



Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning

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Introduction

Background

As a revision of *HSEEP Volume II: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement*, published in 2002, *Volume III* provides updated guidance for evaluating the performance of tasks, activities, and capabilities necessary to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from natural and manmade disasters. While the methodology and general purpose of exercise evaluation has not changed, the revised *HSEEP Volume III* incorporates the capabilities-based planning approach (addressed briefly in Chapter 1) by using the Target Capabilities List (TCL) as the basis for analysis. Using the TCL, revised Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) will act as the primary reference to ensure all jurisdictions/organizations evaluate exercises against the same measurable baseline. This method of evaluation will not only help to identify significant gaps in preparedness capabilities across the Nation, but more importantly, serve as a tool to develop stronger After Action Report/Improvement Plans (AAR/IPs).

After first describing the methodology used in exercise evaluation and improvement plan development, this volume then takes the reader through an eight step process with the objective of describing the following: how to effectively capture strengths, lessons learned and specific areas for improvement within an After-Action Report (AAR); and how to eliminate any shortcomings through the development of Improvement Plans (IP), which are the roadmaps for increasing capability performance and outcomes.

Security Guidance: For Official Use Only Information

The information contained in the HSEEP volumes is not considered sensitive in nature. However, some materials (e.g., scenario examples), particularly those in *Volume IV*, may necessitate confidential restrictions once tailored by an exercise planning team. Exercise materials produced in accordance with HSEEP guidance and deemed sensitive should be designated as “For Official Use Only” (FOUO). While FOUO is not a classification, it does make clear to participants that the material is sensitive and should be handled with care. Examples of materials that may require FOUO designation include scenario information, Master Scenario Events Lists (MSELs), After-Action Reports (AARs), and Improvement Plans (IPs).

Chapter 1 - Evaluation and Improvement Planning Overview

Exercise evaluation and improvement planning are fundamentally linked. Exercise evaluation assesses a jurisdiction/organization's performance in an exercise, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Improvement planning leverages the outputs of the evaluation process to develop improvement plans which assign responsibility for concrete steps that will be taken to remedy identified improvement areas. Thus, evaluation identifies opportunities for improvement, while improvement planning provides a disciplined process for implementing improvement actions.

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)

The main product of the Evaluation and Improvement Planning process is the AAR/IP. The AAR/IP has two components: an After-Action Report (AAR) which captures observations of an exercise and makes recommendations for post-exercise improvements; and an Improvement Plan (IP) which identifies specific improvement actions, assigns them to responsible parties, and establishes targets for their completion. Because the AAR and the IP are developed through different processes and perform distinct functions, they are referred to separately at many points in this volume. However, in practice the AAR and the IP should always be printed and distributed jointly, as a single AAR/IP following an exercise.

Evaluation, Improvement Planning, and Capabilities-Based Planning

To meet the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) adopted a capabilities-based approach to preparedness planning. Capabilities-based planning is defined as planning, under uncertainty, to build capabilities suitable for a wide range of threats and hazards while working within an economic framework that necessitates prioritization and choice. Capabilities-based planning addresses uncertainty by analyzing a wide range of realistic scenarios and identifying the capabilities identified for effective prevention, protection, response, and recovery. Capabilities-based planning is the basis for guidance such as the National Preparedness Goal, Target Capabilities List (TCL), and Universal Task List (UTL).

The TCL identifies the homeland security capabilities which the nation must attain in order to be prepared for terrorism, natural disasters, and other emergencies. Capabilities-based planning is an ongoing effort to strategically build and strengthen these capabilities. Exercise evaluation and improvement planning play an important role in the capabilities-based planning process by assessing a jurisdiction's priority homeland security capabilities and developing improvement plans that enhance those priority capabilities.

This exercise-based capabilities-improvement process is accomplished by planning an evaluation that focuses on specific priority capabilities being exercised, and evaluating those capabilities against Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) that provide standards for assessing execution of the tasks and activities related to applicable TCL capabilities. Based on areas for improvement identified using capability-specific EEGs, After-Action Report/Improvement Plans (AAR/IPs) provide concrete steps that a jurisdiction/organization can take to strengthen the capabilities evaluated during the exercises.

Exercise evaluation is also an opportunity to identify lessons learned and best practices that can be shared with other jurisdictions to help build the Nation's overall preparedness. The Department of Homeland Security's *Lessons Learned Information Sharing* (www.LLIS.gov) web-portal is the Nation's official repository of lessons learned and best practices for emergency responders and homeland security officials.

Exercise Evaluation Methodology

The HSEEP evaluation methodology is an analytical process used to assess the demonstration of homeland security capabilities during preparedness exercises. While the ultimate goal of exercise evaluation is assessment of a jurisdiction/organization's capabilities, there are actually three distinct levels of analysis employed during the evaluation process.

Capability-Level Analysis

Capability-level analysis involves assessing a jurisdiction/organization's ability to demonstrate their priority homeland security capabilities. Capabilities are combinations of elements (such as personnel, planning, organization and leadership, equipment and systems, training, and exercises, assessments and corrective actions) that provide the means to achieve a measurable outcome resulting from performance of one or more activities under specified conditions and performance standards designed by the exercise planning team. An example of a capability that a jurisdiction may demonstrate during an exercise is: *WMD/Hazardous Materials Response and Decontamination*.

Capability-level analysis ultimately seeks to ask the question: to what extent did the jurisdiction/organization demonstrate the capabilities needed to successfully prevent, protect against, respond to, or recover from the threat or hazard simulated in the exercise scenario. To this end, the focus of capabilities-level analysis is primarily on outcome, rather than on individual performance. Capability outcomes are the results which must be achieved for successful prevention of, protection against, response to, and recovery from the threats and hazards which face the Nation and confront communities.

Capability-level analysis is useful to assess the capabilities developed through personnel, planning, organization and leadership, equipment and systems, training, and exercises, assessments and corrective actions. It also helps managers and executives develop operating plans and budgets, communicate with political officials, set long-range training and planning goals, and develop interagency/organization and inter-jurisdictional agreements.

Activity-Level Analysis

Activities are groups of tasks associated with a capability that, when carried out according to plans and procedures, allow a jurisdiction/organization to demonstrate the capability with which they are associated.

The purpose of evaluation at this level is to answer the question, *were all tasks performed successfully in accordance with approved plans, policies, procedures, and agreements?* An example of an activity associated with the WMD/HazMat Response and Decontamination capability is: *Conduct Gross Decontamination*.

Most activities can be assessed using performance measures, which capture the effectiveness of an activity by measuring quantifiable properties. Performance measures are combined with a qualitative analysis of the associated tasks to assess success in carrying out an activity. An example of a performance measure for the activity above is: *Time to perform emergency decontamination of victims on-scene after decontamination team arrives*.

Activity-level analysis is useful to assess issues such as how well members worked together at the discipline or organizational level, and how well team members communicated across organizational boundaries.

Task-Level Analysis

Tasks are specific, discrete actions which individuals or groups must complete or discuss during an exercise to successfully carry out an activity. An example of a task associated with the activity above is: *Identify assets required for decon activities*

Successful execution of performance measures and tasks, either sequentially or in parallel, is the foundation for activities, which are, in turn, the foundation of capabilities. Consequently, task-level analysis can help identify the shortcomings or errors preventing demonstration of a capability. Therefore, task-level analysis is useful for jurisdictions/organizations to analyze shortcomings and target planning, equipment, and training resources optimally to improve their capabilities.

Figure 1-1 depicts the structure of these levels of analysis. All capabilities link to the prevention, protection, response, or recovery mission areas.

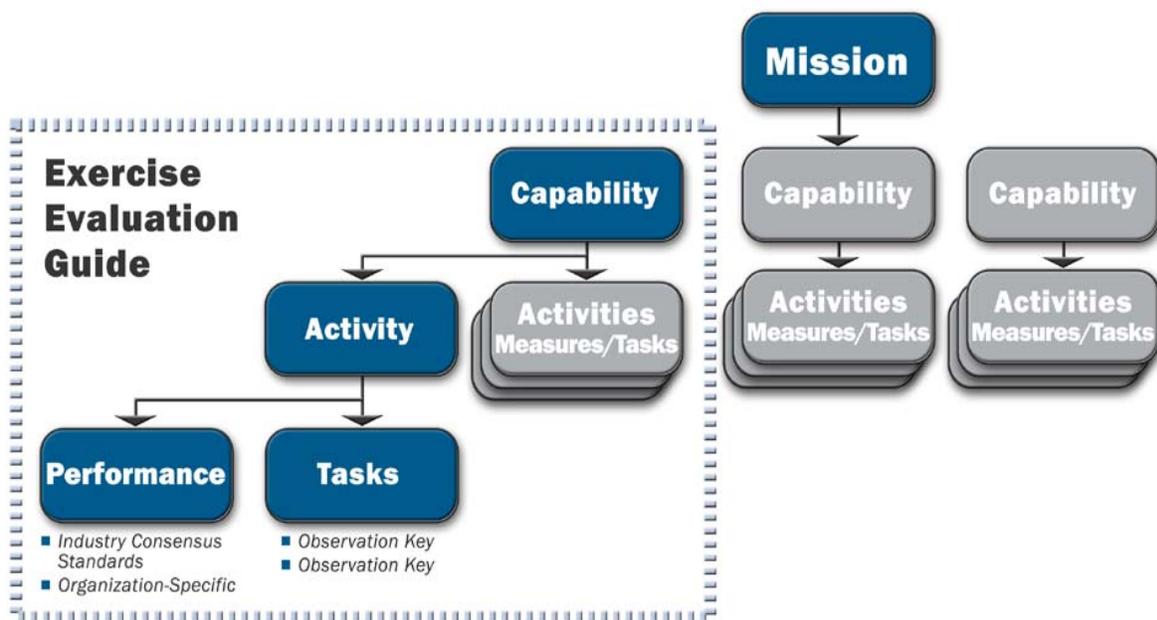


Figure 1-1. Levels of Criteria for Analysis.

Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)

Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) are HSEEP documents which assist with the exercise evaluation process by providing evaluators with consistent standards and guidelines for observation, data collection, analysis, and report writing. The EEGs are linked to capabilities, and to associated activities, performance measures, and tasks. Each capability-specific EEG contains two primary components:

- An EEG observation form, which provides evaluators with the activities, performance measures and tasks associated with a capability for recording of notes associated with exercise performance; and

- An *EEG analysis form*, which helps evaluators to consolidate the observations recorded during an exercise into a coherent narrative that addresses strengths and areas for improvement relevant to demonstration of a capability.

The consistent guidelines provided in EEGs facilitate creation of AAR/IPs. By relating capabilities to activities, performance measures, and tasks, EEGs also establish the foundation for improvement plans which strategically target personnel, planning, organization and leadership, equipment and systems, training, and exercises, assessments and corrective actions on identified shortcomings in priority capabilities.

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Chapter 2 – Exercise Evaluation, Data Collection, and Analysis (Steps 1–4)

This chapter describes the first four steps in the evaluation and improvement planning, which are:

- 1) Plan and Organize the Evaluation
- 2) Observe the Exercise and Collect Data
- 3) Analyze Data
- 4) Develop the Draft After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)

Steps 5-8, which address how areas for improvement identified in an AAR/IP are transformed into concrete improvements to preparedness, are discussed in *Chapter 3: Improvement Planning*.

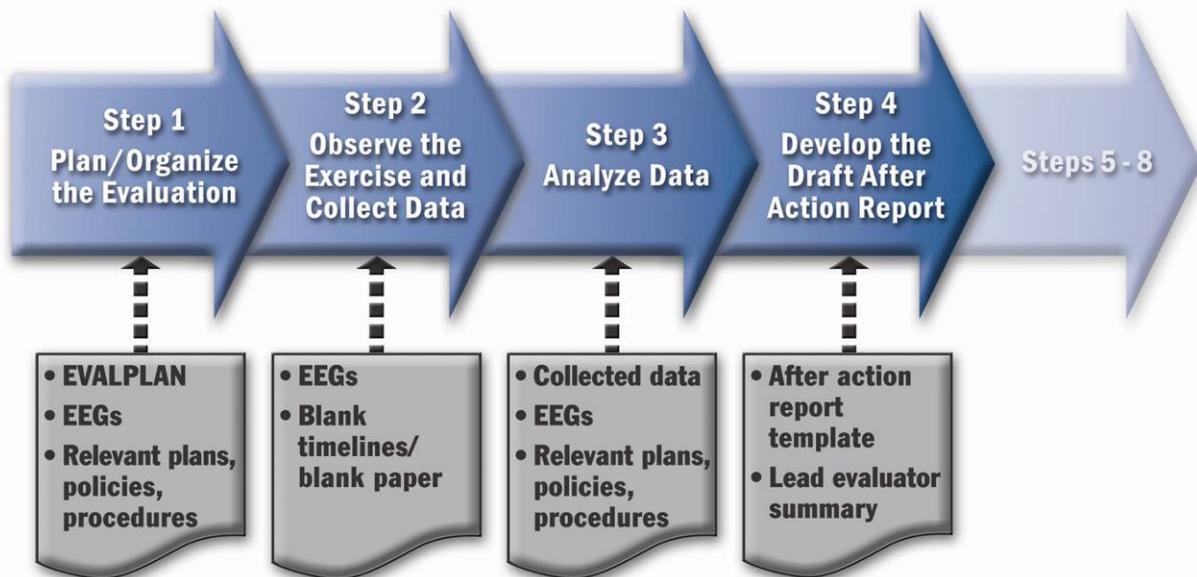


Figure 2-1. Data Collection and Analysis Steps

Figure 2-1 illustrates the first four steps described in the HSEEP evaluation and improvement planning process, in the context of the broader process of which they are a part. The evaluation and improvement planning process is critical for determining a jurisdiction/organization's preparedness, for highlighting strengths and areas for improvement, for implementing improvements, and for identifying the issues that become the focus of future exercises thus supporting a comprehensive exercise program with a focus on continual improvement.

The four steps discussed in this chapter span from the beginning of pre-exercise evaluation planning to the development of an AAR/IP shortly after an exercise. The steps address how exercise goals and objectives inform a focused evaluation process which yields an actionable AAR/IP relevant to the exercising entity's priorities.

Step 1: Plan and Organize the Evaluation

In order to ensure effective and successful exercise evaluation, it is important to conduct thorough planning and organization prior to an exercise. This process should include:

- Appointing a Lead Evaluator;
- Defining evaluation requirements;
- Recruiting, training, and assigning evaluators;
- Finalizing an evaluation plan; and
- Conducting a Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Brief

Through this process, an evaluation team can organize itself appropriately and develop a thorough plan addressing how the exercise will be evaluated.

Appoint Lead Evaluator

Early in the exercise planning process, the lead exercise planner should appoint a lead evaluator to oversee all facets of the evaluation process. The lead evaluator should participate fully as a member of the exercise planning team, and should be a senior-level individual familiar with the following:

- Prevention, protection, response, and/or recovery issues associated with the exercise;
- Plans, policies, and procedures of the exercising jurisdiction/organization;
- Incident command and decision-making processes of the exercising jurisdiction/organization; and
- Interagency and/or inter-jurisdictional coordination issues relevant to the exercise.

The lead evaluator must have the management skills needed to oversee a team of evaluators over an extended process, as well as the knowledge and analytical skills to undertake a thorough and accurate analysis of all capabilities being tested during an exercise.

Develop Evaluation Requirements

Prior to assembling an evaluation team, the exercise planning team must define the exercise's evaluation requirements. These requirements include the tools, plans, and personnel needed to effectively observe, collect data, and analyze information. In defining these requirements the planning team should consider both exercise scope and exercise goals and objectives.

- **Exercise scope**

The scope consists of, but not limited to, the days/hours, location/sites of exercise play, and the type of exercise (e.g., tabletop, functional, or full-scale exercise). This will help determine the number of evaluators needed, and the locations/sites where evaluators should be placed for observation (e.g., facilities/sites, command/control centers, hospitals, or on patrol).

- **Exercise goals and objectives**

Exercise goals and objectives reflect the capabilities that a jurisdiction/organization seeks to demonstrate, and thus what activities and tasks will be observed. By identifying the capabilities, activities, and tasks that are being evaluated, this step allows exercise planners to determine the subject-matter expertise required of evaluators.

For discussion-based exercises, consideration of the exercise's goals and objectives can help inform the development of a Facilitator Guide, which provides the exercise's facilitator with suggestions for how to steer exercise discussion to the capabilities being evaluated.

The Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs), are designed to evaluate specific capabilities. By identifying objectives and goals, the exercise evaluation team can determine which EEGs are needed for evaluating an exercise.

HSEEP EEGs are developed for evaluation of operations-based exercises. Discussion-based exercises, which focus on higher-level discussion, may require custom-developed evaluation forms tailored to address the specific plans, policies, and procedures being discussed. These forms should be created by the lead evaluator, the facilitator, and others to ensure that questions and evaluation criteria conform to the intended course of discussion during the exercise and reflect the exercise's goals and objectives. While the lead evaluator may exercise discretion to ensure that evaluation forms are relevant to an exercise's focus, it is important that the forms provide a concrete framework to assess whether the jurisdiction has succeeded in demonstrating the capabilities that are the exercise's focus. HSEEP's EEGs can form the basis for the creation of such customized discussion-based evaluation forms (for more on discussion-based evaluation forms, see *Step 2: Observe the Exercise and Collect Data* and *Appendix 3*).

Sample evaluation materials and templates will be available within *HSEEP Volume IV* to include evaluation plans, controller/evaluator handbooks, AAR/IPs, discussion-based EEGs, evaluator training briefings, etc. which provide additional tools to support the HSEEP exercise evaluation methodology. By considering the capabilities to be evaluated early in the evaluation planning process, the exercise planning team can determine which tools to tailor for the evaluation.

- Exercise evaluation team organization and structure

The Lead Evaluator and exercise planning team should determine structure of the exercise evaluation team based on the scope of the exercise and the exercise goals and objectives. Exercises that involve multiple jurisdictions, multiple organizations, and/or multiple playing locations should consider assigning jurisdiction or site leads. These individuals would support the Lead Evaluator and coordinate and manage the activities of evaluators assigned to that jurisdiction or location.

In addition, consideration should be given to selecting individuals to support the development of the Draft AAR. For exercise with a limited scope and with fewer goals and objectives, the Lead Evaluator may be the only person needed. However, for exercises with a large or complex scope and that will involve the demonstration of a large number of capabilities and activities, the Lead Evaluator may need assistance with analysis, editing, and compilation of the Draft AAR and/or Final AAR/IP.

