



Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct

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Homeland
Security

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Program

Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct

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Preface

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volume I was initially published in 2002 and provided an overview of the exercise design, development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning process as well as doctrine for U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) exercises. Subsequent volumes (II–IV) provided more detailed descriptions of the planning and evaluation process as well as sample exercise materials.

Since the initial versions of the HSEEP volumes were published, the homeland security community has experienced numerous changes, including the building of a new and cohesive Federal agency and the release and adoption of the National Response Plan (NRP), National Incident Management System (NIMS), National Preparedness Goal, Universal Task List (UTL), and Target Capabilities List (TCL). This 2007 release of the HSEEP volumes represents an exercise policy and program reflective of these changes.

The following changes have been made:

- The volumes have been made more user-friendly and concise.
- New policies have been incorporated (e.g., NIMS, NRP, National Preparedness Goal, UTL, TCL).
- References to DHS-specific doctrinal or grant-related requirements, such as the need for terrorism-related scenarios, have been eliminated.
- Comments from the Federal Interagency, as well as several State and local stakeholders, have been incorporated so the HSEEP Policy and Guidance is more applicable to all exercises, regardless of scope, scale, scenario, or sponsoring agency.
- The order of Volumes II and III has been reversed to follow the natural progression of exercise design, development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.

It is important to note that the fundamentals of the exercise design, development, planning, evaluation, and improvement planning methodologies have not changed with these volume revisions.

Developing and implementing comprehensive exercise policies is a continually evolving process. As strategies, policies, and plans evolve, future revisions will be issued.

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Introduction

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program

Following the domestic terrorist attacks in 1993, 1995, and 2001 and the establishment of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002, officials at all levels of government and in all types of communities have worked to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from a variety of threats to public safety. Exercises play a crucial role in preparedness, providing opportunities for emergency responders and officials to practice and assess their collective capabilities.

Purpose

The purpose of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is to provide common exercise policy and program guidance that constitutes a national standard for exercises. HSEEP includes consistent terminology that can be used by all exercise planners, regardless of the nature and composition of their sponsoring agency or organization. The volumes also provide tools to help exercise managers plan, conduct, and evaluate exercises to improve overall preparedness.

HSEEP reflects lessons learned and best practices from existing exercise programs and can be adapted to the full spectrum of hazardous scenarios and incidents (e.g., natural disasters, terrorism, technological disasters). The HSEEP reference volumes integrate language and concepts from the National Response Plan (NRP), the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the National Preparedness Goal, the Universal Task List (UTL), the Target Capabilities List (TCL), existing exercise programs, and prevention and response protocols from all levels of government. In accordance with NIMS, all efforts should be made to ensure consistent use of the terminology and processes described in HSEEP.

Organization

This document is the second of five HSEEP volumes, all of which are available at the HSEEP website (<http://hseep.dhs.gov>). The volumes are organized as follows:

HSEEP Volume I: HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management provides guidance for building and maintaining an effective exercise program and summarizes the planning and evaluation process described in further detail in Volumes II through V.

HSEEP Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct helps planners outline a standardized foundation, design, development, and conduct process adaptable to any type of exercise.

HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning offers proven methodology for evaluating and documenting exercises and implementing an Improvement Plan (IP).

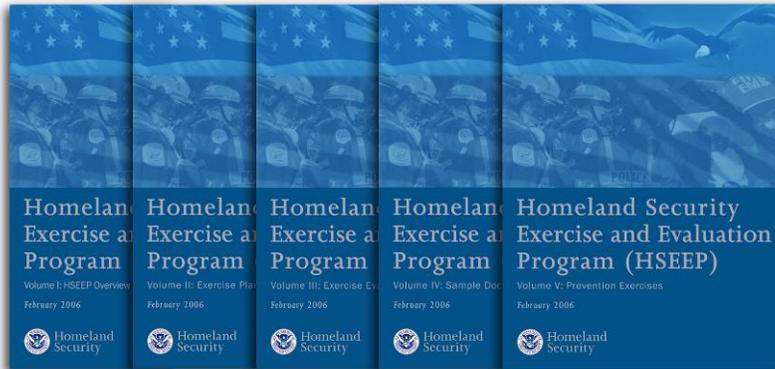
HSEEP Volume IV: Sample Exercise Documents and Formats provides sample exercise materials referenced in HSEEP Volumes I, II, III, and V. Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

HSEEP Volume V: Prevention Exercises (Draft) contains guidance consistent with the HSEEP model to assist entities in designing and evaluating exercises that validate pre-incident capabilities such as intelligence analysis and information sharing.

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This volume, *HSEEP Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct*, is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1:** Foundation
- Chapter 2:** Design and Development
- Chapter 3:** Conduct
- Appendix A:** HSEEP Volume IV Overview
- Appendix B:** Acronyms



Security Guidance

While most of the content found in HSEEP is not sensitive or classified, some HSEEP materials (e.g., scenario examples), particularly those in Volume IV, may necessitate restrictions on distribution. Exercise materials that are produced in accordance with HSEEP guidance and are deemed sensitive should be designated as *For Official Use Only* (FOUO). FOUO identifies unclassified information of a sensitive nature, not otherwise categorized by statute or regulations, of which the unauthorized disclosure could adversely impact a person's privacy or welfare, the conduct of Federal programs, or programs or operations essential to national interest. Examples of materials that may require FOUO designation include scenario information, the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL), and the After Action Report / Improvement Plan (AAR/IP). Access to FOUO information is on a need-to-know basis. FOUO information may be shared with other agencies; Federal, State, local, or tribal government; appropriate private sector representatives; and law enforcement officials, provided a specific need-to-know has been established and the information is shared in furtherance of a coordinated and official governmental activity.

Certain exercise-related information from private sector partners may require or be eligible for additional protections under the Protective Critical Infrastructure Information (PCII) Program. Established pursuant to the Critical Infrastructure Information (CII) Act of 2002, the PCII Program is an information-protection tool that enables members of the private sector to submit proprietary, confidential or sensitive infrastructure information to DHS with the assurance that the information will be protected from public disclosure. Under the PCII Program, information that satisfies the requirements of the CII Act of 2002 is protected from public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), State and local disclosure laws, and use in civil litigation. DHS and other Federal, State, and local analysts use PCII in pursuit of a more secure homeland, focusing primarily on analyzing and securing critical infrastructure and protected systems, identifying vulnerabilities and developing risk assessments, and enhancing recovery preparedness measures.

Chapter 1: Foundation

It is important to establish a foundation for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating an exercise. The exercise planning process is based on a group of planning activities that result in successful exercises. In order to build an exercise foundation, exercising entities (i.e., States, regions, counties, cities, departments, agencies, private companies, and other organizations) must:

- create a base of support;
- identify an exercise planning team;
- develop a project management timeline and establish milestones; and
- schedule planning conferences.

These activities may differ, depending on exercise type. Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) exercises fall into two categories: discussion-based and operations-based. Discussion-based exercises involve only notional player actions in a low-stress environment. Operations-based exercises entail actual player actions and mobilization of personnel and resources.

Base of Support

Before government agencies sponsor an exercise, the appropriate senior officials should be briefed to gain their support. Likewise, executive-level buy-in is essential for private sector entities to conduct successful exercises. Establishing this base of support indicates that the exercise purpose and objectives are concurrent with strategic and organizational goals and objectives. Additionally, senior officials often have the ability to garner participation from potential exercise players and planning team members.



Exercise Planning Team

One of the most important factors for a successful exercise is skilled planning and conduct by the exercise planning team. The exercise planning team oversees, and is ultimately responsible for, exercise foundation, design, development, conduct, and evaluation. The team determines exercise objectives, tailors the scenario to meet the exercising entity's needs, and develops documentation used in evaluation, control, and simulation. Planning team members also help with developing and distributing pre-exercise materials and conducting exercise planning conferences, briefings, and training sessions. Because planning team members are highly involved in the exercise, they are ideal selections for exercise facilitator, controller, and/or evaluator positions.

The exercise planning team should be of manageable size yet represent the full range of participating entities, as well as other relevant stakeholder organizations. For example, in a single-jurisdiction exercise, planning team members should represent each participating key agency, department, and stakeholder organization within that jurisdiction. For a larger, multi-jurisdictional exercise, planning team members should include representatives from each jurisdiction and participating functional area (e.g., fire and rescue, law enforcement, public works, public health, Citizen Corp Council, private sector). An exercise planning team leader manages the planning team.

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The membership of an exercise planning team should be modified to fit the type or scope of an exercise, which varies depending on exercise type. An operations-based exercise may require more logistical coordination than a discussion-based exercise, and therefore would include more personnel on the exercise planning team.

Exercise planning teams use a combination of common principles, including the following:

- **Organized Structure:** Exercise planning teams are most efficient and effective when they adhere to an organized structure, similar to the Incident Command System (ICS), as defined in the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This structure has many benefits, including a distinct chain of command and an accountability system that ends with the exercise planning team leader.
- **Project Management:** Effective project management ensures identification, development, and management of critical and supportive activities; frequent communication about project status; and use of management plans and timelines (e.g., project management timeline, scheduling software, Gantt charts).
- **Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities:** Exercise planning team members are aware of their individual responsibilities as well as those of the team. Activities should be identified and assigned to the appropriate planning team members, and clear deadlines should be established.
- **Functional Area Skills:** Subject matter experts (SMEs) should be used during the planning process to ensure that a realistic and challenging scenario is chosen and that the exercising entity has the appropriate capabilities to manage such an incident. For example, in planning a biological terrorism response scenario, public health departments and hospitals will have larger roles than special weapons and tactics teams, and a special needs populations SME might be used to ensure the exercise reflects those unique concerns.
- **Leadership:** Exercise planning team members follow appropriate leadership principles, including mentoring, motivation, discipline, personnel management, and time management. Exercise planning team leaders and members should delegate responsibilities as necessary.
- **Teamwork:** Exercise planning team members strive toward group and common goals, using all available expertise while fostering creativity. Maintaining open communications within the exercise planning team by allowing all team members to present ideas is the key to developing a successful exercise.
- **Standardized Exercise Design / Development Process:** Exercise planning team members implement standardized processes—such as incorporating responsibility, time, and project management—into exercise design and development. Exercise planning conferences should be scheduled to develop and review activities (e.g., reserving planning conference space) and outputs (e.g., exercise documentation).

Generally, planning team members are not exercise players. However, for cases in which resources are limited—for example, in smaller organizations or less populated jurisdictions—exercise planning team members who act as both planners and players should be especially careful not to divulge exercise information in advance. In most instances, planning team members are asked to be “trusted agents” who must not release scenario-related information to players prior to an exercise.

Exercise Planning Team Position Descriptions

The exercise planning team leader provides exercise planning team members with clearly stated roles and responsibilities, specific activity assignments, and completion timelines to ensure that activities are not overlooked, forgotten, or identified at the last minute.

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Regardless of the scale and complexity of an exercise, certain core groups with specifically assigned responsibilities must be formed because they provide the basis of an exercise planning team. This structure is derived from ICS, as defined in NIMS, and can be scaled to reflect the scope of the exercise. The planning team structure includes the following:

- **Command Section:** The Command Section is responsible for coordinating all exercise planning activities. Within the Command Section is the exercise planning team leader, who assigns exercise activities and responsibilities, provides guidance, establishes timelines, and monitors the development process. The safety controller and the liaison coordinator report directly to the exercise planning team leader.
- **Operations Section:** The Operations Section provides most of the technical or functional expertise for the participating entities. This group provides scenario expertise and has personnel with the expertise necessary to serve as evaluators.
- **Planning Section:** The Planning Section is responsible for compiling and developing all exercise documentation. To accomplish this effectively, the Planning Section also collects and reviews policies, plans, and procedures that will be validated in the exercise. This group is also responsible for planning exercise evaluation. During the exercise, the Planning Section may be responsible for developing simulated actions by agencies not participating in the exercise and setting up a Simulation Cell (SimCell) for exercises that necessitate one (such as functional exercises).
- **Logistics Section:** The Logistics Section provides the supplies, materials, facilities, and services that enable the exercise to function smoothly without outside interference or disruption. This group consists of two subsections: service and support. The service section provides transportation, barricading, signage, food and drinks, real-life medical capability, and exercise-site perimeter security. The support section provides communications, purchasing, general supplies, very important personnel (VIP)/observer processing, and recruitment/management of victim actors. For more information on logistics, see *Chapter 2: Exercise Design and Development* of this volume.
- **Administration/Finance Section:** The Administration/Finance Section provides grant management and administrative support throughout exercise development. This group is also responsible for the registration process and coordinates schedules for the planning team, the exercise planning team leader, participating agencies, and the host community or communities.

Although exercise planning team size may be contracted or expanded depending on personnel availability, the project management timeline for a given type and scope of exercise tends to remain constant in terms of the number and types of planning activities. For smaller, less complicated exercises, planning teams can begin with a core group of four or five people.

