bay area. Prepare for the possibility of hurricane force winds for 8-12 hrs. throughout the area. Finalize all preparations; weather is now beginning to significantly deteriorate. Public shelter space is available but filling quickly. Fire & police crews will not be available until winds are below 40 mph. Search and rescue operations will begin when winds are below 40 mph. Only use 911 for an emergency.

Exercise Goal #1 *(Related Section of the Plan: Administration)*

Facility administration understands legal liabilities during a disaster.

- *Objective 1a- Facility Administration understand legal liabilities during a hurricane.*

Exercise Goal #2 *(Related Section of the Plan: Situation/Hazard Analysis)*

Facility staff understands natural hazard vulnerabilities during a disaster.

- *Objective 2a- Facility staff knows where to find natural hazard vulnerability information.*

Exercise Goal #3 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Facility staff understands responsibilities related to host sheltering.

- *Objective 3a- Staff know procedures for exceeding license capacity.*
- *Objective 3b- Staff know how to contact the licensure agency and state nursing home association.*

Exercise Goal #4 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Facility staff can provide electrical life support without emergency power.

- *Objective 4a- Staff can quickly identify alternate ways to provide resident life support without electricity.*

Exercise Goal #5 *(Related Section of the Plan: Training/Exercises/Agreements)*

Staff has the ability to restart and troubleshoot generator problems.

- *Objective 5a- Beyond maintenance staff, facility has identified others that are trained to restart/troubleshoot the generator.*

As of Saturday 2:00 am:

Winds are down below 40 mph. The County has sustained major damage. Search & rescue operations are underway along with emergency road clearance operations. Power lines are down. Power outages are widespread with as much as 80% of the County without power. Be aware of hazardous materials and stray animals. Remain in your shelter and off roadways until daybreak and then, only go out if absolutely necessary. Food, water and ice distribution stations are being setup and should be operational later today. 911 is operational; however only call if it is a dire emergency.

Exercise Goal #1 *(Related Section of the Plan: Administration/Introduction)*

Understand limitations when facility is exceeding license capacity.

- *Objective 1a- Facility must know how long the regulatory agency will permit them to exceed their license capacity.*
- *Objective 1b- Facility understands procedures to receive the regulatory agency's approval for long- term sheltering of evacuees.*

Exercise Goal #2 *(Related Section of the Plan: Situation/Hazard Analysis)*

Facility administration understands hazards & vulnerabilities as they relate to the decision to shelter in place or evacuate during a disaster.

- *Objective 2a- Facility can defend their decision to shelter in place or evacuate during a hurricane.*

Exercise Goal #3 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

The facility has the ability to communicate when cellular and landline telephone systems are inoperable.

- *Objective 3a- Facility can communicate with resident families when telephone systems are down.*

Exercise Goal #4 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Provide staff support after any disaster.

- *Objective 4a- Facility can support staff family members after a hurricane threat.*
- *Objective 4b- Facility can pay staff after a disaster.*

Exercise Goal #5 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Facility can activate emergency agreements after a disaster.

- *Objective 5a- Facility can communicate with emergency supply vendors when telephone systems are down.*

IS-120.A An Introduction to Exercises

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Course Overview

IS 120.A introduces the basics of emergency management exercises. It also builds a foundation for subsequent exercise courses, which provide the specifics of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) and the National Standard Exercise Curriculum (NSEC).

This course will introduce you to the following concepts:

- Managing an exercise program
- Designing and developing an exercise
- Conducting an exercise
- Evaluating an exercise
- Developing and implementing an improvement plan

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will:

- Identify the five phases of the exercise process
- Distinguish the tasks necessary to complete each phase of the exercise process
- Understand how exercises complete the emergency preparedness cycle
- Comprehend the role of exercises in the testing of facilities, equipment, and personnel in a performance based environment
- Recognize how exercises prepare communities to respond to and recover from major emergencies

Primary Audience

This course is designed for local, State, Federal, trust territories, tribal nations, volunteer organizations, and private industry emergency management/response personnel with the responsibility for exercise program management and/or serve as a member of an exercise planning team.

Prerequisites

N/A.

CEUs:

0.5

Course Length:

5.0 Hours

IS-120.A Introduction

Welcome to IS-120.A - An Introduction to Exercises

Exercises give communities, states, and regions a set of essential tools to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

This course introduces the basics of first responder exercises. It also builds a foundation for future courses that will provide the specifics for a comprehensive program of exercises.

The course will introduce you to the following concepts:

- Managing an exercise program.
- Designing and developing an exercise.
- Conducting an exercise.
- Evaluating an exercise.
- Developing and implementing an improvement plan.

IS-120.A Introduction

At the end of this course, you will understand:

- How to begin to design and develop an exercise.
- How exercises integrate training, equipment, and planning through a cycle of preparedness.
- How exercises can help prepare your community for disastrous events-before having to react to a real incident.

Background

In 1995 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) introduced IS-120 "An Orientation to Community Disaster Exercises." In 2002, the Preparedness Directorate (then called the Office for Domestic Preparedness [ODP]) developed policies to guide the design, development, conduct, and evaluation of exercises, known as the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FEMA have used this opportunity to collaborate and standardize the language and concepts used in the exercise planning and evaluation process. As part of this process, IS-120 has been retired and the new course, IS- 120.A has been created.

Course Overview

There are seven lessons in the new IS-120.A course:

Lesson 1: Exercise Basics
Lesson 2: Exercise Program Management
Lesson 3: Establishing the Foundation
Lesson 4: Design and Development
Lesson 5: Conduct
Lesson 6: Evaluation
Lesson 7: Improvement Planning

Estimated Time to Course Completion: 2 hours 20 minutes

Quizzes

Each lesson covers several topics and concludes with a video activity and a quiz.

Remember: You will not be allowed to advance to the next lesson without completing the one before it.

Lesson 1: Exercise Basics

Lesson Introduction

After completing Lesson 1, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between different exercise types.
- Identify the main goals for conducting exercises.
- Describe the building block approach to exercises.

This lesson contains four topics followed by a video activity and a quiz:

Topic 1: Reasons for Conducting Exercises

Topic 2: The Building Block Approach

Topic 3: Discussion-Based Exercises

Topic 4: Operations-Based Exercises

Video Activity

Lesson Quiz

This lesson should take approximately 28 minutes to complete.

Reasons for Conducting Exercises

Key Concept: Exercise

(n) Something performed or practiced in order to develop, improve, or display a specific power or skill.

(v) To practice in order to train, strengthen, or develop.

-Merriam-Webster's Dictionary

Exercises improve readiness by:

- Providing a way to evaluate operations and plans.
- Reinforcing teamwork.
- Demonstrating a community's resolve to prepare for disastrous and catastrophic events.

"We did not anticipate that airliners would be commandeered and turned into guided missiles; but the fact that we practiced for other kinds of disasters made us far more prepared to handle a catastrophe that nobody envisioned."

-Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City

Quick Tip: Different people define "exercise" in different ways. To some, it means training and drills. To others, it's a way to evaluate and confirm the soundness of policies and procedures, through in-depth discussion. An exercise can be all of these- and more.

Reasons for Conducting Exercises

Main Goals

Exercises also help:

- Clarifying roles and responsibilities.
- Improve interagency coordination.
- Find resource gaps.
- Develop individual performance.
- Identify opportunities for improvement.

The Building Block Approach

Exercises may range widely in cost, size, scope, complexity, purpose, and approach.

Key Concept: Exercises should be planned in a cycle that increases in complexity. Each successive exercise should build on the scale and experience of the previous one.

This is called the building block approach and will be discussed in more detail in the following slides.

The Building Block Approach

Building Block Parts

There are seven types of exercises in the building block approach. Each exercise type falls into one of two categories. The two categories of exercises are Discussion-based exercises and Operations-based exercises.

Key Concept: Discussion-based exercises, as the name suggests, center on participant discussion.

Key Concept: Operations-based exercises focus on action-oriented activities such as deployment of resources and personnel.

The Building Block Approach

Building Block Approach

The most basic exercise type in the building block approach is the seminar, which involves brief discussions of preparedness strategies and goals.

At the other end of the spectrum, the most complex, full-scale exercises can involve thousands of participants in responder gear, using equipment, trucks, evacuation routes, and actors, to simulate real emergency procedures.

Discussion-Based Exercises

These types of exercises:

- Provide a forum for discussing or developing plans, agreements, training and procedures.
- Are generally less complicated than operations-based types.
- Typically focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues.
- Include seminars, workshops, tabletops, and games.
- Do not involve deployment of resources.

Quick Tip: A facilitator or a presenter usually leads the discussions in these exercises, helping to keep participants on track and ensuring that exercise objectives are met.

Discussion-Based Exercises: Seminars

Key Concept: A seminar is an informal discussion-based exercise led by a presenter or facilitator, used to teach or orientate participants.

Goals

In a seminar, participants:

- Orientate participants to new or existing plans, policies, or procedures.
- Research or assess interagency capabilities or inter-jurisdictional operations.
- Construct a common framework of understanding.

Conduct Characteristics:

- Casual atmosphere.
- Minimal time constraints.
- Lecture based.

Discussion-Based Exercises: Workshops

Key Concept: A workshop is a formal discussion-based exercise led by a facilitator or presenter, used to build or achieve a product.

Goals

In a workshop, participants:

- Develop new ideas, processes, or procedures.
- Develop a written product as a group in coordinated activities.

- Obtain consensus.
- Collect or share information.

Conduct Characteristics:

- Involves more participant discussion than a lecture-based seminar.
- Often uses break-out sessions to explore parts of issue with smaller groups.

