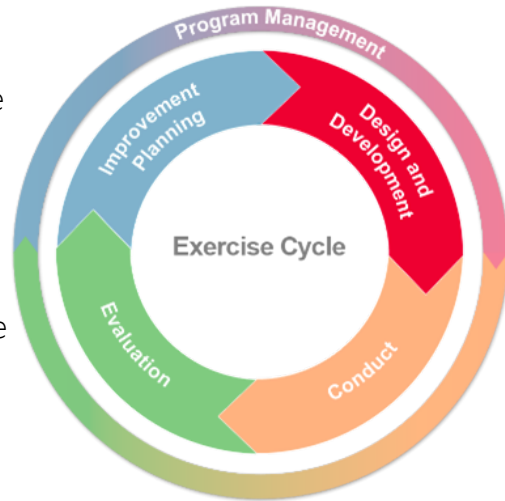


Exercise Design and Development

Key factors drive the exercise design and development process. Exercise practitioners use the intent and guidance of their elected and appointed officials and the exercise program priorities to shape the key concepts and planning considerations for exercises. In designing and developing individual exercises, exercise planning team members are identified to schedule planning meetings, identify and develop exercise objectives, design the scenario, create documentation, plan exercise conduct and evaluation, and coordinate logistics.



Templates

- [C&O Meeting Presentation Template](#)
- [CE Handbook Template](#)
- [Communications Plan Template](#)
- [EEG Instructions - Developing EEGs](#)
- [Exercise Plan Template](#)
- [Exercise Public Announcement](#)
- [Extent of Play Agreement](#)
- [FPM Presentation Template](#)
- [IPM Presentation Template](#)
- [Master Task List](#)
- [MPM Presentation Template](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Situation Manual Template](#)

Directions for this Template

- Use the Slide Master to make universal changes to the presentation, including inserting your organization's logo
– “View” tab > “Slide Master”
- Replace placeholders (indicated by brackets []) with information specific to your exercise
- Delete any slides that are not relevant for your meeting
- Font size should not be smaller than 22pt

Rev. April 2013

HSEEP-DD01



Insert your
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Exercise Name

Concept and Objectives (C&O) Meeting

[Date]



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Welcome

- [Name]
- [Title (e.g., Exercise Director or Lead Planner)]
- [Organization]



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Administrative Remarks

- Safety and emergency information
- Restrooms
- Cell phone etiquette
- Breaks and lunch
- Microphones (if applicable)



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Introductions

- Name
- Organization



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Trusted Agents

- Trusted agents are the individuals on the Exercise Planning Team(s) who are trusted not to reveal exercise and scenario details to players or third parties before exercise conduct.
- Trusted agents also develop pre-exercise materials, conduct exercise briefings, and support training sessions.
- Information in this document is intended for the exclusive use of the exercise planners and is not to be released to the public or other personnel who do not have a valid need-to-know without prior approval from an authorized sponsor organization representative.
- This document is not releasable to any public website.



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Agenda

- [Time] Welcome and introductions
- [Time] Exercise design
- [Time] Exercise planning
- [Time] Action items and next steps



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Meeting Objectives

- Begin the exercise planning process
- Develop exercise design elements
- Identify exercise planning team members
- Develop exercise planning timeline
- Discuss next steps and assign tasks



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Exercise Design Discussion Points

- Identify exercise program priorities to be addressed
- Identify the mission area(s) to be addressed
- Identify the exercise type and scope
- Design exercise objectives based on program priorities
- Align exercise objectives to core capabilities



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Exercise Program Priorities

- **Exercise program priorities** are the multi-year, overarching priorities listed in an organization's Multi-year Training and Exercise Plan (TEP)
- [Insert all or selected priorities from TEP]



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Exercise Scope and Mission Area(s)

- Exercise scope
 - Exercise type
 - Participation level
 - Exercise duration
 - Exercise location
 - Exercise parameters
- Mission area(s)
 - [Prevention, protection, mitigation, response, recovery]



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Objectives and Core Capabilities

- **Exercise objectives** are the distinct outcomes that an organization wishes to achieve during an exercise
 - Planners should select a reasonable number of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound (SMART) objectives
 - SMART objectives facilitate effective scenario design, exercise conduct, and evaluation
- **Core capabilities** are the distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery



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SMART Exercise Objectives

- **Specific:** Objectives should address the five Ws- who, what, when, where, and why. The objective specifies what needs to be done with a timeline for completion.
- **Measurable:** Objectives should include numeric or descriptive measures that define quantity, quality, cost, etc. Their focus should be on observable actions and outcomes.
- **Achievable:** Objectives should be within the control, influence, and resources of exercise play and participant actions.
- **Relevant:** Objectives should be instrumental to the mission of the organization and link to its goals or strategic intent.
- **Time-bound:** A specified and reasonable timeframe should be incorporated into all objectives.



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SMART Objectives – Example

- **Exercise:** Category 5 hurricane scheduled to make landfall across multiple jurisdictions within next 48 hours
- **Objective:** Execute county-wide communications plan at least 24 hours prior to storm's landfall to relay critical information to affected populations
 - **S:** Provides the 5 Ws
 - **M:** Simple deadline, unit of time
 - **A:** Achievable, depending on agency conducting exercise
 - **R:** Communications are vital to jurisdictions' emergency response
 - **T:** Unit of time gives definitive way to measure if objective is achieved or not



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Linking Objectives to Core Capabilities

- The exercise planning team aligns each exercise objective to one or more core capabilities
- Aligning objectives to a common set of capabilities enables:
 - Systematic tracking of progress over the course of exercise programs and/or cycles
 - Standardized exercise data collection to inform preparedness assessments
 - Fulfillment of grant or funding-specific reporting requirements
- Linking objectives to core capabilities supports the development of capability targets to be met during the exercise, with associated critical tasks



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Proposed Exercise Objectives

- [Proposed objectives]



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Aligned Core Capabilities

- Objective 1: [Proposed Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capability]
- Objective 2: [Proposed Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capability]
- Objective 3: [Proposed Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capability]



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Local Issues and Concerns

- [Any issues, concerns, or sensitivities for discussion and consideration]



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Exercise Planning Discussion Points

- Planning team responsibilities
- Planning team members
- Planning timeline and milestones



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Planning Team Responsibilities

- **Exercise Director:** Oversees all exercise functions during exercise conduct
- **Command Section / Exercise Planning Team Leader:** Coordinates all exercise planning activities
- **Operations Section:** Provides most of the technical or functional expertise for scenario development and evaluation
- **Planning Section:** Develops all exercise documentation and collects and reviews policies, plans, and procedures to be assessed during the exercise
- **Logistics Section:** Provides the supplies, materials, facilities, and services that enable the exercise to run smoothly
- **Administration/Finance Section:** Provides financial management and administrative support



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Planning Team Members

- [Proposed exercise planning team members]



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Planning Timeline

- Initial Planning Meeting: [Date and location]
- Midterm Planning Meeting [if needed]: [Date and location]
- MSEL Meeting [if needed]: [Date and location]
- Final Planning Meeting: [Date and location]
- Exercise: [Date and location]
- Draft After-Action Report (AAR): [Date]
- After-Action Meeting: [Date and location]
- Final AAR/Improvement Plan (IP): [Date]



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Outstanding Issues

- [Any outstanding issues to address]



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Action Items

- Distribute C&O meeting minutes: [Responsible organization/individual], [Due date]
- [Additional action items]



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Next Meeting

- [Date]
- [Time]
- [Location]



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[Exercise Name]

Controller/Evaluator Handbook

[Date]

The Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Handbook describes the roles and responsibilities of exercise controllers and evaluators, and the procedures they should follow. Because the C/E Handbook contains information about the scenario and about exercise administration, it is distributed to only those individuals specifically designated as controllers or evaluators; it should not be provided to exercise players. The C/E Handbook may supplement the Exercise Plan (ExPlan) or be a standalone document.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	[Insert the formal name of exercise, which should match the name in the document header]
Exercise Dates	[Indicate the start and end dates of the exercise]
Scope	This exercise is a [exercise type], planned for [exercise duration] at [exercise location]. Exercise play is limited to [exercise parameters].
Mission Area(s)	[Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and/or Recovery]
Core Capabilities	[List the core capabilities being exercised]
Objectives	[List exercise objectives]
Threat or Hazard	[List the threat or hazard (e.g. natural/hurricane, technological/radiological release)]
Scenario	[Insert a brief overview of the exercise scenario, including scenario impacts (2-3 sentences)]
Sponsor	[Insert the name of the sponsor organization, as well as any grant programs being utilized, if applicable]
Participating Organizations	[Insert a brief summary of the total number of participants and participation level (i.e., Federal, State, local, Tribal, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and/or international agencies). Consider including the full list of participating agencies in Appendix B. Delete Appendix B if not required.]
Point of Contact	[Insert the name, title, agency, address, phone number, and email address of the primary exercise POC (e.g., exercise director or exercise sponsor)]

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned core capabilities are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
[Insert objectives]	[Insert core capability aligned to each objective]

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Controllers.** Controllers plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site, and act in the roles of organizations or individuals that are not playing in the exercise. Controllers direct the pace of the exercise, provide key data to players, and may prompt or initiate certain player actions to ensure exercise continuity. In addition, they issue exercise material to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and supervise the safety of all exercise participants.
- **Simulators.** Simulators are control staff personnel who role play nonparticipating organizations or individuals. They most often operate out of the Simulation Cell (SimCell), but they may occasionally have face-to-face contact with players. Simulators function semi-independently under the supervision of SimCell controllers, enacting roles (e.g., media reporters or next of kin) in accordance with instructions provided in the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL). All simulators are ultimately accountable to the Exercise Director and Senior Controller.
- **Evaluators.** Evaluators evaluate and provide feedback on a designated functional area of the exercise. Evaluators observe and document performance against established capability targets and critical tasks, in accordance with the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

- **Actors.** Actors simulate specific roles during exercise play, typically victims or other bystanders. [Delete bullet if not applicable]
- **Observers.** Observers visit or view selected segments of the exercise. Observers do not play in the exercise, nor do they perform any control or evaluation functions. Observers view the exercise from a designated observation area and must remain within the observation area during the exercise. Very Important Persons (VIPs) are also observers, but they frequently are grouped separately.
- **Media Personnel.** Some media personnel may be present as observers, pending approval by the sponsor organization and the Exercise Planning Team. [Delete bullet if not applicable]
- **Support Staff.** The exercise support staff includes individuals who perform administrative and logistical support tasks during the exercise (e.g., registration, catering).

Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise, and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation.

Assumptions

Assumptions constitute the implied factual foundation for the exercise and, as such, are assumed to be present before the exercise starts. The following assumptions apply to the exercise:

- [The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.]
- [The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.]
- [Exercise simulation contains sufficient detail to allow players to react to information and situations as they are presented as if the simulated incident were real.]
- [Participating agencies may need to balance exercise play with real-world emergencies. Real-world emergencies take priority.]

Artificialities

During this exercise, the following artificialities apply:

- [Exercise communication and coordination is limited to participating exercise organizations, venues, and the SimCell.]
- [Only communication methods listed in the Communications Directory are available for players to use during the exercise.]

EXERCISE LOGISTICS

Safety

Exercise participant safety takes priority over exercise events. The following general requirements apply to the exercise:

- A Safety Controller is responsible for participant safety; any safety concerns must be immediately reported to the Safety Controller. The Safety Controller and Exercise Director will determine if a real-world emergency warrants a pause in exercise play and when exercise play can be resumed.
- For an emergency that requires assistance, use the phrase **“real-world emergency.”** The following procedures should be used in case of a real emergency during the exercise:
 - Anyone who observes a participant who is seriously ill or injured will immediately notify emergency services and the closest controller, and, within reason and training, render aid.
 - The controller aware of a real emergency will initiate the **“real-world emergency”** broadcast and provide the Safety Controller, Senior Controller, and Exercise Director with the location of the emergency and resources needed, if any. The Senior Controller will notify the **[Control Cell or SimCell]** as soon as possible if a real emergency occurs.

Fire Safety **[delete section if not applicable]**

Standard fire and safety regulations relevant to the **[jurisdiction, venue, or organization]** will be followed during the exercise. **[Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]**

Emergency Medical Services **[delete section if not applicable]**

The sponsor organization will coordinate with local emergency medical services in the event of a real-world emergency. **[Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]**

Electrical and Generating Device Hazards **[delete section if not applicable]**

All applicable electrical and generating device safety requirements should be documented prior to the start of the exercise. **[Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]**

Weapons Policy **[delete section if not applicable]**

All participants will follow the relevant weapons policy for the exercising organization or exercise venue. **[Please see Appendix [X] for a detailed description of the weapons policy.]**

Site Access

Security

If entry control is required for the exercise venue(s), the sponsor organization is responsible for arranging appropriate security measures. To prevent interruption of the exercise, access to exercise sites and the [Control Cell and/or SimCell] is limited to exercise participants. Players should advise their venue’s controller or evaluator of any unauthorized persons.

Media/Observer Coordination [delete section if not applicable]

Organizations with media personnel and/or observers attending the event should coordinate with the sponsor organization for access to the exercise site. Media/Observers are escorted to designated areas and accompanied by an exercise controller at all times. Sponsor organization representatives and/or the observer controller may be present to explain exercise conduct and answer questions. Exercise participants should be advised of media and/or observer presence.

Exercise Identification [delete section if not applicable]

Exercise staff may be identified by badges, hats, and/or vests to clearly display exercise roles; additionally, uniform clothing may be worn to show agency affiliation. Table 2 describes these identification items.

Group	Color
Exercise Director	White
Facilitator	White
Controllers	Blue
Evaluators	Red
Actors	Black
Support Staff	Gray
Observers/VIPs	Orange
Media Personnel	Purple
Players, Uniformed	Yellow
Players, Civilian Clothes	Yellow

Table 2. Exercise Identification

POST-EXERCISE AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Debriefings

Post-exercise debriefings aim to collect sufficient relevant data to support effective evaluation and improvement planning.

Hot Wash

At the conclusion of exercise play, controllers facilitate a Hot Wash to allow players to discuss strengths and areas for improvement, and allow evaluators to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes. All participants may attend; however, observers are not encouraged to attend the meeting. The Hot Wash should not exceed 30 minutes.

Controller and Evaluator Debriefing

Controllers and evaluators attend a facilitated C/E Debriefing immediately following the exercise. During this debriefing, controllers and evaluators provide an overview of their observed functional areas and discuss strengths and areas for improvement.

Participant Feedback Forms

Participant Feedback Forms provide players with the opportunity to comment candidly on exercise activities and exercise design. Participant Feedback Forms should be collected at the conclusion of the Hot Wash.

Evaluation

Exercise Evaluation Guides

EEGs assist evaluators in collecting relevant exercise observations. EEGs document exercise objectives and aligned core capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks. Each EEG provides evaluators with information on what they should expect to see demonstrated in their functional area. The EEGs, coupled with Participant Feedback Forms and Hot Wash notes, are used to evaluate the exercise and compile the AAR.

After Action Report (AAR)

The AAR summarizes key information related to evaluation. The AAR primarily focuses on the analysis of core capabilities, including capability performance, strengths, and areas for improvement. AARs also include basic exercise information, including the exercise name, type of exercise, dates, location, participating organizations, mission area(s), specific threat or hazard, a brief scenario description, and the name of the exercise sponsor and POC.

Improvement Planning

Improvement planning is the process by which the observations recorded in the AAR are resolved through development of concrete corrective actions, which are prioritized and tracked as a part of a continuous corrective action program.

After-Action Meeting

The After-Action Meeting (AAM) is a meeting held among decision- and policy-makers from the exercising organizations, as well as the Lead Evaluator and members of the Exercise Planning Team, to debrief the exercise and to review and refine the draft AAR and Improvement Plan (IP). The AAM should be an interactive session, providing attendees the opportunity to discuss and validate the observations and corrective actions in the draft AAR/IP.

Improvement Plan

The IP identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties, and establishes target dates for their completion. It is created by elected and appointed officials from the organizations participating in the exercise, and discussed and validated during the AAM.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Exercise Rules

The following general rules govern exercise play:

- Real-world emergency actions take priority over exercise actions.
- Exercise players will comply with real-world emergency procedures, unless otherwise directed by the control staff.
- All communications (including written, radio, telephone, and e-mail) during the exercise will begin and end with the statement **["This is an exercise."]**
- Exercise players who place telephone calls or initiate radio communication with the SimCell must identify the organization or individual with whom they wish to speak.

Players Instructions

Players should follow certain guidelines before, during, and after the exercise to ensure a safe and effective exercise.

Before the Exercise

- Review appropriate organizational plans, procedures, and exercise support documents.
- Be at the appropriate site at least 30 minutes before the exercise starts. Wear the appropriate uniform and/or identification item(s).
- Sign in when you arrive.
- If you gain knowledge of the scenario before the exercise, notify a controller so that appropriate actions can be taken to ensure a valid evaluation.
- **[Read your Player Information Handout, which includes information on exercise safety.]**

During the Exercise

- Respond to exercise events and information as if the emergency were real, unless otherwise directed by an exercise controller.
- Controllers will give you only information they are specifically directed to disseminate. You are expected to obtain other necessary information through existing emergency information channels.
- Do not engage in personal conversations with controllers, evaluators, observers, or media personnel. If you are asked an exercise-related question, give a short, concise answer. If you are busy and cannot immediately respond, indicate that, but report back with an answer as soon as possible.
- If you do not understand the scope of the exercise, or if you are uncertain about an organization's participation in an exercise, ask a controller.

- Parts of the scenario may seem implausible. Recognize that the exercise has objectives to satisfy and may require incorporation of unrealistic aspects. Every effort has been made by the exercise’s trusted agents to balance realism with safety and to create an effective learning and evaluation environment.
- All exercise communications will begin and end with the statement [“**This is an exercise.**”] This precaution is taken so that anyone who overhears the conversation will not mistake exercise play for a real-world emergency.
- When you communicate with the SimCell, identify the organization or individual with whom you wish to speak.
- Speak when you take an action. This procedure will ensure that evaluators are aware of critical actions as they occur.
- Maintain a log of your activities. Many times, this log may include documentation of activities that were missed by a controller or evaluator.

After the Exercise

- Participate in the Hot Wash at your venue with controllers and evaluators.
- Complete the Participant Feedback Form. This form allows you to comment candidly on emergency response activities and exercise effectiveness. Provide the completed form to a controller or evaluator.
- Provide any notes or materials generated from the exercise to your controller or evaluator for review and inclusion in the AAR.

Simulation Guidelines

Because the exercise is of limited duration and scope, certain details will be simulated. The physical description of what would fully occur at the incident sites and surrounding areas will be relayed to players by simulators or controllers. A SimCell will simulate the roles and interactions of nonparticipating organizations or individuals. [Include any additional simulations to be used in the exercise.]

CONTROLLER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Exercise Control Overview

Exercise control maintains exercise scope, pace, and integrity during exercise conduct. The control structure in a well-developed exercise ensures that exercise play assesses objectives in a coordinated fashion at all levels and at all locations for the duration of the exercise.

Exercise Control Documentation

Controller Package

The controller package consists of the C/E Handbook, activity logs, badges, and other exercise tools (e.g., MSEL) as necessary. Controllers must bring their packages and any additional professional materials specific to their assigned exercise activities.

Incident Simulation

Because the exercise is of limited duration and scope, certain details will be simulated. Venue controllers are responsible for providing players with the physical description of what would fully occur at the incident sites and surrounding areas. SimCell controllers will simulate the roles and interactions of nonparticipating organizations or individuals.

Scenario Tools

The MSEL outlines benchmarks and injects that drive exercise play. It also details realistic input to exercise players, as well as information expected to emanate from simulated organizations (i.e., nonparticipating organizations or individuals who usually would respond to the situation). The MSEL consists of the following two parts:

- **Timeline.** This is a list of key exercise events, including scheduled injects and expected player actions. The timeline is used to track exercise events relative to desired response activities.
- **Injects.** An individual event inject is a detailed description of each exercise event. The inject includes the following pieces of information: scenario time, intended recipient, responsible controller, inject type, a short description of the event, and the expected player action.

Exercise Control Structure

Control of the exercise is accomplished through an exercise control structure. The control structure is the framework that allows controllers to communicate and coordinate with other controllers at other exercise venues, the SimCell, or a Control Cell to deliver and track exercise information. The control structure for this exercise is shown in Figure 1.

