

RELATED TERMS

- Mass Casualty Incident
- Subject Matter Experts
- Tabletop Exercise



Lessons Learned Information Sharing

www.LLIS.gov

LESSON LEARNED

PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

- Emergency Management
- Law Enforcement
- Fire

Exercise Development: Providing Educational Briefings to Responders Prior to Full-Scale Exercises

SUMMARY

Exercise planners can enhance the educational benefit of full-scale exercises (FSE) by providing pre-exercise educational briefings to responders. Briefings can improve participants' understanding of response processes, enhance their confidence, and stimulate their interest in the exercise.

DESCRIPTION

Volusia County, Florida, hosts an annual exercise series designed to improve cooperation among agencies likely to respond to a terrorist mass casualty incident in the central Florida region. Each exercise series consists of a tabletop exercise (TTX) and an FSE. The TTX familiarizes responders with the exercise scenario and provides a forum where they can discuss potential response strategies. The FSE affords participants the opportunity to test their response capabilities in a realistic operational environment.

After-action reviews of prior FSEs concluded that participants had difficulty achieving exercise objectives because they lacked familiarity with applicable response processes. Responders did not always understand the command structures or tactical procedures that were required to address incidents simulated in the FSEs. In 2005 and 2006, Volusia County Emergency Management (VCEM) provided responders with educational briefings to ensure that they were aware of relevant threat information and response processes prior to participating in the FSEs. All educational briefings were delivered by subject-matter experts chosen by VCEM for their expertise on topics related to the exercise scenario.

The three educational briefings held prior to the June 6, 2005, FSE provided responders with information they used to achieve FSE objectives. The FSE simulated a man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) attack on a commercial airliner departing from Daytona Beach International Airport.

- **Perishable incident site:** A speaker from Volusia County's Office of the Medical Examiner discussed crime scene preservation and evidence recovery at a perishable incident site, such as an ocean or beach. Responders used these techniques to preserve evidence along a quarter mile stretch of Daytona Beach during the FSE.
- **MANPADS:** A speaker from the Department of Defense's Defense Intelligence Agency detailed the threat of a MANPADS attack on civil aviation and discussed how to identify a MANPADS device and its associated parts. This training enabled law enforcement officers to identify and to recover a MANPADS battery motor placed in a Daytona Beach cemetery by FSE controllers.

- **Airplane crash site:** A speaker from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) shared lessons learned from previous airplane crashes and explained what the NTSB's role would be if an airplane crashed in Volusia County. This information successfully enabled state and local response agencies to integrate their operations with the NTSB throughout the FSE.

The three educational briefings held prior to the April 28, 2006, FSE gave participants a deeper understanding of the terrorist threats and the response procedures that would be employed during the exercise. The 2006 FSE simulated simultaneous terrorist attacks on two cargo trains carrying hazardous materials (HazMat) through different parts of Volusia County.

- **Chemical detection:** Speakers provided responders with training in chemical leak detection and strategies for mitigating the effects of HazMat incidents. HazMat personnel used this training to identify and to protect the public from the simulated chemical agents released during the FSE.
- **Homicidal bombers and incident management:** A speaker detailed the threat posed by terrorist bombers and outlined tactics that Volusia County emergency responders could use to identify and to mitigate this threat. He also discussed incident command system principles as they apply to large-scale, multi-jurisdictional incidents like the one to be simulated during FSE.
- **HazMat injuries:** State and local medical experts presented responders with information on chemical and biological injuries; burn, blast, and traumatic injuries; and general patient triage techniques. These techniques were used by emergency medical personnel to identify, to triage, and to treat HazMat victims during the FSE.

The briefings that preceded the 2005 and 2006 FSEs helped responders achieve exercise objectives by improving their understanding of relevant response processes. Feedback from participants indicates that the briefings also gave them confidence in their ability to execute response actions and increased their interest in the exercises. VCEM attributed an increase in TTX attendance in 2005 and 2006 largely to participant interest in the training briefings.

Exercise planners can enhance the educational benefit of FSEs by providing pre-exercise educational briefings to responders. Briefings can improve participants' understanding of response processes, enhance their confidence, and stimulate their interest in the exercise.

CITATION

James Mauney. Deputy Fire Chief, Volusia County Emergency Management. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*, 24 Aug 2006.

DISCLAIMER

This website and its contents are provided for informational purposes only and do not represent the official position of the US Department of Homeland Security or the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) and are provided without warranty or guarantee of any kind. The reader is directed to the following site for a full recitation of this Disclaimer: www.ilis.gov.