

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program

HSSEP In Action

OMAHA, NEBRASKA'S ORAL QUIZ EXERCISE

Omaha, Nebraska used the HSEEP methodology to design an extended quiz to exercise and validate their Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP). The oral quiz's unscripted play allowed the evaluators to observe and validate more sections of Omaha's TICP than a traditional scenario-driven exercise could test.

In 2006, the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Grants and Training required 76 Urban Area Security Initiative-designated urban areas and other state-designated metropolitan areas to test their Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICP) with full-scale exercises (FSE). Each area's exercise planners had to design the FSE both to test TICP procedures and to provide Department of Homeland Security-appointed evaluators with an opportunity to officially validate the TICP.

The Omaha TICP exercise managers used the HSEEP methodology to design their FSE as an extended quiz rather than a traditional scenario-driven exercise. Using an oral quiz method, the evaluators would task the emergency communications players to perform specific tasks from the TICP, such as opening a communications channel for both fire and law enforcement agencies or broadcasting alerts on multiple radio channels at the same time.

HSEEP's flexible guidance allowed Omaha's exercise managers to design, conduct, and evaluate this uniquely designed exercise while still operating within the HSEEP design and evaluation framework. The exercise managers ensured that the oral quiz exercise was consistent with HSEEP requirements, even while accommodating the exercise's reduced planning timeline, independent evaluation, and specific focus on the TICP. The exercise managers also produced HSEEP-compliant exercise products, such as Exercise Evaluation Guides designed to test specific, targeted capabilities related to the TICP and an After-Action Report and Improvement Plan.

On June 20, 2006, the Omaha Police Department held their TICP FSE in conjunction with the National Collegiate Athletic Association Men's College World Series. The oral quiz's unscripted play allowed the evaluators to observe and validate more sections of Omaha's TICP than a scenario-driven exercise could test. Specifically, the exercise's design allowed evaluators to test the TICP for various different types of emergencies or natural disasters. Exercise managers who had been involved in other TICP exercises noted that Omaha's exercise validated a greater portion of its TICP than other exercises they had evaluated.



Omaha's Johnny Rosenblatt Stadium, one of the exercise venues