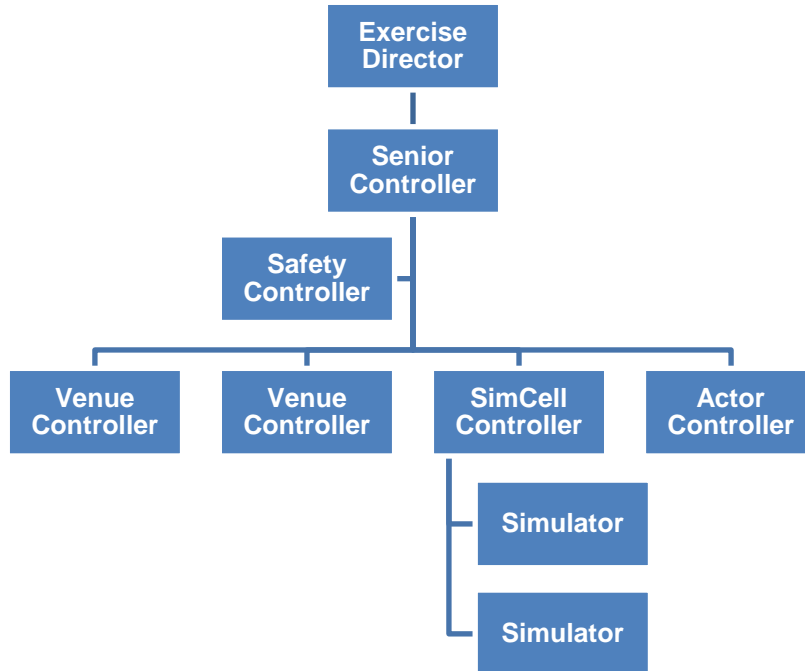


Figure 1. Sample Exercise Control Structure [edit as needed or delete if not applicable]

Controller Instructions

Before the Exercise

- Review appropriate emergency plans, procedures, and protocols.
- Review appropriate exercise package materials, including the objectives, scenario, injects, safety and security plans, and controller instructions.
- Attend required briefings.
- Report to the exercise check-in location at the time designated in the exercise schedule, meet with the exercise staff, and present the Player Briefing.
- Be at the appropriate location at least 15 minutes before the exercise starts.
- Obtain, locate and test necessary communications equipment.

During the Exercise

- Wear controller identification items (e.g., badge).
- Avoid personal conversations with exercise players.
- If you have been given injects, deliver them to appropriate players at the time indicated in the MSEL (or as directed by the Exercise Director). **Note:** If the information depends on some action to be taken by the player, do not deliver the inject until the player has earned the information by successfully accomplishing the required action.

- When you deliver an inject, notify the [Senior Controller or Control Cell] and note the time that you delivered the inject and player actions.
- Receive and record exercise information from players that would be directed to nonparticipating organizations.
- Observe and record exercise artificialities that interfere with exercise realism. If exercise artificialities interfere with exercise play, report it to the Exercise Director.
- Begin and end all exercise communications with the statement, [“This is an exercise.”]
- Do not prompt players regarding what a specific response should be, unless an inject directs you to do so. Clarify information but do not provide coaching.
- Ensure that all observers and media personnel stay out of the exercise activity area. If you need assistance, notify the Exercise Director.
- Do not give information to players about scenario event progress or other participants’ methods of problem resolution. Players are expected to obtain information through their own resources.

After the Exercise

- Distribute copies of Participant Feedback Forms and pertinent documentation.
- All controllers are expected to conduct a Hot Wash at their venue and, in coordination with the venue evaluator, take notes on findings identified by exercise players. Before the Hot Wash, do not discuss specific issues or problems with exercise players.
- At exercise termination, summarize your notes from the exercise and Hot Wash, and prepare for the Controller and Evaluator Debriefing. Have your summary ready for the Exercise Director.

Controller Responsibilities

The following table details controller responsibilities. For controller assignment details, see [Appendix F].

Controller Responsibilities	
Exercise Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees all exercise functions • Oversees and remains in contact with controllers and evaluators • Oversees setup and cleanup of exercise, and positioning of controllers and evaluators
Senior Controller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors exercise progress • Coordinates decisions regarding deviations or significant changes to the scenario • Monitors controller actions and ensures implementation of designed or modified actions at the appropriate time • Debriefs controllers and evaluators after the exercise • Oversees setup and takedown of the exercise

Controller Responsibilities	
Safety Controller	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors exercise safety during exercise setup, conduct, and cleanup • Receives any reports of safety concerns from other controllers or participants 	
Public Information Officer (PIO)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides escort for observers • Provides narration and explanation during exercise events, as needed • Performs pre-exercise and post-exercise public affairs duties • May act as media briefer and escort at exercise site • Serves as safety officer for his or her site 	
Venue Controller	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues exercise materials to players • Monitors exercise timeline • Provides input to players (i.e., injects) as described in MSEL • Serves as safety officer for his or her site 	
Simulation Cell (SimCell) Controller	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role plays as nonparticipating organizations or individuals • Monitors exercise timeline • Provides input to players (i.e., injects) as described in MSEL 	

Table 3. Controller Responsibilities

EVALUATOR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Exercise Evaluation Overview

Exercise evaluation assesses an organization's capabilities to accomplish a mission, function, or objective. Evaluation provides an opportunity to assess performance of critical tasks to capability target levels. Evaluation is accomplished by the following means:

- Observing the event and collecting supporting data;
- Analyzing collected data to identify strengths and areas for improvement; and
- Reporting exercise outcomes in the AAR.

Evaluation Documentation

Evaluator Package

The evaluator package contains this C/E Handbook, EEGs, and other items as necessary. Evaluators should bring the package to the exercise. They may reorganize the material so information that is critical to their specific assignment is readily accessible. Evaluators may bring additional professional materials specific to their assigned activities.

Exercise Evaluation Guides

EEGs provide a consistent tool to guide exercise observation and data collection. EEGs are aligned to exercise objectives and core capabilities, and list the relevant capability targets and critical tasks. Data collected in EEGs by each evaluator will be used to develop the analysis of capabilities in the AAR.

Each evaluator is provided with an EEG for each capability that he/she is assigned to evaluate. Evaluators should complete all assigned EEGs and submit to the Lead Evaluator at the conclusion of the exercise. The Lead Evaluator and Senior Controller compile all evaluator submissions into the first working draft of the AAR.

After Action Report/Improvement Plan

The main focus of the AAR is the analysis of core capabilities. For each core capability exercised, the AAR includes a rating of how the exercise participants performed, as well as strengths and areas for improvement.

Following completion of the draft AAR, elected and appointed officials confirm observations identified in the AAR, and determine which areas for improvement require further action. As part of the improvement planning process, elected and appointed officials identify corrective actions to bring areas for improvement to resolution and determine the appropriate organization with responsibility for those actions. Corrective actions are consolidated in the IP, which is included as an appendix to the AAR.

Evaluator Instructions

General

- Avoid personal conversations with players.
- Do not give information to players about event progress or other participants' methods of problem resolution. Players are expected to obtain information through their own resources.

Before the Exercise

- Review appropriate plans, procedures, and protocols.
- Attend required evaluator training and other briefings.
- Review appropriate exercise materials, including the exercise schedule and evaluator instructions.
- Review the EEGs and other supporting materials for your area of responsibility to ensure that you have a thorough understanding of the core capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks you are assigned to evaluate.
- Report to the exercise check-in location at the time designated in the exercise schedule, and meet with the exercise staff.
- Obtain or locate necessary communications equipment, and test it to ensure that you can communicate with other evaluators and the Exercise Director.

During the Exercise

- Wear evaluator identification items (e.g., badge).
- Stay in proximity to player decision-makers.
- Use EEGs to document performance relative to exercise objectives, core capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks.
- Focus on critical tasks, as specified in the EEGs.
- Your primary duty is to document performance of core capabilities. After the exercise, that information will be used to determine whether the exercise capability targets were effectively met and to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

After the Exercise

- Participate in the Hot Wash, and take notes on findings identified by players. Before the Hot Wash, do not discuss specific issues or problems with participants. After the Hot Wash, summarize your notes and prepare for the Controller and Evaluator Debriefing. Have your summary ready for the Lead Evaluator.
- Complete and submit all EEGs and other documentation to the Lead Evaluator at the end of the exercise.

Using Exercise Evaluation Guides

Terminology

The EEGs are structured to capture information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the Exercise Planning Team. The following evaluation requirements are documented in each EEG:

- **Core capabilities:** The distinct critical elements necessary to achieve a specific mission area (e.g., prevention). To assess both capacity and gaps, each core capability includes capability targets.
- **Capability target(s):** The performance thresholds for each core capability; they state the exact *amount* of capability that players aim to achieve. Capability targets are typically written as quantitative or qualitative statements.
- **Critical tasks:** The distinct elements required to perform a core capability; they describe *how* the capability target will be met. Critical tasks generally include the activities, resources, and responsibilities required to fulfill capability targets. Capability targets and critical tasks are based on operational plans, policies, and procedures to be exercised and tested during the exercise.
- **Performance ratings:** The summary description of performance against target levels. Performance ratings include both Target Ratings, describing how exercise participants performed relative to each capability target, and Core Capability Ratings, describing overall performance relative to entire the core capability.

Documenting Observations

For each EEG, evaluators provide a target rating, observation notes and an explanation of the target rating, and a final core capability rating. In order to efficiently complete these sections of the EEG, evaluators should focus their observations on the capability targets and critical tasks listed in the EEG.

Observation notes should include *if* and *how* quantitative or qualitative targets were met. For example, a capability target might state, “*Within 4 hours of the incident...*” Notes on that target should include the actual time required for exercise players to complete the critical tasks. Additionally, observations should include:

- How the target was or was not met;
- Pertinent decisions made and information gathered to make decisions;
- Requests made and how requests were handled;
- Resources utilized;
- Plans, policies, procedures, or legislative authorities used or implemented; and
- Any other factors contributed to the results.

Evaluators should also note if an obvious cause or underlying reason resulted in players not meeting a capability target or critical task. However, the evaluators should not include recommendations in the EEGs. As part of the after-action and improvement planning processes,

elected and appointed officials will review and confirm observations documented in the AAR and determine areas for improvement requiring further action.

Note: Observation notes for discussion based exercises will focus on *discussion* of the how critical tasks would be completed, rather than actual actions taken.