Quick Tip: Products that are often produced from a workshop include: Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs), Mutual Aid Agreements, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Findings from the workshop should be collected into a short After-Action Report (AAR) and distributed to all parties involved. The AAR for workshops act much like meeting minutes and will be discussed in more detail later in this course.

Discussion-Based Exercises: Tabletop Exercises

Key Concept: A tabletop exercise (TTX) involves senior staff, elected or appointed officials, or other key personnel in an informal group discussion centered on a hypothetical scenario.

Goals

In a TTX, participants:

- Identify strengths and shortfalls.
- Enhance understanding of new concepts.
- Seek to change existing attitudes and perspectives.

Conduct Characteristics:

- Requires an experienced facilitator.
- In-depth discussion.
- Slow-paced problem solving.

Quick Tip: The purpose of a TTX is to test existing plans, policies, or procedures without incurring the costs associated with deploying resources. A TTX also allows participants to thoroughly work through a problem without feeling as much pressure as they would in an operations-based exercise.

Discussion-Based Exercises: Games

Key Concept: A game is a simulation of operations using rules, data, and procedures designed to depict an actual or assumed real-life situation.

Goals

In a game, participants:

- Explore the processes and consequences of decision-making.

- Conduct "what-if" analyses of existing plans.
- Test existing and potential strategies.

Conduct Characteristics:

- Does not involve the use of actual resources.
- Often involves two or more teams.
- Includes models and simulations of increasing complexity as the game progresses.

Quick Tip: A list of gaming products can be found at the Lessons Learned Information Sharing site, www.llis.gov.

Operations-Based Exercises

These types of exercises:

- Involve deployment of resources and personnel.
- Are more complex than discussion-based types.
- Require execution of plans, policies, agreements, and procedures.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Improve individual and team performances.
- Include drills and both functional and full-scale exercises.

Operations-Based Exercises: Drills

Key Concept: A drill is a supervised activity that tests a specific operation or function of a single agency.

Goals

In a drill, participants:

- Gain training on new equipment.
- Test new procedures.
- Practice and maintain skills.
- Prepare for more complex exercises.

Conduct Characteristics:

- Immediate feedback.
- Realistic but isolated environment.

Quick Tip: Note the differences between drills and functional exercises: Drills involve a single function; FEs involve multiple functions. Drills involve actual deployment of resources and personnel; FEs use simulation.

Operations-Based Exercises: Functional Exercises

Key Concept: A functional exercise (FE) is a single or multi-agency activity designed to evaluate capabilities and multiple functions using simulated response. In the past, FEs have occasionally been referred to as Command Post exercises (CPXs).

Goals

In an FE, participants:

- Evaluate management of Emergency Operations Centers, command posts, and headquarters.
- Assess the adequacy of response plans and resources.

Conduct Characteristics:

- Simulated deployment of resources and personnel.
- Rapid problem solving.
- Highly stressful environment.

Operations-Based Exercises: Full-Scale Exercises

Key Concept: A full-scale exercise (FSE) is a high-stress multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional activity involving actual deployment of resources in a coordinated response, as if a real incident had occurred.

Goals

In an FSE, participants:

- Assess plans and procedures under crisis conditions.
- Evaluate coordinated responses under crisis conditions.

Conduct Characteristics:

- Mobilization of units, personnel, and equipment.
- Stressful, realistic environment.
- Scripted exercise scenario.

Activity Background

Jim and Mary work in the Jonesville emergency management office. They're trying to decide which exercises they should conduct this year.

Choosing an Exercise Type

Jim and Mary work in the Jonesville emergency management office. They're trying to decide which exercises they should conduct this year.

[Mary and Jim sitting at table]

Jim: Hey, Mary. I've been looking over the after-action reports from last year's exercises. They were all chemical agent drills and functionals, which is fine, but I think Jonesville is ready to take it to the next level. We've addressed many of the action items from last year's exercises, we've purchased all the equipment we need, our teams are trained and we've got our plans in place. Now it's time to put everything into action.

Mary: What are you thinking?

Jim: Something more complex. Something using the 2 new chemical plants as a staging ground... We need something with victim role play, actual decon, triage, treatment, and transport to the local hospitals. We also need to involve the state's new regional response teams.

Mary: Do you really think we're ready for that kind of effort? You're talking at least 10 different departments... [Mary pondering the difficulty] We'd have to simulate an incident at one or both plants, coordinate multi-agency plans and communications, and get trucks, teams, and responders all at the same scene... That's a lot to handle.

Jim: Yeah, we're up for it! For two years the fire department has been building a great hazmat response team, the police department's last evacuation drill went off without a hitch; and I know our hospitals have spent a lot of time working on the decon processes, lately. What we haven't seen are all these groups working together with their boots on the ground - and they're going to have to if there's a major incident at one of the plants, so let's work those kinks out now.

Summary of Lesson 1

You have covered the following topics in Lesson 1:

The purpose of conducting exercises.

The benefits of conducting exercises.

The building block approach.

Types of discussion-based exercises.

Types of operations-based exercises.

Lesson Quiz

The next screens contain a series of questions based on the topics you have just covered. Choose a response by clicking on its corresponding button.

Question 1

Which of the following are purposes for conducting exercises?

- A. Improving the cooperation and readiness of your community.
- B. Providing the public with a sense of security.
- C. Enhancing cooperation among first responders.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. When well-organized and designed, exercises help improve cooperation, understanding, and readiness between first responder agencies and the community which they serve.

Question 2

Exercises enhance a community's level of preparedness by:

- A. Improving the readiness of your community.
- B. Testing plans, procedures, and policies.
- C. Improving individual performance of first responders.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. Operations-based exercises include drill, functional, and full-scale exercises.

Question 3

Discussion-based exercises:

- A. Involve actual deployment of resources.
- B. Are conducted in formal and high-stress environments.
- C. Familiarize participants with current plans and procedures.
- D. Include drills, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises.

Answer: C. Because discussion-based exercises are not tied to an actual response timeline, participants have time to address items as a group, such as plans and procedures. Items could include familiarization with or revision of plans and procedures.

Question 4

A workshop focuses on:

- A. Training on new equipment.
- B. Management of Emergency Operations Centers, command posts, and headquarters.
- C. Achieving a specific goal or developing/building a product.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: C. A workshop is a discussion-based exercise which does not involve equipment or execution of any particular operations capabilities. Workshops are often used to create new procedures or plans. Typically, a facilitator would walk participants through the building of a document, which allows for group collaboration and buy-in.

Question 5

Which is a feature of discussion-based exercises?

- A. Real-time setting.
- B. Actual deployment of resources.
- C. Led by facilitator or presenter.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: C. A discussion-based exercise often relies on a facilitator or presenter. Stress is kept to a minimum by allowing the group to calmly and thoroughly address policy and/or operations issues. Resources are not deployed during these exercises. When discussion-based exercises address a scenario or threat, it is done in a low stress, simulated time setting, meant to facilitate "discussion" of issues, rather than action in real time.

Question 6

A drill:

- A. Tests a number of functions at once.
- B. Provides training on new equipment.
- C. Involves multiple agencies.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: B. Drills are meant to test a single agency performing a single function. Because of its focused scope, drills are often used to train on and test new equipment. The scope of a drill should be narrow and focused.

Question 7

A _____ simulates operations for the command staff by having them execute plans and procedures under crisis conditions.

- A. Drill.
- B. Tabletop exercise.
- C. Functional exercise.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: C. Functional exercises help test interagency coordination without incurring the cost or safety concerns associated with deploying actual resources.

Question 8

A full-scale exercise:

- A. Involves actual deployment of resources.
- B. Involves multiple agencies and jurisdictions.
- C. Applies and analyzes policies and procedures developed in previous exercises.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. A full-scale exercise builds on previous exercises to involve multiple agencies and jurisdictions through the activation of emergency plans and procedures and the deployment of resources. A full-scale exercise should intimate reality as safely as possible, with the appropriate resources, participants, and procedures.

Lesson 2: Exercise Program Management

Lesson Introduction

After completing Lesson 2, you will be able to:

- Define exercise program management.
- Describe the Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan.
- Describe how exercises build capabilities.

This lesson contains three topics, a video activity, and a quiz:

Topic 1: Exercise Program Management

Topic 2: Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan

Topic 3: Capability Building

Video Activity

Lesson Quiz

This lesson should take approximately 15 Minutes to complete.

Program Management

Defining Exercise Program Management

An exercise program provides the administration, supporting resources, and strategic goals for an organization's exercise efforts.

Key Concept: Exercise program management involves developing and executing an exercise program.

This includes:

- Multiyear training and exercise program planning.
- Budgeting and grant writing.
- Planning and executing individual exercises.
- Tracking improvements.

Exercise program management can vary in size and scope, with staff members responsible for all or parts of these duties.

Quick Tip: Any organization, city, state, or federal agency may establish and manage an exercise program.

Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan

Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan

Key Concept: The Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan is essential to managing an exercise program. The plan is a document that outlines a program's long-term strategy for building capabilities through exercises and training.

A multiyear training & exercise plan:

- Takes stock of current program plans and capabilities.
- Lays out long-term program goals and objectives.
- Develops a mix of exercises to meet goals and objectives.
- Determines what training is needed as a prerequisite to planned exercises.
- Sets a multiyear schedule of exercises.
- Sets a multiyear schedule of training events.

Quick Tip: The Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan is developed at a Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (T&EPW). The T&EPW usually occurs once a year and brings together key exercise personnel from all area agencies to discuss a program's strategy and scheduling of exercise and training for the coming year.

Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan

Multiyear Training and Exercise Schedule

Multiple, connected exercises that take place over time are called an exercise series.

Coordinating a program's various exercises and exercise series is a crucial part of a Multiyear Training and Exercise Plan.

Key Concepts: Exercise coordination is done through the Multiyear Training and Exercise Schedule. This schedule lays out a long-term schedule of planned and potential training dates and exercises.

