

Talladega Hazmat Tabletop Exercise - 2014



After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

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The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine to include the National Preparedness Goal and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Talladega County Hazmat Tabletop Exercise 2014
Exercise Dates	July 10, 2014
Scope	This is a tabletop exercise scheduled for 4 hours at the Marjorie Sanford Building, Central Alabama Community College, Childersburg, Alabama
Mission Area(s)	Response
Core Capabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Planning2. Public Information and Warning3. Operational Coordination4. Environmental Response/Health and Safety5. Fatality Management6. On-scene Security and Protection7. Public Health and Medical Services
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate operational coordination where multiple disciplines and multiple jurisdictions are responding to significant events.• Demonstrate fire and hazmat protocols in response to a life-threatening incident.• Test tactical communications between dispatch centers, responders, and other governmental organizations.
Threat or Hazard	Ammonia Nitrate and Propane gas
Scenario	Responders will be challenged with two major incidents happening almost simultaneously.
Sponsor	Talladega County EMA
Participating Organizations	(See attachment B)
Point of Contact	Director, Talladega County EMA 26715 AL Highway 21Talladega, AL 35161 Phone. (256) 761-2125

ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and core capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned core capabilities, and performance ratings for each core capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Core Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Evaluate operational coordination where multiple disciplines and multiple jurisdictions are responding to significant events.	Operational Coordination		S		
	Public Information and Warning		S		
	Fatality Management	P			
	On-scene Security and Protection	P			
Demonstrate fire and hazmat protocols in response to a life-threatening chemical spill.	Environmental Response/Health and Safety	P			
	Public Health and Medical Services	P			
Test tactical communications between dispatch centers, responders, and other governmental organizations.	Operational Communication		S		

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Objective 1: Evaluate operational coordination where multiple disciplines and multiple jurisdictions are responding to an event.

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability 1: Operational Coordination

Areas for Improvement 1: Unified Command

Analysis 1: Most of the agencies responding were familiar with Incident Command principles but had difficulty actually implementing IC/UC during the exercise. Good span of control was not utilized. The command organization was not sufficient to meet all the needs of this particular scenario. More training and exercises focused on IC/UC should significantly improve this element.

Areas for Improvement 2: Utilizing the EOC

Analysis 2: There were a number of events during the exercise where the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) could have played a significant role in supporting the command post - but was not utilized. Most of the officers in the command post were not familiar with the role of the EOC and did not know what assets were available to them through the EOC. EOC familiarization training will give responders a better idea of how the EOC relates to and supports on-scene command. A published list of the EMA's assets and capabilities would also be beneficial.

Core Capability 2: Public Information and Warning

Areas for Improvement 2: Providing information to the media.

Analysis 1: Each organization had its own spokesman on hand but there was no good method to insure accurate and approved information was coordinated before release to the public. A Joint Information Center would have been appropriate for this scenario.

Core Capability 3: Fatality Management

Areas for Improvement: None noted

Analysis: Public Health and EMA staff efficiently coordinated mass fatality response.

Core Capability 4: On-scene Security and Protection

Strength: Traffic management and identifying safe routes into the response area for other responders. Law Enforcement effectively coordinated the closing of roads and provided information to the command post that allowed other responders to approach and enter the scene from the safest direction.

Areas for Improvement: Evacuations

Analysis: The need to protect downwind citizens was quickly recognized and some 2,000 people were evacuated. However the evacuation message to citizens did not contain information about evacuation routes or information on where evacuees could go.

Objective 2: Demonstrate fire and hazmat protocols in response to a life-threatening chemical spill

Core Capability 1: Environmental Response/Health and Safety

Strengths: The hazmat team demonstrated an excellent knowledge of all protocols for the hazmat event depicted in this exercise scenario.

Areas for Improvement: None Noted

Core Capability 2: Public Health and Medical Services.

Strength: EMS response was well coordinated with local hospitals and EMS crews from other jurisdictions were effectively utilized. The local Department of Public Health activated their operations center and provided a representative to the EOC to further coordinate medical services.

Areas for Improvement 1: Security reinforcements at local hospital Emergency Rooms.

Analysis: Even though Emergency Room security was not an element in this scenario, it was recognized as a potential problem. During a large scale emergency, county and municipal law enforcement officer resources could become depleted at the disaster site. Emergency room will likely require additional security. Recommend hospitals investigate utilization of other law enforcement agencies such as Alabama Fish and Game officers to increase security during large scale emergencies.

Objective 3: Test tactical communications between dispatch centers, responders, and other governmental organizations.

Areas for Improvement: Information flow between incident command and the EOC.

Analysis: There was a significant lack of communication between the incident command post and the EOC. This resulted in an under-utilization of available assets and services from EMA and made it much more difficult for the EOC to maintain a common operating picture across the entire county. The process of information flow is described in the county Emergency Operations Plan. Responders demonstrated a need for more familiarization with the EOC as well as more training on the County Emergency Operations Plan.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Operational Coordination	Unified Command	Provide training and exercises focused on the principles of IC/UC	Training And Exercises	EMA	Director	1 September 2014	On-going
	Utilization of the EOC	Publish a list of the EMAs assets, capabilities, and services.	Training	EMA	Director	1 September 2014	1 January 2015
	Application of the County Emergency Operations Plan	Provide more training to first responders on contents of the Emergency Operations Plan	Training	EMA	Director	1 September 2014	1 April 2014
Public Information and Warning	Providing valid information to the public	Utilize Joint Information Centers during significant events	Planning	All response agencies	Department Chief	1 September 2014	1 March 2015
On-scene Security and Protection	Evacuations	Develop and utilize standard templates to use when executing an evacuation.	Planning	Municipal and County Law Enforcement with help from local fire chiefs	Department Chief	1 September 2014	1 March 2015

¹ Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

Public Health and Medical Services	Hospital security during catastrophic events.	Investigate utilizing second tier law enforcement to increase security at hospital ERs	Planning	Talladega Department of Public Health	Emergency Preparedness Coordinator	1 September 2014	1 June 2015
<p>There is one overarching corrective action that has some effect on most capabilities. Every response agency should be familiar with the Talladega County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Many of the shortfalls noted in this exercise could likely be corrected by understanding and applying the EOP guidelines.</p>							

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations	
State	
	Alabama Department of Public Safety
	Alabama Department of Transportation
	Central Alabama Community College
Local	
	American Red Cross
	Childersburg Fire Department
	Citizen's Hospital
	Coosa Valley Medical Center
	Lincoln Fire Department
	Oak Grove Police Department
	RACES
	Sylacauga Ambulance Company
	Sylacauga Fire Department
	Sylacauga Police Department
	Talladega County EMA
	Talladega County Sheriff's Office
	Talladega Police Department