Assigning Ratings

Based on their observations, evaluators assign a target rating for each capability target listed on the EEG. Evaluators then consider all target ratings for the core capability and assign an overall core capability rating. The rating scale includes four ratings:

- Performed without Challenge (P)
- Performed with Some Challenges (S)
- Performed with Major Challenges (M)
- Unable to be Performed (U)

Definitions for each of these ratings are included in the EEG.

Placement and Monitoring

Evaluators should be located so they can observe player actions and hear conversations without interfering with those activities. In certain conditions, more than one evaluator may be needed in a particular setting or area. For specific evaluator assignments, see [Appendix F]. For exercise site maps highlighting key locations, see [Appendix D].

APPENDIX A: EXERCISE SCHEDULE

[Note: Because this information is updated throughout the exercise planning process, appendices may be developed as stand-alone documents rather than part of the C/E Handbook.]

Time	Personnel	Activity	Location
[Date]			
[Time]	Controllers, evaluators, and exercise staff	Controller and Evaluator Briefing	[Location]
As needed	Controllers and exercise staff	Set up control cell and walkthrough	[Location]
[Date]			
[Time]	Controllers and exercise staff	Check-in for final instructions and communications check	[Location]
[Time]	Media	Media Briefing	[Location]
[Time]	VIPs and selected exercise staff	VIP Controller Briefing	[Location]
[Time]	Controllers and evaluators	Controllers and evaluators in starting positions	[Location]
[Time]	All	Controllers provide player briefs	[Location]
[Time]	All	Exercise starts	[Location]
[Time]	All	Exercise ends	[Location]
Immediately Following the Exercise	All	Venue Hot Washes/turn in all Participant Feedback Forms	[Location]
[Date]			
[Time]	Controllers, evaluators, and elected and appointed officials	Controller and Evaluator After Action Review	[Location]

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations	
Federal	
State	
[Jurisdiction A]	
[Jurisdiction B]	

APPENDIX C: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

[The Communications Plan Template can be inserted here as Appendix C.]

APPENDIX D: EXERCISE SITE MAPS

Figure D.1: [Map Title]

[Insert map]

Figure D.2: [Map Title]

[Insert map]

APPENDIX E: EXERCISE SCENARIO

Scenario

[Insert the detailed exercise scenario narrative or scenario ground truth, including scenario information across all venues and functions. This should establish a common understanding of the scenario for all controllers and evaluators.]

Major Events

[Venue Name]

- [Insert a list of major exercise events at each venue, including both simulated scenario events and important expected player actions.]
- [Insert event description.]
- [Insert event description.]

[Venue Name]

- [Insert a list of major exercise events at each venue, including both simulated scenario events and important expected player actions.]
- [Insert event description.]
- [Insert event description.]

[Venue Name]

- [Insert a list of major exercise events at each venue, including both simulated scenario events and important expected player actions.]
- [Insert event description.]
- [Insert event description.]

APPENDIX F: CONTROLLER AND EVALUATOR ASSIGNMENTS

[Note: This is a sample list of controller and evaluator assignments. The positions should be modified based on the type and scope of the exercise. For example, if the exercise will not include a Simulation Cell, then a controller does not need to fulfill that function. Both controllers and evaluators may be assigned to a second area if play has been completed in the first.]

Name	Role	Position
		Exercise Director
	Controller	Senior Controller
	Controller	Safety Controller
	Evaluator	Lead Evaluator
Exercise Venue Name		
	Controller	Site safety officer
	Controller	[Function/venue] controller
	Controller	[Function/venue] controller
	Evaluator	[Function/venue] evaluator
	Evaluator	[Function/venue] evaluator
Exercise Venue Name		
	Controller	Site safety officer
	Controller	[Function/venue] controller
	Controller	[Function/venue] controller
	Evaluator	[Function/venue] evaluator
	Evaluator	[Function/venue] evaluator
Simulation Cell (SimCell)		
	Controller	Lead SimCell controller, Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) manager
	Controller	[Function/organization] simulator
	Controller	[Function/organization] simulator

APPENDIX G: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
C/E	Controller/Evaluator
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
SME	Subject Matter Expert

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Note: This COMPLAN can be inserted as an Appendix in the Exercise Plan (ExPlan) and/or Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Handbook. Alternately, it can be used as a standalone document.

All spoken and written communications will start and end with the statement [“THIS IS AN EXERCISE.”]

Player Communications

Exercise communications do not interfere with real-world emergency communications. Players use routine organization communications systems. Additional communication assets may be made available as the exercise progresses. Each venue or organization coordinates its internal communication networks and channels.

Controller Communications

The principal methods of information transfer for controllers during the exercise are [landline or cellular telephone, radio, fax, and e-mail]. The controller communications network allows the Exercise Director or Senior Controller to make and announce universal changes in exercise documentation, such as changes to the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL).

The primary means of communication among the SimCell, controllers, and Players is [means of communication, e.g., radio (channels), telephone]. A list of key [telephone and fax numbers and radio call signs] will be available before the exercise starts.

Communications Check

Before the exercise, the [Control Cell or Simulation Cell] conducts a communications check with all interfacing communications nodes to ensure redundancy and uninterrupted flow of control information.

Player Briefing

Controllers may be required to provide scenario details to participants to begin exercise play. Technical handouts or other materials also may be provided to orient players with the exercise.

Public Affairs

The sponsor organization and participating organizations are responsible for coordinating and disseminating public information before the exercise. Each venue should follow internal procedures.

DEVELOPING EXERCISE EVALUATION GUIDES

Terminology

The Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) are structured to capture information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the Exercise Planning Team. The following evaluation requirements are documented in each EEG:

- **Core capabilities:** The distinct critical elements necessary to achieve a specific mission area (e.g., prevention). To assess both capacity and gaps, each core capability includes capability targets.
- **Capability target(s):** The performance threshold(s) for each core capability; they state the exact *amount* of capability that exercise players aim to achieve. Capability targets are typically written as quantitative or qualitative statements.
- **Critical tasks:** The distinct elements required to perform a core capability; they describe *how* the capability target will be met. Critical tasks generally include the activities, resources, and responsibilities required to fulfill capability targets. Capability targets and critical tasks are based on operational plans, policies, and procedures to be exercised and tested during the exercise.
- **Organizational EEG(s):** The EEGs containing organizational capability targets and critical tasks. These are developed for a specific organization and are not transferable to any other organization.

Development Instructions

The HSEEP EEG provides evaluators with a standardized tool to guide data collection and capture performance results during an exercise. Since each organization, jurisdiction, or entity has unique targets and critical tasks, each organization develops EEGs specific to its plans, procedures, and protocols.

The following step-by-step instructions will aid in the development of an EEG.

Step 1: Background Research

- 1) Review the planning team discussions regarding mission area, core capabilities, objectives, and evaluation requirements. These discussions take place at the Concept and Objectives (C&O) Meeting and/or Initial Planning Meeting (IPM).
- 2) Review capability gaps from current threat and hazard assessments. These gaps are identified during the Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW) and documented in the Multi-year Training and Exercise Plan (TEP).
- 3) Research applicable authorities, policies, plans, procedures, and protocols to identify organizational capability targets(s) and associated critical tasks to be exercised and evaluated.

- 4) Research previous and current After-Action Reports (AARs) and Improvement Plans (IPs) to extract capability targets and critical tasks to be exercised and validated based on common themes or trends.

Step 2: Build-Out

- 1) **Select Template:** Select the appropriate EEG template(s), based on the mission area and core capability. The planning team provides the mission area and list of exercise objectives and aligned core capabilities. The EEG templates are pre-populated with the mission area, core capability, and capability description.
- 2) **Insert Basic Information:** Insert the exercise name and date, organization/jurisdiction, and the venue.
- 3) **Insert Exercise Objective:** Insert the exercise objective aligned to the core capability.
Note: If multiple exercise objectives align to the same core capability, separate EEGs should be developed for each objective-core capability combination. The capability targets and critical tasks for each combination should be different.
- 4) **Develop Organizational Capability Target(s):** Develop capability target(s) specific to the organization. The core capability description may provide a starting point for developing capability targets; however, quantitative or qualitative measures are based on the organization's plans, policies, and procedures.

Example: The *Response* mission area core capability *Operational Coordination* description is: *Establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.*

The capability addresses two general targets:

- (1) Establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure.
- (2) Establish a process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.

Add specific quantitative or qualitative measures to make the target measurable. Generally, the quantities/qualitative measures are based on targets identified as part of an organization's or jurisdiction's Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) process, or in organizational plans, policies, and procedures.

Example:

- (1) Within ## minutes of the incident, establish a unified command structure within the impacted area.
- (2) Within ## minutes of notification of the incident, mobilize critical resources through stakeholders and coordinating bodies to provide life saving and life sustaining support.

- 5) **Identify Critical Tasks:** Identify the critical tasks needed to accomplish the capability target and demonstrate the core capability. Critical tasks may be derived from organizational plans, policies and procedures; discipline-specific standards; AAR improvement areas or corrective actions; and/or national Mission Area Frameworks.
- a) The capability targets and critical tasks in the EEG can be tailored to reflect the exercise type. In an operations-based exercise, evaluators observe exercise players performing critical tasks. In a discussion-based exercise, evaluators observe exercise players discussing or describing how critical tasks are performed.

Operations-based Exercise Example:

- (1) Establish the Unified Command Group
- (2) Establish communication with responding agencies

Discussion-based exercise example:

- (1) Identify the agencies/positions in the Unified Command Group.
- (2) Describe the interoperable communications assets available to communicate across responding agencies.

- b) List the source(s) of the capability targets and critical tasks. This will allow evaluators to references plans or other documents as needed, as well as assist in the development of the AAR.
- 6) **Review and Refine:** Review the EEG to ensure the capability targets and critical tasks can be accomplished within the time and scope of the exercise and organization's extent of play.
- 7) **Finalize:** Once the capability targets and critical tasks are finalized, copy the information to page two of the EEG.
- 8) **Coordinate with the Planning Team:** Ensure that the draft and final EEGs are shared with the Exercise Planning Team. The planning team will use the capability targets and critical tasks to guide their development of the exercise scenario narrative, Master Scenario Events List (MSEL), and/or discussion questions.