These considerations should allow the lead evaluator and exercise planning team to make decisions about evaluation requirements for personnel, time commitments, evaluation tools, and subject-matter expertise. These decisions should be recorded as a preliminary template for a finalized evaluation plan.

As a final step of the evaluation requirement identification process, the exercise planning team should determine what sorts of evaluation planning documents will be required upon finalization of an evaluation plan. Discussion-based exercises may not require the same level of detail in planning documentation as an operations-based exercise. For such exercises, a Facilitator Guide and discussion-based evaluation forms for the capabilities being evaluated may constitute a sufficient evaluation plan. Conversely, because most operations-based exercises involve multiple evaluators who must work in a coordinated, collaborative fashion, such exercises often require a Controller and Evaluator (C/E) Handbook to be distributed to all control and evaluation staff. Especially complex exercises may require a dedicated Evaluation Plan for distribution exclusively to evaluators outlining roles and responsibilities.

Recruit, Assign, and Train Evaluators

Once evaluation requirements have been defined, the lead evaluator should oversee the recruitment, assignment, and training of evaluators. Each of these efforts may be managed by the lead evaluator, or by a designated responsible individual that reports to the lead evaluator. The evaluation requirements discussed above play a critical role in determining how many evaluators must be recruited, what kind of subject-matter expertise they must possess, how they are assigned during an exercise, and what kind of training or instruction they must receive.

Recruiting Evaluators

Evaluators should have experience and subject-matter expertise in the functional area they are assigned to observe (e.g. command and control, fire, law enforcement, emergency medical service, etc.).

The time commitment for discussion-based exercises is generally no longer than two days, including observation and analysis. The time commitment for operations-based exercise evaluators is usually three to five days; equivalent to at least one day prior to the exercise (for pre-exercise training), the actual exercise day(s), and at least one full day, or more, after the exercise (for data analysis, AAR/IP development, etc.).

Assigning Evaluators

During operations-based exercises, evaluators should be situated on the basis of their subject-matter expertise. For example, in an exercise using a chemical scenario, evaluators with HazMat expertise should be strategically assigned to locations where they can observe decontamination and the use of personal protective equipment. An operations-based exercise's Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) should provide a timeline and locations for all expected exercise events. Reference to a MSEL can help the lead evaluator to determine the times at which specific evaluators should be at certain locations. Evaluator assignments should be decided upon, recorded, and communicated to evaluators prior to exercise conduct. An adequate number of evaluators should be assigned to each exercise play location to successfully observe and record all of the information needed to evaluate the capabilities and activities being evaluated,

Training Evaluators

Training for evaluators should take place at least one day prior to the exercise, and should address all aspects of the exercise, including the exercise goals and objectives, the scenario, participants, and evaluator roles, responsibilities, and assignments. During or prior to the training, evaluators should be provided with copies of the following materials to review prior to the exercise:

- Exercise documents, such as the Situation Manual (SitMan) for discussion-based exercises or the Exercise Plan (ExPlan), C/E Handbook, and the MSEL for operations-based exercises;
- Evaluation materials, EEGs and/or other evaluation tools, exercise agenda and schedule, and evaluator assignments; and
- Appropriate jurisdictional plans, policies, procedures, and agreements.

If there are specific plans, policies, procedures, or agreements that are the focus of an exercise, the lead evaluator may decide to brief evaluators upon the content of those documents.

Evaluator training should also include guidance on observing the exercise discussion or operations, what to look for, what to record, and how to use the EEGs. To promote effective observation, evaluators should be instructed to do the following:

- Be at the appropriate position when players arrive;
- Get a good view of activities, but avoid getting in the way;
- Focus on the tasks and activities in relevant EEGs;
- Take legible, detailed notes, including times and sequence of events;
- Remain at the assigned post at key times; and
- Avoid prompting players or answering player questions.

For operations-based exercises, evaluators should be trained according to best practices for observing exercises and recording data, described in Step 2 below.

Finalize Evaluation Plan

Once exercise requirements have been defined, and evaluation planning to meet those requirements has been completed, the lead evaluator should finalize the evaluation plan. As mentioned above, for complex exercises, this finalized evaluation plan should be documented and distributed to evaluators in a C/E Handbook or EvalPlan. In less complex discussion-based exercises, the finalized plan can be communicated orally among evaluators prior to an exercise. Whether formally documented or not, evaluation plans should contain:

- **Exercise-specific information** – Exercise scenario, exercise schedule, and the evaluation schedule;
- **Evaluator team organization, assignments, and location** – A list of where each evaluator will be located, a map of the exercise site(s), and an evaluator organizational chart;
- **Evaluator instructions** – Step-by-step instructions for evaluators as to what to do before they arrive (e.g., review exercise materials, wear appropriate clothing for assignment), how to proceed upon arrival, during the exercise, and following its conclusion; and
- **Evaluation tools** – Exercise-specific EEGs, the MSEL, blank paper or timeline observation sheets, and analysis forms.

Conduct C/E Brief

Before the exercise begins, the lead evaluator should meet with the facilitators and/or evaluators to verify roles, responsibilities, and assignments and to provide any significant updates (changes to the scenario, new assignments, etc). This briefing (referred to as the C/E Brief in operations-based exercises) is the time for evaluators to ask questions and to ensure complete understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Evaluators will also be given any updates from exercise planners on changes to plans and procedures. Evaluator questions should be addressed and information clarified so evaluators can confidently and effectively perform their assignments. For operations-based exercises, the briefing often includes a tour of the exercise site so that evaluators are familiar with the venue and know where they should position themselves to observe the exercise play.

Step 2: Observe the Exercise and Collect Data

Exercise observations and data collection (Step 2) can differ widely between discussion-based exercises and observations-based exercises. For this reason, the two exercise types are discussed separately in this section.

Discussion-Based Exercises

Many discussion-based exercises use a “breakout group” approach, in which after a scenario is framed and questions are posed, initial discussion takes place in sub-groups based on discipline or jurisdiction/organization. In such discussion-based exercises, there must be evaluators or note-takers present in each breakout group. Due to the nature of discussion-based exercises, it is also recommended note takers be assigned to each breakout group so that the evaluator can focus on addressing issues related to exercise objectives and the note taker can focus on capturing general discussion.

As discussed above, discussion-based exercises require the creation of customized evaluation forms that may be derived from the operations-based EEGs and customized to reflect the plans, policies, procedures, and capabilities being discussed in a given exercise. During the exercise, each evaluator uses such a custom-created evaluation form to record data for critical topics and subjects which he/she is assigned to evaluate by the lead evaluator. The development of evaluation forms is determined by the exercise goals and objectives. These forms should provide guidelines and additional space for collecting relevant data while observing exercise discussion. Evaluation forms should include questions linked to the capabilities, activities and tasks within the HSEEP EEGs to produce an effective evaluation that supports an overall capabilities-based exercise program.

Facilitators should help evaluators collect useful data by keeping discussion focused on capabilities and activities identified as exercise goals and objectives and relevant to the questions provided in discussion-based versions of the EEGs. Strategies for keeping discussion focused and constructive may be recorded in a Facilitator Guide which is provided to facilitators prior to an exercise (see *Develop Exercise Requirements* above).

Evaluators generally record the following types of information from participant discussions:

- What plans, policies, and procedures would the participants implement to prevent, protect against, respond to, or recover from the incident described in the exercise scenario?
- Are roles and responsibilities of the various government agencies and private organizations clearly defined?
- How are various decisions made? Who has authority to make decisions?
- What information about the scenario, the hazard, the victims, and the risks to participants and the public is collected? Who collects it, and what do they do with it?
- How is information shared with other agencies and with the public? What information is shared?
- What are the roles of Federal and State agencies? How are Federal and State resources requested? Who makes the request? How are the resources distributed and controlled?
- What mutual aid agreements (MAAs) exist? How would they be activated?
- What recommendations for improvements are made by the group?
- Which issues are unresolved or require follow-up?
- What actions do participants plan to take in order to address outstanding issues?

After breakout sessions take place, the sub-groups are usually reconvened to address any key issues, cross-disciplinary issues, or conflicting recommendations that were identified during breakout group

discussions. Although assigned to record discussion within a designated group, all evaluators should capture information on cross-cutting issues.

A hot wash with the exercise planning team, facilitators, and evaluators should be held immediately following the exercise. The purpose of the hot wash is to collect observations and thoughts about the conduct of the exercise. The hot wash also provides the evaluators with the opportunity to clarify points or collect any missing information. Following an exercise, evaluators may also supplement the data collected on their observation forms by collecting additional data from participant and facilitator notes. The lead evaluator should assign one or more members of the evaluation team to take detailed notes during the hot wash, which should later be incorporated into preliminary analyses (see Step 3 below).

Operations-Based Exercises

Whereas evaluation of discussion-based exercises can focus primarily on high-level issues affecting demonstration of capabilities, evaluation of operations-based exercises requires detailed observations at the task and activity level. During operations-based exercises, evaluators are strategically pre-positioned in locations at which they can gather useful data, and must track and record participant actions carefully. After an exercise, the information recorded by evaluators will be used to analyze whether tasks were successfully completed, activities were successfully carried out, and capabilities were successfully demonstrated.