A small team may require a member or section leader to assume additional roles. For example, early in the planning process, a logistics section leader may perform the few activities that normally the food/vendor, transportation, or security coordinators would handle because those requirements spread out over the 6-month exercise planning process. However, care should be taken not to overwhelm team members by understaffing the exercise. When a task reaches a level that requires an individual's dedicated attention, that task position should be assigned to another team member in order to avoid any oversight due to multiple task performance. Position descriptions can be provided to help individuals who must perform activities associated with multiple roles.

Oftentimes during the planning process, particularly for more complicated exercises, the exercise planning team grows as activities increase in frequency and complexity. For example, it may be necessary

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to expand positions to include several SMEs (e.g., representatives from law enforcement, fire and rescue, private sector, or public health) in the Operations Group as well as additional logistical support or service staff (e.g., representatives from public works, representatives from communications, victim actor coordinators). Many large, complex, or multi-jurisdictional exercises may start with a planning team that fills most, if not all, of the sample organizational structure depicted in Figure 1-1. In these cases, planning leaders must be prepared to delegate responsibility.



Figure 1-1: *Sample exercise planning team*

Timeline and Milestones

Discussion-based exercises require some attention to logistical details. The exercise planning team should establish a timeline that identifies key planning meeting dates and milestones, as well as critical responsibilities and activities, no later than by the conclusion of the Initial Planning Conference (IPC), which is discussed in more detail in this chapter under *Planning Conferences*. Responsibility for these tasks may be assigned and tracked on a project management timeline. If the exercise planning team leader institutes a project management timeline, it is most effective for the planning team to follow it exactly. Any changes must be justified to the exercise planning team leader, and the entire team should be subsequently notified to avoid any confusion.

Operations-based exercises require a much more detailed and organized planning process than discussion-based exercises in order to ensure a high-quality product. In addition to a project management timeline, exercise planners may find it necessary to employ more detailed project management tools, such as assignment checklists or Gantt charts, for operations-based exercises. Examples of exercise planning timelines containing milestones are available in Appendix C of HSEEP Volume I.

Planning Conferences

This section describes the types of planning conferences most useful in exercise design and development. The exercise planning team leader and exercise planning team members decide the number of meetings

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needed to successfully plan a given exercise. In preparation for the first planning conference, the exercise program manager (described in HSEEP Volume I) should provide the exercise planning team leader with information on the exercise program, its objectives, and its flexibilities and limitations.

The following section provides descriptions of each type of exercise planning conference and its outcome, along with information on tools (e.g., agendas, draft documents, checklists, presentations) used to assist the exercise planning team in designing, developing, and conducting an exercise.

Providing advance information to planning team members significantly enhances the efficiency of a planning conference. Materials may be provided to team members in a read-ahead packet that typically includes, but is not limited to, proposed agenda items; relevant background information (e.g., rationale for conducting the exercise); and expected conference outcomes. Ideally delivered a week in advance of the planning conference, a read-ahead packet provides literature on the relevancy and importance of the conference, and allows for better informed attendees.

Planning conference details for both discussion-based and operations-based exercises are described in the following section. Suggested timetables for planning conferences and associated tasks can be found in Appendix C of HSEEP Volume I.

Concept and Objectives Meeting

Primary Focus

A Concept and Objectives (C&O) Meeting is the formal beginning of the planning process. It is held to identify the type, scope, objectives, and purpose of the exercise. For less complex exercises and for entities with limited resources, the C&O Meeting can be conducted in conjunction with the IPC; however, when exercise scope dictates, the C&O Meeting is held first. For example, the C&O Meeting is held before the IPC for large-scale exercises, complex full-scale exercises (FSEs), or any high-profile exercise that necessitates a high level of support from executives or authorities.

Representatives from the sponsoring agency or organization, representatives from potentially participating organizations, the exercise planning team leader, and senior officials typically attend the C&O Meeting. The C&O Meeting helps planners identify the capabilities and tasks that are going to be validated, design objectives based on those capabilities and tasks, and exercise planning team members.

Length

Depending on the scope of the exercise, the C&O Meeting can range from 2 to 4 hours.

Location

The exercise planning team leader determines the location of the meeting in consideration of the senior officials in attendance.

Discussion Points

Possible topics or issues for a C&O Meeting include the following:

- Exercise purpose
- Proposed exercise scenario, capabilities, tasks, and objectives
- Available exercise resources
- Proposed exercise location, date, and duration
- Exercise planning team and exercise participants
- Exercise assumptions and artificialities

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- Exercise control and evaluation
- Exercise security organization and structure
- Local issues, concerns, and sensitivities
- Exercise logistics

Tools

The primary tools for the C&O Meeting are the read-ahead packet, the agenda, and background/rationale for conducting the exercise. Briefings are useful for presenting the exercise background/rationale as well as the proposed exercise methodology for those unfamiliar with HSEEP.

Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected from the C&O Meeting:

- Agreement regarding exercise type, scenario, capabilities, tasks, and objectives
- Consensus regarding the target exercise timeframe and the date and time of the next planning conference
- Identification of participating entities

Follow-up

C&O Meeting minutes should be prepared and disseminated to attendees and other potential planning team members within 4 working days of the meeting's conclusion. During the period between the C&O Meeting and the IPC, the exercise planning team leader ensures that the exercise planning team has sufficient representation from participating agencies and organizations.

Initial Planning Conference

Primary Focus

The IPC marks the beginning of the exercise development phase. Unless a separate C&O Meeting is conducted, the IPC is typically the first official step in the planning process. Its purpose is to determine exercise scope by gathering: input from the exercise planning team; design requirements and conditions (e.g., assumptions and artificialities); objectives; extent of play; and scenario variables (e.g., time, location, hazard selection). The IPC is also used to develop exercise documentation by obtaining the planning team's input on exercise location, schedule, duration, and other relevant details.

During the IPC, exercise planning team members are assigned responsibility for activities associated with designing and developing exercise documents—such as the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) and the Situation Manual (SitMan), which are described later in this volume—and logistics, such as scene management and personnel. In addition to conducting the conference, the exercise planning team gathers appropriate photographs and audio recordings to enhance the realism and informational value of the final document(s) and/or multimedia presentation(s) presented during the exercise.

Length

Depending on the scope of the exercise, the IPC can range from 3 to 6 hours.

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Location

The exercise planning team leader determines the location for the IPC. Facilities should be accessible to all participants and conducive to discussing and accomplishing work.

Discussion Points

Possible topics or issues for an IPC include the following:

- Understanding the rationale for exercise development
- Ensuring clearly defined and measurable capabilities, tasks, and objectives
- Incorporating community emergency operations plans (EOPs), memoranda of agreement (MOA), participating agency standard operating procedures (SOPs), and/or other relevant policy into the exercise design
- Identifying local issues, concerns, or sensitivities
- Determining the extent of play for each participating entity by establishing what each entity will demonstrate and be evaluated on at the exercise, allowing for appropriate logistical needs to be arranged in order to support those activities
- Ensuring that exercise planners consider themselves trusted agents and understand that, in most cases, they will participate as facilitators, controllers, or evaluators (rather than as players)
- Choosing subjects for photographs and/or audio/visual (A/V) recordings to incorporate into exercise documents and multimedia presentations (to enhance realism)
- Deciding whether or not to record exercise proceedings (audio or video)
- Determining the optimum duration of the exercise
- Ensuring that exercise planners understand that the exercise is conducted in a no-fault environment intended to validate plans and procedures and identify problems and potential solutions
- Selecting or customizing the appropriate Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) to determine whether or not exercise capabilities, tasks, and objectives were achieved and to allow participants to provide feedback
- Reaching a consensus regarding the date, time, and location for the next conference

Tools

The primary tools for the IPC are the read-ahead packet; the agenda; capabilities and tasks from the EEGs; hazard information (if applicable); a proposed room layout (for discussion-based exercises); and the project management timeline. A briefing is useful for presenting an overview of the exercise to the planning team.

Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected from the IPC:

- A planning schedule
- Clearly defined, obtainable, and measurable capabilities, tasks, and objectives
- Identified exercise scenario variables (e.g., threat scenario, scope of hazard, venue, conditions)

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- A list of exercise participants
- Identification and availability of SMEs and presenters, as necessary, for scenario vetting and/or expert evaluation
- Determination of the best communication method among exercise planning team members
- A list of which exercise documents and presentations must be employed, and assignments for drafting each
- Availability of all source documents (e.g., policies, plans, procedures) needed to draft exercise documents and presentations
- Clearly identified and assigned responsibility for exercise logistical issues (e.g., registration, badges, invitations)
- A list of established dates for completion of corrective actions and responsibilities
- A list of critical activities for the next planning conference
- An agreed upon date, time, and location for the next conference and the actual exercise

Follow-up

IPC minutes are prepared and disseminated to exercise planning team members within 4 working days of the conference's conclusion. All members of the exercise planning team remain in direct contact regarding outstanding issues and the logistics for conducting additional planning conferences and the exercise.

During the period between the IPC and the next conference, exercise planning team members prepare their assigned draft exercise documents and presentations. If possible, these materials are provided to planning team members at least 5 days in advance of the next conference.

Mid-Term Planning Conference

Mid-Term Planning Conferences (MPCs) are typically used in more complex, operations-based exercises such as functional exercises (FEs) and FSEs. MPCs provide additional opportunities to settle logistical and organizational issues that may arise during planning.

Primary Focus

The MPC is a working session to discuss exercise organization and staffing concepts, scenario and timeline development, scheduling, logistics, and administrative requirements. It is also a session to review draft documentation (e.g., scenario, Exercise Plan [ExPlan], Controller and Evaluator [C/E] Handbook, MSEL). At the conclusion of the MPC, selected planners should conduct a walkthrough of the proposed exercise site. If only three planning conferences are scheduled (i.e., the IPC, MPC, and Final Planning Conference [FPC]), the second half of the MPC should be devoted to developing the MSEL. See the next section, *Master Scenario Events List Conference*, for more information.

Length

Depending on the agenda, the MPC is generally a full-day conference (especially if no MSEL planning conference is scheduled). The exercise planning team should allow sufficient time to conduct a walkthrough of the exercise site and gather supporting pictures, maps, and other visual aids.

Location

The MPC should be held at, or near, the intended exercise site to facilitate the walkthrough.

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Discussion Points

Possible topics or issues for an MPC include the following:

- Comments on draft exercise documentation
- Identification of exercise venue artificialities and/or limitations
- Agreement on final logistical items
- Assignment of additional responsibilities
- Construction of the scenario timeline—usually the MSEL—if an additional MSEL planning conference will not be held

Tools

MPC tools include, but are not limited to, an agenda; IPC minutes; a draft scenario timeline; draft documentation (e.g., ExPlan, C/E Handbook); and other selected documentation needed to illustrate exercise concepts and provide planning guidance.

Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected from the MPC:

- Agreement on final ExPlan details
- A fully reviewed exercise scenario timeline, usually the MSEL
- Fully reviewed exercise documentation (e.g., ExPlan, C/E Handbook)
- Well-developed scenario injects (imperative if no additional conferences are scheduled)
- Agreement on the exercise site
- Finalization of date, time, and location of the FPC

Follow-up

MPC minutes are prepared and distributed to the exercise planning team within 4 working days of the conference's conclusion. The time between the MPC and the FPC is used to finalize the ExPlan, scenario timeline, and any remaining exercise documentation (as determined at the IPC).

Master Scenario Events List Conference

For more complex, operations-based exercises, one or two additional planning conferences—or MSEL conferences—may be held specifically to review the scenario timeline. If not held separately, MSEL conferences are incorporated into the MPC and FPC.

Primary Focus

The MSEL Conference focuses on developing the MSEL. The MSEL is a chronological list that supplements the exercise scenario with event synopses; expected participant responses; capabilities, tasks, and objectives to be addressed; and responsible personnel. It includes specific scenario events (or *injects*) that prompt players to implement the plans, policies, and procedures that require testing during the exercise, as identified in the capabilities-based planning process. It also records the methods that will be used to provide the injects (e.g., phone call, facsimile, radio call, e-mail). For more information on MSELs, see *Chapter 3: Exercise Conduct*.

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Length

The length of a MSEL Conference varies according to the scope of the exercise and variability of the injects. The exercise planning team allows 4 to 8 hours to conduct a MSEL Conference and assigns a person to be responsible for incorporating suggestions and constructing the MSEL after the conference.

Location

A MSEL Conference takes place in a convenient location accessible to all participants that facilitates a working environment.

Discussion Points

In developing a MSEL, the exercise planning team must first consider the tasks, conditions, and standards set forth by each exercise objective. As described in Chapter 4 of HSEEP Volume I, completing a task is one step toward demonstrating a capability. A *condition* is the environment in which a task is performed—it can be provided by the scenario or through the MSEL.

If scenario conditions do not stimulate performance of the appropriate task, the exercise planning team must develop a MSEL entry to simulate the desired situation. A well-written entry considers the following questions:

- Is the event key (i.e., is it directly related to meeting an exercise objective)?
- What is the desired task? Who will demonstrate the task?
- What will stimulate the behavior (e.g., course of play, phone call, actor, video)?
- Who originates the stimulant? Who receives it and how?
- What action is the player expected to complete?
- Should a contingency entry be developed for injection into the exercise in case the players fail to demonstrate the task?