[Exercise Name]

Exercise Plan

[Date]

The Exercise Plan (ExPlan) gives elected and appointed officials, observers, media personnel, and players from participating organizations information they need to observe or participate in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, controllers, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the ExPlan.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	[Insert the formal name of exercise, which should match the name in the document header]
Exercise Dates	[Indicate the start and end dates of the exercise]
Scope	This exercise is a [exercise type], planned for [exercise duration] at [exercise location]. Exercise play is limited to [exercise parameters].
Mission Area(s)	[Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and/or Recovery]
Core Capabilities	[List the core capabilities being exercised]
Objectives	[List exercise objectives]
Threat or Hazard	[List the threat or hazard (e.g. natural/hurricane, technological/radiological release)]
Scenario	[Insert a brief overview of the exercise scenario, including scenario impacts (2-3 sentences)]
Sponsor	[Insert the name of the sponsor organization, as well as any grant programs being utilized, if applicable]
Participating Organizations	[Insert a brief summary of the total number of participants and participation level (i.e., Federal, State, local, Tribal, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and/or international agencies). Consider including the full list of participating agencies in Appendix B. Delete Appendix B if not required.]
Point of Contact	[Insert the name, title, agency, address, phone number, and email address of the primary exercise POC (e.g., exercise director or exercise sponsor)]

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned core capabilities are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
[Insert objectives]	[Insert core capability aligned to each objective]

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Controllers.** Controllers plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site, and act in the roles of organizations or individuals that are not playing in the exercise. Controllers direct the pace of the exercise, provide key data to players, and may prompt or initiate certain player actions to ensure exercise continuity. In addition, they issue exercise material to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and supervise the safety of all exercise participants.
- **Simulators.** Simulators are control staff personnel who role play nonparticipating organizations or individuals. They most often operate out of the Simulation Cell (SimCell), but they may occasionally have face-to-face contact with players. Simulators function semi-independently under the supervision of SimCell controllers, enacting roles (e.g., media reporters or next of kin) in accordance with instructions provided in the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL). All simulators are ultimately accountable to the Exercise Director and Senior Controller.
- **Evaluators.** Evaluators evaluate and provide feedback on a designated functional area of the exercise. Evaluators observe and document performance against established capability targets and critical tasks, in accordance with the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

- **Actors.** Actors simulate specific roles during exercise play, typically victims or other bystanders. [Delete bullet if not applicable]
- **Observers.** Observers visit or view selected segments of the exercise. Observers do not play in the exercise, nor do they perform any control or evaluation functions. Observers view the exercise from a designated observation area and must remain within the observation area during the exercise. Very Important Persons (VIPs) are also observers, but they frequently are grouped separately.
- **Media Personnel.** Some media personnel may be present as observers, pending approval by the sponsor organization and the Exercise Planning Team. [Delete bullet if not applicable]
- **Support Staff.** The exercise support staff includes individuals who perform administrative and logistical support tasks during the exercise (e.g., registration, catering).

Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise, and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation.

Assumptions

Assumptions constitute the implied factual foundation for the exercise and, as such, are assumed to be present before the exercise starts. The following assumptions apply to the exercise:

- [The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.]
- [The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.]
- [Exercise simulation contains sufficient detail to allow players to react to information and situations as they are presented as if the simulated incident were real.]
- [Participating agencies may need to balance exercise play with real-world emergencies. Real-world emergencies take priority.]

Artificialities

During this exercise, the following artificialities apply:

- [Exercise communication and coordination is limited to participating exercise organizations, venues, and the SimCell.]
- [Only communication methods listed in the Communications Directory are available for players to use during the exercise.]

EXERCISE LOGISTICS

Safety

Exercise participant safety takes priority over exercise events. The following general requirements apply to the exercise:

- A Safety Controller is responsible for participant safety; any safety concerns must be immediately reported to the Safety Controller. The Safety Controller and Exercise Director will determine if a real-world emergency warrants a pause in exercise play and when exercise play can be resumed.
- For an emergency that requires assistance, use the phrase **“real-world emergency.”** The following procedures should be used in case of a real emergency during the exercise:
 - Anyone who observes a participant who is seriously ill or injured will immediately notify emergency services and the closest controller, and, within reason and training, render aid.
 - The controller aware of a real emergency will initiate the **“real-world emergency”** broadcast and provide the Safety Controller, Senior Controller, and Exercise Director with the location of the emergency and resources needed, if any. The Senior Controller will notify the **[Control Cell or SimCell]** as soon as possible if a real emergency occurs.

Fire Safety **[delete section if not applicable]**

Standard fire and safety regulations relevant to the **[jurisdiction, venue, or organization]** will be followed during the exercise. **[Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]**

Emergency Medical Services **[delete section if not applicable]**

The sponsor organization will coordinate with local emergency medical services in the event of a real-world emergency. **[Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]**

Electrical and Generating Device Hazards **[delete section if not applicable]**

All applicable electrical and generating device safety requirements should be documented prior to the start of the exercise. **[Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]**

Weapons Policy **[delete section if not applicable]**

All participants will follow the relevant weapons policy for the exercising organization or exercise venue. **[Please see Appendix [X] for a detailed description of the weapons policy.]**

Site Access

Security

If entry control is required for the exercise venue(s), the sponsor organization is responsible for arranging appropriate security measures. To prevent interruption of the exercise, access to exercise sites and the [Control Cell and/or SimCell] is limited to exercise participants. Players should advise their venue’s controller or evaluator of any unauthorized persons.

Media/Observer Coordination [delete section if not applicable]

Organizations with media personnel and/or observers attending the event should coordinate with the sponsor organization for access to the exercise site. Media/Observers are escorted to designated areas and accompanied by an exercise controller at all times. Sponsor organization representatives and/or the observer controller may be present to explain exercise conduct and answer questions. Exercise participants should be advised of media and/or observer presence.

Exercise Identification [delete section if not applicable]

Exercise staff may be identified by badges, hats, and/or vests to clearly display exercise roles; additionally, uniform clothing may be worn to show agency affiliation. Table 2 describes these identification items.

Group	Color
Exercise Director	White
Facilitator	White
Controllers	Blue
Evaluators	Red
Actors	Black
Support Staff	Gray
Observers/VIPs	Orange
Media Personnel	Purple
Players, Uniformed	Yellow
Players, Civilian Clothes	Yellow

Table 2. Exercise Identification

POST-EXERCISE AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Debriefings

Post-exercise debriefings aim to collect sufficient relevant data to support effective evaluation and improvement planning.

Hot Wash

At the conclusion of exercise play, controllers facilitate a Hot Wash to allow players to discuss strengths and areas for improvement, and evaluators to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes. All participants may attend; however, observers are not encouraged to attend the meeting. The Hot Wash should not exceed 30 minutes.

Controller and Evaluator Debriefing

Controllers and evaluators attend a facilitated C/E Debriefing immediately following the exercise. During this debriefing, controllers and evaluators provide an overview of their observed functional areas and discuss strengths and areas for improvement.

Participant Feedback Forms

Participant Feedback Forms provide players with the opportunity to comment candidly on exercise activities and exercise design. Participant Feedback Forms should be collected at the conclusion of the Hot Wash.

Evaluation

Exercise Evaluation Guides

EEGs assist evaluators in collecting relevant exercise observations. EEGs document exercise objectives and aligned core capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks. Each EEG provides evaluators with information on what they should expect to see demonstrated in their functional area. The EEGs, coupled with Participant Feedback Forms and Hot Wash notes, are used to evaluate the exercise and compile the After-Action Report (AAR).

After-Action Report

The AAR summarizes key information related to evaluation. The AAR primarily focuses on the analysis of core capabilities, including capability performance, strengths, and areas for improvement. AARs also include basic exercise information, including the exercise name, type of exercise, dates, location, participating organizations, mission area(s), specific threat or hazard, a brief scenario description, and the name of the exercise sponsor and POC.

Improvement Planning

Improvement planning is the process by which the observations recorded in the AAR are resolved through development of concrete corrective actions, which are prioritized and tracked as a part of a continuous corrective action program.

After-Action Meeting

The After-Action Meeting (AAM) is a meeting held among decision- and policy-makers from the exercising organizations, as well as the Lead Evaluator and members of the Exercise Planning Team, to debrief the exercise and to review and refine the draft AAR and Improvement Plan (IP). The AAM should be an interactive session, providing attendees the opportunity to discuss and validate the observations and corrective actions in the draft AAR/IP.

Improvement Plan

The IP identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties, and establishes target dates for their completion. It is created by elected and appointed officials from the organizations participating in the exercise, and discussed and validated during the AAM.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Exercise Rules

The following general rules govern exercise play:

- Real-world emergency actions take priority over exercise actions.
- Exercise players will comply with real-world emergency procedures, unless otherwise directed by the control staff.
- All communications (including written, radio, telephone, and e-mail) during the exercise will begin and end with the statement **["This is an exercise."]**
- Exercise players who place telephone calls or initiate radio communication with the SimCell must identify the organization or individual with whom they wish to speak.

Players Instructions

Players should follow certain guidelines before, during, and after the exercise to ensure a safe and effective exercise.

Before the Exercise

- Review appropriate organizational plans, procedures, and exercise support documents.
- Be at the appropriate site at least 30 minutes before the exercise starts. Wear the appropriate uniform and/or identification item(s).
- Sign in when you arrive.
- If you gain knowledge of the scenario before the exercise, notify a controller so that appropriate actions can be taken to ensure a valid evaluation.
- **[Read your Player Information Handout, which includes information on exercise safety.]**

During the Exercise

- Respond to exercise events and information as if the emergency were real, unless otherwise directed by an exercise controller.
- Controllers will give you only information they are specifically directed to disseminate. You are expected to obtain other necessary information through existing emergency information channels.
- Do not engage in personal conversations with controllers, evaluators, observers, or media personnel. If you are asked an exercise-related question, give a short, concise answer. If you are busy and cannot immediately respond, indicate that, but report back with an answer as soon as possible.
- If you do not understand the scope of the exercise, or if you are uncertain about an organization's participation in an exercise, ask a controller.

- Parts of the scenario may seem implausible. Recognize that the exercise has objectives to satisfy and may require incorporation of unrealistic aspects. Every effort has been made by the exercise's trusted agents to balance realism with safety and to create an effective learning and evaluation environment.
- All exercise communications will begin and end with the statement **["This is an exercise."]** This precaution is taken so that anyone who overhears the conversation will not mistake exercise play for a real-world emergency.
- When you communicate with the SimCell, identify the organization or individual with whom you wish to speak.
- Speak when you take an action. This procedure will ensure that evaluators are aware of critical actions as they occur.
- Maintain a log of your activities. Many times, this log may include documentation of activities that were missed by a controller or evaluator.

