

Facilitator's Guide
Food Related
Emergency
Exercise Boxed-set
(FREE-B)
Wilted Woes



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Facilitator's Guide

Welcome

This facilitator guide provides you with all you need to conduct a tabletop exercise based on the Wilted Woes scenario. This scenario begins with the first reports of human illness and then focuses on the epidemiological investigation process to identify the food vehicle. This is the typical approach when there is a human health incident caused by an unintentional contamination of produce with *E. coli* O157:H7. As the epidemiologic process unfolds, the preliminary work on identification of the contaminated food product is introduced. The concurrent activities of both the public health and the regulatory operations from this early stage of investigation are included. It is designed to be a five-hour tabletop exercise.

Exercise Goals and Objectives

Overall Goal

Improve jurisdictional preparedness and response to food-related human health incidents.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this tabletop exercise, participants should be able to:

- Understand how an epidemiological investigation unfolds and the roles that various public health agencies play
- Clearly state their roles and contributions to an epidemiologic investigation of a foodborne public health incident
- Obtain a working knowledge of the specific roles clinical, public health, regulatory and laboratory communities play when engaged in this investigation
- Apply the step-by-step process used to investigate a public health situation that

starts with a few cases of clinical illnesses through to the ultimate identification of the food vehicle

- Define the process for collecting and applying the epidemiologic data related to the identification of the contaminated food product
- Assess the limitations of the public health and regulatory sectors and take necessary actions to address these limitations

Exercise Expectations

The event you are preparing to conduct is a tabletop exercise. This tabletop exercise is intended to involve key personnel discussing a simulated scenario in an informal setting. You can use the discussion time today to talk about plans, policies and procedures and promote functional organization through the understanding of authorities, protocols and response resources that already exist within participants' jurisdictions. This tabletop exercise is designed to facilitate discussion among various participating entities such as:

- Public health services/inspectors/clinical practitioners
- Epidemiologists
- Private sector (food-related)
- Federal, State and local agencies

Facilitator Expectations

The role of the facilitator is to guide the participants through the tabletop exercise. Your primary responsibilities include:

- Read and understand this Facilitator Guide prior to conducting the tabletop exercise.
- Be familiar with the objectives of the tabletop exercise and ensure that participants are

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familiar with these objectives prior to the tabletop exercise.

- Understand the exercise evaluation guide (EEG) that will be used by evaluators to document highlights of the discussions.
- Thoroughly review the SITMAN and accompanying PowerPoint presentation.
- Establish and monitor a basic set of ground rules for participants to follow during discussion.
- Keep the tabletop exercise on schedule.
- Identify the appropriate times for breaks and lunch (if applicable).
- Facilitate discussions by asking pertinent questions rather than offering your opinions.
- Keep all discussions focused by bringing the group back on track if the conversation strays from the topic.
- Encourage interaction among the different groups as they would be in the “real world.”
- Encourage the participants to share their experiences and ideas so that they can learn from one another.
- Help the small groups during the breakout sessions if they have questions or need clarification of the discussion questions.
- Identify participants who have relevant and recent experience with scenarios such as this and encourage them to share with lesser experienced participants.

It may be necessary for you to interact with and monitor the small groups to make sure they stay engaged, including reassigning members to different tables to facilitate a more effective and balanced discussion. Some facilitators have also found it helpful to have someone identified (perhaps the lead planner) to assist with monitoring and guiding the groups when they are in the breakout sessions.

Participant Expectations

The following can be expected of the tabletop exercise participants:

- Participants should have a working knowledge of their standard operating procedures, MOUs, MOAs or other interdisciplinary mechanism(s) used for food contamination investigations.
- Participants who have relevant experience are expected to share those experiences with less experienced participants during the breakout sessions.

Additional Materials

A PowerPoint presentation has been developed to help you facilitate the tabletop exercise and to enhance the learning experience for attendees. There is also a situation manual (SITMAN) that has been created as a reference tool for the participants.

Personal Learning Inventory

The Personal Learning Inventory (PLI) is designed to provide participants with a document they can keep that highlights their major takeaways, improvement ideas and action items.

PLIs are for the participants' use only and will not be collected; however, they are welcome to share their PLIs with others as records of their learning experiences in today's tabletop exercise.

Every participant should be given a PLI at the beginning of the tabletop exercise to capture important discoveries and issues as they go through the modules. Participants will complete the PLIs at the end of the exercise and keep them. The PLIs will not be collected.