Program managers use the Multiyear Training and Exercise Schedule to:

- Avoid duplicating their efforts.
- Combine exercises and ensure the exercises don't conflict.
- Combine training and ensure training does not conflict.
- Optimize and combine funding where possible.
- Prevent "over" training and exercising.

Quick Tip: Any series may be simultaneously occurring at any time within a program.

Capability Building

Program managers use exercises to build and improve upon an organization's capabilities. Validating training, plans, and equipment is a critical part of capability building.

Program managers should be continually evaluating exercise lessons to:

- Assess the adequacy of current training, plans and equipment.
- Prepare for future training, plans and equipment.
- Identify other resources needed to fill in capability gaps.

Activity Background

Jonestate is conducting an Exercise Plan Workshop to schedule exercises around the state and its regions for the next three years. Stakeholders from different agencies and organizations are participating.

Multiyear Exercise Plan

Jonestate is conducting an Exercise Plan Workshop to schedule exercises around the state and its regions for the next three years. Stakeholders from different agencies and organizations sit in the audience and participate.

[Bill, the exercise planner, is standing at white board. Exercise Planning Workshop members Mary, Kristen, Jerry, and Frank are sitting at the table.]

Bill: Ok, that'll do it for July – let's get the August exercises up on the board. As we know there's a REP exercise at the nuke plant on the 12th. Who else has exercises planned?

Jim: Bill on the 10th, Mary and I were talking about putting on a full-scale at the Jonesville chemical plants. We want to build on the lessons learned from last year's exercises there.

Kristen: Bill [Kristen looking at her notes] CDC is planning on a Public Health tabletop in McIntosh county on the 25 th. We also have a point of dispensing drill on the 12 th with Gray and Henry counties.

Jerry: [raising hand and talking] Bill – the state's also doing a regional hurricane exercise on the 5th.

Bill: [Bill writing on white board.] Frank, anything from ODP?

Frank: Yup. [Frank looking at notes] We've got a local intel seminar in Hutchinson on the 10th. A multi-local Emergency Alert System drill on the 30th in Beauregard County and a pandemic flu tabletop in Jackson County on the 21st.

Bill: [Bill writing and looking at calendar.] That last one comes really close to the CDC tabletop in McIntosh. Why don't we take a look and see if they have similar objectives. And maybe we can combine some of these exercises.

Lesson Summary

This lesson covered the following topics:

- Exercise program management.
- The Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan.
- The Multiyear Training and Exercise Schedule.
- How exercises build capabilities.

Lesson Quiz

Question 1

The Multiyear Exercise Plan incorporates:

- A. Program goals and objectives.
- B. Multiyear Exercise Schedule.
- C. Current program status.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. The Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan provides a comprehensive view of the exercise program that it represents.

Question 2

A Multiyear Exercise Schedule helps a planner:

- A. Synchronize planning efforts.
- B. Develop an exercise program methodology.
- C. Track improvements.
- D. Assess current capabilities.

Answer: A. The Multiyear Exercise Schedule should identify all exercises planned by a state/region/jurisdiction within a long term timeframe. Planners should use this to deconflict and synchronize their exercise efforts in terms of resources and objectives - combining exercises, where appropriate and more efficient.

Question 3

The Multiyear Training & Exercise Plan is developed and updated every year during the:

- A. Training & Exercise Plan Workshop (T&EPW).
- B. Initial Planning Conference (IPC).
- C. Multiyear Strategy Implementation Workshop (MSIW).
- D. Master Scenario of Events Conference (MSEL Conference).

Answer: A. The Training & Exercise Plan Workshop (T&EPW) is conducted annually and brings together representatives from all agencies who conduct or participate in disaster training and exercises.

Question 4

An effective exercise program:

- A. Combines exercise types to accomplish program goals.
- B. Succeeds in conducting a full-scale exercise (FSE).
- C. Does not incorporate previous exercises.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: A. An effective exercise program combines multiple exercise types in an effort to gradually build up to the complexity and scope needed to achieve a program's goals. These exercises have a common history to them, being designed with information gathered from previous training and exercises, equipment purchases, and plans or procedures.

Question 5

Which of the following progressions of exercises best illustrates a building block approach?

- A. Full-scale, functional, tabletop, game, drill, workshop, seminar.
- B. Workshop, seminar, functional, drill, game, full-scale.
- C. Seminar, workshop, tabletop, game, drill, functional, full-scale.
- D. Drill, game, workshop, functional, full-scale.

Answer: C. The "building block" approach to exercises means that each exercise benefits from and reflects upon the lessons learned and achievements of previous, related exercises. The complexity of these connected exercises increases each previous exercise provides a foundation upon which to build greater capabilities.

Question 6

What capability building elements can be accomplished by an exercise program?

- A. Validation of Training
- B. Validation of Planning
- C. Validation of Equipment
- D. All of the Above

Answer: D. A well organized exercise program will greatly assist an organization validate its Training, Planning and Equipment.

Question 7

Exercise program managers can help build and improve capabilities by using exercises to:

- A. Assess the adequacy of current training, plans, and equipment.
- B. Test new concepts for viability.
- C. Maintain the status quo.
- D. Both A and B.

Answer: D. A well organized exercise program will greatly assist an organization validate its Training, Planning and Equipment

Lesson 3: Establishing the Foundation

Lesson Introduction

After completing Lesson 3, you will be able to:

- Identify the key components of exercise project management.
- Describe the critical aspects of an exercise planning team.
- Name the different types of exercise planning conferences.

This lesson contains three topics, a video activity, and a quiz:

Topic 1: Exercise Project Management

Topic 2: Exercise Planning Team

Topic 3: Planning Conferences

Video Activity

Lesson Quiz

This lesson should take approximately 23 minutes to complete.

Exercise Project Management

Defining Exercise Project Management

Key Concept: Exercise project management is the next step after program management. In this step, project managers are responsible for the design, development, and execution of a specific exercise, followed by evaluation and improvement planning.

Good project management involves:

- Developing a project management timeline.
- Establishing project milestones.
- Identifying the exercise planning team.
- Scheduling planning conferences.

These tasks are the foundation of every exercise - without them, other tasks and stages of the exercise planning cycle could not happen.

Quick Tip: Exercise program management = coordination of multiple exercises

Exercise Project Management

Exercise Timeline

In program management, the Multiyear Exercise Schedule provides a long-term calendar for multiple exercises.

Key Concept: In project management, the Exercise Timeline identifies key conferences and tasks for an individual exercise.

Exercise project managers build timelines to include:

- A schedule of key conferences and milestones.
- A Master Task List.
- Planning team task assignments.

Generally, timelines for discussion-based exercises are shorter and have fewer tasks than timelines for operations-based exercises.

Quick Tip: Often times, especially for larger exercises, exercise planning teams are set up much like the Incident Command System (ICS). When this happens, tasks are divided by function. However, depending on the size and resources available to plan the exercise, individuals may be assigned to tasks the project manager decides best matches their capabilities.

Exercise Planning Team

Key Concept: Every exercise requires an Exercise Planning Team – the core group responsible for the design, development, conduct, and evaluation of an exercise.

A team consists of a Lead Planner and planning team members.

The Exercise Planning Team:

- Determines exercise objectives.
- Creates the scenario.
- Develops exercise documentation.
- Conducts pre-exercise briefing and training sessions.

Because of their high level of involvement, planning team members are ideal selections for exercise controller and evaluator positions. As a general rule, however, they do not participate as players.

Quick Tip: The Lead Exercise Planner (aka the Exercise Director) has complete management responsibility, assigning tasks to team members and ensuring the successful execution of the exercise.

Exercise Planning Team

Membership and Size

The Exercise Planning Team should be assembled from key participating agencies, organizations and jurisdictions. The scope and type of exercise or scenario should also help determine the team's membership.

For example, a "point of dispensing" drill that simulates the distribution of pharmaceutical supplies should involve planners and subject-matter experts from the medical and public health communities.

Consistent with NIMIS/ ICS principles, the team's size should be manageable and flexible -capable of expanding or shrinking, given the demands of the timeline and its associated tasks.

Quick Tip: Lead planners should consider planning team members as strong candidates for the positions of exercise controller and evaluator, but not as player-participants in the exercise.

Exercise Planning Team

Planning Team Organization

Tasks assignments are often based on the following functions:

- Command.
- Logistics.
- Operations.
- Administration/Finance.
- Planning.

These functions form the core of the Incident Command System (ICS) – a standardized method for managing emergencies. Planners use the ICS structure because it creates a distinct chain of command and accountability that ends with the Lead Exercise Planner.

Quick Tip: For example, using the ICS structure, the Logistics lead would be responsible for securing the planning conference and exercise site facilities, equipment, and communications. The Finance lead would identify and monitor all costs related to the exercise, and provide procurement and accounting plans.

Exercise Planning Team

The number of planning team members can vary depending on the functions or tasks involved in an exercise. The organization chart below shows a clear difference in personnel requirements between small- and large-scale exercises.

Quick Tip: For further information on the ICS, see the FEMA Independent Study Course, IS-700: National Incident Management System: An Introduction (<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp>).

Planning Conferences

Key Concept: Planning Conferences are the official meetings held by the planning team to develop and coordinate an exercise.

The conferences provide an opportunity for the team to:

- Define the exercise purpose and objectives.
- Develop the scenario.
- Coordinate logistics.
- Track design and development progress.
- Troubleshoot design or development problems.

The scope, type, size, and complexity of the exercise determine the type and number of conferences the planning team decides to conduct.

Quick Tip: Discussion-based exercises typically require fewer planning conferences (between one and two), while operations-based exercises generally require more (between three and five).