Tools

MSEL Conference tools include, but are not limited to, previous planning conference minutes, draft exercise documentation, and an agreed-upon MSEL template. See HSEEP Volume IV for MSEL templates and examples.

Outcomes

Following a MSEL Conference, the status of the MSEL's completion may vary. At a minimum, key events and the time of their delivery are identified, and responsibility for constructing the remaining events is assigned.

Follow-up

Once the MSEL is drafted, the exercise planning team coordinates and sequences entries and resolves any conflicts between events, thus forming a credible and challenging MSEL that will enhance the exercise experience for players.

Final Planning Conference

Primary Focus

The FPC is the final forum for reviewing exercise processes and procedures. Prior to the FPC, the exercise planning team receives final drafts of all exercise materials. No major changes to the design or scope of the exercise, or its supporting documentation, should take place at the FPC. The FPC ensures

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that all logistical requirements have been met, all outstanding issues have been identified and resolved, and all exercise products are ready for printing.

Length

Generally, the FPC is a half-day conference for discussion-based exercises and a full day for operations-based exercises.

Location

The FPC should be located in close proximity to the planned exercise site to allow a final walkthrough. The facility should be accessible to all participants and conducive to discussing and accomplishing work.

Discussion Points

The following items are addressed during the FPC:

- Resolve any open issues related to exercise planning and identify last-minute concerns that may arise
- Review all exercise logistical activities (e.g., schedule, registration, attire, special needs)
- Conduct a comprehensive, final review of—and approve—all exercise documents (e.g., SitMan, ExPlan, MSEL, C/E Handbook) and presentation materials

Tools

The primary tools for the FPC include IPC and/or MPC minutes, an agenda, and final draft exercise documents. If possible, these materials should be delivered to planning team members 5 days prior to the FPC.

Outcomes

The FPC should not generate any significant changes or surprises. The following outcomes are expected:

- Attendees have a clear understanding of—and give final approval for—exercise processes and procedures.
- Exercise documents and materials for production are approved.
- Last-minute issues are identified and resolved.
- Logistical elements, including A/V equipment, room configuration and setup, refreshments, and schedule, are confirmed.

Follow-up

FPC minutes are prepared and disseminated to exercise planning team members within 4 working days of the conference's conclusion. Direct communication is maintained among exercise planning team members regarding any outstanding issues, especially exercise conduct logistics. The exercise planning team finalizes all publications, prepares all supporting materials, rehearses presentations and briefings, and prepares to conduct the exercise. Prior to the exercise, documentation and any additional instructions should be disseminated to the appropriate personnel (e.g., presenters, facilitators, controllers, evaluators, simulators).

Chapter 2: Design and Development

Building on the exercise foundation, the design and development process consists of identifying capabilities, tasks, and objectives; designing the scenario; developing documentation; coordinating logistics; planning exercise conduct; and selecting an evaluation and improvement methodology.

Capabilities, Tasks, and Objectives

Exercise capabilities, tasks, and objectives are the cornerstone of design and development. The exercise planning team determines exercise capabilities, tasks, and objectives with input from the overall exercise program, as described in Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volume I. An entity's Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan, also discussed in HSEEP Volume I, should dictate the specific capabilities to be evaluated by the current exercise.

The exercise planning team must consider all of the capabilities being evaluated. Each capability has specific tasks associated with it that should be performed and validated during the exercise. These capabilities and tasks, derived from the Target Capabilities List (TCL) and Universal Task List (UTL), should be used to formulate objectives that reflect the exercising entity's specific needs, environment, plans, and procedures. Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs), described in further detail below, contain these capabilities and tasks that can be used to build objectives specific to the exercising entity.

Objectives help address general exercise program goals, provide a framework for scenario development, guide development of individual organizational objectives, and supply evaluation criteria. Planners should create objectives that are simple, measurable, attainable, realistic, and task-oriented (SMART).

For example, if an entity identified the need to validate its interoperable communications in its Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan, when it comes time to execute that plan and design and develop an individual exercise, the exercise planning team would first select the Interoperable Communications capability EEG. Within this EEG, several tasks are associated with this capability, including: implement response communications interoperability plans and protocols; establish an Incident Command Post (ICP) in a location that is safe and appropriate to facilitate communications; and designate a communications unit leader (COML), as appropriate, and announce to all relevant personnel who will carry out COML responsibilities. Based on this capability and associated tasks, the entity may want to design the following SMART objective based on its particular standard operating procedure (SOP): *Examine the ability of Jones County Emergency Medical Service (EMS) to communicate directly with Jones County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) using the 800-megahertz (MHz) system.*

Generally, planners should limit the number of exercise objectives to enable timely exercise conduct, facilitate reasonable scenario design, and support successful completion of exercise goals. Capabilities, tasks, and objectives are initially prepared during a Concept and Objectives (C&O) Meeting or Initial Planning Conference (IPC). For a discussion-based exercise, they typically focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues; whereas for an operations-based exercise, they typically focus on tactical issues.





Figure 2-1: Referencing capabilities and tasks to create exercise objectives and scenarios

Scenario

A scenario is an outline or a model of the simulated sequence of events for the exercise. It can be written as a narrative or depicted by an event timeline. For a discussion-based exercise, a scenario provides the backdrop that drives participant discussion, and it is contained in a Situation Manual (SitMan). For an operations-based exercise, a scenario provides background information on the incident catalyst(s) of the exercise—the overall scenario is provided in the Controller and Evaluator (C/E) Handbook, and specific scenario events are contained in the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL).

Exercise planners should select and develop scenarios that enable an exercise to meet its capabilities, tasks, and objectives. There are a number of factors that should be taken into consideration when developing a scenario, including level of realism, type of threat/hazard, site selection, weather variables, and optimal date and time for exercise conduct. All scenarios should be realistic, plausible, and challenging; however, designers must ensure the scenario is not so complicated that it overwhelms players. Scenario development should also take into account the capabilities and tasks that an exercise seeks to validate.

A scenario consists of three basic elements: (1) the general context or comprehensive story; (2) the conditions that allow players to demonstrate proficiency and competency in meeting the exercise capabilities, tasks, and objectives; and (3) the technical details necessary to accurately depict scenario conditions and events. The exercise planning team ensures that the design effort is not characterized by a fixation on scenario development—rather, the scenario facilitates achievement of exercise capabilities, tasks, and objectives, which are the foundation of exercise design. Furthermore, scenarios should be constructed to avoid any sensitivities that may arise, such as the use of real names of terrorist groups or sensitive venues (e.g., a school or private company).

Realism

Exercise scenarios reflect a range of probable threats faced by the exercising entity. They must be credible enough for players to suspend their inherent disbelief in hypothetical situations.

Findings from an entity's threat/vulnerability analyses can contribute to scenario development. For example, if a certain area is known to be susceptible to earthquakes, the scenario could feature a high-magnitude, high-intensity quake affecting that location. Exercise planning team members should also consider previous real-world incidents and existing plans that have been developed for popular local attractions or large venues.

The level of detail provided in a scenario should reflect real-world uncertainty. Inclusion of superfluous information, or “white noise,” is a variable that should be discussed and agreed upon by the exercise planning team.

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Threat/Hazard

The first step in designing a scenario is determining the type of threat/hazard on which the exercise will focus. Each type of emergency has its own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to evaluating different aspects of prevention, protection, response, and recovery. The exercise planning team should choose a threat/hazard that best validates the capabilities, tasks, and objectives on which the exercise will focus. For example, if the entity wants to validate its evacuation capabilities, it might design a hurricane scenario.

The identification of this threat/hazard scenario should be based on the entity's threat and vulnerability analysis. For example, in a highly populated, high-profile community, the threat of chemical, biological, or radiological terrorism may be considered more of a risk than in predominately rural areas, where agricultural assets may be more vulnerable to acts of terrorism. Likewise, the threat of hurricanes is far greater in the Southeastern United States, whereas wildfires are a concern in the West.

Venue

The venue is the facility or site where the scenario will take place. Venue selection should be based on the identified threat or hazard. For example, if a terrorist attack using a non-persistent chemical hazard (e.g., the nerve agent sarin) is selected, the venue should not be an open-air facility (e.g., stadium, park) because of that hazard's dissipating characteristics. When appropriate, the selected venue described in the scenario should be based on previous threat/vulnerability analyses as well as the objectives.

For an operations-based exercise, the site used to conduct the exercise does not necessarily have to be the same venue described in the exercise scenario. For example, a stadium parking lot may be used to simulate an airport runway. Regardless of the exercise site, venue employees (e.g., stadium concessionaires, security guards) may participate as planning team members, players, or support staff during exercise conduct to cost-effectively practice internal procedures such as notification and evacuation.

When selecting an appropriate site for an operations-based exercise, planners should consider the need for the following:

- A large area for tactical operations during the exercise
- A designated area (either at or near the site) large enough to accommodate the pre-staging or assembly area (described in the section *Exercise Logistics*) for apparatus and equipment
- Minimal disruption from normal, everyday services such as traffic, public activities, and construction
- A designated area or room for victim actors to receive instructions before the exercise and, in some instances, to be moulaged (i.e., apply mold or makeup to simulate real injuries during an exercise)
- A designated area for media, observers, and very important personnel (VIPs) to view the exercise without interfering with exercise play
- Adequate parking for control staff, media, observers, victim actors, and support staff

Weather

For operations-based exercises, especially those conducted outdoors, exercise planners must decide whether to use real-world weather conditions at the time of the exercise or simulated weather conditions to prompt a certain chain of events. Wind direction and speed are typical examples of conditions that are simulated so that exercise play can be more easily controlled (e.g., in order to more readily disperse a chemical agent). If weather elements will be simulated, that information should be provided in the

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Exercise Plan (ExPlan) and player briefing, which are described in more detail in the *Exercise Documentation* section.

Real-world weather conditions may pose a safety issue for exercise controllers at outdoor exercises. High heat or severe cold may produce dangerous exercise conditions that put exercise players at risk for injury if not properly planned for and mitigated. For example, players conducting exercise activities with personal protective equipment (PPE) are at increased risk for heat stress on hot days, so their condition must be monitored closely. This safety issue is addressed further in the *Exercise Logistics* section.

Date and Time

For all scenarios, the date and time affect exercise play. Many communities have different population demographics on weekdays, weekends, and holidays, as well as at night and during special events. These changes may affect players' expected actions and can be incorporated into the scenario. For example, when a major sporting event is held at a stadium, it may temporarily increase a community's population and change traffic patterns—evacuation routes or response times may be affected. In fact, exercise planners may consider conducting an exercise on a weekend or during night hours to test off-hour resource levels and to minimize disruption to traffic and ongoing operations.

Exercise Documentation

This section describes the various types of exercise documents, which are also summarized in Table 2-1. Discussion-based exercises generally do not use as many different types of documents as operations-based exercises.

Exercise Evaluation Guides

The HSEEP series of tools includes EEGs to help evaluators collect and interpret relevant exercise observations. These sets of documents outline and provide guidance on assessing the tasks and activities to be accomplished for each capability being validated by an exercise. EEGs were developed for use by experienced exercise evaluators and by practitioners who are subject matter experts (SMEs). Each EEG provides evaluators with information on what they should expect to see demonstrated or hear discussed, space to record their observations, and criteria to consider after the exercise (as the first step in the analysis process).

Each EEG can be used by an individual evaluator or by groups assigned to observe specific activities. During the analysis phase, evaluators combine their observations with those of other evaluators. They reconstruct events and analyze outcomes and interactions across agencies, organizations, disciplines, and jurisdictions to achieve broad capability outcomes.

EEGs can also be a valuable tool during the exercise planning process since they link tasks to capabilities, making it easier to determine what should be exercised. Relevant EEGs should be selected early in the planning process because they aid design of the exercise objectives and scenario.

Document Title	Exercise Usage	Distribution Audience	Key Document Features
Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)	All evaluated exercises	Limited: Evaluators	Helps evaluators assess performance of capabilities, tasks, and objectives during an exercise
Situation Manual (SitMan)	Discussion-based	Not limited: All exercise participants	Textual background for multimedia, facilitated exercise Includes administrative information as well as scenario details
Multimedia Presentation	Discussion-based	Not limited: All exercise participants	Supports SitMan, concisely summarizing written information Enhances exercise realism with audio/visual depiction of the scenario Focuses and drives exercise
Controller and Evaluator (C/E) Handbook	Operations-based	Limited: Controllers, evaluators	Supplements ExPlan with exercise administration information and scenario details
Exercise Plan (ExPlan)	Operations-based	Not limited: Players, observers	Includes general exercise information but does not contain scenario details Enables players to understand their roles and responsibilities in the exercise
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)	Operations-based	Limited: Controllers, evaluators, simulators	A chronological listing of the events and injects that drive exercise play Produced in both short (i.e. quick reference) and long (i.e. all-encompassing) formats

Table 2-1: Exercise documents

Situation Manual

SitMans are usually provided for discussion-based exercises, especially tabletop exercises (TTXs), as the core documentation that provides the textual background for a multimedia, facilitated exercise. The SitMan supports the scenario narrative and allows participants to read along while watching the multimedia events unfold. All participants (i.e., players, facilitators, evaluators, and observers) should receive SitMans at the beginning of the exercise. Consideration should be given to the accessibility of presentations and documents, such as making information available in alternative formats (i.e., large prints, compact disk [CD], Braille), closed captioning or another form of text display, or the provision of sign language interpreters.