During exercise observation, it is critical for evaluators to keep an accurate written record of what they observe. In addition to the EEG, evaluators should also consider recording data through other systems that fit their preferences, such as notebooks or portable audio recorders (evaluation documentation such as an EvalPlan or C/E Handbook should communicate in advance any exercise policy regarding recording devices). As participants make decisions and take actions, evaluators should take notes which capture the following information about each data point:

- Who (by name or position) performed the action or made the decision?
- What occurred (the observed action)?
- Where (the location) did the action or decision take place?
- When (the time) was the action completed?
- Why did the action take place or why was the decision made (the trigger)?
- How was the action performed and how was decision made (the process)?

As numerous events may be occurring simultaneously, evaluators may not be able to record all of the action. Knowing which events are important allows for manageable action recording, eliminates unnecessary information, and provides data most useful for exercise evaluation. To this end, evaluators should be trained prior to the exercise about key tasks or activities and how they can be best observed (during evaluator training, in evaluation documents such as an EvalPlan or C/E Handbook, or in a pre-exercise C/E Briefing). Furthermore, evaluators should be trained to recognize the occurrence of the following events as requiring recording:

- **Inject:** Information, including directives, instructions, and decisions are provided by exercise controllers to exercise participants to support exercise play
- **Message in:** An individual or group receives information from someone outside of his or her physical location. Messages can be received as part of participant-to-participant activity or as a controlled exercise inject
- **Message out:** An individual sends information to another individual or group of participants

outside of his or her physical location

- **Discussion:** A conversation involving several participants takes place
- **Decision:** An individual or group arrives at a conclusion or makes a specific determination
- **Directive:** An individual gives an order or specific direction to one or more participants
- **Movement:** An individual, group, or piece of equipment relocates
- **Task:** An individual or group performs a specific, clearly definable action or function, such as donning a Hazardous Materials (HazMat) suit or checking patient status

Additional evaluator observations and notes should include the following:

- Initiation and unfolding of scenario events;
- Deviations from plans or procedures;
- Timeliness and other performance measures relevant to task evaluation
- Effectiveness or shortcomings in command and control;
- Creative player problem-solving; and
- Equipment issues that affect participant efforts.

Evaluators should not interfere with exercise play. However it may be necessary for evaluators to interact with participants during the exercise if they have a question about something they observed. This may be especially important for evaluators observing play in locations where much of the activity is conducted over the phone, such as Emergency Operations Centers and Joint Information Centers. Because evaluators cannot hear what is happening on the opposite end of a telephone conversation, they may have to ask who the participant was talking to and what was discussed. Evaluators should not interrupt play to ask such questions but should wait until there is a break in activity. These questions should not prompt or lead participants in any way, and conversation should remain brief and focused.

Following an exercise, evaluators may also supplement the data collected on their observation forms by collecting additional data from participant and facilitator notes.

Conducting a Player Hot Wash

Immediately after an operations-based exercise, each evaluator (or team of evaluators and controllers) should debrief the players and controllers in his/her observed discipline, either separately or as a large group. This facilitated discussion, referred to as a hot wash, allows players to engage in a self-assessment of their exercise play and provides a general assessment of how the jurisdiction/organization performed in the exercise. The hot wash also provides the evaluators with the opportunity to clarify points or collect any missing information from the players before they leave the exercise venue. The hot wash is conducted as soon as possible after the exercise, usually the same day. In FSEs with several exercise sites, separate hot washes may take place at each location. A hot wash will be most effective if it is led by an experienced facilitator who can ensure that the discussion remains brief and constructive, and who can focus conversation on performance highlights and areas for improvement.

During the hot wash, evaluators should distribute Participant Feedback Forms (see Volume IV for examples of participant feedback forms) to obtain information on perceptions of the exercise and how well each participant thought his/her unit performed. This information can provide insight into why events happened the way they did or why some expected actions did not take place. Participant feedback forms should be collected at the end of a hot wash and should be reviewed

by the evaluation team to capture any useful information. Participant Feedback Forms also serve to solicit general feedback on exercise quality, which can be provided to the exercise planning team to help implement improvements in future exercises.

Collecting Supplemental Data

The lead evaluator should assign one or more members of the evaluation team to collect supplemental data immediately after the exercise. Such data is critical to fill in gaps during exercise evaluation. For example, one useful source of information could be records produced by automated systems or communications networks – an action similar to preserving evidence during an actual incident. Another useful source is written records such as duty logs and message forms.

These records can help evaluators validate their observations, determine equipment status, and identify the effect of inaccurate information on operations.

Evaluators should retain their notes and recordings as historical records of the exercise, which may need to be referenced later in the exercise evaluation process, particularly during completion of EEG analysis forms.

Step 3: Analyze Data

During data analysis, the data collected during an exercise are consolidated and transformed into narratives that address the course of exercise play, demonstrated strengths, areas for improvement and performance ratings appropriate for inclusion in an After-Action Report/Improvement Plan.

Because operations-based exercises yield greater amounts of data, operations-based exercises require more thorough, involved data analysis than discussion-based exercises. Reflecting this difference, this discussion addresses operations-based and discussion-based exercises separately.

Identifying Root Cause and Developing Recommendations

In order for the exercise evaluation process to produce an AAR/IP which makes useful recommendations to improve an organization/jurisdiction's preparedness, it is critical for evaluators to discover not only *what* happened, but also *why* it happened. In order to answer such questions and develop useful recommendations, evaluators must conduct careful task-level analysis.

Each task that is not completed as expected offers evaluators the opportunity to search for a root cause. A root cause is the source of an identified issue, as uncovered during careful analysis, toward which the evaluator/analyst can direct an improvement. To arrive at the root cause, an evaluator should ask him/herself, other evaluators, or participants why each causal event happened or did not happen until the primary underlying cause with an actionable solution has been uncovered. It is important to reach this level of understanding to make recommendations to enhance preparedness. The process also helps evaluators detect flaws in their reasoning.

The identification of areas for improvement and their root causes enables the analysis team to develop recommendations for improvement. These recommendations should be based on the evaluation team's experience and best judgment. However, the leaders and managers of the jurisdiction/organizations that participated in the exercise ultimately have the responsibility for developing improvement plans for identified shortcomings. It is the responsibility of the evaluation team to provide the documentation of the areas for improvement and the consequences of shortcomings so that the jurisdictions/organizations have enough information to develop practical and achievable improvement plans.

Discussion-Based Exercises

As soon as possible after a discussion-based exercise, evaluators should review their notes of the discussion, and begin to develop preliminary analyses of the exercise. Creation of preliminary analyses consists of developing a separate chronological narrative of relevant discussion for each capability and associated activities being exercised. The lead evaluator may assign the preliminary analysis for each activity to an individual or group of evaluators with relevant functional expertise, or the evaluation team can jointly develop all required preliminary analyses. These narratives should highlight both strengths and areas for improvement, identifying discussion points relevant to an organization/jurisdiction's ability to carry out the activities and demonstrate the capabilities being exercised.

When writing preliminary analyses, evaluators should consider the following questions:

- Did discussion suggest personnel could successfully complete the tasks needed to carry out each activity? If not, why?
- What are the key decisions associated with each activity?
- Did discussion suggest personnel are adequately trained to complete the tasks needed to carry out each activity?
- Did discussion identify any resource shortcomings that could inhibit ability to carry out an activity?
- Do the current plans, policies, and procedures support performance of activities? Are participants familiar with these documents?
- Do personnel from multiple agencies, organizations, or jurisdictions need to work together to perform a task/activity/capability? If yes, are the agreements or relationships in place to support the coordination required?
- What should be learned from this exercise?
- What strengths were identified for each activity?
- What areas for improvement are recommended for each activity?

Operations-Based Exercises

As soon as possible following a post-exercise hot wash, a Controller and Evaluator (C/E) Debriefing should take place. The C/E Debriefing provides each controller and evaluator with an opportunity to provide an overview of the functional area they observed and to discuss both strengths and areas for improvement. The lead evaluator should assign one or more members of the evaluation team to take detailed notes of the C/E Debriefing discussion.

Following the C/E Debriefing discussion, evaluators should use the EEG analysis forms to develop an activity-specific narrative that describes what the participants did during the exercise and identifies strengths and areas of improvement associated with that activity observed during an exercise. The EEG analysis form provides specific instructions and criteria for developing such a narrative.

In developing the activity-specific narratives, evaluators should make use of all available data, including: the EEG observation form filled out during exercise play; other notes or records from the exercise; notes from the post-exercise hot wash; notes from the C/E Debriefing; and any other relevant materials. The narratives developed by evaluators should describe the actions taken by participants and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Evaluators should cite specific data and observations to support their assessment.

Next, the lead evaluator should coordinate the process to use these activity-specific narratives to reconstruct a timeline of exercise events as they occurred—an approach similar to the reconstruction of events that most organizations do following an incident. This process generally takes several hours, and its final product should be a master timeline which captures all the key points relevant to successful demonstration of the capabilities being exercised.

The activity-specific narratives and overall exercise timeline should combine to provide the lead evaluator with the foundation needed to summarize the exercise in the After-Action Report (AAR). If developed properly, the timeline and activity narratives should help answer the following questions, which are critical to a strong AAR:

- What did evaluators observe?
- What should have evaluators observed according to policies, plans, and procedures?
- If there is a difference, why?
- What is the consequence of that difference?
- What should be learned from this difference?
- What improvements should be made or exemplary practices adopted?