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Course at a Glance


Unit	Time (Mins.)	Pages (in SITMAN)	Description
1. Welcome	30	3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductions ▪ Objectives ▪ Logistics and Administrative ▪ Facilitator's Role ▪ Distribution of PLI
2. Module 1: Early Investigation	30 30	6-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of first segment of SITMAN ▪ Conduct small group discussion related to specific responsibilities
3. Whole Group Recap of Module 1	30	11-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each group reports on its assessment of the situation and steps to be taken ▪ Whole group discusses how their work should be coordinated ▪ Gaps in coverage are identified
Break	15		
4. Module 2: Later Investigation and Conclusions	15 30	15-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of second segment of SITMAN ▪ Conduct small group discussion related to specific responsibilities
5. Whole Group Recap of Module 2	30	19-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each group reports its further assessment of the situation and additional steps to be taken ▪ Whole group discusses how their work should be coordinated ▪ Gaps in coverage are identified
Break	15		
6. Final Assessment	45	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use wrap up questions to discuss the whole group's ability to respond to the event ▪ Document action items and accountability for next steps
7. Evaluation	30	Hand out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute and collect feedback forms ▪ Close out exercise

Approximate Total Workshop Time: 5 hours

- Note on Breakout Timing:
 - Thirty minutes for whole group to report on their findings allows about 5 minutes per group.
 - Groups should focus on the top three points or challenges they have uncovered.

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Facilitator's Guide Icons

When You See This...	It Means...
	Refer the participants to the SITMAN page as indicated.
	Say what's printed in the SITMAN, present information in the PowerPoint or provide other instruction.
	Ask the question(s) of the participants.
	Hand out materials to be distributed to the participants.
	Assemble participants into a breakout or smaller group for an activity.
	Planning and review time for the facilitator.

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Preparations: Getting Started

The following items should be provided by the lead planner:

- List of participants and their affiliations
- Tabletop exercise schedule
- One copy of the SITMAN for each participant
- Name badge for each participant
- Table tent card for each participant group
- Certificate of Attendance for each participant
- Appropriate audio visual equipment and meeting supplies
- Copies of the Personal Learning Inventory

The facilitator should arrive early enough (one hour before the start of the tabletop exercise is recommended) to make sure that the room is set up properly and that the necessary documents and supplies are available. The facilitator should also check that all equipment is in working order.

A Note about Clock Management

As facilitator you are responsible for keeping the tabletop exercise on schedule. Running behind schedule and finishing late will distract from the tabletop exercise's goals and may detract from the learning experience. Also, cutting corners and rushing through the program may have equally negative effects, as the continuity of the learning can be greatly disrupted. Some helpful guidelines for you to consider are:

- Prepare in advance to be familiar with the materials.
- Rehearse the timing of each portion of the training.
- Use the agenda — the timing has been calculated to effectively fit the allotted timeframe.
- If the training is scheduled for more or less time than the suggested timeframe, plan out a new agenda in advance.
- Manage excessive conversation by asking participants to link their comments to the stated objectives.
- “Park” lengthy discussions in a “Parking Lot,” and agree to return to them later (if time permits).
- Questions and concerns that arise in the breakout sessions that cannot be resolved should be recorded in the After-Action Report (AAR).
- Use breaks and lunch to recalculate the agenda timing if there are concerns about veering off course.

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Opening Remarks: Suggestions



Facilitator Introduction – The facilitator should welcome everyone and introduce himself/herself to the participants.

Facility Points of Interest – Identify the locations of important places in the building like the restrooms, emergency exits, snack room or cafeteria, and other places that may be needed by the participants during the course of the tabletop exercise.

Explain the Exercise Terminology – The following is a list of terminology that is used throughout this guide. The facilitator should go over these terms with the participants so that everyone has a clear understanding.

- **Facilitator** – The person who provides leadership to the participants during the presentation of the entire tabletop exercise. You should briefly describe your background and qualifications. Express your intent to make this tabletop exercise a useful and rewarding experience for all participants.
- **Lead Planner** – The person who has overall responsibility for the tabletop exercise, including convening the Planning Team and pre- and post-exercise needs.
- **Group Leader** – A participant selected to keep each group on track during the breakout sessions. Each table should volunteer a group leader for their table.
- **Group Recorder/Reporter** – A participant selected to record the discussion at each table during the breakout sessions. They also act as the spokesperson during the moderated discussions. Each table should volunteer a group leader for their table.
- **Situation Manual (SITMAN)** – A handbook that is given to the participants that contains the scenario, objectives and any supplemental documentation needed.

Evaluator(s) – Representatives chosen by the Planning Team to record the events at each breakout table or group. This person does not participate in the tabletop exercise but captures the essence of the dialog for use in the After-Action Report, using an exercise evaluation guide as a basis. They are chosen based on their expertise in the area (e.g., epidemiology, etc.) that they are to observe. Confirm that an evaluator is present for each breakout table or group.

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Participants – Explain that representatives from various entities have been asked to take part in this exercise. Ask participants to introduce themselves by offering their name, agency/company/entity and their role.



