



# Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program

## *The National Exercise Program*

### **THE NATIONAL EXERCISE PROGRAM (NEP)**

National security and homeland security preparedness-related exercises play a critical role in accomplishing the mission of the Department of Homeland Security. The NEP is a national, interagency-wide program that serves as the principal mechanism for examining the preparation and efficiency of national leaders, their staffs, and the organizations and systems they lead. The program is conducted in accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8) and the Homeland Security Act of 2002, and is administered by a working group within the Homeland Security Council.

### **THE NEP AND THE HOMELAND SECURITY EXERCISE AND EVALUATION PROGRAM (HSEEP)**

HSPD-8 directed the United States Government “to strengthen the preparedness of the United States to prevent and respond to threatened or actual domestic terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies by requiring a national domestic all-hazard preparedness goal, establishing mechanisms for improved delivery of federal preparedness assistance to State and local governments, and outlining actions to strengthen preparedness capabilities of Federal, State, and local entities.” To achieve this policy, the Homeland Security Council—building upon the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) and other existing exercise programs—established the NEP under the leadership of the Secretary of Homeland Security in order to integrate National-level exercise activities. As a result, HSEEP is a key pillar of the larger NEP framework. For each NEP exercise, HSEEP serves as doctrine for exercise design, development, conduct, and evaluation.

#### **The goals of the NEP are to:**

- Require national leaders and other officials to exercise their responsibilities under the National Response Plan and other strategies.
- Examine emerging policy issues through the conduct of exercises in a comprehensive manner on a routine basis.
- Incorporate current threat and vulnerability assessments into the exercise objectives and planning effort.
- Develop a corrective action process to ensure lessons from exercises are either sustained or improved.
- Achieve national unity among appropriate Federal, State, local, private sector, and partner nations.

**For more information on the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program, please contact the HSEEP Help Desk at :**

[support@hseep.net](mailto:support@hseep.net)



## THE NATIONAL EXERCISE PROGRAM TIERS

The NEP organizes Federal, State, and local exercises into four tiers reflecting the relative priority of interagency participation in the exercise. Ranging from national-level to State and local exercises, these tiers are designed to test collective preparedness, interoperability, and collaboration across all levels of government and the private sector:

- Tier I Exercises (*Required*): Require the participation of appropriate Department and Agency heads or their deputies, as well as necessary operations centers.
- Tier II Exercises (*Commended*): Supported by all appropriate Departments and Agencies either through the National Simulation Center or as determined by agency leadership.
- Tier III Exercises (*Permitted*): Emphasize achieving stated objectives without requiring broad interagency headquarters-level involvement. Participation is not mandatory.
- Tier IV Exercises: Primarily for the training of State, territorial, local, tribal governments, and the private sector.



## THE FIVE YEAR EXERCISE SCHEDULE

The NEP runs on a Five Year Exercise Schedule, which establishes goals and themes for exercises based on immediate and long-term strategic direction and policy priorities. This five-year schedule gives Federal, State, and local jurisdictions the necessary time to secure a budget for exercise participation, align activities with efforts in other jurisdictions, and make other necessary preparations.

**The National Exercise Program requires the U.S. Government to maintain a permanent state of readiness to protect against possible security threats.**

Rather than replacing Federal, State, and local jurisdiction exercises, the NEP works to incorporate these activities into a comprehensive program that can function cohesively in the event of an emergency. Department- or Agency-level exercises, in turn, can address individual problems and support the NEP priorities laid out in the five year plan.