

#### RELATED TERMS

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- Unified Command



## Lessons Learned Information Sharing

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## LESSON LEARNED

### Exercise Design: Allowing Sufficient Time for Exercise Participants to Establish an Initial Incident Command

#### SUMMARY

Exercise scenarios should allow sufficient time for exercise participants to establish an initial Incident Command (IC). This affords them the opportunity to practice skills that may prove important during an actual incident.

#### DESCRIPTION

On February 23, 2005, the Pierce County, Washington, Terrorism Early Warning/Response Taskforce staged Cascade Resolve 05, a multi-agency, full-scale exercise (FSE). The county-wide exercise provided individual agencies the opportunity to evaluate their tactical, managerial, and investigative capabilities when responding to a series of terrorist attacks. Using the Puyallup County Fairgrounds, the exercise simulated multiple events, including a large conventional explosion with a high number of casualties, chemical and radiological hazards, multiple hostage-taking situations, and structural damage to area buildings resulting in trapped victims.

The FSE scenario did not allow participants sufficient time to establish an initial IC. Instead, the FSE timeline dictated that a Unified Command structure be implemented immediately following the arrival of the first law enforcement and fire officers at the incident scene. The failure to include an initial IC in the exercise design prevented first arriving officers from practicing important skills needed during an actual event. First arriving officers were not given a chance to assess incident conditions, identify potential problems, and make strategic decisions based on their assessments.

Exercise scenarios should allow sufficient time for exercise participants to establish an initial IC. This affords them the opportunity to practice skills that may prove important during an actual incident.

#### CITATION

Pierce County, Washington, Department of Emergency Management. [\*Pierce County, Washington Exercise—Cascade Resolve 05: After Action Report and Improvement Plan.\*](#) June 2005.  
([LLIS.gov ID# 13536](#))

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