Exercise Objectives – Review tabletop exercise objectives with all participants. Ask participants what expectations they have for this exercise. Include relevant new objectives (if time permits), and clearly explain that participant objectives that are not relevant will not be addressed in this exercise; however, another FREE-B scenario might be a better forum for a specific participant objective. Direct the participants to the FREE-B Web resource <http://www.fda.gov/fooddefense> to review other FREE-B content.

It is also important to remind the participant groups that not all of the questions will be applicable to every group.



Personal Learning Inventory

Instruct participants to complete their Personal Learning Inventory (PLI).

Remind participants that PLIs are for the participants' use only and will not be collected; however, they are welcome to share their PLIs with others as records of their learning experiences in today's tabletop exercise.

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Module 1 – Early Investigation

Tell participants that Module 1 describes the discovery and diagnosis of the illness as well as the cause. Explain the tasks for the participants:

- You have 75 minutes to consider the developments and assigned questions in your group for Module 1.
- Spend 15 minutes summarizing the scenario using the PowerPoint presentation. Let participants know that additional details are in the SITMAN.
- Ask participants to spend 30 minutes answering the assigned questions.
- Tell participants that after the time to answer questions has elapsed they will reconvene as a whole group to report on their findings and issues.
- Explain that there are 30 minutes allotted for the whole group to report back so each group should focus on three discoveries or issues that are important for the whole group to know.
- Tell the participants that to expedite the whole group feedback, they should select a group recorder/reporter in advance.
- Identify any additional requirements, critical issues, decisions and questions you think should be addressed at this time.
- Unanswered questions should be written down for discussion with the entire group.
- Tell participants you will help them manage their time, and instruct them when to begin constructing their report for presentation to the whole group.

Note to Facilitator: Timing is critical. Manage the clock, and allow 75 minutes in total for the entire module. Keep them informed about remaining time, and give them warnings at 10 minutes, 5 minutes and 2 minutes. Whole group discussion is limited to 30 minutes.



Facilitator Notes

1. Spend 15 minutes summarizing the scenario using the PowerPoint presentation. Let participants know that additional details are in the SITMAN.

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2. Before participants begin their discussion of the assigned questions provide an opportunity to ask questions.
3. Quickly review the expectations for the breakout session, and have participants begin their discussions.
4. Inform the participants that each group will be assigned questions regarding each module for discussion.



Breakout Session

- Refer participants to relevant SITMAN pages.
- Indicate to each group which questions it should answer for that module.



Facilitator Notes

1. At the appropriate time, ask the participants in the breakout sessions to end their discussions so that the group can participate in the moderated discussion. Give the groups 10, 5 and 2 minute warnings so that they can wrap up their discussions.
2. Have each of the groups give a report of their discussions. It should focus on the top three items they have discussed and should be important for the whole group to know.
3. Ask if there are any comments from other participants about the questions and answers reported.
4. If a group is unable to answer a question, pose the question to the whole group and see if an answer can be found.
5. Unresolved questions should be recorded and later addressed in the After-Action Report.
6. Manage the clock, and keep the discussion on track.

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Break

Take a 15-minute break before continuing with Module 2.



Module 2 – Identification of Food

Explain the tasks for the participants:

- You have 65 minutes to consider the developments and assigned questions in your group for Module 2.
- Spend 15 minutes summarizing the scenario using the PowerPoint presentation. Let participants know that additional details are in the SITMAN.
- Ask participants to spend 30 minutes answering the assigned questions.
- Tell participants that after the time to answer questions has elapsed they will reconvene as a whole group to report on their findings and issues.
- Explain that there are 30 minutes allotted for the whole group to report back so each group should focus on three discoveries or issues that are important for the whole group to know.
- Tell the participants that to expedite the whole group feedback, they should select a group recorder/reporter in advance.
- Identify any additional requirements, critical issues, decisions and questions you think should be addressed at this time.
- Unanswered questions should be written down for discussion with the entire group.
- Tell participants you will help them manage their time, and instruct them when to begin constructing their report for presentation to the whole group.

Note to Facilitator: Timing is critical. Manage the clock, and allow 65 minutes in total for the entire module. Keep them informed about remaining time, and give them warnings at 10 minutes, 5 minutes and 2 minutes. Whole group discussion is limited to 30 minutes.

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Facilitator Notes

1. Spend 15 minutes summarizing the scenario using the PowerPoint presentation. Let participants know that additional details are in the SITMAN.
2. Before participants begin their discussion of the assigned questions, provide an opportunity to ask questions.
3. Quickly review the expectations for the breakout session and have participants begin their discussions.
4. Inform the participants that each group will be assigned questions regarding each module for discussion.



Breakout Session

- Refer participants to relevant SITMAN pages.
- Indicate to each group which questions it should answer for that module.