Step 4: Develop the Draft AAR

All discussion-based and operations-based exercises should result in the development of an AAR/IP, the final exercise document that provides a description of what happened, notes any exemplary practices or strengths, identifies areas for improvement that need to be addressed, and provides recommendations for improvements. As directed by the lead evaluator, the exercise planning team drafts the AAR, using the evaluative products (timeline and activity narratives) discussed in Step 3 above.

The AAR should follow the format described below. More detailed guidelines are contained in Appendix A.

- Report Cover
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Section 1 – Exercise Overview (Identifying Information e.g., exercise name, date, duration; participant information; etc.)
- Section 2 – Exercise Design Summary (Overarching exercise goals and objectives; Capabilities and Activities identified for demonstration; summary of designed initiating event(s)/ key scenario events; and, planned simulations)
- Section 3 – Exercise Events Summary
- Section 4 – Analysis of Capabilities Demonstrated
- Section 5 – Analysis of Participant Demonstrations
- Appendix A – Improvement Plans
- Appendix B – Lessons Learned
- Appendix C – Participant Feedback Summary
- Appendix D – (Exercise unique information that does not fit into the AAR format)
- Acronyms
- Distribution

AAR/IPs are required for all exercises regardless of the type, however, some discussion-based exercises—such as seminars and workshops—may have an abbreviated *Analysis of Capability* section. Generally, these reports will provide the following information:

- Overview of guest and keynote speaker(s) presentations;
- Summary of discussion points; and
- Summary of results and recommendations

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Chapter 3 – Improvement Planning (Steps 5–8)

One of the important benefits of conducting an exercise is the opportunity to evaluate capabilities under controlled, predetermined conditions developed by the exercise planning team. The effort to design, develop, conduct an exercise and evaluate the exercise may be ineffective if the lessons from the exercise are not translated into actions that result in capability improvement.

The final four steps of the HSEEP evaluation and improvement process, described in this chapter, focus on using the information gained from exercises to implement improvements that enhance capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, or recover from natural and manmade disasters.

Improvement planning is the process by which concrete improvement actions that address issues observed during an exercise are developed, assigned, implemented, and tracked. Following completion of a draft After-Action Report (AAR), an After-Action Conference is held, in which the exercise planning team, evaluation team, and others gather to review and refine the draft AAR. As part of the After-Action Conference's activities, attendees develop an Improvement Plan (IP) which articulates specific improvement actions addressing issues identified in the AAR, and assign each improvement action to a responsible person or group. The refined AAR and IP are then finalized as a combined AAR/IP, and IP action items are tracked to completion.

The IP communicates how the areas for improvement observed during an exercise are addressed by concrete, measurable steps that result in improved capabilities. It is developed by the exercising jurisdiction, agencies, or organizations, which are ultimately accountable for its implementation. The IP specifically details:

- What actions will be taken to address each area for improvement presented in the draft AAR;
- What individual or group will be responsible for taking the action; and
- The timeline for completion.

Step 5 (Conduct an After-Action Conference) of the exercise evaluation and improvement process and Step 6 (Identify Improvement to be Implemented) are the key steps that enable the development of the IP. Step 7 (Finalize the AAR/IP) and Step 8 (Track Implementation) are the final steps in the HSEEP evaluation and improvement process and represent the opportunity to improve capabilities based upon the data collected, analyzed, and summarized during the exercise and evaluation period. These steps provide the basis for future efforts conducted in the capabilities based planning cycle.

Figure 3-1 summarizes the four steps in the Improvement Identification and Implementation process. It further highlights the supporting documentation that either feeds into or is developed as part of each of step of this process.



Figure 3-1. Improvement Planning Steps

Step 5: Conduct an After-Action Conference and Refine Draft AAR

As soon as possible after completion of a draft AAR, the lead evaluator, members of the evaluation team, and other members of the exercise planning team should conduct an After-Action Conference to present, discuss, and refine the draft AAR, and to develop an IP. This conference is a chance to present the AAR to participating jurisdictions/organizations in order to solicit feedback and make necessary changes.

The After-Action Conference should be scheduled to occur over the course of a full day, no later than one month after exercise completion. The schedule should allow adequate time to discuss the areas for improvement, recommendations, and improvement actions. The meeting should be held at a convenient location or at the site where the exercise took place.

During the conference, the lead evaluator should present salient points from the draft AAR, including the exercise objectives, an account of key exercise events, differences between expected performance and actual performance, lessons learned, and recommendations for improvement.

The After-Action Conference should be interactive; attendees should have the opportunity to validate the observations and recommendations, and provide insight into activities that might have been omitted or misinterpreted by evaluators. The draft AAR should be modified to incorporate any clarifying information. This refined AAR, which incorporates feedback from conference participants, is one of the two main desired outputs of the After-Action Conference.

Step 6: Identify Improvements to be Implemented

In addition to refining the draft AAR, much of the After-Action Conference will be devoted to discussing specific actions that the participating jurisdictions/organizations must take to address the areas for improvement identified in the draft AAR. This discussion should take place in a moderated, disciplined environment and yield a list of improvement actions which identifies what will be done, who (person or agency) is responsible, and the timeframe for implementation. This list is known as the Improvement Plan (IP). *See Appendix A for an IP template.* Each participating jurisdiction/organization should identify a point of contact (POC) responsible for reporting its progress toward implementing the improvement actions assigned to it in the IP.

An action item should contain enough detail to make it useful; it should state what types of actions should be performed, and who should perform those actions. For example, an action item stating, “Train on alert and warning process,” would be more useful if it read, “The 24-hour warning point staff needs additional training on reading siren system printouts so they can better identify system failures.”

Jurisdictions/organizations should use the following questions as a guide for developing action items:

- What changes need to be made to plans and procedures to improve performance?
- What changes need to be made to organizational structures to improve performance?
- What changes need to be made to leadership and management processes to improve performance?
- What training is needed to improve performance?
- What changes to (or additional) equipment is needed to improve performance?
- What lessons can be learned that will direct how to approach a similar problem in the future?

The jurisdiction/organization should begin to consider who will be responsible for carrying out the action, and in what timeframe to assist with developing a clear action.

Not all AAR areas for improvement can be addressed with improvement actions during an After-Action Conference. For more complex issues, the IP developed at the conference should indicate at least the first step in the process. For example, an IP could call for creation of a working group to examine possible solutions to a complex issue, and impose a deadline for the working group to select a course of action. Not all areas for improvement in an AAR will result in IP improvement actions, and some areas for improvement may be consolidated upon review at the conference.

Some improvement actions will require the deployment of resources, especially to address recommendations related to personnel, organization and leadership, training, planning, equipment, exercises, evaluations and corrective actions. The IP should be realistic and should establish priorities for the use of limited resources. Some action items may call for steps such as submission of an application for additional funding, or seeking an agreement to share resources with another jurisdiction/organization. When necessary resources are not immediately available, exercise planners and evaluators should develop both short- and long-term solutions. Some improvement actions may be comprised of multiple steps. In such cases, the IP is considered sufficient if only the first (defined and assigned) steps are included.

Improvement actions items should be written to include attainable benchmarks that gauge progress toward full implementation. Examples of benchmarks include, but are not limited to, the number of personnel trained in a task, the percentage of equipment that is up-to-date, or the finalization of an interagency agreement within a given amount of time. These benchmarks should be defined against concrete deadlines so that gradual progress toward attainment of improvement actions can be tracked.

HSEEP provides an automated online tool for action item tracking, the *IP Tracking and Analysis System*.

As discussed in *HSEEP Volume I*, each exercise program should have an improvement action manager responsible for tracking IP action items to completion. Following development of an IP, this individual should enter the contents of the IP into the *IP Tracking and Analysis System*, and that individual should subsequently monitor progress toward implementation of each action item. This mechanism ensures a comprehensive exercise program that demonstrates continual improvement of capabilities relevant to the jurisdiction/organization.

Step 7: Finalize the AAR/IP

Following the After-Action Conference, the exercise planning team should finalize the AAR/IP. Finalizing the AAR/IP involves incorporating the corrections, clarifications, and other feedback provided by participants at the After-Action Conference. Once these inputs have been incorporated, the AAR/IP should be distributed to the members of the exercise planning team for validation that the AAR/IP is an accurate document that meets the exercise's objectives. This step ensures that the AAR/IP addresses the needs of the jurisdictions/organizations participating in the exercise, and serves as a useful tool to guide:

- The focus of limited resources upon improvements in preparedness;
- Strategy development;
- Exercise program planning;
- Sharing of lessons learned with homeland security community partners;
- Changes to plans, policies, and procedures; and
- Capability development and refinement

Once the exercise planning team has validated the AAR/IP, the document should be considered final. To protect potentially sensitive information, the exercise planning team should agree upon a distribution list for the final AAR/IP, and distribute the document exclusively to individuals, jurisdictions, or organizations on the distribution list.

Step 8: Track Implementation

As is described in *HSEEP Volume I: Overview and Exercise Program Management*, a successful exercise program must have an individual, known as an improvement action manager, who is responsible for continuously tracking implementation of the improvement actions identified and assigned in AAR/IPs. As described in Step 6 of this chapter, each participating jurisdiction/organization should identify a POC responsible for reporting its progress toward implementing the improvement actions assigned to it in the IP. After an AAR/IP is finalized, this POC should provide the sponsoring jurisdiction/organizations' improvement action manager with regular updates on the status of improvement action items assigned to the POC's jurisdiction/organization.