The SitMan’s introduction provides an overview of the exercise—including scope, capabilities, tasks and objectives, structure, rules, and conduct—as well as an exercise agenda. The next section of the SitMan is the scenario itself, which is divided up into distinct modules. Modules provide the basic structure of the exercise and are chronologically sequenced. Each module represents a specific time segment of the overall scenario—pre-incident warning, notification, response, or recovery—selected based on exercise

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objectives and scenario requirements. For example, pandemic disease exercises typically contain an incubation module, whereas chemical or explosive terrorism scenarios offer planners the opportunity to include a warning phase and initial response modules.

Each module is followed by discussion questions, usually divided up by organizational group (e.g., public safety, emergency management, public affairs). Responses to the modules' discussion questions are the focus of the exercise, and reviewing them provides the basis for evaluating exercise results. These discussion questions can be derived from tasks and capabilities contained within each EEG (see Volume III for more information on evaluating discussion-based exercises).

The SitMan contains greater detail than the discussion-based exercise's multimedia presentation and generally includes the following information:

- Introduction
- Schedule of events
- Exercise purpose, scope, capabilities, tasks, and objectives
- Exercise structure (i.e., order of the modules)
- Instructions for exercise facilitators, players, and observers
- Exercise assumptions and artificialities
- Exercise rules
- Exercise scenario background (including scenario location information)
- Discussion questions and key issues
- Reference appendices with relevant supporting information, which may include, but not be limited to:
 - entity- and threat-specific information;
 - Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or agent fact sheet, when applicable;
 - relevant documents regarding plans, SOPs, etc.; and
 - a list of reference terms.

Multimedia Presentation

Multimedia presentations are often used for discussion-based exercises to provide the general scenario. They are given at the start of the exercise (StartEx) and support (both visually and with audio) the written documentation, the SitMan. Participants read the written material while watching or listening to the presentation. The presentation itself should concisely summarize information contained in the written documentation. Like the SitMan, the multimedia presentation is also divided into distinct, chronologically segmented modules that, when combined, create the entire scenario.

This presentation typically contains, at a minimum, the following information:

- Introduction
- Background/history on the threat and the scenario
- Exercise capabilities, tasks, and objectives
- Exercise play rules and administrative information

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- Modules that describe the scenario

These presentations are intended to help focus and drive the exercise as well as add realism. Audio/visual (A/V) enhancements to a presentation include video or sounds that convey information to exercise participants. For example, presentations can include sound bites and video clips that have local interest. A video clip of the local mayor conducting a press conference and a sound bite of a 9-1-1 call are common examples. Obtaining recordings from the officials who participate in a real incident is a good way to add realism to the presentation.

Exercise Plan

ExPlans are general information documents that help operations-based exercises run smoothly. They are published and distributed prior to StartEx and provide a synopsis of the exercise. In addition to addressing exercise objectives and scope, ExPlans assign activities and responsibilities for successful exercise conduct. They enable participants to understand their roles and responsibilities in exercise planning, conduct, and evaluation. The ExPlan is intended for use by exercise players and observers—therefore, it does not contain detailed scenario information that may reduce the realism of the tasks to be performed. Players and observers should review all elements of the ExPlan prior to exercise participation.

An ExPlan typically contains the following sections:

- Administrative handling instructions / security designation
- Purpose, scope, and objectives
- Duration, date, and time of exercise and schedule of events
- Exercise planning team / control staff organization description
- Roles and responsibilities
- Rules of conduct
- Safety issues, notably real emergency codes/phrases, safety controller responsibilities, and prohibited activities
- Logistics
- Security of and access to the exercise site
- Communications (e.g., radio frequencies/channels)
- Maps and directions

Extent of Play Agreements

Extent of Play Agreements (XPAs) can be used during the development of exercise objectives to determine what will be exercised and what will be evaluated. These binding agreements are formed between exercise participants and can be vital to the planning of an exercise, the recruitment of evaluators, and the development of support requirements.

Controller and Evaluator Handbook

The C/E Handbook, also used in operations-based exercises, specifically describes the roles and responsibilities of exercise controllers and evaluators and the procedures they must follow. Because the C/E Handbook contains information about the scenario and about exercise administration, it is distributed to only those individuals specifically designated as controllers or evaluators. The C/E Handbook supplements the ExPlan and contains more detailed information about the scenario. It points readers to the

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ExPlan for more general exercise information, such as participant lists, activity schedules, required briefings, and the roles and responsibilities of specific participants.

The C/E Handbook usually contains the following sections:

- Detailed scenario information
- Assignments, roles, and responsibilities of group or individual controllers and evaluators
- Exercise safety plan
- Controller communications plan (e.g., a phone list, a call-down tree, instructions for the use of radio channels)
- Evaluation instructions

For larger, more complex exercises, planners may develop a written Evaluation Plan (EvalPlan) in lieu of, or in addition to, a C/E Handbook. Like the C/E Handbook, an EvalPlan supplements the ExPlan by providing evaluation staff with guidance and instructions on evaluation or observation methodology to be used as well as essential materials required to execute their specific functions. The EvalPlan is a limited distribution document. Evaluators use it in conjunction with the ExPlan and the MSEL, and some controllers may use it as well. More information on the EvalPlan and the evaluation process can be found in HSEEP Volume III.

Likewise, Control Staff Instructions (COSIN) may be employed in lieu of a C/E Handbook for larger, more complex exercises that require more coordination among control staff. A COSIN contains guidance that controllers, simulators, and evaluators need concerning procedures and responsibilities for exercise control, simulation, and support. In addition to the functions of a C/E Handbook, a COSIN provides guidelines for control and simulation support and establishes a management structure for these activities.

Controller and Evaluator Packets

While C/E Handbooks contain detailed information that should be read and understood well in advance of the exercise, Controller and Evaluator Packets are provided to controllers and evaluators immediately prior to an exercise. Unlike C/E Handbooks, which are provided identically to all controllers and evaluators, Controller and Evaluator Packets are given out individually—controllers receive Controller Packets and evaluators receive Evaluator Packets. The packets contain key information from the C/E Handbook and additional information specific to the functional area in which the given controller or evaluator will be working. This information is needed on-hand during exercise play in order to carry out control and evaluation responsibilities.

Both Controller Packets and Evaluator Packets should contain the following:

- Essential C/E Handbook information
- The MSEL, including injects and events for each responsible controller/evaluator
- Appropriate EEGs
- Maps/directions

Master Scenario Events List

A MSEL (pronounced *mee-zul*) is typically used in operations-based exercises and contains a chronological listing of the events that drive exercise play. The MSEL links simulation to action and reflects each inject or event that will prompt players to implement the policy or procedure being validated. MSEL entries that controllers must simulate are called *injects*. Entries that represent expected player actions are called *expected action events*. Oftentimes, injects and expected action events are

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referred to simply as *events*. Each MSEL entry contains the following:

- Designated scenario time
- Event synopsis
- Controller responsible for delivering the inject, with controller/evaluator special instructions (if applicable)
- Expected action (i.e., player response expected after a MSEL inject is delivered)
- Intended player (i.e., agency or individual player for whom the MSEL event is intended)
- Capability, task, or objective to be demonstrated (if applicable)
- Notes section (for controllers and evaluators to track actual events against those listed in the MSEL, with special instructions for individual controllers and evaluators)

Times listed in a MSEL should reflect the time an event should occur. These times should be as realistic as possible and should be based on input from SMEs. If the activity occurs sooner than the MSEL writers anticipated, then controllers and evaluators should note the time it occurred, but play should not be interrupted.

Controllers delivering MSEL injects will either be co-located with players in the venue of play, or they will reside in a Simulation Cell (SimCell). A SimCell is a location from which controllers deliver telephone calls, radio messages, facsimiles, and other types of messages—these messages represent actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise but would likely be actively involved during a real incident. Prior to StartEx, the mechanisms for introducing injects into exercise play should be tested, especially when injects are input through various communications systems. This ensures that controllers are aware of the procedures for delivering MSEL injects, and that any systems that will be used to deliver them are functioning properly as planned. The setup of a SimCell is described in the *Exercise Logistics* section.

The three types of events that comprise a MSEL are as follows:

1. **Contextual injects** are introduced to a player by a controller to help build the exercise operating environment. For example, if the exercise is designed to test information-sharing capabilities, a MSEL inject can be developed to direct a controller to select an actor to portray a suspect. The inject could then instruct the controller to prompt another actor to approach a law enforcement officer and inform him/her that this person was behaving suspiciously.
2. **Expected action events** reserve a place in the MSEL timeline and notify controllers of when a response action would typically take place. For example, during an full-scale exercise (FSE) involving a chemical agent, establishing decontamination is an expected action.
3. **Contingency injects** are events that a controller verbally indicates to a player if they do not physically take place. This ensures that play moves forward, as needed, to adequately evaluate performance of activities. For example, if a simulated secondary device is placed at an incident scene during a terrorism response exercise, but is not discovered, a controller may want to prompt an actor to approach a player to say that he/she witnessed suspicious activity close to the device location. This should prompt the responder to discover the device, and result in subsequent execution of the desired notification procedures.

MSELs are typically produced in long formats, short formats, or both. Short MSELs list contextual injects and a delivery time for each; they provide a short description, the responsible controller, and a player to receive the inject. These can be used as a quick-reference guide during exercise play. Long MSELs are

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used when greater detail is necessary; they include more detailed descriptions, exact quotes and formats for SimCell injects, and descriptions of expected actions.

Media / Public Information Documentation

Members of the media have the unique ability to fulfill an important function before, during, and after an exercise. Prior to an exercise, they inform the public that an exercise will place, and they make the public aware that the community is preparing for disasters. During an exercise, they can facilitate the validation of public information plans and procedures. Following an exercise, the media may release details to the host community on the state of its preparedness, if the exercise planning team leader provides such information.

Press Release

Prior to an exercise, the exercise planning team should develop a written press release to be disseminated to media outlets. This release informs the media and the public about general exercise information. Additionally, this information can be distributed to observers, senior officials, and other VIPs. This release should *not* contain detailed scenario information, such as the type of threat/hazard or venue, nor should it contain information that might hinder exercise outcomes if a participant were to see it.

Typically, the contents of a media / public information release for an exercise include the following:

- Introduction, including sponsor and exercise program information
- Purpose and expected outcomes
- Scope and duration
- General scenario information (e.g., site/venue, goals, objectives)
- Participating agencies or disciplines

Public Announcement

Public announcements should be made prior to any operations-based exercise. This precaution helps alleviate any confusion on the part of passing motorists or pedestrians. It will also help the public avoid congestion near the exercise site by providing suggestions for alternate routes. Announcements can be made on local television or radio, in local newspapers, through mass mailings or pamphlets, and/or on signs near the exercise site.

Media Policy

Exercise planners may wish to notify the media about an exercise before it takes place. This notification can prevent public confusion on the day of the exercise and assure the public that the community is working to prepare for real-world incidents. The agency/organization sponsoring the exercise should decide whether to invite the media. If invited, the media should have an opportunity prior to the exercise to conduct interviews with key planners and participants.

At discussion-based exercises, the media should not be present during the discussion of any potentially sensitive information. If the media would like video footage of exercise proceedings and participants, they should be allowed to film from the back of the room until scenario discussions begin. This allows participants to speak freely and openly during the exercise without outside distractions or intimidation.

During operations-based exercises, media may be allowed to film certain activities but should be cautioned not to interfere with exercise play. Unless media are invited to participate in the exercise, a guide—typically a public information officer (PIO) or designee—should escort media at all times. If mock media—exercise controllers simulating the real-world media—are employed during an exercise in

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order to test public affairs training, they should be kept completely separate from any real-world media that may be observing the exercise.

Exercise Logistics

Logistical details are important, but often overlooked, aspects of an exercise. They can make the difference between a smooth, seamless exercise and one that is confusing.

Discussion-Based Exercises

Facility and Room

Meetings, briefings, and discussion-based exercises are conducted in facilities that are appropriate for exercise scope and attendance. Conference rooms and banquet halls are ideal examples. Facilities should be reserved solely for exercise purposes and should be accessible to all and free from distractions.