Facilitator Notes

1. At the appropriate time, ask the participants in the breakout sessions to end their discussions so that the group can participate in the moderated discussion. You might want to give the groups 10, 5 and 2 minute warnings so that they can wrap up their discussions.
2. Have each of the groups give a report of their discussions. It should include questions discussed and the conclusions they were able to reach.
3. Ask if there are any comments from other participants about the questions and answers reported.

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4. If a group is unable to answer a question, pose the question to the whole group and see if an answer can be found.
5. Unresolved questions should be recorded and later addressed in the After-Action Report.



Break

Take a 15-minute break before continuing with the wrap up.



Final Assessment and Evaluation

- Explain to participants that you will spend about 45 minutes discussing wrap up questions.
- Explain that participants will be asked to fill out feedback forms (to be handed in) and complete their personal learning inventory (theirs to keep).

Note that you will then discuss “next steps,” including items for the After-Action Report, assignments and timeline.



Wrap Up Questions

Have all the Learning Objectives been met? Review each one by one.

Please lead the group through a discussion of the wrap up questions for about 45 minutes. The lead planner will let you know which specific questions to use before the

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session begins. All of the questions are listed in the SITMAN and here for your reference.

1. What is the most important thing you learned today in terms of managing an outbreak that impacts multiple jurisdictions?
2. What information do you need to make informed decisions during such an event? If you don't have that information, how do you get it or what needs to be done to make a decision without it?
3. Do you think this exercise will prompt your organization to evaluate your protocols, policies and procedures?
4. What top three actions should be taken to ensure proper event management based on what you have learned from this exercise?
5. What went right, and what can you improve on at each stage of the outbreak investigation?
6. What are the roles and responsibilities of the various clinical, public health, regulatory and laboratory communities engaged in this investigation?
7. What could be done through all phases to reduce the time from the first signal to implementation of effective controls and to final resolution in order to protect public health and reduce the economic impact on the entire industry?
8. What are some key lessons related to risk communication that you discussed today? What can you commit to doing to ensure that your organization supports a consistent, multi-jurisdictional, science-based message in the event of a foodborne illness outbreak?
9. At any point during the investigation did you consider that contamination might have been intentional? How would this have changed the investigation?



Feedback Forms

In order to make future exercises even more successful, feedback forms are used to get input from participants. These forms will provide details about the overall exercise process, whether the objectives were met and areas that could be improved. The comments should be captured in notes to assist in the completion of the After-Action Report and Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).

After the tabletop exercise and wrap up discussion, the facilitator should have the participants complete a feedback form. These forms should be returned to the facilitator

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upon completion. The facilitator should then forward these feedback forms to the lead planner.

The comments will be captured to assist in the completion of the AAR/IP. An AAR/IP is an important tool used to evaluate the tabletop exercise addressing outcomes, strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned; and share that information with the participants. Please review the exercise objectives once more prior to passing out these forms.

At the end of tabletop exercise, the facilitator should inform the participants the date by which they will receive the AAR/IP. Participants should also be told that the AAR/IP should be treated as a "For Official Use Only" document that should only be shared with individuals with a need to know.



Personal Learning Inventory

After the group finishes filling out the feedback forms, please ask the group to spend 10 minutes completing their personal learning inventories. Remind participants that PLIs are for the participants use only and will not be collected; however, they are welcome to share their PLIs with others as records of their learning experiences in today's tabletop exercise.

Please ask participants to hand in their evaluation forms to the lead planner before they leave.



Close Out Exercise

Thank participants for their contributions to the exercise. Ask the lead planner to make any final remarks and to remind participants about the After Action Report and other follow up activities.

Appendix A

Appendix A: Glossary

In this appendix, you will find a list of terms used throughout the guide. Use this as a reference for any words with which you are unfamiliar.

- **After-Action Report and Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)** – The final product of an exercise. The After-Action Report and Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) has two components: an AAR, which captures observations and recommendations based on the exercise objectives as associated with the capabilities and tasks; and an IP, which identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties and establishes targets for their completion. The lead evaluator and the exercise Planning Team draft the AAR and submit it to conference participants prior to an After-Action Conference. The draft AAR is distributed to conference participants for review no more than 30 days after the exercise is conducted. The final AAR/IP is an outcome of the After-Action Conference and should be disseminated to participants no more than 60 days after exercise completion. The AAR/IP should be treated as a “For Official Use Only” document and shared only with those with a need to know.
- **Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)** – A capabilities- and performance-based exercise program that provides standardized policy, doctrine and terminology for the design, development, conduct and evaluation of homeland security exercises. HSEEP also provides tools and resources to facilitate the management of self-sustaining homeland security exercise programs.
- **Personal Learning Inventory (PLI)** – An accounting of each participant’s learning experience.
- **Module** – A segment within the exercise.

Appendix B

Appendix B: Acronyms Used

Acronym	Definition
AAR	After-Action Report
AAR/IP	After-Action Report and Improvement Plan
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
SITMAN	Situation Manual
DHS	Department of Homeland Security