



## Hurricane Preparedness Exercises: Frequently Asked Questions

### *What are the Hurricane Preparedness Exercises (HPE)?*

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is sponsoring regional Hurricane Preparedness Exercises that will engage top officials from states and territories along the U.S. Gulf Coast and Eastern Seaboard and adjacent states within FEMA Regions I-IV and VI. The exercises will also include participation from federal agencies, tribal entities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector partners. The Hurricane Preparedness Exercise series will feature discussion-based exercises, preceded by a number of events with senior leadership at the state and federal level, including senior leadership seminars.

### *What are the goals of the HPE?*

The primary goal of the HPE is to validate improvements to hurricane response plans based on the 2005 hurricane season after-actions reports and to identify immediate coordination and preparedness improvements needed prior to the 2006 hurricane season.

### *Who is participating in the HPE?*

The DHS Preparedness Directorate's Office of Grants and Training (G&T), in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is spearheading the Hurricane Preparedness Exercises. Participation includes appropriate components of the federal interagency, state and local, territorial, and tribal representatives, in addition to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and critical private sector partners.

### *What policies will the HPE test and refine?*

The HPE will test and refine the plans, policies, and procedural changes made at all levels of government following Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. These plans include a new FEMA Concept of Operations and Evacuation Plan for the 2006 hurricane season, changes to the National Response Plan, and the newly sanctioned DHS Common Operational Picture. The HPE will also serve as a forum to discuss and reinforce the principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which is the underlying incident management structure for hurricane response activities at all levels of government.

### *How will lessons learned be gathered and implemented?*

One goal of the HPE is to identify and implement additional high priority improvement actions prior to the start of the 2006 hurricane season on June 1. As part of the exercise after-action reporting process, participants will collaboratively identify necessary improvements and assign them to responsible parties. DHS will provide states and localities with support in tracking progress toward implementation of improvement actions, to ensure that the exercises result in concrete preparedness benefits.

*What are the anticipated outcomes of the HPE?*

The HPE will communicate, refine, and validate the policies and plans that the nation will rely on during the 2006 hurricane season. The exercises will also address immediate coordination issues among federal, state, and local emergency management agencies, and will build and strengthen existing on-the-ground relationships that will be crucial to successfully responding to hurricanes and other emergencies.

*How are these exercises different from others like the Top Officials Exercise (TOPFF) and Hurricane Pam?*

The HPE has a broad geographic footprint, exercising the entire Gulf Coast and Eastern Seaboard under a short timeframe. Whereas TOPOFF features scenarios designed to broadly test preparedness, the HPE is narrowly focused to help strengthen the specific capabilities that are essential for a well-coordinated response to the 2006 hurricane season. Furthermore, unlike the Hurricane Pam exercise conducted in 2004, the HPE will feature a disciplined process to implement lessons learned, ensuring that the exercises result in concrete preparedness improvements.

*What is the schedule for HPE activities?*

- FEMA Region III Tabletop (Philadelphia, PA: May 3-4)
- FEMA Region II Tabletop (San Juan, PR: May 8-9)
- Louisiana Mobile Education Team Session (Baton Rouge, LA: May 16)
- FEMA Region VI Tabletop (New Orleans, LA: May 17-18)
- New Orleans/Baton Rouge Full-Scale Exercise (New Orleans/Baton Rouge, LA: May 22-24)
- FEMA Region IV Tabletop (Atlanta, GA: May 31-June 1)
- FEMA Regions I and II Tabletop (location TBD: June 20-21)

*Where can additional information about the HPE be found?*

Hurricane Preparedness Exercises information has been posted to the Department of Homeland Security Website at [DHS.gov/hpe](http://DHS.gov/hpe), the DHS Lessons Learned Information Sharing System and the Grants & Training Secure Portal. You must be a member of the Grants & Training Secure Portal to view the materials. Requests for access should be sent to [hseep@dhs.gov](mailto:hseep@dhs.gov). For media inquiries, please call the DHS Press Office at 202-282-8010.