After the Exercise

- Participate in the Hot Wash at your venue with controllers and evaluators.
- Complete the Participant Feedback Form. This form allows you to comment candidly on emergency response activities and exercise effectiveness. Provide the completed form to a controller or evaluator.
- Provide any notes or materials generated from the exercise to your controller or evaluator for review and inclusion in the AAR.

Simulation Guidelines

Because the exercise is of limited duration and scope, certain details will be simulated. The physical description of what would fully occur at the incident sites and surrounding areas will be relayed to players by simulators or controllers. A SimCell will simulate the roles and interactions of nonparticipating organizations or individuals. **[Include any additional simulations to be used in the exercise.]**

APPENDIX A: EXERCISE SCHEDULE

[Note: Because this information is updated throughout the exercise planning process, appendices may be developed as stand-alone documents rather than part of the ExPlan.]

Time	Personnel	Activity	Location
[Date]			
[Time]	Controllers, evaluators, and exercise staff	Controller and Evaluator Briefing	[Location]
As needed	Controllers and exercise staff	Set up control cell and walkthrough	[Location]
[Date]			
[Time]	Controllers and exercise staff	Check-in for final instructions and communications check	[Location]
[Time]	Media	Media Briefing	[Location]
[Time]	VIPs and selected exercise staff	VIP Controller Briefing	[Location]
[Time]	Controllers and evaluators	Controllers and evaluators in starting positions	[Location]
[Time]	All	Controllers provide player briefs	[Location]
[Time]	All	Exercise starts	[Location]
[Time]	All	Exercise ends	[Location]
Immediately Following the Exercise	All	Venue Hot Washes/turn in all Participant Feedback Forms	[Location]
[Date]			
[Time]	Controllers, evaluators, and elected and appointed officials	Controller and Evaluator After Action Review	[Location]

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations	
Federal	
State	
[Jurisdiction A]	
[Jurisdiction B]	

APPENDIX C: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

[The Communications Plan Template can be inserted here as Appendix C.]

APPENDIX D: EXERCISE SITE MAPS

Figure D.1: [Map Title]

[Insert map]

Figure D.2: [Map Title]

[Insert map]

APPENDIX E: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
ExPlan	Exercise Plan
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
SME	Subject Matter Expert

Note: *The Public Announcement letter can be distributed to residents surrounding the exercise site to inform them of an upcoming exercise. For large-scale exercises, the announcement can be published in the local newspaper prior to the exercise. A sample announcement is provided.*

City
Seal/Logo

Format Picture/Layout/
In front of text

Dear Area Residents,

Organizations from your city and state will participate in an exercise taking place on [Date]. The exercise is being conducted in order to test and improve your community's overall preparedness for an emergency event. The fictional exercise simulates a [scenario type]. Exercise participants will simulate [exercise activities, e.g., "emergency responders will simulate crime scenes and might treat volunteers who are pretending to be victims"]. **The incident is not real**; however the response activities during the fictional exercise will be practiced in a manner that is as realistic as possible. [A general list of participants, e.g., "area hospitals, city and county police, fire and emergency teams, state and local officials, other government agencies and private sector partners"] will be participating.

The areas where the exercise will take place will be clearly marked. For your safety, and in order to complete the exercise in a realistic environment, the exercise area will not be open to the public. We ask for your patience and support if the exercise disrupts your daily routine.

There are simple steps that Americans can take to prepare themselves and their loved ones for emergencies: be informed, make a plan, build a disaster supply kit, and get involved through opportunities that support community preparedness. By gathering supplies to meet basic needs, discussing what to do during an emergency with your family in advance, and being aware of the risks and appropriate actions, you will be better prepared for the unexpected and can help better prepare your community and the country. Please visit www.ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY to learn more about preparedness activities.

We thank all area residents for their support of this important exercise. [Optional: If you have any concerns or questions about the exercise, please contact: POC].

Sincerely,

[Exercise Director]

[Sponsoring Agency]

EXTENT OF PLAY AGREEMENT

For the [Exercise Name]

[Date]

1. Purpose

Insert the information in brackets.

This Extent of Play Agreement (XPA) identifies the conditions that will be used to develop, conduct, control, and evaluate the [Exercise Name], as agreed to by [Participating Organization] and the Exercise Director for [Sponsor Organization].

2. Executive Summary

Provide a brief description and overview of the exercise.

3. Identified Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

Provide a list of exercise objectives and the core capabilities aligned to each objective.

Exercise Objective

Aligned Core Capability

[Exercise Objective 1]

[Core Capability]

[Exercise Objective 2]

[Core Capability]

[Exercise Objective 3]

[Core Capability]

[Exercise Objective 4]

[Core Capability]

4. Standards & References

Provide the information in brackets.

[Sponsoring Organization] will use the following references, plans, and procedures during exercise play:

- [Insert plan, policy, or procedure, include validation date of plan]
- [Insert plan, policy, or procedure, include validation date of plan]
- [Insert plan, policy, or procedure, include validation date of plan]

5. Exercise Parameters

Provide an overview of the exercise scenario and intended outcome of the exercise. Include details such as the date, time, and location of the exercise and the intended exercise type (e.g. tabletop, functional exercise, or full-scale exercise).

6. Exercise Participants

Identify participants and their intended role in the exercise. Include players, with expected level of play, observers, and intended media participation.

Participant <i>(Name, Position, & Organization Name)</i>	Exercise Role <i>(Player, Observer, Media)</i>	Expected Level of Play <i>(Dates/Times of Play)</i>

7. Signatures & Conditions

Insert the names and organizations of the Exercise Director and Participating Organization representative.

The following agree to support this exercise as described herein:

_____	_____
[Name of Exercise Director]	[Name of Representative]
Exercise Director	[Title]
[Sponsor Organization]	[Participating Organization]

Directions for this Template

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Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Name

Final Planning Meeting

[Date]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Welcome

- [Name]
- [Title (e.g., Exercise Director or Lead Planner)]
- [Organization]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Administrative Remarks

- Safety and emergency information
- Restrooms
- Cell phone etiquette
- Breaks and lunch
- Microphones (if applicable)



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Introductions

- Name
- Organization



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Trusted Agents

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Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Agenda

- [Time] Welcome and introductions
- [Time] Planning updates
- [Time] Exercise design
- [Time] Exercise development
- [Time] Action items and next steps



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Meeting Objectives

- Review and approve all draft exercise material
- Ensure all logistical requirements are met
- Identify and resolve any outstanding issues



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Planning Updates

- Outcomes of the Midterm Planning Meeting
- [Outcomes of MSEL Meeting, if held]
- Additional updates



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Design Discussion Points

- Review and confirm exercise design elements
- Review and finalize the scenario timeline
- Review and approve exercise documentation
 - [Situation Manual (SitMan) or Exercise Plan (ExPlan)]
 - [Facilitator Guide or Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Handbook]
 - Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Objectives and Core Capabilities

- Objective 1: [Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capabilities]
- Objective 2: [Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capabilities]
- Objective 3: [Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capabilities]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Scenario

- [Overview of the scenario and any details that need to be discussed or finalized]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Participants

- [Participating organization]
 - [Role (e.g., Player, Observer)]
 - [Extent of play]
- [Participating organization]
 - [Role (e.g., Player, Observer)]
 - [Extent of play]
- [Participating organization]
 - [Role (e.g., Player, Observer)]
 - [Extent of play]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Review Exercise Documentation

- [SitMan or ExPlan]
- [Facilitator Guide or C/E Handbook]
- EEGs
- [Other documents as needed]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Local Issues and Concerns

- [Any issues, concerns, or sensitivities for discussion and consideration]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Development Discussion Points

- Confirm all exercise logistical arrangements
- Finalize exercise schedule
- Finalize exercise staffing requirements
- Finalize exercise planning timeline



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Logistics

- Exercise location
 - [Venue arrangements, including location(s), setup, etc.]
 - [Any locations for designated exercise areas, such as exercise assembly area, observer/media area, etc.]
- A/V requirements
 - [A/V arrangements, such as screens, microphones, etc.]
- Badging and identification
 - [Badging and identification arrangements]
- Parking and transportation
 - [Parking and transportation arrangements]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Schedule

- Controller/Evaluator briefing: [Date/time]
- [Date]
 - Participant registration: [Time]
 - Participant briefing: [Time]
 - Start of exercise (StartEx): [Time]
 - End of exercise (EndEx): [Time]
 - Hot Wash: Immediately after EndEx
- [Date]
 - Controller/Evaluator debriefing: [Time]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Staffing

- Subject-Matter Experts
 - [Any identified SMEs]
- Exercise control
 - Lead or Senior Controller: [Name/organization]
 - Safety Controller: [Name/organization]
 - [Other controllers as needed]
- Exercise evaluation
 - Lead Evaluator: [Name/organization]
 - [Site- or function-specific evaluators, as needed]
- [Other staff as needed]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Planning Timeline

- Exercise: [Date and location]
- Draft AAR: [Date]
- After-Action Meeting: [Date and location]
- Final AAR/IP: [Date]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Outstanding Issues

- [Any outstanding issues to address]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Action Items

- Distribute FPM minutes: [Responsible organization/individual], [Due date]
- Finalize and distribute exercise documentation: [Responsible organization/individual], [Due date]
- Finalize logistics: [Responsible organization/individual], [Due date]
- [Additional action items]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Directions for this Template

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HSEEP-DD02



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Name

Initial Planning Meeting

[Date]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Welcome

- [Name]
- [Title (e.g., Exercise Director or Lead Planner)]
- [Organization]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Administrative Remarks

- Safety and emergency information
- Restrooms
- Cell phone etiquette
- Breaks and lunch
- Microphones (if applicable)



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Introductions

- Name
- Organization



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Trusted Agents

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Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Agenda

- [Time] Welcome and introductions
- [Time] Planning updates
- [Time] Exercise design
- [Time] Exercise development
- [Time] Action items and next steps



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Meeting Objectives

- Review planning updates
- Determine exercise design elements
- Discuss exercise development items
- Address outstanding issues
- Discuss next steps and assign tasks



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Planning Updates

- [Outcomes of the Concept and Objectives Meeting]
- [Additional updates]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Design Discussion Points

- Develop exercise objectives and align to core capabilities
- Outline evaluation requirements
- Identify relevant plans, policies, and procedures to be tested
- Begin development of the exercise scenario
- Identify modeling and simulation needs
- Identify participating organizations and their extent of play
- Identify needed exercise documentation
- Highlight any local issues, concerns, or sensitivities