Enough tables and chairs should be available for every player, observer, facilitator, and presenter; varying table arrangements should be used for different types of exercises. For example, for a conference (during which input is needed from all parties), a U-shaped layout is most conducive to facilitation and participant interaction. For a seminar, during which there is little participant interaction and information is presented to the audience, chairs and/or tables face the front of the room. For a workshop, the ideal facility permits breakout sessions in separate rooms. For a TTX, the number of tables is based on the number of participating functional areas (e.g., one table for the medical community, one table for Federal representatives). Table arrangements for a TTX should allow for as much participant and facilitator interaction as possible.

When selecting a facility, room acoustics are paramount. Carpeting and low ceilings are effective room elements that help dampen the effect of simultaneous conversation. Planners may limit players to 12 to 15 per table during a TTX to avoid excessive crowding and noise levels. Facilitators and presenters should control the noise in the room by discouraging side conversations, ensuring cellular phones are turned off or made silent, and controlling group dynamics.

The facility should have accessible parking for all participants. Readily available and accessible restroom facilities and room to move during breaks are also priority considerations when selecting a facility.

Food and Refreshments

Food and refreshments should be provided to participants and observers, especially during prolonged exercises. For discussion-based exercises that exceed 4 hours, it is often beneficial to have a working lunch provided; a working lunch keeps exercise disruption to a minimum.

Audio/Visual Requirements

The multimedia presentation is a key aspect of a discussion-based exercise because it adds realism. A/V requirements should be identified well in advance, and specific responsibilities should be assigned to ensure proper equipment functioning. Examples of A/V equipment include, but are not limited to, projection display screens, video and/or computer projectors, speakers, and microphones (lapel/lavaliere, handheld, or podium). Advance consideration should also be given to the accessibility of presentations and documents, such as making information available in alternative formats (i.e., large prints, CDs, Braille), closed captioning or another form of text display, or the provision of sign language interpreters.

Supplies

Exercise planners should not assume participants will bring necessary supplies with them. Writing utensils, notepads, easels, copies of plans and procedures to be discussed, name badges, and any other

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equipment deemed necessary should be procured prior to exercise conduct and provided to participants.

Badges, Name Tents, and Table Tents

Badges are used to clearly identify each exercise participant by name and agency or organization. Name tents are placed on tables prior to StartEx to ensure proper seating arrangements. Additionally, each table has a table tent identifying the functional area seated at that table.

Registration and Table/Breakout Identification

Participants register upon arrival, for both identification and security reasons. Each participant provides his or her name, organization, telephone/facsimile number, and e-mail address. Table assignments must be predetermined, and last-minute changes are strongly discouraged. The exercise planning team retains copies of the sign-in sheets so that participants can receive follow-up correspondence such as thank you notes, certificates of completion, copies of the After Action Report / Improvement Plan (AAR/IP), and invitations to future planning meetings and exercises.

Restrooms

Restrooms should be available to all individuals involved in an exercise, including individuals with physical disabilities.

Operations-Based Exercises

Operations-based exercises have additional logistical items that must be considered. At a minimum, water should be available to all individuals present during exercise conduct. If an exercise exceeds 4 hours in length, a meal, usually a boxed lunch, should be available to victim actors, players, controllers, and evaluators. Restroom facilities should include portable and/or permanent restrooms at the assembly area and the exercise play area. Compliance with accessibility requirements for people with various disabilities should be integral to all logistical considerations. Further logistical considerations unique to operations-based exercises are described in this section.

Videotaping

Due to security concerns, it is important for the exercise planning team to determine which parts of an exercise, if any, will be videotaped. Videotaping is a good way to document exercise events for future training, additional evaluator observation, or even public record. If there is a videotaping team, members should be clearly identified with badges, vests, or other forms of identification that allow them free reign in the exercise play area. This team should not be confused with members of the media.

Props and Devices

Props and devices are used in operations-based exercises to add realism and test player awareness. See the *Exercise Enhancement* section of this chapter for information on props and devices.

Site Security

Due to the sensitive nature of exercises, and because exercises themselves may become targets, it is important for the exercise site to be secure. Local law enforcement should provide site security. Site security personnel are the only individuals involved with the exercise who should remain armed.

Weapon and Safety Policy

All exercises must employ a written weapon and safety policy that has been approved by senior officials prior to exercise conduct. Qualified individual(s) must perform a weapons check to clear all inspected weapons, and these weapons must be clearly marked to indicate they are safe for use in exercise play. All players are expected to fully adhere to this policy; however, site security personnel may continue to carry assigned weapons. See HSEEP Volume IV for the HSEEP weapon and safety policy.

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Communications

Prior to an exercise, a radio frequency or designated exercise channel is identified for player use. The selected frequency should not interfere with normal operations that are outside the scope of the exercise. All radio and/or telephone conversations with players, either at the primary incident site or at an off-site location, should begin with the phrase, “*This is an exercise.*”

In addition, a separate radio frequency is assigned for use by controllers when coordinating exercise logistics, updating exercise status, and relaying information on real emergencies, if necessary. When feasible, handheld radios should be provided to all controllers prior to an exercise.

Safety

Safety is the most important consideration in planning an operations-based exercise. The following actions must take place to ensure a safe environment:

- Identify safety controller(s) (not to be confused with a safety officer designated by the incident commander as part of the response to the exercise scenario)
- Dedicate advanced life support or basic life support ambulance unit(s) for real-world emergencies only
- Identify real-world emergency procedures with a code word or phrase
- Identify safety requirements and policies
- Consider other safety issues outside the scope of exercise control (e.g., weather, heat stress, hypothermia, fire/pyrotechnics, weapons, animals/K-9s, use of force, use of PPE)

Badging and Identification

For security purposes, all exercise participants should wear some form of identification. Although some players may wear their uniforms, all other participants—including controllers, evaluators, actors, observers/VIPs, support staff, and plain-clothes players—should also be clearly identified. This identification is usually accomplished through a color-coded system of badges and hats. Badges and hats should be distributed before conducting the exercise, usually during registration or briefings. Participants should receive information about the forms of identification they will see at the exercise play area and what each color represents.

Actors

Volunteer victim actors are an important part of an operations-based exercise. They provide added realism and prompt players to provide simulated victim care. Recruiting victim actors is one of the biggest challenges of any operations-based exercise. As soon as the exercise planning team determines the total number of actors needed, team members should begin recruiting from local sources.

Sources

Exercise planning team members can recruit victim actors from local colleges and universities, drama clubs, theaters, civic groups, emergency response academies, medical classes, and Federal/State military units. Consideration should be given to soliciting volunteer victim actors from within the special needs population to provide an opportunity to practice meeting the needs of these individuals in a disaster situation. Potential actors should inform exercise staff of any pre-existing medical conditions, such as pregnancy or diabetes, which may require special care or treatment.

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Waiver Forms

Each victim actor receives a waiver form prior to the day of the exercise. Signing this form waives liability for all exercise planners and participants. Exercising entities should use discretion when recruiting actors under the age of 18 because of additional challenges and concerns related to liability, maturity, and emotional reactions. If the exercise requires volunteers younger than age 18, parents or legal guardians should sign their waiver forms.

Actor Instructions

Volunteers should receive their instructions prior to the day of the exercise. Victim actor instructions include information on when to arrive, where to report, and whether a meal will be provided during or after the exercise. Additional instructions provided include the following:

- Wear old clothing because clothing could possibly get cut, ripped, or wet.
- Eat prior to attending the exercise.
- Expect a long, tiring day.
- Do not wear expensive clothing or jewelry.
- Tell the victim actor coordinator about pre-existing medical conditions.

Symptomology Cards

Each victim actor in a response-focused exercise is given a unique symptomology card containing the signs and symptoms the actor will portray, as well as information for medical providers. The victim actor coordinator or his/her staff explains these cards to victim actors before the exercise and answers any questions. Victim actors are instructed to keep these cards with them at all times during the exercise, and to not step out of character except in the event of a real emergency.

At a minimum, symptomology cards should include:

- vital signs;
- symptoms;
- trauma injuries;
- acting instructions (e.g., disorientation, emotional distress); and
- special needs (e.g., language barriers, physical limitations).

Moulage

Moulage is a cosmetic mold or makeup applied to victim actors to simulate injuries, adding realism to an exercise. It includes fake blood, plastic bones, and any other makeup that helps a victim actor emulate the signs and symptoms on his or her symptomology card. Although not required, moulage is encouraged at all response-focused, operations-based exercises. School drama clubs, military units, community theaters, the American Red Cross, and morticians are common resources for moulage staff.

Self-Referrals

Some hospitals may wish to practice handling self-referred victims or psychosomatic (i.e., worried-well) patients. In such cases, the number of patients each hospital will receive and the method of transport to these hospitals should be predetermined. Victim actors portraying self-referring victims are pre-staged at the appropriate hospital(s) prior to StartEx and must be monitored for safety, food, and water needs.

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Hospital/Victim Breakdown

For exercises that include hospital participation, identification of which hospitals will receive victim actors is determined prior to the exercise. This breakdown should include:

- the number of actors that will be transported from the primary incident site to each hospital;
- the number of self-referring patients;
- the number of actors that will be pre-staged (generally self-referrals) at each hospital; and
- special considerations.

This breakdown should be considered when making transportation arrangements.

Water/Food

Water is provided to all victim actors during operations-based exercises. It is important that victim actors do not become dehydrated. If an exercise exceeds 4 hours, a meal, usually a boxed lunch, is provided. Victim actors receive instructions on how to get water and meals. Ideally, water is placed at designated stations throughout the exercise site, or bottles of water are on-hand for distribution. Local American Red Cross and Salvation Army chapters are excellent sources for canteen supplies (e.g., food and refreshments) as well as blankets for decontaminated actors. Some communities have received donated water and food from private companies (e.g., soda distributors, fast food chains).

Transportation

If victim actors are transported offsite, round-trip transportation is coordinated before StartEx. Victims are transported back to their vehicles at the conclusion of the exercise.

Assembly Area

The assembly area is an essential element of an operations-based exercise; it is the gathering place for deployable resources prior to StartEx. All deployable units are dispatched from this area; therefore, all personnel, organizations, and resources who are playing and dispatching to the exercise should report to the assembly area. (All participants who are assigned to offsite locations such as hospitals, EOCs, or SimCells should report to the areas designated by their respective organizations.)

More than one assembly area may be established if the exercise involves multiple sites or incidents. In a response-focused, operations-based exercise, actual response times to or from multiple sites can be safely mimicked from an assembly area in close proximity to the exercise. When dispatched, units should not leave the assembly area until directed to do so. Units will be released based on a realistic duration of time from their home stations to the scenario venue. Because personnel may be gathered in the assembly area for a significant amount of time prior to dispatch, it is important to have provisions, such as potable water and restrooms, available.

The assembly area is an exercise-designated area and should not be confused with a staging area, which may be established by Incident Command to stage units before their arrival on the scene.

Response Route

The response route is the path traveled by responding emergency units to a simulated incident during a response-focused, operations-based exercise—it leads from the assembly area to the exercise site. This route should be clearly marked and free of traffic that is unrelated to the exercise.

Operations Area

The operations area is a large space where tactical operations—such as decontamination, triage, or render-safe procedures (RSP)—take place. Predetermining routes to an operations area will help reduce the

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possibility of accidents and liability issues. Directions and maps should be produced and disseminated to players before the exercise.

Parking

Established parking areas should be clearly labeled for use by observers, media, actors, controllers, evaluators, and players arriving in personal vehicles. Law enforcement personnel should be available to help direct vehicles to proper parking areas.

Registration

No unauthorized personnel are allowed into an operations-based exercise site; everyone associated with the exercise must register. All individuals register immediately upon arrival at the exercise site and receive a badge. If necessary, certain VIPs may be registered and receive their badges in advance or at a separate registration location.

Observer/Media Area

If observers and media are invited to an exercise, they are directed to a designated area that provides them with a view of exercise play but prevents them from interfering with exercise play. Because many entities prefer to keep operations of groups—such as Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams or Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams—confidential, these activities take place some distance from the observer/media area.

Simulation Cell

A SimCell is used to generate injects and receive player responses for non-participating agencies. For example, if part of an exercise requires the police department to request closure of specific air space, the SimCell would receive the call rather than the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), assuming the FAA is not playing in the exercise. The SimCell also provides information in place of a non-participating agency. For example, if the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is not participating, the SimCell may be used to simulate communication to and from the FBI Strategic Information Operations Center (SIOC).

Physically, the SimCell is a working location for a number of qualified professionals who portray non-participating organizations, agencies, and individuals who would likely participate actively if exercise events were real. These professionals are knowledgeable of the agencies and organizations they are portraying, and they deliver MSEL injects in a dramatic and realistic tone of voice. Depending on the type of exercise, the SimCell may require a telephone, fax machine, computer, e-mail account, or other means of communication.

Exercise Enhancement

Enhanced exercises provide a realistic scenario or field environment and add an increased level of learning potential for participants. Enhancements can range from using scenarios based on detailed research on a specific hazard to providing props such as explosion debris, mannequins, smoke, or moulaged victims. The following paragraphs detail some operations-based exercise enhancements.