The regular updates provided by participating jurisdiction/organization POCs should be systematically compiled by the sponsoring jurisdiction/organization's improvement action manager to produce periodic progress reports on the status of all improvement actions identified in an exercise's AAR/IP. These reports should track whether the benchmarks defined for improvement actions in the AAR/IP are achieved on schedule. These reports should be distributed to participating jurisdictions/organizations. Improvement action items for which responsible parties have not met benchmarks should be highlighted to facilitate their resolution and provide for accountability.

As discussed in *HSEEP Volume I: Overview and Exercise Program Management*, exercises are one component of a preparedness cycle which also includes plans, training, personnel, and equipment purchases. The implementation of improvement actions is the mechanism by which exercises can inform and improve other preparedness cycle components.

The progress reports issued by a jurisdiction/organization's improvement action manager should illustrate a consistent trend of progress toward implementation of the improvement actions listed in an AAR/IP. Because the AAR/IP ties these improvement action items to specific capabilities, these reports ultimately demonstrate the concrete ways in which exercises enhance capabilities. Once participating jurisdictions/organizations have had time to implement post-exercise improvement actions, a new cycle of exercise activities can begin, to test and improve capabilities further. It is through this cycle of continuous improvement that exercises prepare our nation for all hazards. Without effective evaluation and improvement planning, these benefits could not be realized.

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Appendix A – After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) Guidelines

These After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) Guidelines are designed to reflect Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-8 requirements. Concepts and language from the National Preparedness Goal (NPG), the National Planning Scenarios, the Target Capability List (TCL), the Universal Task List (UTL), and the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) are reflected in this Appendix.

This format is expected to support National Preparedness reporting. It is recognized that it is nearly impossible to design a template that will be fully applicable to exercises ranging from limited scope single county or organization exercises to multi-State or organization exercises with international participation. However, exercise planners are encouraged to develop AAR/IPs that are modeled on and consistent with these guidelines. Many of the sections outlined below are expected to be populated from and consistent with the exercise planning documentation (i.e., exercise plan, controller/evaluator handbook, situation manual.)

1.0 REPORT CONTENTS

- Report Cover
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Section 1 – Exercise Overview (Identifying Information e.g., exercise name, date, duration; funding information; participant information; etc.)
- Section 2 – Exercise Design Summary (Overarching exercise purpose, goals, and objectives; Capabilities and Activities identified for demonstration; summary of designed initiating event(s)/ key scenario events; and, planned simulations)
- Section 3 – Exercise Events Summary
- Section 4 – Analysis of Capabilities Demonstrated
- Section 5 – Analysis of Participant Demonstrations
- Appendix A – Improvement Plans
- Appendix B – Lessons Learned
- Appendix C – Participant Feedback Summary
- Acronyms
- Distribution

2.0 REPORT FORMAT

2.1 General

- The Draft AAR/IP will be clearly identifiable as a draft document. A large watermark centered on the page can be used.
- The Final AAR/IP will be clearly identifiable as a final document.

2.2 Report Cover

Should include the following information:

- Exercise Name
- Date(s) the exercise was conducted
- The words “After Action Report/Improvement Plan”
- Date the AAR/IP was published
- Identify/add any other items such as use of logos, pictures, background color(s), etc.

2.3 Administrative Handling Instructions

- List the appropriate marking of exercise documentation, if any:
 - For Official Use Only (FOUO)
 - By Invitation Only (IO)
 - Sensitive but Unclassified (SBU)
- Identify the authority for approval of dissemination (e.g., lead exercise planner, sponsor agency)
- Additional guidance to be provided on AAR/IP markings, usage, and dissemination

2.4 Table of Contents

- Title and page number of each major component and each subcomponent in the report
- Caption and page number for each graphic included in the report organized by category (e.g., Figures, Tables)

2.5 Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should provide a brief overview of the exercise to include:

- Why the exercise was conducted
- What the community wanted to learn by participating in the exercise
- What Mission, Capabilities, and Scenario were used to achieve those learning objectives
- Identify, in bullet form, up to three things that were learned by participating in the exercise
- Identify, in bullet form, up to three things that need further development or improvement
- The Executive Summary should be two pages or less in length

2.6 Section 1 – Exercise Overview

The information contained in this Section of the AAR should be “structured data” in order to facilitate preparation of other parts of the AAR, for consistency within AAR/IPs, and to facilitate the analysis of AAR/IPs for program reporting.

Information	Definition
Exercise Name	List formal name of exercise

Information	Definition
Type of Exercise	List the type of exercise as described in the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volume I: Seminar, Workshop, Drill, Game, Tabletop, Functional Exercise, or Full-Scale Exercise
Exercise Start Date	List the Month, Day, and Year that the exercise began
Exercise End Date	List the Month, Day, and Year that the exercise ended
Duration	List the total length of the exercise
Sponsor	List the Federal agency that sponsored the exercise
Program	List the name of the program under which exercise funding originated from
Funding Recipient	List the agency that received funding for the exercise(s)
Mission	List the appropriate mission(s) of the exercise: Prevent, Protect, Response, Recovery
Capabilities	Provide a list of capabilities addressed within the exercise
Scenario	Select the exercise/event scenario: 1. Chemical Release or Threat 2. Biological Release or Threat 3. Radiological Release or Threat 4. Nuclear Detonation or Threat 5. Explosive Detonation or Threat 6. Cyber 7. Agricultural 8. Natural Disaster 9. Other _____
Location	List all applicable information regarding the specific location of the Exercise, including the City, State, Federal Region, International Country, Military Installation
Exercise Planning Team	List the organization or agency names of the co-sponsors of the exercise and the members of the exercise planning team, including Local, State, and Federal agencies
Exercise Players	List the individual participating organizations or agencies, including Federal, State, Tribal, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and local agencies as well as international agencies, if applicable
Number of Participants	List the total number of each of the following exercise participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players • Victim role players • Controllers • Evaluators • Observers

2.7 Section 2 – Exercise Design Summary

This section is intended to provide a summary of the exercise design process and the planning context in which the exercise was conducted.

- Overarching exercise purpose, goals, and objectives
 - This subsection should provide a brief (one to three paragraphs) overview of why the exercise was conducted and what the participants wanted to learn by playing in the exercise.
 - *EXAMPLE – [Name of Exercise] was conducted to fulfill the XX programmatic requirement for an annual exercise. In addition, the State of J and X, Y and Z Counties wanted to demonstrate the use of a new system to share information about resource status and*

management among their Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs). County X wanted to demonstrate mass casualty response procedures and mutual aid agreements with Counties Y and Z. Federal Departments/Agencies A, B, and C also participated in the exercise to demonstrate their support to a mass casualty event.

- Capabilities and Activities identified for demonstration
 - The purpose of this subsection is to align the exercise design goals and objectives with the Target Capabilities, Activities and Tasks.
 - For this format, it is the expectation that if a Capability is to be demonstrated, all Activities (including all Performance Measures and Tasks) associated with that Capability are to be demonstrated. If plans, procedures, and/or the scenario design do not support the demonstration, the reasons should be documented during the planning process.
- Summary of designed initiating event(s)/ key scenario events
 - This subsection should summarize the situation initially presented to the players, subsequent events introduced into play, and times that these events occurred.
- Planned simulations
 - This subsection summarizes the simulations that were identified during the design process.

2.8 Section 3 – Exercise Events Summary Table

This section summarizes what actually happened during the exercise in a timeline table format.

- Focus of this section is on what inputs were actually presented to the player and what actions the players took during the exercise.
- Successful development of this section is aided by the design, development, and planning actions of the exercise design team. Prior to the exercise the exercise design team should have developed a timeline of anticipated key events.
- An example of the format for the Exercise Event Summary Table is presented below.

Date	Time	Scenario Event, Simulated Player Inject, Player Action	Event/Action
02/20/06	0900	Scenario Event	Explosion and injuries reported at subway station 13
02/20/06	0902	Player Action	Subway services stopped in accordance with protocols; notifications started
02/20/06	0915	Player Action	Evacuation ordered for planning zone 2A
02/20/06	0940	Simulate Player Inject	Traffic at a standstill on major egress route 1 reported to players. (Response generated issue because personnel to staff traffic control points were not deployed.)

2.9 Section 4 – Analysis of Capabilities Demonstrated

This section analyzes the collective performance of all jurisdictions/organizations participating in the exercise. This section of the AAR identifies performance ratings at the community level for each Capability demonstrated.

- Information in this section is organized by Capability and associated Activities
- The focus of analysis in this section of the AAR is on the demonstration of an Activity by all of the organizations/jurisdictions that demonstrated it during the exercise. The detailed information

APPENDIX A - DRAFT AAR/IP Guidelines

contained in Section 5 – Analysis of Participant Demonstrations should not be repeated in this section. The focus of this section of the AAR/IP is on how the system worked at the Capability Activity-level, not on the details about how each component did its job.

- For each Capability, the analysis should be presented in narrative form. It should be brief. It should summarize demonstrations where performance shortfalls were not identified. Expanded discussion should be provided if performance shortfalls are identified.
- Observations, if any are written, would follow the narrative. Observations should be formatted in the same way as outlined in the EEG analysis form. The Observations written in this section of the AAR/IP should not simply repeat information contained in Section 5. The Observations in this section should be based on the systemic analysis conducted to support the development of this section. Observations are organized in three categories.