Planning Conferences

Types of Planning Conferences

Five different types of planning conferences or meetings may occur during the planning process.

Concept and Objectives (C&O) Meeting:

- Optional—may be rolled into the Initial Planning Conference (below).
- Exercise type, scope, scenario, and objectives are identified.
- Official Exercise Planning Team selection occurs.
- Sponsoring agency and senior officials attend.

Initial Planning Conference (IPC)

- If there is no C&O meeting, the IPC has the same characteristics, as well as the following.
- Refines exercise scope, scenario, and objectives.
- Solidifies exercise timeline and task list.
- Sets task assignments for planning team members.

Planning Conferences

Types of Planning Conferences

Mid-Term Planning Conference (MPC)

- Settles outstanding logistical or organization issues.
- Site walkthrough is conducted.
- Usually only held for operations-based exercises.

Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Conference

- Develops (or continues developing) scenario injects for exercise conduct.
- Usually only held for operations-based exercises.

Final Planning Conference (FPC)

- Final drafts of exercise materials are completed.
- Logistics and procedures for exercise conduct are finalized.
- Last opportunity to settle outstanding issues.

Activity Background

Jonesville Chemical FSE, Initial Planning Conference. Jim sitting at conference table, speaking with planning team members.

Assigning Tasks

Jim is leading the Initial Planning Conference for the Jonesville Chemical FSE.

[Jim, Mary, John, Josh, Molly, Paul, and Reese are sitting at the table.]

Voice Over: The Multi-year Exercise Plan that was developed out of the EPW in February calls for the conduct of a full-scale exercise at the Jonesville chemical plants. Based on the date of the exercise, set in August, some design and development milestones were also scheduled, such as the Initial Planning Conference.

Jim: Alright – just to recap thus far - so we're all clear on the goal of the exercise: we're going to be looking at a multi-agency response to a chemical release at the two new plants.

[The planners nodding in agreement]

Jim: Our primary objective is to examine the establishment and functionality of an incident command and unified command and specifically how they coordinate communication and response at the strategic and tactical levels.

Mary: [Mary looking at a list of major agencies] And we're all agreed that our key participating agencies should be the sheriff's office and state police for law enforcement; fire; HazMat; EMS; public affairs; the 911 dispatch center, hospitals, public health, the state EMA, regional response teams, and the chemical plants' response assets. [Mary looking back at participants] And of course, we're going to invite lots of others, but [Mary motions to the board] these players will be central to meeting our objectives.

Jim: Ok, so that's what we've covered thus far – now let's get down to task assignments [The planners pick up their notepads and pens]. John– I'd like you to handle Safety. Josh – you are in charge of logistics. Molly – you have the actor task list. Paul – why don't you take care of media and public information. And Reese – you've got exercise documentation.

Jim: Now we're going to do a detailed break down of tasks for each of these areas, but you'll be in charge of divvying out responsibilities for each – and following through on what you have delegated and to whom you have delegated those tasks....[Video fades out]

Lesson Summary

This lesson covered the following topics:

- Project Management.
- Exercise Timeline.
- Exercise Planning Team Responsibilities.
- Planning Conference Types.

Lesson Quiz

Question 1

Exercise project management involves:

- A. Developing a timeline and task list.
- B. Identifying and assigning Exercise Planning Team members.
- C. Scheduling planning conferences.
- D. All of the above

Answer: D. Exercise should be created using essential project management principles of time, task, and personnel management.

Question 2

Using project management principles ensures that:

- A. All tasks are identified and managed.
- B. Communication about project status is frequent.
- C. Management plans and timelines are followed.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. Though many planners may not be familiar with the specifics of exercise design, they should always rely on the consistency of proven program management practices which ensure transparency of tasks, communication, and timelines.

Question 3

A timeline:

- A. Indicates when essential conferences and activities will occur during the course of planning an exercise.
- B. Lays out a schedule of multiple exercises over time.
- C. Is the same for every exercise.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: A. An exercise-specific timeline relates only to the tasks, conferences, and milestones occurring between an exercise's initial kickoff to the development and completion of its improvement plan.

Question 4

The Exercise Planning Team is composed of:

- A. Only volunteers from the same agency.
- B. Only members of an emergency management staff.
- C. Representatives from major participating agencies.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: C. An ideal planning team will have the major participating agencies represented in order to custom tailor the most appropriate objectives and evaluation criteria for their functional or organization-specific players.

Question 5

Planning Conferences:

- A. Evaluate the performance of an exercise.
- B. Establish an exercise budget.
- C. Are restricted to senior officials.

D. None of the above.

Answer: D. Planning conferences are meant to coordinate the details of a specific exercise in regards to logistics, objectives, scenario, design documentation, planning team members and tasks. They should not involve budget discussions. They cannot evaluate exercise performance, since the exercise has not yet occurred. Lastly, they are attended by representatives of the participating agencies, not strictly senior officials.

Question 6

The size of an Exercise Planning Team:

- A. Never exceeds eight people.
- B. Is flexible depending on the exercise, but should be kept manageable.
- C. Is affected by the exercises scope, type, and scenario.
- D. Answers B and C.

Answer: D. The size of a planning team should reflect the scope and complexity of an exercise, but does not have a predetermined limit.

Question 7

Official selection of the Exercise Planning Team occurs:

- A. At the C&O Conference or IPC.
- B. Before the C&O Conference.
- C. After the IPC.
- D. None of the above

Answer: A. Planning team members should reflect the participating agencies in an exercise, which often are not known before the Concepts and Objectives meeting. The initial meeting and planning stages (i.e. during the C&O meeting and Initial Planning Conference), typically determine the number and names of the final team.

Lesson 4: Design and Development

Lesson Introduction

After completing Lesson 4, you will be able to:

- Define four key elements in the design and development of an exercise: scope, purpose, objective, and scenario.
- Understand the purpose of exercise documentation.

This module contains six topics, a video activity, and a quiz:

Topic 1: Defining Design and Development

Topic 2: Assessing Needs

Topic 3: Scope

Topic 4: Purpose and Objectives

Topic 5: Scenario

Topic 6: Exercise Documentation

Video Activity

Lesson Quiz

This lesson should take approximately 23 minutes to complete.

Defining Design and Development

Think of design as the framework of an exercise, and development as the building of that exercise.

Exercise design includes:

- Assessing exercise needs.
- Defining the scope of the exercise.
- Writing a statement of purpose.
- Defining exercise objectives.
- Creating a scenario for the exercise.

Exercise development includes:

- Creating exercise documentation.
- Arranging logistics, actors, and safety.
- Coordinating participants and media.
- Other supporting planning tasks (e.g., training controllers, evaluators, and exercise staff).

Needs Assessment

The best way to determine the appropriate exercise design is to assess your organization's or jurisdiction's capability needs.

A comprehensive exercise program will already have evaluated its organization's capabilities. Referring to and updating that assessment is an important step whenever a new exercise is considered for development.

The needs assessment will identify:

- Functions most requiring rehearsal.
- Potential exercise participants.
- Existing exercise requirements and capabilities.
- Plausible hazards and the priority levels of those hazards.

For example, if your jurisdiction has recently updated their Emergency Operations Plan, that plan should then be validated. Therefore, your needs assessment should reflect the desire to design and conduct an exercise which would then test that plan.

Scope

Like "exercises", the word scope has multiple interpretations.

Key Concept: Most often, scope defines the kind, rather than number, of exercise participants (i.e., levels of government/ private sector).

Other interpretations include:

- Geographic size (local, national, regional).
- Number of participants.
- Responder functions.
- Hazard Type.

Exercise planners must be careful to make their scope manageable (neither too large nor too complex), selecting only those participants or actions best suited for the exercise program, type, budget, and objectives.

Quick Tip: Most exercises focus on one of the following mission areas:
Prevention
Protection
Response
Recovery

Don't try to cover too much when designing an exercise. Try to focus on just one mission area such as Response, or Protection. If an exercise tries to cover all four mission areas participants will become overloaded.

Purpose and Objectives

Purpose

Key Concept: An exercise's purpose statement is a broad statement listing the desired goals of the exercise.

The purpose of an exercise should be captured in a simple phrase that communicates the intent of the exercise. It does not describe in detail how the intent will be achieved.

Example of a purpose statement:

"This exercise is designed to provide feedback on the proficiency of the tasks involved in critical emergency response operations. It is also a learning opportunity for responders to examine the unique aspects of responding to chemical incidents."

Purpose and Objectives

Objectives

Key Concept: An objective is a description of the performance you expect from participants. It conveys specifically how the exercise should achieve its purpose.

Objectives:

- Define specific exercise goals.
- Provide a framework for scenario development.
- Provide exercise evaluation criteria.

Generally, the number of exercise objectives should be limited to enable timely execution, facilitate design of a reasonable scenario, and promote successful completion of the exercise purpose.

Purpose and Objectives

Use the SMART acronym to define objectives.

Simple—Don't try to cover too broad an area.

Measurable—Ensure evaluators can determine whether the objective was achieved.

Achievable—The objective should not be too difficult to achieve.

Realistic—The objective should present a realistic expectation of the situation.

Task-oriented—The objective should focus on a behavior or procedure.

Examples of objectives:

Discussion-based objective:

- Evaluate the standard operating procedure (SOP) for presumptive agent identification.

Operations-based objective:

- Assess the capability of the local hazardous material team to detect, identify, monitor, and respond to the effects of an unknown chemical release.
- Examine the ability of the local response agencies to implement a large-scale decontamination of a mass casualty incident.

Quick Tip: Further explanation of SMART:

Simple: Avoid making broad complex objectives. If an objective gets complex try to break it into two objectives.

Measurable: Ensure evaluators can determine whether the objective was achieved. This is sometimes accomplished by adding a quantitative element such as: "within 30 minutes of arrival on scene".

