

Plan Exercises

Focus on Tabletops

Why Exercise Your Plan? You only do what you practice.

- Evaluate your plans, policies, and procedures
 - Accurate and up to date?
 - Implementable?
 - COMPLETE?
- Improve individual or group performance
- Identify weaknesses and/or gaps
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Address legal / regulatory requirements if relevant

Training Options

- Orientation
 - Overview of the plan
 - Discussion of role and responsibilities
 - Not, necessarily, scenario driven
- Tabletop Exercise
 - Scenario and input driven
 - Deeper dive onto plans
 - Additional “stress” on participants
- Functional Exercise
 - Actually begin to deploy and utilize resources on a limited scale
- Full Scale Drill
 - Activate EOC, possible use of outside players, real-time use of equipment, everyone “turns out” exercise.

Tabletop - Classic Definition

- FEMA: a “tabletop” exercise is a “**facilitated analysis of an emergency situation in an informal, stress-free environment.**”
 - It is designed to elicit discussion as participants examine and respond to the scenario / problems
 - Solutions should be based on existing plans, not plans we WISHED existed
 - There is minimal attempt at simulation (BUT we will discuss this more later).
 - For the most part, no equipment, no deployment of resources, and no **major** stress.

Tabletop Exercise Room and Setup

- Large room or multiple rooms – can easily integrate in remote locations
- Name tags, possible organization by functional group
- Make sure you can be heard
 - Key developments and decisions must be shared
 - White boards if possible
- Audio / visual aids are fun but are NOT necessary

Tabletop One

- You are attending the Marin Disaster Summit
- It is 0935
- The lights go out
- The alarms go off

- Whatcha gonna DO???

Tabletop Exercises

- Discussion guided by a facilitator(s)
- Utilizes previously developed scenarios and various inputs (some inputs may be done on the fly)
- No simulation cell
- One or two evaluators to observe proceedings and progress (keep you honest)

(Cheats and other considerations come later)

Tabletop Exercises

- You can make anything, and EVERYTHING, happen if you wish
- Exercise does not need to take place in real-time
- Success is determined by
 - Ah Ha's!
 - Successful evaluation of policies, plans, and procedures
 - Identification of NEXT Steps
 - Plan modifications
 - Better understanding of roles etc. by players
 - They will play again

Tabletop Exercises – Classic Before

FEMA's training

- Assess needs
- Define the scope
- Write a purpose statement
- Define objectives
- Compose a narrative
- Write major and detailed events
- List expected actions

Tabletop Exercises – Classic During

As you exercise;

- Record communication
- Document actions initiated
- Identify problems encountered
- List solutions used
- Itemize changes needed

Tabletop Exercises – Classic After

- Conduct post-exercise meeting
- Review lessons learned
 - Positive
 - Negative
- Identify unanswered questions and items in the Parking Lot
- Critique areas for refinement for future exercises
- Set up Action Item and OWNERS

- SCHEDULE NEXT SESSION!

The Usual Exercise Lessons Learned

- Preplanning must include a role for all critical groups
- Allow time for scenario to develop and play out
- Plan for someone to handle role(s) of those not present – or play them yourself
- Have facilitators on hand to control and monitor progress of the exercise if you don't feel you can
- Be realistic – IF YOU NEED TO BE

The Usual Exercise Lessons Learned

- Be in CONTROL
 - Stress ground rules
 - Stop and assess as needed
 - Be quick on your feet
- Stay on target and on time
 - Allow enough time for post exercise debriefing – here is where a LOT of learnings will be expressed

Things Maybe NOT So Classic...

- Scenarios (know your audience)
 - Godzilla?
 - Ripped from the Headlines?
- Hidden agendas
 - Know what you want to stress
 - LEAD the horse to water
- Know the plan better than anyone
 - OCCASIONALLY – there will be someone who doesn't really want to play...

Things Maybe NOT So Classic

- Don't be afraid to "kill"
 - Really – be prepared to "take out" the one person that knows everything
- Have your champions
 - Do your homework before the design
 - Know who's going to support you
 - Plant a ringer if you think you must
- Don't do anything that's career limiting...
 - Ignore everything on the last two pages

Other Templates

- **SCENARIO**
- *The Event – Part 1*
- On Monday at 11:45 am, an earthquake begins to shake your facility. You have no idea how near or how big the event is. There are employees outside on having lunch as well as in the building.
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- **SCENARIO - MODULE 1 - The Event – SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**
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- What is your first action and/or command?
- Who is "in charge"?
- What are your critical concerns at this point?
- What is your role at this time?
- How would any safety and security issues be addressed?
- What about accountability of employees?
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- **SCENARIO**
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- *The Event – Part 2*
- The shaking has stopped and clearly there has been damage to your site.
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- **SCENARIO - MODULE 2 - Initial Response – SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**
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- What are your priorities?
- How are injuries and damages being reported?
- Would you evacuate the facility – if not, why not?
- Would you set up any staging areas/ICP at this point?
- What general communication activities will be followed?
- What assets are currently available for potential response (plans, equipment and personnel)?
- Are there gaps that should be addressed in light of the potential threat (e.g. lack of required protocols, communication interoperability, etc.)?

Other Templates

- Review other documents
 - Public Health – Cumberland County
 - OESD 144
 - Minnesota Federal Executive Board
 - CCSF – Pandemic for Business and Facilitator's Guide

FEMA TRAINING:
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is139.asp>

Soft Copies?? Got a better way??
Want an Observer?

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(sorry, I never check my ARC email! L)