Strength	General Observation	Area for Improvement
An observed action, behavior, procedure and/or practice that is worthy of special notice and recognition. Simply doing one’s job does not warrant writing a Commendable Practice Observation	A suggestion offered by the evaluator based on training and/or experience that could enhance efficiency or effectiveness, if implemented. A jurisdiction or organization is under no obligation to implement the suggestion.	The evaluator observed that an Activity was not able to be performed; that an Activity was performed but with major problems; that the behavior demonstrated, or not demonstrated, posed a threat to health and/or safety; or, the behavior demonstrated was in violation of a law or regulation.

- The following information should be provided for each Observation:
 - Short Title – Short descriptive phrase that conveys what the Observation is about
 - Reference – Specific plan, policy, procedure, law, or regulation (or subsection thereof) that applies to the Observation. Task(s) from EEGs should also be referenced.
 - Analysis – A statement of the observed behavior or actions that are the core of the Observation. The following should be addressed within the summary.
 - Description of what happened
 - Consequence – positive or negative significance or impact of behavior or action
 - Analysis – A brief root-cause analysis of the contributing factor(s)
 - Recommendation – Required for General Observations and Area for Improvement. The preliminary suggestion of changes by the evaluation team. The recommendation should be associated with one of the following Elements of Capability identified in the TCL:
 - Personnel/Staffing
 - Planning
 - Organization and Leadership
 - Systems and Equipment
 - Training
 - Exercises, Evaluations, or Corrective Actions
- A Performance Rating is assigned to each Activity demonstrated within Capability area.

APPENDIX A - DRAFT AAR/IP Guidelines

- The Performance Rating is based on a systemic review of exercise performance based evaluator analysis of how well the participants reached the Capability outcome.
- A qualitative scaling will be used. The categories will be that the Activity was:

Rating

Description

Performed without Challenges:

The Performance Measures and Tasks associated with the Activity were performed in a manner that “got the job done” and in a manner that did not negatively impact the performance of other Activities; did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and, were conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations and laws.

Performed with Some Challenges, but Adequately:

The Performance Measures and Tasks associated with the Activity were performed in a manner that “got the job done” and in a manner that did not negatively impact the performance of other Activities; did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and, were conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.

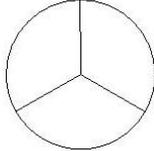
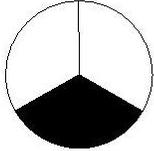
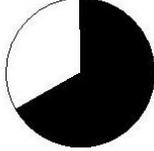
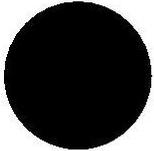
Performed with Major Challenges:

The Performance Measures and Tasks associated with the Activity were performed in a manner that “got the job done” but some or all of the following were observed. Demonstrated performance had a negative impact the performance of other Activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or, were not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations and laws.

Unable to be Performed:

The Performance Measures and Tasks associated with the Activity were not performed in a manner that “got the job done”.

- Another way of visualizing the Performance Ratings is presented below.

			
Performed without Challenge	Performed with Some but Adequately Challenges,	Performed with Major Challenges	Unable to be Performed

2.10 Section 5 – Analysis of Participant Demonstrations

This section is intended to analyze the Activities demonstrated by each playing jurisdiction or organization. Exercise planners should define their level of analysis during the planning process. Jurisdictions can be defined as geo-political entities such as cities, counties, states, and/or tribes that participated in the exercise. Organizations can be defined as government department and/or agencies, non-governmental organizations like the American Red Cross, and/or private sector that participated in the exercise.

- For each jurisdiction/organization that participated in the exercise, the following format should be used to provide evaluation feedback for each Capability demonstrated during the exercise.
 - Capability – List the Capability number and title
 - Activity – List the Activity number and title
 - Narrative based on Evaluator input on EEG analysis form
 - The Performance Measures for each Activity will be listed following the narrative analysis. The measurement observed and recorded during the exercise will also be recorded here.
 - Observations would follow the listing of Performance measures. Observations should be derived from the individual evaluator input recorded on EEG analysis form. The Observations in this section should be based on the demonstrated performance by players from a particular jurisdiction/organization. Observations are organized in three categories:

Strength	General Observation	Area for Improvement
An observed action, behavior, procedure and/or practice that is worthy of special notice and recognition. Simply doing one’s job does not warrant writing a Commendable Practice Observation	A suggestion offered by the evaluator based on training and/or experience that could enhance efficiency or effectiveness, if implemented. A jurisdiction or organization is under no obligation to implement the suggestion.	The evaluator observed that an Activity was not able to be performed; that an Activity was performed but with major problems; that the behavior demonstrated, or not demonstrated, posed a threat to health and/or safety; or, the behavior demonstrated was in violation of a law or regulation.

- The following information should be provided for each Observation:
 - Short Title – Short descriptive phrase that conveys what the Observation is about
 - Reference – Specific citation of the contents of a plan, policy, procedure, law, or regulation that applies to the Observation. Task(s) from EEGs should also be referenced.
 - Analysis – A statement of the observed behavior or actions that are the core of the Observation. The following should be addressed within the summary.
 - Description of what happened
 - Consequence – positive or negative significance or impact of behavior or action
 - Analysis – A brief root-cause analysis of the contributing factor(s)
 - Recommendation – Required for General Observations and Area for Improvement. The preliminary suggestion of changes by the

evaluation team. The recommendation should be associated with one of the following Elements of Capability identified in the TCL:

- Personnel/Staffing
- Planning
- Organization and Leadership
- Systems and Equipment
- Training
- Exercises, Evaluations or Corrective Actions

2.11 Appendix A – Improvement Plans

The Improvement Plan is drafted during Draft AAR development and finalized at the After Action Conference. The Capability/Activity and Title are derived from the AAR but the Improvement Plan, Responsible Party/Agency and Completion Date are completed by the organization(s) during the After Action Conference and updated within the AAR to provide a baseline Improvement Plan to be published with the AAR.

- Example of an Improvement Plan Summary Matrix

Capability/Activity	Title	Improvement Action Description	Capability Element	Jurisdiction/Organization	Responsible Party/Agency
Public Information/Warning/Activity 1 - Direct Emergency Public Information and Warning Tactical Operations	1. Some counties did not receive press releases	1. The director of EMA issued a directive on September 1, 2005, requiring that all personnel assigned to work in Joint Information Center (JIC) receive a copy of the operating procedures, become familiar with them, and follow them during an emergency.	Planning	State X	EMA Director
		2. The director of EMA will convene a working group with representatives from selected counties to develop a plan to provide all counties with access to the EMS and train county staff.	Planning	State X	EMA Director
		3. The EMS system director will develop and implement a backup system (e.g., fax, e-mail) to ensure that all counties receive news releases.	Systems and Equipment	State X	EMS System Director

2.12 Appendix B – Lessons Learned

Any observations nominated for inclusion in the LLIS are contained in this Appendix. If there are not any nominations, a simple statement to that effect should be included here.

Following are the categories and definitions used in LLIS:

- Lesson Learned – knowledge and experience, positive or negative, derived from actual incidents such as the 9/11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina as well as observations and historical study of operations, training, and exercises.
- Best Practices – peer-validated techniques, procedures, good ideas, or solutions that work and are solidly grounded upon actual experience in operations, training, and exercises.
- Good Stories – exemplary, but non-peer-validated, initiatives implemented by various jurisdictions that have shown success in their specific environments and that may provide useful information to other communities and organizations.

2.13 Appendix C – Participant Feedback Summary

This section should include a summary of Participant Feedback forms. The Participant Observation Forms should address at a minimum the satisfaction of exercise participants with the exercise.

2.14 Acronyms

Any acronym used in the AAR should be listed alphabetically and include the meaning.

2.15 Distribution

Listing of who the AAR is distributed to and in what form (paper, CD, email, web posting). All electronic distribution should be a read-only format, such as .pdf.

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Appendix B – After-Action Report (AAR) Quick Look Guidelines

These guidelines are based on the AAR/IP Guidelines in Appendix A but abbreviated to support the initial AAR produced from an exercise highlighting high-level initial assessment of the accomplishment of exercise goals and objectives.

1.0 Quick Look Report Contents

- Report Cover
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Section 1 – Exercise Overview (Identifying Information e.g., exercise name, date, duration; participant information; etc.)
- Section 2 – Exercise Design Summary (Overarching exercise, goals, and objectives; Capabilities and Activities identified for demonstration; summary of designed initiating event(s)/ key scenario events; and, planned simulations)
- Acronyms
- Distribution

2.0 Quick Look Report Format

2.1 General

- The Draft Quick Look Report will be clearly identifiable as a draft document and should clearly state that the contents is based on initial exercise evaluation feedback and is not intended to serve as the draft or final AAR/IP.

2.2 Report Cover

Should include the following information:

- Exercise Name
- Date(s) the exercise was conducted
- The words “Quick Look Report”
- Date the Quick Look Report was published
- Identify/add any other items such as use of logos, pictures, background color(s), etc.