Insert your
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Exercise Scope and Mission Area(s)

- Exercise scope
 - Exercise type
 - Participation level
 - Exercise duration
 - Exercise location
 - Exercise parameters
- Mission area(s)
 - [Prevention, protection, mitigation, response, recovery]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Proposed Exercise Objectives

- [Insert proposed objectives]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Aligned Core Capabilities

- Objective 1: [Proposed Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capabilities (ex: Intelligence and Information Sharing)]
- Objective 2: [Proposed Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capabilities (ex: Interdiction and Disruption, Physical Protective Measures)]
- Objective 3: [Proposed Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capabilities (ex: Situational Assessment)]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Evaluation Requirements

- **Capability targets** are the performance thresholds for each core capability
 - Targets are quantitative or qualitative
- **Critical tasks** are the distinct elements required to perform a core capability
- **Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)** document exercise objectives, core capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Plans, Policies, and Procedures

- [Relevant plans, policies, and procedures to be tested or examined during the exercise]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Scenario

- The scenarios enables an exercise to assess objectives and core capabilities
- Threat or hazard: [Proposed threat/hazard]
- Conditions: [Scenario details such as locations, time, weather, etc.]
- Modeling and simulation: [Any models or simulations to be used]
 - Human-based
 - Computer-based



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Participants

- [List of participating organizations]



Insert your
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Logo Here

Exercise Documentation

Identify required documentation:

- Extent of Play Agreement (XPA)
- EEGs
- Situation Manual (SitMan)
- Facilitator Guide
- Exercise Plan (ExPlan)
- Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Handbook
- Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)
- Multimedia Presentation
- Participant Feedback Form



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Local Issues and Concerns

- [Any issues, concerns, or sensitivities for discussion and consideration]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Development Discussion Points

- Plan for exercise logistics
 - Location
 - Audio/visual (A/V) requirements
 - Duration and schedule
- Identify exercise staffing requirements
- Outline exercise planning team roles and responsibilities
- Develop exercise planning timeline



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Logistics

- Exercise location
 - [Location requirements, including seating capacity, layout, etc.]
 - [Potential locations]
- A/V requirements
 - [A/V requirements, such as screens, microphones, etc.]
- Exercise duration and schedule



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Staffing

- Subject-Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Exercise control
- Exercise evaluation



Insert your
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Logo Here

Exercise Planning Team

- Roles and responsibilities
 - [Planning team roles and assignments]
- Communications
 - [Preferred frequency and methods of communications]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Planning Timeline

- Midterm Planning Meeting: [Date and location]
 - Milestones and deliverables before next meeting
- MSEL Meeting **[as needed]**: [Date and location]
 - Milestones and deliverables before next meeting
- Final Planning Meeting: [Date and location]
 - Milestones and deliverables before next meeting
- Exercise: [Date and location]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Outstanding Issues

- [Any outstanding issues to address]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Action Items

- Distribute IPM minutes: [Responsible organization/individual], [due date]
- Draft exercise documentation
 - EEGs: [Responsible organization/individual], [due date]
 - [Other documents as needed]
- [Additional action items]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Next Meeting

- [Date]
- [Time]
- [Location]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Planning Tasks	Responsible Party	Contact Information	Suggested Timeline	Date Completed	Remarks
I. Design and Development					
Foundation					
Review exercise program guidance, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected and appointed officials' intent and guidance • Multi-year Training and Exercise Plan (TEP) • Existing plans and procedures • Risk, threat, and hazard assessments • Relevant AARs/IPs • Grant or cooperative agreement requirements 	[Exercise Program Manager]		[Prior to design of exercise concepts and objectives. 6-8 months before exercise]		
Exercise Planning Team and Events					
Identify elected and appointed officials and representatives from the sponsor organization for potential Exercise Planning Team membership			[5-7 months before exercise]		
Identify participating organizations for potential Exercise Planning Team membership			[5-7 months before exercise]		
Officially stand up Exercise Planning Team with Exercise Planning Team Leader and section chiefs, as appropriate			[5-7 months before exercise]		
Develop exercise budget			[5-7 months before exercise]		

Exercise Planning Tasks	Responsible Party	Contact Information	Suggested Timeline	Date Completed	Remarks
Schedule first planning meeting (C&O or IPM as needed)			[5-7 months before exercise]		
Identify/review topics or issues to be covered during the first planning meeting (C&O or IPM as needed)			[3-4 weeks before C&O Meeting or IPM]		
Planning Meetings					
Concepts and Objectives (C&O) Meeting (optional)			[Prior to or concurrent with IPM. 5-7 months before exercise]		
Coordinate meeting logistics, prepare and send invitations and read-ahead packets			[2-3 weeks before C&O Meeting]		
Develop draft exercise scope, objectives, and aligned core capabilities			During C&O		
Identify/confirm exercise planning team			During C&O		
Develop and distribute meeting minutes			[No later than (NLT) 1 week after C&O Meeting]		
Initial Planning Meeting (IPM)			[5-7 months before exercise]		
Coordinate meeting logistics, prepare and send invitations and read-ahead packets			[2-3 weeks before IPM]		

Exercise Planning Tasks	Responsible Party	Contact Information	Suggested Timeline	Date Completed	Remarks
Identify exercise design and development elements and begin development of exercise documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope, objectives, and core capabilities • Evaluation requirements (capability targets and critical tasks) • Scenario threat/hazard • Participants and extent of play • Exercise staffing requirements • Exercise logistics (date, location, including breakout locations or specific exercise play sites, if needed) 			During IPM		
Assign responsibilities and due dates for tasks and determine date for next planning meeting			During IPM		
Develop and distribute meeting minutes			[NLT 1 week after IPM]		
Midterm Planning Meeting (MPM) (as needed)			[3 months before exercise]		
Coordinate meeting logistics, prepare and send invitations and read-ahead packets			[2-3 weeks before MPM]		
Review and refine all exercise materials, documents, and tasks			During MPM		

Exercise Planning Tasks	Responsible Party	Contact Information	Suggested Timeline	Date Completed	Remarks
Assign responsibilities and due dates for tasks, and determine date for next planning conference			During MPM		
Develop and distribute meeting minutes			[NLT 1 week after MPM]		
MSEL Meeting (if necessary)			[2 months before exercise]		
Coordinate meeting logistics, prepare and send invitations and read-ahead packets			[2-3 weeks before MSEL Meeting]		
Review and develop MSEL injects			During MSEL Meeting		
Final Planning Meeting (FPM)			[6 weeks before exercise]		
Coordinate meeting logistics, prepare and send invitations and read-ahead packets			[2-3 weeks before exercise]		
Facilitate meeting			During FPM		
Review and approve all exercise documents			During FPM		
Finalize exercise staffing (including facilitators/controllers, evaluators, and support staff)			During FPM		
Confirm all exercise logistical elements (including exercise site(s), equipment, and schedule)			During FPM		
Assign responsibilities and due dates for tasks			During FPM		
Develop and distribute meeting minutes			[NLT 1 week after FPM]		

Exercise Planning Tasks	Responsible Party	Contact Information	Suggested Timeline	Date Completed	Remarks
Documentation					
Develop Situation Manual (SitMan) or Exercise Plan (ExPlan)					
Develop Facilitator's Guide or C/E Handbook					
Develop exercise evaluation packets (including Exercise Evaluation Guides [EEGs])					
Develop multimedia exercise presentation					
Develop MSEL (as needed)					
Develop Participant Feedback Forms					
Exercise Site Areas					
Designate media/observer area					
Designate registration area					
Designate parking area					
Media/Public Information					
Develop media policy					
Develop Press Release and/or Public Announcements as needed					
Logistics					
Identify exercise venue					
Arrange for use of exercise venue (reserve room/use of facility)					
Arrange for participant parking at venue					

Exercise Planning Tasks	Responsible Party	Contact Information	Suggested Timeline	Date Completed	Remarks
Arrange for audio/visual equipment (e.g., microphones, screens, projectors)					
Arrange for exercise supplies (e.g., pens, markers, flipcharts)					
Develop mailing lists (players, facilitators, Exercise Planning Team)					
Develop ID badges, name/table tents, and sign-in sheets					
Arrange for restrooms					
Develop signage					
Exercise Staffing					
Determine exercise staff requirements					
Select and train exercise staff					
II. Conduct					
Exercise Play Preparation					
Distribute exercise documentation			[1 week before exercise]		
Set up exercise site(s) (including Simulation and/or Control Cells, as needed)			[1 day before exercise]		
Present pre-exercise Elected and Appointed Official Briefing (as needed)			As requested		

Exercise Planning Tasks	Responsible Party	Contact Information	Suggested Timeline	Date Completed	Remarks
Conduct pre-exercise briefings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C/E Briefing and/or Evaluator Training • Actor Briefing (as needed) • Player Briefing • Observer Briefing (as needed) 			[NLT 1 day before exercise (C/E Briefing), or before STARTEX]		
Exercise Conduct					
Facilitate/Control exercise play			During Exercise		
Collect data			During Exercise		
Wrap-Up Activities					
Conduct post-exercise player Hot Wash			Immediately following ENDEX		
Conduct C/E Debrief			Immediately following ENDEX and Hot Wash		
III. Evaluation					
After-Action Report (AAR)					
Complete and submit all EEGs			Immediately following exercise		
Develop draft AAR			[NLT 30 days after exercise]		
Distribute draft AAR to participating organizations' policy and decision makers for review			[NLT 30 days after exercise]		
IV. Improvement Planning					
After-Action Meeting					
Schedule meeting			Immediately following exercise		

Exercise Planning Tasks	Responsible Party	Contact Information	Suggested Timeline	Date Completed	Remarks
Coordinate meeting logistics, prepare and send invitations and read-ahead packets			[2-3 weeks before AAM]		
Receive feedback on Draft AAR, make any revisions, and develop draft list of corrective actions			[1 week before AAM]		
Conduct AAM to reach consensus on AAR content and revise/gain consensus on corrective actions			[NLT than 45 days after exercise]		
Finalize AAR/IP			[NLT 1 week after AAM]		
Distribute final AAR/IP			[NLT 1 week after AAM]		
Continuous Improvement					
Share lessons learned, best practices, and successes identified in AAR/IP			Ongoing		
Implement corrective actions			Ongoing		
Track AAR/IP implementation			Ongoing		

Directions for this Template

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Insert your
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Exercise Name

Midterm Planning Meeting

[Date]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Welcome

- [Name]
- [Title (e.g., Exercise Director or Lead Planner)]
- [Organization]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Administrative Remarks

- Safety and emergency information
- Restrooms
- Cell phone etiquette
- Breaks and lunch
- Microphones (if applicable)



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Introductions

- Name
- Organization



Insert your
Organization's
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- This document is not releasable to any public website.