Achievable: The objective should be achievable for the players within the scope and constraints of the exercise.

Realistic: The objective should present a realistic expectation.

Task oriented: The objective should relate back to a task or procedure that can be evaluated.

Scenario

Key Concept: A scenario is the storyline that drives an exercise.

It has three basic elements:

- General context or comprehensive story.
- Technical details of story's conditions and events.
- Conditions for assessing/ demonstrating capabilities.

Scenarios should be:

- Threat-based and performance-based.
- Realistic.
- Challenging—but not so demanding that participants become overwhelmed.

A scenario should involve the participants, the threat, and the area identified in the scope.

Quick Tip: To reflect real-world conditions, planners should avoid providing all the details of an event in a scenario, thus allowing for some degree of uncertainty.

Scenario

Scenario narratives should be designed to engage exercise participants in a way that approximates real-world responses to emergencies.

At a minimum, the narrative should address these questions:

- Where does the initiating event take place?
- How dangerous and persistent is the emergency?
- What is the impact of the incident?
- What time of day does the event take place?
- What is the sequence of events?
- What other factors would influence emergency procedures?

Exercise Documentation

Exercise documents are the most tangible elements of design and development.

Different exercise types require different documentation. They may range from simple sign-in sheets to media releases and exercise evaluation guides.

The Exercise Planning Team is responsible for producing exercise documentation. The Lead Planner assigns responsibility for each document to individual members or groups.

Quick Tip: For examples and templates of exercise documentation, go to the HSEEP Volume IV Library (https://hseep.dhs.gov/hseep_vols/).

Exercise Documentation

Situation Manual

A Situation Manual (SITMAN) is the participant handbook for discussion-based exercises. It provides background information on the scope, schedule, and objectives for the exercise. It also presents the scenario narrative for participant discussions during the exercise.

Exercise Plan

The Exercise Plan (EXPLAN) is the participant handbook for operations-based exercises. The EXPLAN provides controllers, evaluators, players, and observers with information such as the exercise purpose, scope, objectives, and logistical information.

Controller Evaluator Handbook

Controller Evaluator (C/E) Handbooks supplement EXPLANs for operations-based exercises. The C/E Handbook contains more detailed information about the exercise scenario and guides controllers and evaluators in their roles and responsibilities.

Master Scenario Events List

The Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) contains a chronological listing of the events and injects that drive operations-based exercise play.

Exercise Evaluation Guides

Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) provide evaluators with a checklist of critical tasks to be completed by participants during an exercise. EEGs contain the information to be discussed by participants, space to record evaluator observations, and questions to consider after the exercise.

Quick tip: These are just a few of the major documents created for an exercise. For a more comprehensive listing of documents, go to the HSEEP Volume IV Library (https://hseep.dhs.gov/hseep_vols/).

Activity Background

The Initial Planning Conference (IPC) continues. The team is working on solidifying the objectives.

Video transcript

Objectives

The planning committee continues. The team is working on solidifying objectives.

[Jim, Mary, Paul, Molly, Reese, Josh, and John are sitting at a table]

Jim: Ok, task assignments are done, so let's get down to objectives. Keep in mind; objectives have got to be clear, measurable, and achievable. We're going to be measuring our success against this list – so let's make a good one.

Paul: Well, clearly we've got to have the first arriving agency properly identify that this is a hazardous materials incident. They'll also need to make the appropriate report to the 911 dispatch center.

Molly: I think we'll also have to make sure that the state emergency management director declares a disaster right away.

Reese: Well, back to Paul's point – we'll need the Jonesville PD to check in with the IC as soon as they're on the scene. They are going to play a really important part in the transition to a unified command.

Josh: We need to make sure that whoever sets up the IC follows standard operating procedures, calls for assistance, considers evacuation and activation of mutual aid agreements the second this event gets beyond their control.

John: We should make sure the EOC notifies the White House – we want to get the Feds involved in this.

Lesson Summary

You have covered the following topics in Lesson 4:

- Defining Design and Development.
- Assessing Needs.
- Scope.
- Purpose and Objectives.
- Scenarios.
- Exercised documentations.

Lesson Quiz

Question 1

The basis for selecting a scenario hazard might be its:

- A. Likelihood of occurring in the community.
- B. Ability to help exercise certain functions.
- C. Possible impact on the community.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. A scenario should be chosen to test/assess/evaluate in an environment as close to reality and community relevance as possible.

Question 2

The Situation Manual is a:

- A. An evaluator's handbook for discussion-based exercises.
- B. An evaluator's handbook for operations-based exercises.
- C. A participant handbook for operations-based exercises.
- D. A participant handbook for discussion-based exercises.

Answer: D. The SITMAN gives players in discussion-based exercises the background information about the exercise they will need to fully participate, as well as the scenario narrative which they will be discussing.

Question 3

A purpose statement can be best described as:

- A. A function-specific objective.
- B. A framework for keeping exercise planning and conduct on track.
- C. A broad statement of the exercise goal.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: C. The purpose should broadly state what response elements are to be assessed, evaluated, or measured.

Question 4

Objectives:

- A. Are the cornerstone of exercise design and development.
- B. Define what the exercise is supposed to accomplish.
- C. Set a framework for keeping exercise planning and conduct on track.
- D. All of the above

Answer: D. Objectives are targets for exercise performance which define specific goals, provide a framework for scenario development, guide individual organizational objective development, and provide exercise evaluation criteria.

Question 5

Objectives should be SMART. What does SMART stand for?

- A. Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Task-oriented.
- B. Simple, Manageable, Action-specific, Realistic, Traceable.
- C. Strategic, Measurable, Action-specific, Realistic, Threat-based.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: A. Objectives not created with the SMART principle will be harder for the evaluators to assess and the players to achieve.

Question 6

A scenario narrative:

- A. Outlines an exercise's objectives.

- B. Details the threat and sequence of events.
- C. Creates conditions for capabilities assessment.
- D. B and C.

Answer: D. The scenario narrative is the storyline of an exercise that drives players towards the achievement of the design objectives. In doing so, evaluators can assess/evaluate/test the strengths or weakness of the capabilities being targeted for the exercise.

Question 7

An exercise scope:

- A. Should include as many participants as possible.
- B. Only refers to the number of participants.
- C. Always includes the scenario hazard.
- D. Often defines the kind, rather than number of participants.

Answer: D. Scope has multiple interpretations, but most often refers the type, rather than number, of participants. Though it can also include the scenario hazard, it does not have to do so. Additionally, the scope of an exercise, like objectives, should be manageable and relevant - only involving those participants best suited to achieve the overall goal and purpose of the exercise.

Question 8

Needs Assessments should:

- A. Help determine the appropriate exercise design.
- B. Identify weakness in organizational capabilities.
- C. Identify existing exercise requirements and capabilities.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. Needs assessments should precede the design of an exercise in order to determine the appropriate capabilities to be assessed/evaluated, and to determine whether and what requirements exist to exercise.

Lesson 5: Conduct

Lesson Introduction

After completing Lesson 5, you will be able to:

- Describe the differences between discussion and operations-based exercise conduct.
- Understand the basics of discussion-based conduct.
- Understand the basics of operations-based conduct.
- Describe the basic responsibilities of controllers and evaluators.

This lesson contains four topics, a video activity, and a quiz:

Topic 1: Discussion-Based Conduct
Topic 2: Operations-Based Conduct
Topic 3: Controller and Evaluator Responsibilities
Topic 4: Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)
Video Activity
Lesson Quiz

This lesson should take approximately 23 minutes to complete.

Lesson Introduction

As you have learned, discussion-based and operations-based exercises differ in their complexity and in their planning processes. There are key differences in how the two types of exercises are conducted as well.

Conduct characteristics differ principally in:

- Time.
- Venue.
- Equipment.
- Number of participants and participant activities.
- Number of planning team members and their activities.

Quick Tip: Operations-based exercises usually require additional logistical considerations such as providing blankets for victim actors in case they have to lie on the ground for a long time, or ensuring that roads will be closed to normal traffic at the exercise venue.

Discussion-Based Conduct

Discussion-based exercise conduct involves:

- Site setup.
- Guided presentation.
- Facilitated/ moderated discussion.
- Wrap-up activities.

The majority of discussion-based “action” comes from moderated participant discussions, either as a whole group or in break-out sessions. Moderators and facilitators are essential to keeping the discussions on track to meet exercise objectives.

Discussion-Based Conduct

Setup

- Usually an indoors venue.
- Includes registration, refreshments, identification tags.
- Requires audio/visual equipment and participant tables.

Guided Presentation

- A central tool for facilitating/ moderating discussion.
- Usually involves multimedia (with video, sound, and graphics).
- Often used to present scenario narratives (by module).

Facilitated/ Moderated Discussion

- Guided discussion aimed at meeting exercise objectives.
- Style varies by exercise type (i.e., formal vs. informal).
- Often led by functional subject-matter experts.

Quick Tip: A facilitator should be an active listener, intervening in the discussion only to guide group activities to ensure that the participants achieve the stated goals and/or objectives of that session. The group must be allowed to collectively reach its own conclusion.

Discussion-Based Conduct

Wrap-Up Activities

- Distributing and reviewing participant feedback forms.
- Conducting a "hot wash".
- Debriefing.

Key Concept: Hot washes are participant feedback sessions immediately following an exercise. They give players a chance to voice concerns and offer potential improvements while the experience is still fresh.

Key Concept: The debrief is a forum for planners, facilitators, controllers, and evaluators to review and provide feedback on the exercise.

These same activities apply for operations-based exercises. The feedback forms, hot washes, and debriefings all provide vital information for the exercise planning team to begin the next stage of the exercise cycle: evaluation.

