



FEMA

Lessons Learned  
Information Sharing  
[LLIS.gov](http://LLIS.gov)

Sharing Information  
Enhancing Preparedness  
Strengthening Homeland Security

---

## LESSON LEARNED

---

### Emergency Management: Establishing a Planning Section at the Emergency Operations Center

#### SUMMARY

Incident command should establish a planning section in or near the emergency operations center (EOC). This section would conduct the planning process, compile incident action plans (IAP), and develop a county action plan that would identify resources required for the next operational period.

#### DESCRIPTION

The US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and Joint Forces Command co-sponsored the Ardent Sentry exercise from May 7 to 18, 2007, in the US and Canada. Ardent Sentry consisted of five exercise components: the National Guard full-scale exercise (FSE) Vigilant Guard, the Northern Edge FSE in Canada, the Hoosier Sentry combined functional and full-scale exercise in Indiana, the Alaska Shield combined functional and full-scale exercise in Alaska, and the HURREX tabletop exercise in Rhode Island. The main goal of Ardent Sentry was to demonstrate multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional unity of effort in support of a civilian-led response to a national crisis. Ardent Sentry simulated a Category 3 hurricane making landfall in New England, a nuclear detonation in Indiana, and several terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure in Alaska and waters along the western US-Canadian border. Ardent Sentry required the coordination of over 3,000 federal, state, and local responders and more than 2,000 active-duty personnel.

Canada served as a full partner in the Ardent Sentry exercise through the coordination of Canada Command and US military resources. Canada Command oversees the operations of Canadian forces and coordinates with NORTHCOM.

NORTHCOM, the National Guard, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, the Indiana National Guard, and the Indianapolis-Marion County Emergency Management Division co-sponsored the Hoosier Sentry combined functional and full-scale exercise from May 10 to 13, 2007, at 6 locations in south-central Indiana. Hoosier Sentry simulated the detonation of a 10-kiloton nuclear device by a terrorist cell in northeastern Indianapolis. Exercise objectives focused on integrating National Guard and active-duty military resources with emergency response operations. The combined exercise also evaluated federal and state abilities to support local responders during a weapon of mass destruction/hazardous materials incident. The exercise required emergency response and military teams to provide sheltering operations for over 77,000 notional civilians and to treat over 500 role-playing victims. Over 100 federal, state, and local agencies and 1,000 response personnel participated in the Hoosier Sentry exercise.

During the FSE, incident command did not establish a planning section in the EOC, which resulted in the failure to develop a county action plan. This made the EOC staff less proactive and minimized the amount of guidance and situational awareness provided to

incident commanders, the policy group, and other relevant exercise entities. The FSE after-action report (AAR) notes that previous procedures required EOC staff to establish a county action plan during each operational period. However, emergency support function representatives are often too busy with their immediate operations tasks, preventing them from completing the planning process. In order to eliminate this problem, the AAR suggests that EOC staff utilize a planning section to develop a county action plan. The AAR notes that personnel assigned to the planning section, "should be dedicated to the EOC during activations and incorporated into the EOC system in the same manner as other ESF [emergency support function] representatives."

Incident command should establish a planning section in or near the EOC. This section would conduct the planning process, compile IAPs, and develop a county action plan that would identify resources required for the next operational period.

### **CITATION**

Indianapolis-Marion County Emergency Management Division. *2007 Ardent Sentry, Indiana Homeland Security District 5 After Action Report*. 16 Aug 2007.  
<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=26593>

### **DISCLAIMER**

*Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov)* is the US Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency response and homeland security communities. The Web site and its contents are provided for informational purposes only, without warranty or guarantee of any kind, and do not represent the official positions of the US Department of Homeland Security. For more information on *LLIS.gov*, please email [feedback@llis.dhs.gov](mailto:feedback@llis.dhs.gov) or visit [www.llis.gov](http://www.llis.gov).