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Agenda

- [Time] Welcome and introductions
- [Time] Planning updates
- [Time] Exercise design
- [Time] Exercise development
- [Time] Action items and next steps



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Meeting Objectives

- Review planning updates
- Further develop exercise design elements
- Review and update exercise development items
- Address outstanding issues
- Discuss next steps and assign tasks



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Planning Updates

- [Outcomes of the Initial Planning Meeting]
- [Additional updates]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Design Discussion Points

- Review and confirm exercise design elements
- Construct the scenario timeline
- Review draft exercise documentation
 - [Situation Manual (SitMan) or Exercise Plan (ExPlan)]
 - [Facilitator's Guide or Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Handbook]
 - Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Objectives and Core Capabilities

- Objective 1: [Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capabilities]
- Objective 2: [Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capabilities]
- Objective 3: [Objective]
 - Aligns to: [Core Capabilities]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Plans, Policies, and Procedures

- [Relevant plans, policies, and procedures to be tested or examined during the exercise]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Scenario

- Threat or hazard: [Threat/hazard]
- Conditions: [Scenario details such as locations, time, weather, etc.]
- Modeling and simulation: [Any models or simulations to be used
 - Human-based
 - Computer-based]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Scenario Timeline

- [Event]
 - [Date/time]
 - [Event description]
 - [Related core capability/critical task]
- [Event]
 - [Date/time]
 - [Event description]
 - [Related core capability/critical task]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

MSEL [As needed]

- A MSEL contains a chronological listing of the events that drive exercise play
- Each MSEL entry should contain the following:
 - Designated scenario time
 - Event synopsis
 - Controller responsible for delivering the inject
 - Expected player response
 - Intended player
 - Objective, core capability, capability target, and/or critical task to be addressed
 - Notes section



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

MSEL Development Session [as needed]

- Participants suggest specific MSEL entries to support the evaluation of their organizations' objectives, core capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Participants

- [List of participating organizations]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Draft Exercise Documentation

- [SitMan or ExPlan]
- [Facilitator Guide or C/E Handbook]
- EEGs
- [Other documents as needed]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Local Issues and Concerns

- [Any issues, concerns, or sensitivities for discussion and consideration]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Development Discussion Points

- Review and update exercise logistical arrangements
- Develop exercise schedule
- Review and update exercise staffing requirements
- Review and update exercise planning timeline



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Logistics

- Exercise location
 - [Venue arrangements, including location(s), setup, etc.]
 - [Any locations for designated exercise areas, such as exercise assembly area, observer/media area, etc.]
- A/V requirements
 - [A/V arrangements, such as screens, microphones, etc.]
- Badging and identification
 - [Badging and identification arrangements]
- Parking and transportation
 - [Parking and transportation arrangements]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Schedule

- Controller/Evaluator briefing: [Date/time]
- [Date]
 - Participant registration: [Time]
 - Participant briefing: [Time]
 - Start of exercise (StartEx): [Time]
 - End of exercise (EndEx): [Time]
 - Hot Wash: Immediately after EndEx
- [Date]
 - Controller/Evaluator debriefing: [Time]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Staffing

- Subject-Matter Experts
 - [Any identified SMEs]
- Exercise control
 - Lead or Senior Controller: [Name/organization]
 - Safety Controller: [Name/organization]
 - [Other controllers as needed]
- Exercise evaluation
 - Lead Evaluator: [Name/organization]
 - [Site- or function-specific evaluators as needed]
- [Other staff as needed]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Exercise Planning Timeline

- MSEL Meeting **[if needed]** : [Date and location]
 - Milestones and deliverables before next meeting
- Final Planning Meeting: [Date and location]
 - Milestones and deliverables before next meeting
- Exercise: [Date and location]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Outstanding Issues

- [Any outstanding issues to address]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Action Items

- Distribute MPM minutes: [Responsible organization/individual], [Due date]
- Revise draft exercise documentation
 - [SitMan or ExPlan]: [Responsible organization/individual], [Due date]
 - EEGs: [Responsible organization/individual], [Due date]
 - [Scenario or MSEL]: [Responsible organization/ individual], [Due date]
 - [Other documents]
- [Additional action items]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

Next Meeting

- [Date]
- [Time]
- [Location]



Insert your
Organization's
Logo Here

[TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE]

[Date]

Note: Press releases are disseminated to the media before exercise conduct. A standard press release contains a brief overview of the exercise, including the intent of the exercise, scope of the exercise, a synopsis of the scenario (without identifying the threat/hazard/agent), and participating agencies/organizations.

Introduction

[Sponsor organization] is sponsoring a [exercise type] on [date]. This exercise will provide participants with an opportunity to assess capabilities, plans, policies, and procedures. It will focus on decision-making, coordination, and integration with other organizations during a [scenario]. The expected outcome of the exercise is [goal or result, e.g. strengthening interagency coordination].

Scenario

[Brief description of the scenario.]

Participants

The following agencies and organizations will participate in the exercise:

- [Agency/Organization]

Contact Information

For more information on this exercise, please contact:

[Exercise Point of Contact]

[Exercise Name]

Situation Manual

[Date]

This Situation Manual (SitMan) provides exercise participants with all the necessary tools for their roles in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, facilitators, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the SitMan.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	[Insert the formal name of exercise, which should match the name in the document header]
Exercise Dates	[Indicate the start and end dates of the exercise]
Scope	This exercise is a [exercise type], planned for [exercise duration] at [exercise location]. Exercise play is limited to [exercise parameters].
Mission Area(s)	[Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and/or Recovery]
Core Capabilities	[List the core capabilities being exercised]
Objectives	[List exercise objectives]
Threat or Hazard	[List the threat or hazard (e.g. natural/hurricane, technological/radiological release)]
Scenario	[Insert a brief overview of the exercise scenario, including scenario impacts (2-3 sentences)]
Sponsor	[Insert the name of the sponsor organization, as well as any grant programs being utilized, if applicable]
Participating Organizations	[Insert a brief summary of the total number of participants and participation level (i.e., Federal, State, local, Tribal, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and/or international agencies). Consider including the full list of participating agencies in Appendix B. Delete Appendix B if not required.]
Point of Contact	[Insert the name, title, agency, address, phone number, and email address of the primary exercise POC (e.g., exercise director or exercise sponsor)]

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned core capabilities are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
[Insert objectives]	[Insert core capability aligned to each objective]

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Observers.** Observers do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development of player responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.
- **Facilitators.** Facilitators provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required. Key Exercise Planning Team members also may assist with facilitation as subject matter experts (SMEs) during the exercise.
- **Evaluators.** Evaluators are assigned to observe and document certain objectives during the exercise. Their primary role is to document player discussions, including how and if those discussions conform to plans, policies, and procedures.

Exercise Structure

This exercise will be a multimedia, facilitated exercise. Players will participate in the following [insert number of modules] modules:

- Module 1: [Module name, e.g. Incident Notification]
- Module 2: [Module name]
- Module 3: [Module name]

Each module begins with a multimedia update that summarizes key events occurring within that time period. After the updates, participants review the situation and engage in functional group discussions of appropriate [prevention/protection/mitigation/response/recovery] issues. For this exercise, the functional groups are as follows:

- [Functional group, e.g. Law Enforcement]
- [Functional group]
- [Functional group]
- [Functional group]

After these functional group discussions, participants will engage in a moderated plenary discussion in which a spokesperson from each group will present a synopsis of the group's actions, based on the scenario.

Exercise Guidelines

- This exercise will be held in an open, low-stress, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
- Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., you may use only existing assets) and insights derived from your training.
- Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your organization's final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.
- Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve [prevention/protection/mitigation/response/recovery] efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus.

Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise, and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation. During this exercise, the following apply:

- [The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.]
- [The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.]
- [All players receive information at the same time.]

Exercise Evaluation

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the exercise objectives and aligned capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks, which are documented in Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs). Evaluators have EEGs for each of their assigned areas. Additionally, players will be asked to complete participant feedback forms. These documents, coupled with facilitator observations and notes, will be used to evaluate the exercise and compile the After-Action Report (AAR).

MODULE 1: [MODULE NAME]

[Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

[Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

[Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

Key Issues

- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]
- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]
- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]

Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 1. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

[Functional Group]

1. [List suggested discussion questions. Questions should be developed by the Exercise Planning Team with input from the Evaluators. Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks in the EEGs.]
2. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]
3. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]

[Functional Group]

1. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]
2. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]
3. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]

MODULE 2: [MODULE NAME]

[Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

[Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

[Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

Key Issues

- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]
- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]
- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]

Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 2. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

[Functional Group]

1. [List suggested discussion questions. Questions should be developed by the Exercise Planning Team with input from the Evaluators. Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks in the EEGs.]
2. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]
3. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]

[Functional Group]

1. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]
2. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]
3. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]

MODULE 3: [MODULE NAME]

[Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

[Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

[Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

Key Issues

- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]
- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]
- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]

Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 3. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

[Functional Group]

1. [List suggested discussion questions. Questions should be developed by the Exercise Planning Team with input from the Evaluators. Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks in the EEGs.]
2. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]
3. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]

[Functional Group]

1. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]
2. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]
3. [Provide suggested discussion questions.]

APPENDIX A: EXERCISE SCHEDULE

Note: Because this information is updated throughout the exercise planning process, appendices may be developed as stand-alone documents rather than part of the SitMan.

Time	Activity
[Month Day, Year]	
0000	Registration
0000	Welcome and Opening Remarks
0000	Module 1: Briefing, Caucus Discussion, and Brief-Back
0000	Break
0000	Module 2: Briefing, Caucus Discussion, and Brief-Back
0000	Lunch
0000	Module 3: Briefing, Caucus Discussion, and Brief-Back
0000	Break
0000	Hot Wash
0000	Closing Comments

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations	
Federal	
State	
[Jurisdiction A]	
[Jurisdiction B]	

APPENDIX C: RELEVANT PLANS

[Insert excerpts from relevant plans, policies, or procedures to be tested during the exercise.]

APPENDIX D: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
SitMan	Situation Manual
SME	Subject Matter Expert
TTX	Tabletop Exercise