Quick Tip: Think of the hot wash and debrief as virtually the same thing for different audiences. Hot washes are for players, and occur immediately after the exercise has concluded. Debriefs are for "exercise management" and can take place on the same day or weeks after the exercise.

Discussion-Based Conduct

There are two proven methods of keeping discussions on track:

Facilitated Discussions

- Separate, facilitated group discussions.
- Groups identified by functional expertise.
- Facilitated discussion of scenario and objectives.
- Recorder/ notes-taker often present.

Moderated Discussions

- Results of facilitated discussions reported.
- All participants/groups involved.
- Group discussions summarized by group spokespersons.
- All participant discussions controlled by lead moderator.

At times a combination of both styles may be appropriate to use.

Discussion-Based Conduct

Exercise Personnel

Discussion-based exercise personnel include:

- Presenters - Deliver the exercise presentation.
- Facilitators/ Moderators - Lead group discussion.
- Controllers - Interpret rules and provide players with information.
- Evaluators - Observe and collect exercise data.

- Players - Discuss issues based on professional knowledge.
- Observers/VIPs - View but do not participate in exercise.

The positions of presenters, facilitators/moderators, and controllers may be combined depending on the size and scope of the exercise.

Operations-Based Conduct

The conduct of operations-based exercises involves:

- Site setup.
- Exercise briefings.
- Exercise play.
- Wrap-up activities.

The majority of operations-based conduct action involves the deployment and use of personnel, equipment, communications, and actual or simulated performance of operations.

Operations-Based Conduct

Site Setup

- Done by the planning team the day before conduct.
- Usually an outdoor venue.

The site setup may include:

- Response Route - routes to the simulated incident.
- Response Area - location of exercise activities.
- Assembly Area - location of deployable resources participating in the exercise.
- Observer/Media Area - designated viewing area.
- Simulation Cell - location generating scenario injects.
- Registration – to ensure only authorized personnel are allowed on scene.
- Parking.

Coordinating logistics is a critical element in an operations-based exercise conduct because of the large number of personnel and equipment involved.

Operations-Based Conduct

Exercise Briefings

- Train and/or inform exercise participants.
- Provide safety information to all personnel.
- Are different for controllers, evaluators, players, and actors.

- Explain exercise play rules (which vary for each exercise).

Wrap-Up Activities

- Distribute and review participant feedback forms.
- Conduct a hot wash.
- Conduct a debrief.

Operations-Based Conduct

Exercise Play Rules

Key Concept: Exercise play rules describe appropriate behavior for participants when physical contact is necessary or when participant become overemotional or their actions excessive.

Play rules for operations-based exercises are more stringent and formalized because the exercises demand a higher level of intensity from both planners and participants.

Rules are established in advance of the exercise to give participants or actors - such as law enforcement personnel or a barricaded hostage taker - a safety net to prevent physical harm to individuals or damage to property.

Responsibilities of Controller / Evaluator

Controllers and evaluators have two primary responsibilities: Keep an exercise on track and assess its performance. Both are essential steps toward capabilities building.

Controllers:

- Plan and manage exercise play.
- Set up and operate the exercise incident site.
- Sometimes simulate non-participating organizations.

Evaluators:

- Track action relative to evaluation objectives.
- Identify any resolved and unresolved issues.
- Help analyze the exercise results.
- Participate in post-exercise meetings and critiques.
- Do not interfere with exercise flow.

Quick Tip: Because of their familiarity with the exercise, planning team members make excellent controllers and evaluators.

Exercise Evaluation Guides

A key document used by evaluators during exercise conduct is the Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG).

Key Concept: EEGs provide structured evaluation measures of participant conduct, listing critical activities and tasks to be completed during an exercise.

They tell evaluators what they should expect to see, give them space to record observations, and list questions to address after the exercise as a first step in the analysis process.

Some questions an EEG might include:

- Were roles and responsibilities of the various government agencies and private organizations clear?
- How were various decisions made? Who had authority?
- What information about the scenario, the weapon, the victims, and the risks to responders and the public was collected in the course of the exercise?

Quick Tip: Each major emergency response capability identified in the Target Capabilities List (TCL) has its own EEG (e.g. responder safety and health). Which capabilities are being tested and/ or evaluated in an exercise will affect how many EEGs evaluators will need.

Activity Background

Jim is conducting a player's briefing just prior to the beginning of exercise play.

Video transcript

Conduct

Jim is conducting a player's briefing just prior to the beginning of exercise play.

[Jim is speaking with the players outside at the site of the exercise.]

Jim: Now, in about one hour we'll be kicking off the exercise. As players you should have had an opportunity to review the Player's Handbook. So before we start the exercise, does anyone have any questions about the exercise assumptions, artificialities, or the Safety Plan?

Steve: Yeah, Jim, what if a real emergency occurs during the exercise.

Jim: Good question, Tom. Did everybody hear Tom's question? Folks, the safety plan cover any Real World Emergency procedures. If, for any reason, an emergency happens during the exercise we will notify any of the control staff immediately. First and foremost, we'll handle the situation. Secondly, we'll leave it to the controllers as to whether we continue to play.

Dan: Now I just want to double check – not all of the ambulances will be evacuating plant workers to the nearest hospitals, right?

Jim: Correct – we'll be transporting about 50 victims via ambulance to Jonesville East and Jonesville West. The other 75 will be triaged, treated, and put on two school busses so we can simulate transport.

Lesson Summary

This lesson covered the following topics:

- Differences between the conduct of discussion-based and operations-based exercises.
- Basics of discussions-based conduct.
- Basics of operations-based conduct.
- Responsibilities of the conduct controller/evaluator.
- Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

Lesson Quiz

Question 1

The presentation portion of discussion-based exercise conduct:

- A. Provides an overview of the exercise and presents the scenario narrative.
- B. Should only include a minimum number of images and no sounds if it is a multimedia presentation, since it will distract the attendees.
- C. Includes evaluation criteria for the exercise evaluators.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: A. Discussion-based exercise presentations usually involve multimedia and allow the facilitator/moderator to give players an overview of the objectives, expectations and scenario.

Question 2

The purpose of including a facilitator in a discussion-based exercise is:

- A. So that the exercise can be observed and evaluated.

- B. To keep the discussion on track and make sure issues relating to the objective are explored.
- C. So the facilitator can teach the participants about his or her area of expertise.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: B. Facilitators/ moderators should guide the participants' discussion to meet exercise objectives. They do not function as trainers, observers, or evaluators, during the exercise.

Question 3

Operations-based exercise play rules:

- A. Are established the day of the exercise.
- B. Provide logistical information to the exercise staff.
- C. Apply to actors only.
- D. Address safety procedures of exercise play and provide rules for participant interaction.

Answer: D. Operations-based exercises involve real world procedures in a higher stressed environment than discussion-based. With higher risks and greater possibility for injury, it is essential that safety play rules be established ahead of time and are applied across all participants involved in the exercise.

Question 4

Which of the following is true of moderated discussions?

- A. A spokesperson from each facilitated discussion summarizes and presents the group's results.
- B. A period for questions is not included.
- C. They are held at the end of the exercise.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: A. In moderated discussions group spokespersons summarize the results of smaller, facilitated discussions. All players are then invited to ask questions of the spokesperson

Question 5

The debrief or "hot wash" phase of a discussion-based exercise:

- A. Should be conducted immediately after the exercise.
- B. Provides a forum in which to discuss issues or concerns.
- C. Should include proposed improvements.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. The hot wash phase offers players an opportunity to voice their thoughts about the exercise and recommend improvements. This information will be to the evaluators as they assemble the after-action report

Question 6

Controllers:

- A. Comment on designated functional areas of the exercise.
- B. Manage exercise play.
- C. Only note the actions/decisions of players.
- D. Do not interfere with exercise flow.

Answer: B. Controllers plan and manage exercise play. Their functions are distinct from both observers, who only note the actions/decisions of players, and evaluators, who critique the performance of players, typically by functional areas.

Question 7

Exercise Evaluation Guides:

- A. Design the exercise objectives.
- B. Provide consistent, structured measures for evaluation
- C. Help observers record their observations.
- D. Describe scenario information and risks to responders.

Answer: B. EEGs tell evaluators what they should expect to see, give them space to record observations, and list questions to address after the exercise as a first step in the analysis process.

Lesson 6: Evaluation

Lesson Introduction

After completing Lesson 6, you will be able to:

- Describe the methodology used to evaluate an exercise.
- Describe the basic elements of an After Action Report.
- Identify the eight steps in the evaluation process.

This lesson contains three topics, a video activity, and a quiz:

Topic 1: Evaluation Methodology

Topic 2: Evaluation Process

Topic 3: After Action Reports

Video Activity

Lesson Quiz

Lesson Introduction

Key Concept: Exercise evaluation assesses how well the exercise objectives were achieved. It also identifies opportunities for improvement.

Evaluators accomplish this by:

- Observing the exercise and collecting supporting data.
- Gauging performance against expected outcomes.
- Determining what changes are needed to ensure desired outcomes.

Evaluation is the yardstick by which an organization measures its capabilities. Good evaluations result in suggestions for filling and bridging capability gaps or making needed improvements.

Quick Tip: Changes might involve an organization's procedures, plans, staffing, equipment, communications, or interagency coordination-or all of these.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology of the Department of Homeland Security assesses exercise performance at three levels.

Task Level

The ability of individual players or teams to perform a required task during an exercise.

Organization/discipline/function Level

The ability of an organization (e.g., Jonesville EMA), discipline (e.g., law enforcement), or function (e.g., HazMat response) to perform its role in responding to an event.

Mission Level

The ability of the intergovernmental community as a whole (across disciplines and jurisdictions) to achieve expected outcomes in responding to an event.