Props

Props are nonfunctional replicas of objects, the presence or discovery of which prompt certain actions by exercise players. Examples include simulated bombs, bomb blast debris (i.e., shrapnel), mannequins or body parts, and foam bricks and beams. Simulations that mimic the effects of chemical hazards or that cause a positive reading of an actual detection device are also considered props. Providing prop written materials is a suitable method of delivering detailed, scripted information. For example, providing a prop copy of a local newspaper that includes a scripted article related to the exercise scenario is an effective

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way to enhance what might otherwise be a bland message.

Equipment

When feasible, using real equipment is more desirable than using simulated props. Using real equipment has the added effect of familiarizing personnel with the tools of the trade. For example, emergency medical technician (EMT) staff will benefit more from completing medical triage tags than from stating what they would do if they had triage tags. However, when players treat victim actors, they must use noninvasive equipment.

Personnel

Using actual team members and victim actors is essential for exercise realism. Teams that consistently train and practice together tend to respond more effectively and cohesively. Every effort should be made to incorporate existing teams into the exercise as players. For example, include hazardous materials (HazMat) teams and bomb squads; disaster medical assistance teams; and evidence response, special reaction, and hostage negotiation teams. Using actors as victims enhances realism for all response staff that interacts directly with them. Soliciting volunteers from the local jurisdiction (e.g., city, county) helps develop a sense of community and assures community members that their first responders are well-trained.

Special Effects

A special effect is a technical enhancement that typically requires trained and licensed personnel, special permission for use, and additional safety and/or security precautions. Examples include the employment of pyrotechnics or explosives, or the use of makeup specialists.

Red Teams

Composed of experienced role-players, Red Teams are a physical representation of the adversary whom the players are seeking to prevent or deter from perpetrating an attack during a prevention-focused, operations-based exercise. Numerous personnel, logistics, and safety considerations are associated with employment of Red Teams. See HSEEP Volume V for more information on prevention-focused exercises.

Evaluation Planning

As part of the exercise design and development process, the exercise planning team will use the exercise capabilities, tasks, and objectives to determine what data should be collected, which peer experts will collect it, and how it will be collected. Early in the design and development process, it is important to define evaluation requirements. Exercise scope and objectives, and the tasks assigned to participating agencies, will help determine such requirements. Next, the planning team selects evaluation tools, generally the EEGs related to the capabilities to be evaluated during the exercise. Finally, it is helpful to recruit, assign, and train evaluators well in advance of the exercise start date. For more information on evaluation planning, see HSEEP Volume III.

Chapter 3: Conduct

Exercise conduct includes setup and wrap-up activities. For a discussion-based exercise, conduct also entails presentation, facilitation, and discussion. For an operations-based exercise, conduct encompasses all operations occurring between the designated start of the exercise (StartEx) and end of the exercise (EndEx).

Discussion-Based Exercise Types

Seminars

Seminars generally orient participants to, or provide an overview of, authorities, strategies, plans, policies, procedures, protocols, resources, concepts, and ideas. They also provide a good starting point for entities that are developing or making major changes to existing plans or procedures. Seminars are also useful when attempting to gain awareness of, or assess, the capabilities of interagency or inter-jurisdictional operations. Seminars are useful whenever there is a need to provide a common framework of understanding. Seminars are the basic building block of exercise development.



Seminars can be used to deliver a wide range of topics. Although the topics may vary, all seminars share the following common attributes:

- They are conducted in a low-stress environment.
- Information is conveyed through different instructional techniques, which may include lectures, multimedia presentations, panel discussions, case study discussions, expert testimony, decision support tools, or any combination thereof.
- Informal discussions are led by a seminar leader.
- There are no real-time “clock” constraints.
- They are effective for both small and large groups.

Prior to participating in a seminar, participants should have a clear understanding of exercise objectives, which can range from developing new standard operating procedures (SOPs) to attaining priority capabilities. Seminars are typically conducted in a lecture-based format with limited feedback or interaction from participants. They may feature one speaker or a series of speakers from different entities. Lecture content can vary, but often includes the following:

- Current resources
- Current or proposed mutual aid agreements (MAAs)
- Existing plans, policies, or procedures
- Real-world incident or exercise experiences and lessons learned
- Entity directions and goals

Seminars do not typically result in a formal, comprehensive After Action Report / Improvement Plan

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(AAR/IPs); however, a final report, or Summary Report, should be developed to capture the discussions conducted; issues raised; and, when appropriate, corrective actions that will address these issues.

Workshops

Although similar to seminars, workshops differ in two important aspects: participant interaction is increased and the focus is placed on achieving or building a product. Workshops provide an ideal forum for:

- collecting or sharing information;
- obtaining new or different perspectives;
- testing new ideas, processes, or procedures;
- training groups to perform coordinated activities;
- problem-solving complex issues;
- obtaining consensus; and/or
- building teams.

Products produced from a workshop include new SOPs, emergency operations plans (EOPs), continuity of operations (COOP) plans, MAAs, Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plans, and IPs that address specific issues and recommendations from a given AAR. To be effective, workshops must focus on a specific issue, and the desired outcome, product, or goal must be clearly defined. It should be noted that these products are distinct from the resulting workshop Summary Report.

The following are examples of workshop objectives:

- Identify issues that may arise when developing a cooperative plan for use by entities that have not previously worked together.
- Define new regional boundaries.
- Determine program or plan objectives.
- Develop an exercise scenario.
- Determine evaluation elements or performance standards.

Potential topics and goals relevant to workshops are numerous; however, all workshops share the following attributes:

- They are conducted in a low-stress environment.
- They use a no-fault forum.
- Information is conveyed using a number of different instructional techniques, including lectures, multimedia presentations, panel discussions, case study discussions, expert testimony, decision support tools, or any combination thereof.
- They use facilitated, working breakout sessions.
- Plenum discussions are led by a workshop leader.
- Goal-oriented discussions take place with an identifiable product in mind.
- There are no real-time “clock” constraints.

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- They are effective for both small and large groups.

Typically, workshops begin with a presentation or briefing, during which the background and rationale for the workshop are conveyed, and specific activities and expected outcomes are delineated.

The presentation is typically followed by facilitated breakout sessions, in which workshop participants break into groups for focused discussions of specific issues. Breakout sessions are used to increase participant interaction regarding the issues most relevant to their functional areas. For example, if a workshop's objectives address inter-jurisdictional disaster plans, it would have breakout sessions for law enforcement, fire and rescue, and emergency management personnel, among others.

Ideally, breakout sessions are facilitated by someone with both subject matter knowledge and facilitation experience. If this is not possible, it is more important to have a good facilitator who can keep the discussion on track than to have subject matter knowledge. During breakout sessions, facilitators should be aware of time constraints, notify participants about progress, and warn them when time is about to expire. Following breakout group discussions, the groups reconvene in a plenum session to present outcomes.

For workshops, planners should reserve one large room in which all participants can see a screen and see all other participants. For breakout sessions, individual rooms (such as classrooms) are ideal.

Tabletop Exercises

Key staff, decision makers, and elected and appointed officials are typical participants in a tabletop exercise (TTX). This type of exercise is generally held in an informal setting intended to generate discussion of various issues regarding a hypothetical, simulated emergency incident. TTXs can be used to enhance general awareness, validate plans and procedures, and/or assess the types of systems needed to guide prevention of, protection from, response to, and recovery from a defined incident. Generally, TTXs are aimed at facilitating concept understanding, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and/or achieving changes in attitudes.

During a TTX, players are encouraged to discuss issues in depth, and the environment allows them to develop decisions through slow-paced problem solving rather than the rapid, spontaneous decision making that occurs under actual incident conditions. The effectiveness of a TTX is derived from the energetic involvement of participants and their assessment of recommended revisions to current policies, procedures, and plans.

TTX methods are divided into basic and advanced categories. In a basic TTX, the scenario is presented and remains constant—it describes an emergency incident and brings discussion participants up to the simulated present time. Players apply their knowledge and skills to a list of problems presented by the facilitator or moderator; problems are discussed as a group; and resolution is reached and documented for later analysis.

In an advanced TTX, play advances as players receive pre-scripted messages that alter the original scenario. The moderator usually introduces problems one at a time in the form of a written message, simulated telephone call, videotape, or other means. Players discuss the issues raised by each problem, using appropriate plans and procedures. Player decisions are incorporated as the scenario continues to unfold.

TTXs may be conducted using either breakout or plenary formats. The breakout format uses several breakout groups, which can vary in size but may include as many as 10 to 15 players each, seated at different tables. Common interests or responsibilities determine table assignments. Although the scenario is usually presented to all groups simultaneously, individual breakout groups consider their own probable actions based on plans, policies, and procedures. Each group reports to the re-assembled plenary at the

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conclusion of each exercise module.

The plenary format groups players in a large room or hall according to function or responsibility. In a plenary TTX, no periods are set aside for small or subgroup discussions. This type of exercise requires active facilitation, sometimes by a team of facilitators. Use of facilitators generally allows more control over discussion direction; facilitators can draw information from players to present a clear picture of issues and objectives. Active facilitation also ensures that the discussion remains focused on issues and policies. A plenary format is useful for exercises involving agencies/organizations that do not have a tradition of coordinated operations. It is also the preferred format if most participants are new to TTXs. This format ensures that everyone hears everything that is said and all players have an opportunity to comment.

All types of TTXs are usually constructed with the following common features:

- They incorporate group problem solving.
- Senior officials become familiar with critical issues related to their responsibilities.
- They employ the conditions of a specific scenario.
- Personnel contingencies are examined.
- Group message interpretation is examined.
- Participants share information.
- Interagency/inter-organization coordination is assessed.
- Limited or specific objectives are achieved.
- They prepare participants for more complex exercises.

All participants should be encouraged to contribute to the discussion. They should be reminded they are making decisions in a no-fault environment. Facilitators should encourage interaction between groups.

During TTX conduct, exercise planning team personnel give a multimedia presentation, facilitate discussions during caucus periods, and moderate ensuing discussion or report-back sessions. At the conclusion of the TTX, the exercise planning team leader provides an overview of the day's activities, followed by comments or closing remarks by members of the exercise planning team.

TTXs require a room in which all participants can view a screen and participants at individual tables can discuss issues without disruption. For this reason, it is ideal to reserve one large room and several smaller rooms (similar to workshop breakout rooms).

Games

Games are hypothetical situations steered by player actions. Force-on-force games are used for exercises and have specific rules, using controllers to enforce game parameters. Game players may come from the same or different functional areas or entities, depending on exercise objectives.

Games explore the consequences of player decisions and actions and are used to consider appropriate behavior or behavioral guidelines for the future. Therefore, they are excellent tools to use when validating or reinforcing plans and procedures, or evaluating resource requirements.

During game play, decision making may be either slow and considered, or rapid and more stressful, depending on the exercise design and objectives. In a game, the outcomes of player actions are highly dependent on a controller's interpretation of the rules, whereas in computerized simulations (described in the next section), rules are interpreted more strictly. The controller's role is to process the information that

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is received. Player decisions, subsequent actions, and outcomes rely on the controller's subject matter knowledge and understanding of game rules. The open, decision-based format of a game can incorporate "what if" questions that expand exercise benefits.

Games have the following common characteristics:

- Play unfolds contingent on player decisions.
- They encourage a competitive environment.
- They provide rapid feedback.
- They improve teamwork.
- They foster an environment to practice group problem solving.
- Group message interpretation is tested.
- Interagency coordination is assessed.
- Senior officials become familiar with individual responsibilities.
- Players explore potential future scenarios.
- Consequences of player actions are demonstrated.

A major variable in games is whether consequences of player actions are scripted or random. After each player action or move, the controller presents the outcome. Depending on the game's design, this outcome can be either pre-scripted or decided after play. Identifying critical decision-making points is a major factor in the success of games because players make their evaluated moves at these crucial points. The controller, guided by the rules, determines the outcomes produced by player actions. Therefore, time must be allotted for game rules to be thoroughly tested prior to game play. If either the critical decision-making opportunities or the rules are deficient, then objectives will not be properly tested.

Generally, attendance at a game is dictated by game objectives, design, and concepts. Due to the usual limitation on number of players, planners are encouraged to open the exercise to observers, if possible. Observers are asked not to participate in discussions and strategy sessions, but can be tasked to make notes and report back to controllers with feedback.

The exercise planning team begins the game. Interaction among players or teams is encouraged; however, conversations and associations should emulate what is found in the real world.

Controllers must be aware of pre-established rules and procedures of the game. The game may have only one controller or, if there are teams, there may be a controller for every team (under the guidance of a lead controller). The controller presents the outcome of each action and ensures that player actions take place within game rules and timeframe.

All controllers and evaluators make and compile notes relevant to their team's actions. Immediately after the game, a short hot wash is conducted with the exercise planning team to determine the level of satisfaction with the exercise, issues or concerns, and proposed improvements. In addition, players can provide immediate feedback throughout the exercise, and capture events as they occur. The planning team should collect game attendance lists and capture notes from the hot wash for inclusion in the AAR/IP.

