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## Interoperable Communications: Creating Course Outlines and Lesson Plans for Staff

### SUMMARY

Exercise planners should consider developing course outlines and lesson plans that detail Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP) protocol for the technical staff, line operations staff, and command staff. These lesson plans and course outlines can facilitate interoperable communications by ensuring proper implementation of protocol during incidents.

### DESCRIPTION

The Philadelphia Urban Area conducted Project Liberty TICP full-scale exercise at the Strafford Train Station in Wayne, Pennsylvania, on August 24, 2006. Forty-nine federal, state, and local representatives from nine emergency management agencies and two private sector organizations participated in the exercise, which identified strengths and areas for improvement in the Philadelphia Urban Area's tactical interoperable communications capabilities. The exercise tested participants' abilities to maintain interoperable communications after an explosion on the train tracks at Strafford Train Station, which caused a train derailment resulting in multiple injuries.

Exercise planners designated two incident notification methods: radio from the train conductor through the Amtrak system to the Chester County 9-1-1 center and a victim's cell phone call directly to the Chester County 9-1-1 center. Responders succeeded at implementing some TICP protocols but experienced difficulties fulfilling all TICP elements. For example, responders missed critical information when radio technicians did not follow proper TICP protocol by dropping a patch without first notifying dispatchers.

Participants noted during the post-exercise debriefing session that a lack of training on implementing the TICP protocols caused uneven deployment of communications personnel and resources during the exercise. The AAR recommended that exercise planners should consider creating TICP protocol course outlines and lesson plans for the technical staff, line operations staff, and command staff.

Exercise planners should consider creating course outlines and lesson plans in TICP protocols. Exercise planners should distribute these outlines and plans to the technical, line operations, and command staffs to ensure proper TICP implementation during incidents.

### CITATIONS

Philadelphia Urban Area Security Initiative. *Project Liberty Full-Scale Exercise After-Action Report*. 2006, p. 10.

Southeast Pennsylvania Regional Counter-Terrorism Task Force. *Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan*. 08 Jun 2006.

Ward, Marilyn. Executive Director and Exercise Lead Evaluator, National Public Safety Telecommunications Council. Correspondence with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*, 27 Mar 2007.

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