Quick Tip: Not every level is assessed in less complex exercises. Discussion-based exercises usually focus on Mission Level issues.

Evaluation Methodology

For discussion-based exercises, evaluation focuses on the adequacy of and familiarity with an organization's:

- Plans, policies, and procedures.
- Resources and capabilities.
- Interagency/inter-jurisdictional relationships.

Operations-based exercises often focus their evaluation on areas such as:

- Effectiveness of communication.
- Effectiveness of Incident Command management.
- Ability to properly use equipment.
- Cooperation between agencies.

Evaluation Process

There are eight HSEEP steps in the evaluation process:

- Step 1: Plan and organize the evaluation
- Step 2: Observe the exercise and collect data
- Step 3: Analyze data
- Step 4: Develop the draft After Action Report (AAR)
- Step 5: Conduct an After Action Conference
- Step 6: Identify improvements to be implemented
- Step 7: Finalize the AAR and Improvement Plan (IP)
- Step 8: Track implementation

Evaluation Process

Step 1: Plan and organize the evaluation.

The planning team determines what information should be collected, who should collect it, and how it should be collected.

Step 2: Observe the exercise and collect data.

Expert (peer) evaluators gather data by recording their observations during exercise play.

Step 3: Analyze data.

Evaluators analyze:

- Expected versus actual performance.
- Lessons to be learned from conduct.
- Improvements to be made in performance and process.
- Which best practices could be adopted.

Quick Tip: The Exercise Planning Team prepares its evaluation during the design and objectives development process.

Evaluation Process

Step 4: Develop draft After Action Report (AAR).

The evaluation team and/or planning team drafts the AAR, a summary of the exercise analysis that:

- Describes what happened during exercise conduct.
- Identifies exemplary practices.
- Highlights issues that need to be addressed.
- Recommends improvements.

Step 5: Conduct After Action Conference.

The exercise planners and/or evaluation team present their draft AAR to official representatives of exercise participants for feedback and validation.

Quick Tip: The After Action Conference should always include officials from the agencies and jurisdictions that participated in the exercise.

Evaluation Process

Step 6: Identify improvement to be implemented.

During the After Action Conference, planners and evaluators create an Improvement Plan that:

- Identifies the next steps to be taken for improving performance.
- Suggests which individuals, agencies, or organizations should be responsible for implementing the improvements.
- Outlines a timeframe for implementation.

Step 7: Finalize AAR and Improvement Plan.

Planners and/or evaluators incorporate the results, corrections, or clarifications of the After Action Conference.

Step 8: Track implementation.

Each agency/jurisdiction or organization establishes a process to implement and track its tasks from the improvement plan.

After Action Reports

The main instrument of exercise evaluation is the After Action Report (AAR).

Key Concept: Often prepared by the members of the planning team and evaluation team, the After Action Report (AAR) provides participant officials with feedback on the exercise's results and suggests recommendations for improvement.

After Action Reports:

- Should be prepared after every exercise type.
- Summarize what happened during the exercise.
- Provide feedback to participants on their performance.
- Recommend improvements for better preparedness.

Key Concept: A task list and timeline of corrective actions, called the Improvement Plan (IP), is part of the AAR.

Quick Tip: AARs generally include summaries and evaluations of the exercise scenario, player activities, preliminary observations, and major issues.

After Action Reports

AARs vary in size and detail, depending on the complexity of an exercise.

Sources for AAR data include:

- Evaluator observation.
- Exercise Evaluation Guides. (EEGs)
- Hot wash, debrief, or participant feedback forms.
- Plans and procedures of participant organizations.

Key Concept: Draft AARs are presented in an After Action Conference. This forum allows key findings to be aired in a group discussion intended to produce action items for the Improvement Plan.

Quick Tip: The AAR uses organizations' plans, policies, and procedures to compare the actual results with the intended outcome

After Action Reports

Recommended HSEEP AAR Format

Executive Summary

Exercise Overview

Includes background information: participating organizations, exercise conduct date and time, location, exercise type, hazard, evaluation methodology.

Exercise Goals and Objectives

Exercise Events Synopsis

Chronological synopsis of major events and actions.

Analysis of Mission Outcomes

Summarizes how the performance or nonperformance of tasks and interactions affected achievement of the mission outcomes.

Analysis of Critical Task Performance

Summarizes and addresses issues regarding each task in terms of consequences, analysis, recommendations, and improvement actions.

Conclusion

Appendix: Improvement Plan Matrix

Provides a task list of recommendations, due dates, and responsible organizations.

Activity Background

Lead Controller Jim conducts an exercise debrief with other controllers and evaluators.
Video transcript

Evaluation

[Jim is speaking to the exercise participants after the exercise. Jim is standing in a large room speaking with tire participants.]

Jim: Before we wrap and call it a day, I want to spend maybe an hour conducting the debrief. As most of you know, this debrief is the time set aside for you to give us feedback. We're looking for your initial reactions as to how you think the exercise went.

Mary: I'm going to go around and ask each of the controllers and evaluators in the room to talk about 3 issues you observed during the exercise based on the notes you took

and the feedback you received from the players at the Hot Wash. This will help us put together the After Action Report and Improvement Plan.

Jim: Okay – let's start with the Controller for Incident/Unified Command.

Karl: Yeah, Karl Gray, from Jonesville PD. I got to say the players were a little confused as to the location of the command post – there were no clear markings on the command bus and some of the participants weren't wearing their vests. And I was also concerned about accountability and the lack of communications between agencies.

Jim: Thanks Karl. Okay, now can we get the lead evaluator for IC?

Suzanne: Hi, Suzanne Williams from EMS. I want to put a slightly different spin on what Officer Gray said. As I understand it, one of the key objectives was to have responders check in with command as soon as they arrived on scene. Most folks actually did that. They checked in with command found the command and got there almost immediately. But out in the field we did find a few people who asked us where it was.

Lesson Summary

This lesson covered the following topics:

- Evaluation Methodology.
- Evaluation Process.
- After Action Reports (AARs).

Lesson Quiz

Question 1

A successful Exercise evaluation will:

- A. Observes the exercise and collects supporting data.
- B. Analyzes the data to compare performance against expected outcomes.
- C. Determines what changes need to be made to ensure expected outcomes.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. In order to successfully evaluate an exercise one must carefully observe, analyze, and recommend improvements.

Question 2

The goal of exercise evaluation is to:

- A. Criticize the participating agencies.
- B. Validate strengths and identify improvement opportunities.

- C. Design an exercise.
- D. Create task lists to be performed by actors during an exercise.

Answer: B. Exercise evaluators should always keep in mind that their goal is to identify both strengths and areas for improvement. It is a common tendency for evaluators to focus just on participant weaknesses, but also important is the validation of good performance. It is important for evaluators to recognize both positive achievement and areas which need attention

Question 3

The evaluation process for operations-based exercises should include:

- A. Integrated analysis.
- B. Formal exercise evaluation.
- C. An After Action Report and Improvement Plan.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. The evaluation process continues well after the exercise has ended and involves the integration of observation against expectation, the recommendations for improvements, and the construction of both an After-Action Report and Improvement Plan for correcting the weaknesses noted in the exercise

Question 4

Exercise planners and/or the evaluation team present their findings and recommendations in an After Action Conference. Those findings and recommendations will then be finalized to help produce:

- A. The draft After Action Report.
- B. The Improvement Plan.
- C. The Master Scenario Events List.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: B. The Draft AAR will be created prior to the After Action Conference. The goal of the conference is to get buy-in to the Draft AAR, and identify *who* is going to do *what* to follow through with the AAR recommendations.

Question 5

AARs include data taken from:

- A. Evaluator observations.
- B. Exercise participant feedback.
- C. Plans, policies, and procedures.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. Multiple data sources should be used to ensure that the AAR is accurate and comprehensive.

Question 6

The purpose of the AAR is to analyze execution of exercise tasks and participant performance, and to summarize what happened during the exercise.

- A. True.
- B. False.

Answer: A. A well written AAR will answer the questions of: What happened? Why did it happen? Was it good or bad that it happened? How could it be done better in the future?

Question 7

The final After-Action Report will include:

- A. The exercise scenario.
- B. Evaluator observations.
- C. Recommendations for improvement.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. The AAR should present a comprehensive account of the exercise design background, the events of the exercise, the analysis of those events, as well as recommendations for improvement. It should be done in a manner such that someone who was not part of the exercise would understand its context and implications.

Lesson 7: Improvement Planning

Lesson Introduction

Improvement planning completes the cycle of preparedness that you learned about in Lesson 1.

- Assessments determine which capabilities are needed.
Those needs in turn help define:
 - o An exercise program's direction and schedule.
 - o A strategy for improving training, equipment, and plans.
 - o Scenarios and objectives for individual exercises.
- Exercises help further assess (and improve) performance.
- Evaluations identify what areas need improving.
- Improvement planning identifies actions designed to ensure improvements are made.

Quick Tip: The goal of DHS is to help jurisdictions and organizations objectively assess their capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from a disaster, so that modifications or improvements can be made before having to react to a real incident.

The Improvement Planning Process

Key Concept: The Improvement Planning Process is the means for converting recommendations from the After Action Report (AAR) into measurable steps that, when implemented, lead to improved response capabilities.

By focusing on performance and how actual outcomes differ from expectations, public officials and exercise planners can:

- Target their improvement resources more effectively.
- Modify their exercise programs before having to respond to a real incident.

This process should be considered a dynamic program that is updated and modified regularly in a constant cycle of improvement.

The Improvement Planning Process

Pre-Exercise Improvement Planning

Improvement planning should not occur only at the end of an exercise. It can also help shape the planning and design of the exercise.

Because past improvements affect future performance:

- Previous AARs should be referenced early.
- Lessons learned should be incorporated.
- Testing and validation of improvements should be built into the ongoing improvement process.