Models and Simulations

Models and simulations are valuable tools that use game-like formats to guide players to conceptualize threats to national security and work through lengthy scenarios. Models and simulations can provide immediate feedback to players within the context of a given scenario. Although live exercises are an

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irreplaceable component of any preparedness program, simulations are a cost effective way to understand the resources available within the homeland security community and the challenges of prioritizing their use. When used to complement live exercises, models and simulations can perform systematic data collection and analysis instead of requiring exercise controllers and evaluators to rely on personal expertise to estimate the effects of the simulated threat or disaster.

Model

A model is a physical, mathematical, or otherwise logical representation of a system, entity, phenomenon, or process. Models allow responders to visualize a specific procedure or plan component without physically demonstrating a full capability.

Simulation

A simulation is a method for implementing a model over time. For example, a computer program presents users with a scenario, and then follows their decision-making processes based on their actions at critical moments during the incident. Simulation tools can incorporate built-in responses to player decisions, providing players with instant feedback on the outcomes of their choices and the underlying reasons for those results.

As an increasingly complex network of challenges emerges in the homeland security community, the integration of various training techniques, including the use of models and simulations, can help augment the level of national preparedness.

Discussion-Based Exercise Conduct

Setup

Members of the exercise planning team assigned to setup should visit the exercise site at least 1 day prior to the event to arrange the room and test audio/video (A/V) equipment. On the day of the exercise, planning team members should arrive several hours before StartEx to handle any remaining logistical or administrative items pertaining to setup, and to arrange for registration.

Prior to exercise conduct, the exercise planning team must deliver the necessary exercise materials and equipment, which include the following:

- Adequate number of Situation Manuals (SitMans) or other written materials for exercise participants
- Multimedia presentation
- Appropriate A/V equipment including televisions, projectors, projection screens, microphones, and speakers
- Table tents for each table
- Name tents for each participant
- Badges identifying the role of each exercise participant (e.g., player, observer, VIP, facilitator, evaluator)
- Sign-in sheets
- Participant Feedback Forms

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Presentation

The multimedia presentation is a crucial vehicle for conveying information to the audience. Individuals selected to present should be confident of their abilities, able to speak well in front of large audiences, and exhibit their expertise of the subject. For example, they should not be prone to reading directly from the presentation slides.

The presentation typically starts with brief remarks by representatives from the exercise planning team or sponsoring entity, and/or senior officials from the governing jurisdiction. After the opening remarks, the presentation moves into a brief introductory and explanatory phase led by a moderator. During this phase, attendees will be introduced to facilitators and evaluators, given background on the exercise process, and be advised about their individual roles and responsibilities.

The moderator generally presents the multimedia briefing, which describes the scenario that will unfold and any relevant background information. The moderator also leads the discussion, brings spokespersons up to the front of the room, poses questions to the audience, and ensures that the schedule remains on track.

Facilitated Discussions

Facilitated group discussions occur at individual tables organized by discipline or agency/organization, and ideally, someone with functional area expertise facilitates them. The facilitator is responsible for keeping the discussion on track with the exercise objectives and making sure all issues are explored (time permitting). Characteristics of a good facilitator include the following:

- Ability to keep side conversations to a minimum, keep discussions on track and within established time limits, control group dynamics and strong personalities, and speak competently and confidently about the subject without dominating the conversation
- Functional area expertise or experience
- Awareness of local plans and procedures
- Ability to capture the discussion in notes for inclusion in the AAR/IP

Facilitated discussions take place before moderated discussions. Players should discuss their responses based on their knowledge of current plans, procedures, and capabilities.

If feasible and/or appropriate, co-facilitators who are knowledgeable about local issues, plans, and procedures may assist the lead facilitator. Also, designating a recorder to take notes allows the facilitator to focus on key discussion issues.

Moderated Discussions

In moderated discussions, a representative from each table presents all participants with summarized results from a group's facilitated discussion. This spokesperson is selected before the facilitated discussion so that he or she can prepare to speak on behalf of the group. During moderated discussions, spokespersons summarize the facilitated discussion, present key findings and issues, and discuss any unresolved issues or questions. At the end of the moderated discussion period, the floor becomes open for questions.

Generally, time for both facilitated and moderated discussion periods is scheduled at the end of each module, with another, longer period for each at the conclusion of the exercise. During the module discussion periods, groups should be careful to focus only on the material presented in a given module.

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Wrap-up Activities

All facilitators should take and compile notes relevant to their groups' facilitated and moderated discussions. This information will be used to generate the AAR/IP and/or exercise notes.

In addition, players and observers receive a Participant Feedback Form before EndEx that asks for input regarding the exercise's strengths and areas for improvement. At a minimum, the questions on this feedback form solicit the following:

- Impressions about exercise conduct and logistics
- Substantive information on the most pertinent issues discussed and potential corrective actions to address these issues

Information collected from feedback forms contributes to the issues, observations, recommendations, and corrective actions in the AAR/IP. Exercise planners should pay particular attention to comments regarding logistical problems so future exercises can avoid them. Feedback forms can be supplemented by the conduct of a hot wash immediately following the exercise, during which time facilitators conduct an informal conversation with players to capture their perspectives on the key strengths and areas for improvement identified during the exercise.

Also immediately following the exercise, a short debrief is conducted with exercise planning team members to ascertain their level of satisfaction, discuss any issues or concerns, and propose improvements. Exercise attendance lists are collected and copies provided to the exercise planning team leader. Debrief notes are captured in the meeting minutes.

Operations-Based Exercise Types

Drills

A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to validate a specific operation or function in a single agency or organization. Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, develop or validate new policies or procedures, or practice and maintain current skills. Drills are narrow in scope and typically focus on a specific aspect of an operation. For example, drills are appropriate for assessing response time to an alarm, checking the ability of a guard to use a metal detector, or determining if a 9-1-1 operator can appropriately direct a call reporting suspicious behavior that may involve terrorism. Drills can be used to determine if plans can be executed as designed, to assess whether more training is required, or to reinforce best practices.

A drill is useful as a stand-alone tool, but a series of drills can also be used to prepare several agencies/organizations to collaborate in a full-scale exercise (FSE). For example, plans for an FSE may involve response to a simulated radiological dispersal device (RDD) detonation that results in radioactively contaminated mass casualties and a crime scene. Preparatory drills for this exercise might include the following:

- A decontamination drill for firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to practice and demonstrate decontamination procedures
- A hotline management drill for law enforcement officials and firefighters to practice investigation and collection of evidence in a radioactive environment
- A hospital triage drill to practice receiving potentially contaminated patients

Typically, attributes of drills include the following:

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- They have a narrow focus.
- Results from drills are measured against established standards.
- They provide instant feedback.
- They involve a realistic environment.
- They are performed in isolation.
- Players become prepared for exercises that are larger in scope.

For every drill, clearly defined plans, policies, and procedures need to be in place. Personnel need to be familiar with those plans and policies, and trained in the processes and procedures to be drilled.

A drill may start with brief remarks from the exercise planning team leader. Once controllers and evaluators are properly stationed, the drill begins. If no safety issues arise, the drill continues until the process is complete, time expires, or objectives are achieved. During the simulated incident, players must know that they are participating in a drill and not an actual emergency.

Controllers ensure that participant behavior remains within predefined boundaries and that entities not involved in the drill are not unnecessarily mobilized. Evaluators observe behaviors and compare them against established plans, policies, procedures, and standard practices (if applicable). Safety controllers ensure all activity takes place within a safe environment.

Functional Exercises

Functional exercises (FEs) are designed to validate and evaluate capabilities, multiple functions and/or sub-functions, or interdependent groups of functions. FEs are focused on exercising plans, policies, procedures, and staff involved in management, direction, command, and control functions. Events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity at the management level. An FE is conducted in a realistic, real-time environment; however, movement of personnel and equipment is simulated.

Response- and recovery-focused FEs are generally focused on exercising the plans, policies, procedures, and staffs of the direction and control branches of the Incident Command System (ICS) and Unified Command (UC), or multi-agency coordination centers (e.g., Emergency Operation Centers [EOCs]).

A prevention-focused FE generally concentrates on exercising the plans, policies, procedures, agreements, networks, and staffs of law enforcement intelligence centers or agencies with counterterrorism missions. Adversary actions are largely simulated and delivered in the form of shared intelligence; however, some adversary actions may be carried out by Red Teams in a separate but coordinated category of exercise play. See HSEEP Volume V for more information on prevention-focused exercises.

Typical FE attributes include the following:

- Performance analysis is part of the overall exercise.
- Management evaluates command/headquarters-level staff.
- Established policies and procedures that pertain to the scenario are inspected.
- Adequacy, appropriation, and acquisition of resources are measured.
- Cooperative (e.g., inter-jurisdictional) relationships are examined.
- A Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) is the primary tool that drives exercise play.

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To create an effective environment, the exercise planning team chooses potential areas of play that reflect the real world. Agency/organization and player actions must be anticipated, and information resources must be identified and assembled. As with other types of operations-based exercises, the exercise planning team must ensure that entities not involved with the exercise are not unnecessarily mobilized.

Controllers and evaluators are briefed and trained prior to the exercise date. This briefing and training should be long enough to allow for questions and a visit to the exercise site. Controllers and evaluators meet each other and determine where they will be located during the exercise. Controllers are briefed on their responsibilities and the rules of engagement, and evaluators become familiar with exercise objectives, exercise forms, and the reporting process. Controllers and evaluators station themselves where they can observe actions but avoid impeding exercise play.

Security should be in place at least 2 hours before StartEx. Controllers, evaluators, observers, and media should be in place sufficiently early to allow the exercise to start on time. Observers and media remain in their assigned areas throughout the exercise (unless escorted by an official). Public information officers (PIOs) are available to interpret actions and/or provide briefings to observers and media, as appropriate. During the FE, players must know that they are participating in an exercise, not an actual incident.

FE controllers use a MSEL to ensure participant behavior remains within predefined boundaries. Simulators in the Simulation Cell (SimCell) inject scenario elements to simulate real events. Evaluators observe behaviors and compare them against established plans, policies, procedures, and standard practices (if applicable), as well as against the timeline set forth in the MSEL. Safety controllers ensure all activity takes place within a safe environment.

Full-Scale Exercises

FSEs are typically the most complex and resource-intensive type of exercise. They involve multiple agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions and validate many facets of preparedness. They include many players operating under cooperative systems such as ICS or UC to effectively and efficiently prevent, respond to, or initiate recovery from an incident. An FSE focuses on implementing and analyzing the plans, policies, and procedures developed in discussion-based exercises and honed during previous, smaller, operations-based exercises.

Events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity at the operational level. The FSE is conducted in a real-time, stressful environment that closely mirrors a real incident. Personnel and resources are mobilized and deployed to the scene where actions would be conducted as if a real incident had occurred (with a few minor exceptions). The FSE simulates reality by presenting complex and realistic problems involving operations in multiple functional areas that require critical thinking, rapid problem solving, and effective responses by trained personnel.

Typical FSE attributes include the following:

- Units, personnel, and equipment are mobilized.
- Multi-agency coordination centers (e.g., EOCs) are activated.
- Established policies and procedures (as they pertain to the scenario) are used.
- Adequacy, appropriation, and acquisition of resources are measured.
- Inter-jurisdictional or inter-organizational relationships are examined.
- Performance is analyzed.

The level of support needed to conduct an FSE is greater than that needed for other types of exercises. The exercise site for an FSE is usually vast, and site logistics require close monitoring. Safety issues,

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including those surrounding the use of props and special effects, must be monitored. Throughout the duration of the exercise, many activities occur simultaneously.

Controllers and evaluators meet together prior to the exercise—possibly during the controller/evaluator (C/E) briefing—to determine their locations during the exercise. Controllers are briefed on their responsibilities, rules of exercise play, and use of the MSEL or other tools. Evaluators must become familiar with exercise capabilities, tasks and objectives, forms, and the reporting process. Controllers and evaluators should station themselves where they can observe exercise activity but be as unobtrusive as possible.

Except in the event of adverse weather conditions, thorough planning should allow an exercise to begin on time. Security should be in place at least 2 hours before StartEx. Controllers, evaluators, observers, and media should be in place sufficiently early to allow the exercise to start on time. Observers and media remain in their assigned areas throughout the exercise, unless escorted by an official. PIOs are available to interpret actions and/or provide briefings to observers and media, as appropriate. During the FSE, players must know that they are participating in an exercise, not an actual incident.

Controllers ensure participant behavior takes place within predefined boundaries and that entities not involved in the exercise are not unnecessarily mobilized. SimCell simulators inject scenario elements to simulate real events. Evaluators observe behaviors and compare them against established plans, policies, procedures, and standard practices (if applicable). Safety controllers ensure all activity takes place within a safe environment.

Although the exercise may have a time limit, it is best to announce EndEx after exercise objectives have been met and all required functions are completed to the satisfaction of the exercise planning team leader and/or the exercise planning team.

Operations-Based Exercise Conduct

Setup

The appropriate exercise planning team members arrange and begin event setup as many days prior to the event as necessary, depending on the scope of the simulated environment. Setup entails arranging briefing rooms and testing A/V equipment, placing props and effects, marking the appropriate areas and their perimeters, and checking for potential safety issues. On the day of the exercise, all exercise planning team members should: arrive several hours before StartEx to handle any remaining logistical or administrative items pertaining to setup, arrange for registration, and conduct a communications check.

Exercise Participants

Players

Players are agency/organization personnel who perform their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players perform tasks that demonstrate the capabilities being assessed during the exercise.

Controllers

Controllers are exercise participants who plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site, and act in the roles of individuals and agencies not actually playing in the exercise (see the section *Exercise Logistics* for more information on SimCells). Controllers give key data to players and may prompt or initiate certain player actions—as listed in the MSEL—to ensure exercise continuity. Controllers are the only participants who should provide information or direction to players. All controllers are accountable to a senior controller. A controller may also serve as an evaluator.

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Evaluators

Evaluators are chosen from various agencies to analyze the performance of designated functional areas. Evaluators are chosen based on their expertise in the functional area(s) they review, and have a passive role. They observe and record the actions of players but do not interfere with exercise flow.

Actors

Actors are volunteer exercise players who simulate specific roles during exercise play. An actor also may serve as an evaluator or, if directed by a controller, as a simulator acting on behalf of an agency or organization not playing in an exercise. Individuals acting as simulators are usually placed in a SimCell to inject messages via telephone, facsimile, or e-mail.

Observers

Observers view all or selected portions of exercise play. Observers do not participate in exercise play or in exercise control functions.

Briefings

Held prior to an exercise, briefings educate participants about their roles and responsibilities. By scheduling separate briefings for controllers and evaluators, actors, and on-site and off-site players, exercise planning team members can avoid giving extraneous material to different groups. If the exercise planning team has enough members, many of these briefings may be scheduled simultaneously to prevent delay of StartEx. Presentations should accompany most of these briefings.

Controller and Evaluator Briefing

The C/E briefing is generally conducted the day before an operations-based exercise. It begins with an exercise overview and then covers location and area, schedule of events, scenario, control concept, controller and evaluator responsibilities, and any miscellaneous information. This briefing generally lasts 1 to 2 hours.

When hospitals participate in operations-based exercises by receiving victim actors, a separate briefing for hospital controllers and evaluators is generally conducted the day before the exercise. The hospital briefing is used to review communications between the exercise site and hospitals, notification procedures, the schedule of events, the scenario, controller and evaluator responsibilities, actor issues, and any miscellaneous information. This briefing generally lasts 1 to 2 hours.

Player Briefing

Approximately 15 to 30 minutes before StartEx, a controller conducts a briefing for all players to address individual roles and responsibilities, exercise parameters, safety, badges, and any remaining logistical exercise concerns or questions. Following the exercise, controllers ensure that appropriate players attend the post-exercise hot wash in their respective functional area.

Actor Briefing

The actor briefing is generally conducted the morning of the exercise, prior to the victim actors taking their positions. The victim actor controller leads this briefing and includes the following information: exercise overview, safety, real emergency procedures, symptomology, acting instructions, and schedule. Identification badges and symptomology cards are distributed before or during this briefing. If moulage is to be applied to actors, it should be completed before the briefing, which generally lasts 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Observer Briefing

An observer briefing informs exercise observers and VIPs about program background, scenario, schedule

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of events, observer limitations, and any other miscellaneous information. Often, observers will be unfamiliar with public safety procedures and will have questions about the activities they see. Designating someone, such as a PIO, to answer questions prevents observers from asking questions of players, controllers, or evaluators. The observer briefing is generally conducted the day of an exercise and lasts 1 hour.

Exercise Play

The exercise planning team leader normally serves as the senior controller of exercise play. This person is responsible for announcing StartEx. No exercise activities should commence prior to this announcement. Play continues in the exercise environment as controlled by the exercise staff.

The exercise area for an FE is limited to the control or command centers (e.g., EOCs, command posts, fusion centers) and their on-site staff. All other activity and deployment of resources outside of these locations is notional and is simulated by SimCell control staff. All exercise communications going in and out of these exercise locations must either originate or terminate at the SimCell. This is done to ensure that no accidental deployment of resources occurs. To accomplish this, players should be supplied with an exercise directory that provides contact information for each of the simulated entities, which will be portrayed by simulators in the SimCell.

In order to prevent accidental deployments, all exercise communications must be easily identifiable as such. This can be accomplished by displaying the phrase “exercise material only” prominently on all typed or printed communications (e.g., fax, e-mail), and by beginning each verbal communication by stating, “*This is an exercise.*”

Due to the great deal of simulated activity that occurs during FEs, these exercises require a robust and detailed MSEL and close communication between the site controller(s) and the SimCell. Site controllers should advise the SimCell on the pace of exercise play, and request more or fewer injects as necessary to maintain an appropriate pace.

During an FSE, the on-site assembly area controller remains in close communication with other controllers throughout the exercise to ensure safe and realistic dispatch of units. The assembly area controller is responsible for the logistical organization of the assembly area, including placement locations for units and coordination of exiting patterns for dispatched units. Excellent organization of this area is critical to exercise success. Therefore, it is imperative for the exercise planning team to create a deployment timetable based on realistic response times from a unit or agency’s home station or office. Failure to do so will result in a compromised and disorganized exercise.

The assembly area controller must be informed about any updates to the exercise that may require changes to the deployment timetable. Should such changes be required, the assembly area controller updates the deployment timetable. When the most current information is used, appropriate units are dispatched and arrive on schedule, allowing the remainder of the exercise to proceed smoothly and realistically.

The controller “takes attendance” to ensure all players are present when a unit arrives at the assembly area. Units are positioned according to their deployment times, and qualified individuals perform a weapons check to guarantee the tagging of all inspected weapons to indicate they are safe for exercise play.

Implementation of an exercise weapons policy is one important example of exercise play rules. Exercise play rules must be disseminated to establish the parameters that participants must follow. These rules help players understand their roles in the exercise environment, enabling the tasks they perform to be effectively evaluated. These rules also describe appropriate behavior, establish guidelines for physical contact, and aim to prevent physical harm to individuals or damage to property. Written rules must be

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reviewed and approved by appropriate authorities and then provided in advance to all parties.

All exercise operations are performed in the operational area. Controllers and evaluators report key activities to the senior controller. The senior controller announces EndEx, either at the conclusion of the scenario, after a certain period of time has passed, or when he or she has determined that all exercise objectives have been met.

Wrap-up Activities

Debriefs subsequent to EndEx provide an opportunity to review general exercise proceedings after the exercise is complete.

Player Hot Wash

Immediately following the exercise, a controller in each functional area leads a hot wash and allows players to provide immediate feedback. This enables controllers and evaluators to capture information about events while they are still fresh in the players' minds. The hot wash is an opportunity to ascertain the level of satisfaction with the exercise, identify issues or concerns, and propose areas for improvement.

Players complete and submit their Participant Feedback Forms during the hot wash. All evaluators take notes during play and hot washes for later compilation with other observations from their functional areas. Information from Participant Feedback Forms is used to help generate the AAR/IP. The exercise planning team leader collects and secures attendance lists.

Controller and Evaluator Debrief

The C/E debrief provides a forum for functional area controllers and evaluators to review the exercise. The exercise planning team leader facilitates this debrief, which provides each controller and evaluator with an opportunity to provide an overview of the functional area he or she observed and to discuss both strengths and areas for improvement. During the debrief, controllers and evaluators complete and submit their Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) as well as their Participant Feedback Forms. Debrief results are captured for inclusion in the AAR/IP.

If hospitals have participated in the exercise, the controllers and evaluators assigned to the hospitals are generally debriefed the day after the exercise. This separate forum enables hospital representatives to assess the tasks performed by the medical community. It features a facilitated discussion covering each hospital's experience during the incident. Prior to this session, hospital controllers and evaluators complete and submit their EEG data collection forms and analysis forms as well as their Participant Feedback Forms. The exercise planning team leader or a key hospital participant facilitates this debrief. Results are captured for inclusion in the AAR/IP.

Appendix A: HSEEP Volume IV Overview

Content

Samples of exercise documents and formats described in the preceding manual can be found in *HSEEP Volume IV: Sample Exercise Documents and Formats*. These samples are presented as both examples and templates, intended for exercise planners to use and/or modify when designing and developing exercises. They can be found on the HSEEP website (<http://hseep.dhs.gov>).

Materials presented in HSEEP Volume IV are pre-arranged in a manner consistent with the outline and contents of the HSEEP series of manuals, as described below. Content may also be searched or displayed based on user preferences and criteria input.

Topics

Topics provided in HSEEP Volume IV are as follows:

- **Program Management** contains sample materials for use in developing and managing an exercise program.
- **Planning** contains sample materials for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating exercises.
- **Multimedia Library** contains video clips, sounds, and pictures that may be inserted into documentation or presentations to add a sense of realism.
- **References** contains homeland security community resources such as publications, websites, and acronyms/definitions.
- **Volunteered Materials** contains examples of documentation posted voluntarily by the planners and program managers who used them in actual exercises and exercise programs.

These materials are intended for users who have varying levels of exercise experience. Information to support their use is included in the HSEEP volumes. The exercise timelines for discussion-based exercises and operations-based exercises further support the use of these materials by chronologically listing the step-by-step process and corrective actions that need to be accomplished during exercise planning and conduct. Many of the sample materials also contain brief descriptions and/or instructions for use.

Formats

The materials contained in HSEEP Volume IV are a starting point from which exercise planners should incorporate exercise goals and exercise type to tailor the final product to the exercising entity's needs. Some materials are provided in both template and example formats. Template documents use an outline format that users can modify and tailor to meet specific needs. Example materials are finished products that demonstrate what a template product should look like when completed.

Users may choose the format with which they feel most comfortable but should be careful when using example materials, particularly scenario-related materials such as Situation Manuals (SitMans). Users must not simply "fill in the blank" or "copy and paste" information into a document without ensuring the content is accurate and pertinent. Users should keep in mind that all materials can be adapted to any exercise focus, type, or scenario. Although users possess a variety of computer and software capabilities, electronic versions of HSEEP Volume IV materials are provided in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint only.

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The purpose of disseminating HSEEP Volume IV is *not* to design and develop “canned” or “boilerplate” exercises. The intent in making these documents available to a wide audience is to lessen the burden on exercise planners who are designing and developing multiple exercises. Many of these materials, particularly those that present an exercise scenario, should be tailored to reflect participating or affected entities and bring realism to an exercise. Exercise success is based on player actions, exhibited either through discussions or actual operations. Documents and materials simply support these activities.

Many of the offered materials are based on proven exercise programs, have been vetted through several organizations, and have gone through numerous iterations and revisions. Although many materials derive from the same program, HSEEP Volume IV is intended to be a compilation of best practice materials from a variety of exercise programs. While these materials are being disseminated on behalf of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its partner agencies, the processes and documents can be adapted to exercise programs sponsored by other Federal agencies or any public or private organization.

HSEEP Volume IV will constantly evolve based on innovative ideas and changing conditions. New, updated, and revised materials will be posted to the HSEEP website as they become available. DHS will accept ideas, documentation, or innovative materials for enhancing the exercise planning process. Program users should submit these comments directly to hseep@dhs.gov or by completing the online surveys located on the HSEEP website.

System Requirements

Users must provide their own Internet access. The system does not rely heavily on graphics, so a dial-up connection should provide adequate performance. However, a higher speed connection is recommended for users who need to download larger files (e.g., sample exercise documents, presentations). Any modern browser supporting Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) and 128-bit encryption will work. Style sheets may be required in the near future to provide for standards-based control over application appearance.

Appendix B: Acronyms

AAR/IP	After Action Report / Improvement Plan
A/V	audio/video
C/E Handbook	Controller and Evaluator Handbook
C&O Meeting	Concept and Objectives Meeting
COOP	continuity of operations
COSIN	Control Staff Instructions
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EEG	Exercise Evaluation Guide
EndEx	end of the exercise
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EOP	emergency operating procedure
ExPlan	Exercise Plan
EvalPlan	Evaluation Plan
FE	functional exercise
FOUO	For Official Use Only
FPC	Final Planning Conference
FSE	full-scale exercise
HazMat	hazardous materials
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
ICS	Incident Command System
IP	Improvement Plan
IPC	Initial Planning Conference
MAA	mutual aid agreement
MPC	Mid-Term Planning Conference
MSEL	Master Scenario Events List
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NRP	National Response Plan
PIO	public information officer
RSP	render-safe procedures
SimCell	Simulation Cell

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SitMan	Situation Manual
SMART	simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and task-oriented
SME	subject matter expert
SOP	standard operating procedure
StartEx	start of the exercise
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
TCL	Target Capabilities List
TTX	tabletop exercise
UTL	Universal Task List
VIP	very important personnel
XPA	Extent of Play Agreement