Understanding how improvements have been handled and completed will affect how an exercise, or exercise program, incorporates the new capabilities.

The Improvement Planning Process

The Improvement Plan

Key Concept: Organizations execute the improvement planning process using a tool called the Improvement Plan (IP).

The IP identifies:

- Actions to address each AAR recommendation.
- Who will be responsible for taking each action.
- A timeline for completion of those actions.

Once recommendations and action items have been identified, organizations should ensure that each item is tracked to completion and improvements are implemented.

When no resources are available, alternative short and long-term solutions such as mutual aid agreements should be considered.

The After Action Conference

Key Concept: The After Action Conference, as discussed in Module 6, is a forum for exercise participants to discuss the draft AAR and identify action items for the IP.

Recommended Conference Attendees:

- Official representatives of all participating organizations.
- Exercise Planners who assisted in the development of the AAR.
- Exercise Evaluators who assisted in the development of the AAR.
- Stakeholders from the city, state, region, or other jurisdictions.

The conference should address:

- Specific improvement actions that agencies can take.
- Feedback and validation of observations and recommendations.
- Key lessons learned from the exercise experience.
- Distribution of the After Action Report (AAR) and the Improvement Plan (IP).

The After Action Conference

The Improvement Plan Matrix

During the After Action Conference, attendees often use an Improvement Plan Matrix to finalize the AAR/IP.

Key Concept: The Improvement Plan Matrix is a template for completing the IP.

It includes:

- Tasks.
- Recommendations.
- Improvement Actions.
- Responsible Party (Parties).
- Completion Date.

Tasks in the matrix should match those from the Exercise Evaluation Guides, while recommendations and improvement actions should be taken from the body of the After Action Report.

The After Action Conference

Below is an example of an Improvement Plan Matrix.

III-14 Provide emergency public information to the media and the public 1. Emergency Management Agency (EMA) should establish procedures or protocols to ensure that news releases reach all affected counties or agencies, regardless of their Emergency Management System capabilities.

1. The director of EMA issued a directive on September 1, 2003, requiring that all personnel assigned to work in the Joint Information Center (JIC) receive a copy of the operating procedures, become familiar with them, and follow them during an emergency.

2. The director of EMA will convene a working group with representatives from selected counties to develop a plan to provide all counties with access to the EMS and to train county staff.

Implementing the AAR

Within your community, try to determine the best way to share lessons learned from exercises and actual incidents. This could entail maintaining a library of AARs, a list in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), or your community's own secure website.

Lessons Learned

The building block approach to preparedness relies on lessons learned from earlier efforts - in exercises, training, policies, and procedures – and communication of those lessons.

- AARs identify lessons learned and improvements.
- Those lessons not communicated will be lost.
- Sharing lessons enhances preparedness nation-wide.

DHS has created a Lessons Learned and Information Sharing (LLIS) network to collect and disseminate best practices identified during exercises and actual incidents (available at <http://www.llis.gov>). To maximize the value of an exercise, planners are encouraged to share the lessons learned and best practices on this secure network.

Implementing the AAR

Managing the Implementation

Implementing the recommendations from the AAR and action items from the IP can be complex and may require significant resources and funding. Not every suggested improvement may be achievable. With this in mind, planners should:

- Prioritize according to benefits rather than costs.
- Use local resources as much as possible.
- Have a solid method for monitoring improvements.
- Regularly review improvement progress.
- Review potential alternatives if progress is not being made.

Simply by tracking improvements, exercise participants may identify additional needs and tasks. Roadblocks to achieving improvements may also highlight issues not previously recognized.

Quick Tip: At the very least, reviews of improvement progress should occur at the Exercise Planning Workshop (EPW), when the Multiyear Plan is created.

Activity Background

The After Action Conference. Lead Planner Jim reads out findings from the AAR. The team is putting together the Improvement Plan.

Video transcript

After Action Reports/Improvement Planning

Jim is conducting the After Action Conference. As the Lead Planner, Jim reads out the Critical Task Performance findings from the AAR. The team is then putting together the Improvement Plan.

[Jim and the participants are sitting in a large room.]

Jim: Alright, now for the fun part. We're going to take the next half hour to fill in our Improvement Plan Matrix. [Jim is pointing to a chart] This chart is going to serve two purposes for us. Number one: gives us a clear understanding of areas we need to improve upon. And, number two: gives us a plan with action items, due dates, and responsible parties attached, to achieve those improvements.

Mary: Essentially, we'll be taking the key issues identified and agreed upon in the AAR – which you all have in front of you [The planners look at their AARs] – and we're going to put those findings in the improvement plan matrix. By doing so we'll be able to identify which agency among you will be responsible for making the identified changes and determine a timeline for each task to be completed.

Jim: For example, the AAR said that the location of our command post wasn't clear. So one of our action items should be to clearly mark the Command Post Bus and purchase some vests for the Command Staff.

Lesson Summary

This lesson covered the following topics:

- The improvement planning process.
- The basics of an After Action Conference.
- The importance of lessons learned.
- The essentials of implementing an After Action Report.

Lesson Quiz

Question 1

Sharing your lessons learned and best practices with others ensures that maximum value is gained from your exercise.

- A. True
- B. False

Answer: A. Although some lessons learned from exercises are sensitive in nature and the distribution of those findings should be monitored closely, neighboring jurisdictions

who share the same challenges may benefit greatly from an exchange of relevant exercise findings.

Question 2

The Improvement Plan Matrix contains:

- A. AAR recommendations.
- B. The Evaluation Plan.
- C. Senior official contact information.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: A. The Improvement Plan Matrix (IPM) outlines the recommendations for improvement, the agency or position assigned to make sure those changes happen, and a due date for completion. The IPM is a focused Document.

Question 3

An After Action Conference:

- A. Creates the first draft of the After Action Report.
- B. Is made up of all the exercise participants.
- C. Addresses lessons learned from the exercise.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: C. The Draft AAR should be completed prior to the After Action Conference. Conference participants should include high level representatives from each of the participating agencies. The conference will be used to discuss lessons learned and to create the Improvement Plan.

Question 4

Improvement Plans include:

- A. The improvement actions that will be taken.
- B. The individual or agency responsible for taking improvement actions.
- C. A timeline for the completion of actions.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. The Improvement Plan should contain the who, what, and when for implementing corrective actions.

Question 5

Improvement Plan action items must be:

- A. Prioritized so the most important actions have first access to available resources.
- B. Prioritized with the most expensive improvements given top priority.
- C. Open-ended in order to give agencies leeway in how they make the improvements.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: A. Not all improvement actions will be able to be accomplished immediately, often due to time, personnel, and budget constraints. Because of this it is important to identify a priority listing of improvement actions.

Question 6

Tracking improvements:

- A. Is optional for most agencies.
- B. Is the responsibility of the federal government.
- C. May identify additional needs.
- D. None of the above.

Answer: C. Improvement Plan tracking should be the responsibility and obligation of the agencies to which action items have been assigned. Often times the act of fixing one item will help identify other items in need of improvement.

Question 7

The improvement planning process:

- A. Takes into account training, equipment, and plans.
- B. Can occur during exercise planning.
- C. Is a continuous cycle of review.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D. Improvement planning should be constant and should involve all aspects of an agency.

Participant Quick Scenario Worksheet

Tabletop role-playing information sheet

You are _____ (*assigned role such as IC, Single Resource, Division Supervisor, etc.*).
It is _____ (time) on _____ (date). You are in _____ (what location) on the
_____ (*unit such as police unit, Fire service unit, EMS unit, public works etc.*).

Describe incident conditions and other factors to set the scenario scene up

(*Describe bldg or road type, incident factors and conditions*).

Other scenario information (*if necessary*): _____

Current conditions are: Add hazards and conditions as needed / supplement with details

Temperature			
RH			
Wind Speed and Direction			
Sky			
Known Fire Danger Indicators			
Other/ Intel- Hazards etc			

“ The incident is currently located at _____
and involves _____
(*vehicles, train, crowd size, etc.*).”

“Your (participant) assignment is _____”
(*should include the intent of scenario: task/purpose or end state, first unit arriving duties or second arriving, or transfer of command role etc.*).

“Communications are being handled on _____(*frequency, channel, etc.*).”

“Current resources on scene/ enroute are _____see
resource status sheet” (*engines, ladders, medic, BLS, LE, PW, other command officers etc/ or what is available to response*)

You (participant) arrive on scene at _____hours and determine the following actions have been taken: _____(*describe the current tactical situation –size up info for first arriving unit*).

Participant- What now? Take _____minutes to develop your plan of action, prepare instructions to your personnel and any communication reports to others as necessary. Execute your initial incident action plans and task as needed.

Instructor Scenario Design Worksheet- 5 Step instructional action plan
(Steps 1,2, 4 not to be shared with Students until needed in the exercise)

Scenario Number _____ or Scenario Name _____

1. Target Audience

(Example: IC, Single Resource, Crew, Division or Group Supervisor, etc)

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2. Teaching Points

(Example: address multiple agency response, manage an incident within an incident, first unit size up etc)

3. Develop Scenario Worksheet –see Participant Quick Scenario Worksheet

Facilitator Set-up to Students: Provide enough information to paint a good scenario picture so that students can gain a situation awareness level that will allow them to play the assigned role. *(The depth of information provided on the worksheet can be tailored to individual skill levels; less initial information to provide more stress for more experienced groups).*

4. Murphy's Law Inputs- provide during exercise as needed

(Example: engine breaks down, wind shifts, irate home owner arrives, secondary crash on scene etc)

Event description	Link to Teaching Points

5. AFTER ACTION REVIEW (AAR) key questions regarding Teaching Points:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Instructor Work Sheet