2.3 Administrative Handling Instructions

- List the appropriate marking of exercise documentation, if any:
 - For Official Use Only (FOUO)
 - By Invitation Only (IO)
 - Sensitive but Unclassified (SBU)
- Identify the authority for approval of dissemination (e.g., lead exercise planner, sponsor agency)
- Additional guidance to be provided on AAR/IP markings, usage, and dissemination

2.4 Table of Contents

- Title and page number of each major component and each subcomponent in the report

APPENDIX B - DRAFT AAR Quick Look Guidelines

- Caption and page number for each graphic included in the report organized by category (e.g., Figures, Tables, etc.)

2.5 Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should provide a brief overview of the exercise to include:

- Why the exercise was conducted
- What the community wanted to learn by participating in the exercise
- What Mission, Capabilities, and Scenario were used to achieve those learning objectives

For the Quick Look, the following section should be organized by the Capabilities exercised and highlight within each Capability area the following (depending on exercise-specific needs, the evaluator may want to provide a breakout by capability and exercise participant):

- Up to three things that were learned by participating in the exercise
- Up to three things that need further development or improvement

2.6 Section 1 – Exercise Overview

The information contained in this Section should be “structured data” in order to facilitate preparation of other parts of the AAR/IP, for consistency and to support development of the AAR/IP.

Information	Definition
Exercise Name	List formal name of exercise
Type of Exercise	List the type of exercise as described in the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volume I: Seminar, Workshop, Drill, Game, Tabletop, Functional Exercise, or Full-Scale Exercise.
Exercise Start Date	List the Month, Day, and Year that the exercise began
Exercise End Date	List the Month, Day, and Year that the exercise ended
Duration	List the total length of the exercise
Sponsor	List the Federal agency that sponsored the exercise
Program	List the name of the program under which exercise funding originated from
Funding Recipient	List the agency that received funding for the exercise(s)
Mission	List the appropriate mission(s) of the exercise: Prevent, Protect, Response, Recovery
Capabilities	Provide a list of capabilities addressed within the exercise
Scenario	Select the exercise/event scenario: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chemical Release or Threat 2. Biological Release or Threat 3. Radiological Release or Threat 4. Nuclear Detonation or Threat 5. Explosive Detonation or Threat 6. Cyber 7. Agricultural 8. Natural Disaster 9. Other _____
Location	List all applicable information regarding the specific location of the Exercise, including the City, State, Federal Region, International Country, Military Installation
Exercise Planning Team	List the organization or agency names of the Co-sponsors of the exercise and the members of the exercise planning team, including local, State, and Federal agencies

Information	Definition
Exercise Players	List the individual participating organizations or agencies, including Federal, State, Tribal, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Local agencies as well as International Agencies, if applicable.
Number of Participants	List the total number of each of the following exercise participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players • Victim role players • Controllers • Evaluators • Observers

2.7 Section 2 – Exercise Design Summary

This section is intended to provide a summary of the exercise design process and the planning context in which the exercise will be conducted.

- Overarching exercise purpose, goals, and objectives
 - This subsection should provide a brief (one to three paragraphs) overview of why the exercise was conducted and what the participants wanted to learn by playing in the exercise.
 - *EXAMPLE – [Name of Exercise] was conducted to fulfill the XX programmatic requirement for an annual exercise. In addition, the State of J and X, Y and Z Counties wanted to demonstrate the use of a new system to share information about resource status and management among their Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs). County X wanted to demonstrate mass casualty response procedures and mutual aid agreements with Counties Y and Z. Federal Departments/Agencies A, B, and C also participated in the exercise to demonstrate their support to a mass casualty event.*
- Capabilities and Activities identified for demonstration
 - The purpose of this subsection is to align the exercise design goals and objectives with the Target Capabilities, Activities and Tasks.
 - For this format, it is the expectation that if a Capability is to be demonstrated, all Activities (including all Performance Measures and Tasks) associated with that Capability are to be demonstrated. If plans, procedures, and/or the scenario design do not support the demonstration, the reasons should be documented during the planning process.
- Summary of designed initiating event(s)/ key scenario events
 - This subsection should summarize the situation presented to the players, subsequent events introduced into play, and the estimated times that these events occurred.

Appendix C – Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)

Please refer to the HSEEP Website www.hseep.dhs.gov for finalized EEGs. The Phase I EEGs are being released as they are vetted by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). We will be soliciting on-going comments via the HSEEP Website on the content and use of the EEGs to prepare for Phase II.

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Appendix D – Discussion-based Exercise EEG Guidance

Discussion-based exercises range from small discussion groups to large multi-community events. Likewise, the purpose and goals of discussion-based exercises can vary greatly as well. In most cases, discussion-based exercises are conducted at a central location where responders and decision makers can meet to discuss plans, policies, procedures, training, equipment, and interagency and inter-jurisdictional agreements. Often a facilitator is used to keep discussions on track and maintain focus on the exercise goals and objectives. Exercise evaluators are specifically chosen for their overall knowledge of emergency operations amongst multiple specialties which help capture important comments, agreements, and discoveries by the discussion-based exercise participants.

Following the discussion-based exercise, the exercise facilitator(s) and evaluators report on the multi-faceted discussion, agreements, strengths and areas for improvement. Capturing these aspects of the discussion-based exercise requires specific attention during the design phase of the exercise by the exercise planning team, careful preparation by the discussion-based exercise facilitator(s) and exercise evaluators and a tool specifically formatted for ease of note taking and easy transition of the facilitator(s) and evaluators note for the exercise after-action report (AAR/IP).

A facilitator and evaluator evaluation guide can be constructed using much of the information contained in the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) based on operations-based exercises.

Discussion-based Exercise Facilitator

The role of the exercise facilitator sets the expectations for the exercise, introduces or presents the scenario and the various modules, manages the time and group reports, and facilitates the discussion of any coordination issues between groups. The facilitator must make the participants comfortable to the presence of exercise evaluators by explaining their role and stressing the capturing of key discussion points that can lead to improvements to local plans and procedures and help determine if the community is prepared for a functional or full-scale exercise.

Discussion-based Exercise Evaluators

The role of the evaluator is to observe and record the discussion during the exercise, participate in the data analysis, and assist with drafting the AAR/IP. The evaluator should not serve as the group note taker but instead should gather the note taker's notes or flip chart sheets to supplement his/her notes, as appropriate.

Discussion-based Exercise Evaluation Guides

Since each jurisdiction/organization's response requirements are as different as their location, threats, and mutual aid agreements, each exercise planning team must develop their own list of detailed leading questions that will help the facilitator guide the discussion-based exercise participants' discussion along the lines of the exercise goals and objectives. Likewise, the exercise evaluators need a note taking tool consisting of the same facilitator questions.

Figure D-1 depicts a preferred methodology that can be used by exercise planners to develop exercise

facilitator guides and exercise evaluator note taking and evaluation guides for discussion-based exercises.

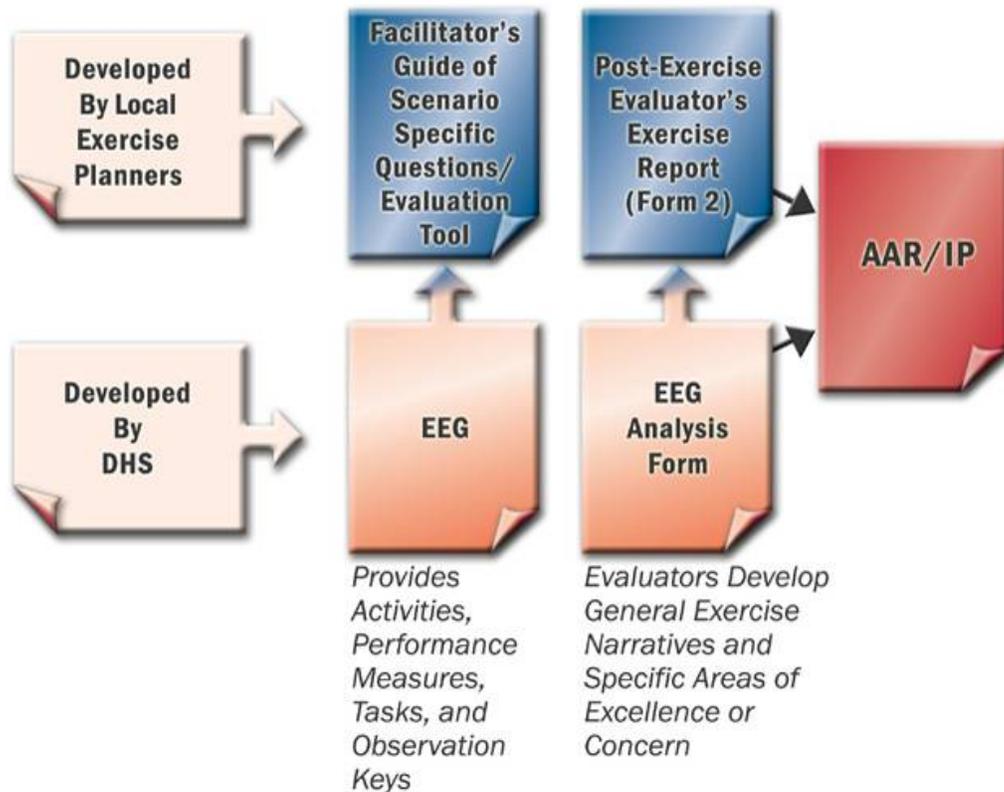


Figure D-1. Developing Scenario Specific Discussion-based Exercise Facilitator & Evaluator Guides

Developing Discussion-based Exercise Facilitator and Evaluator Tools

DHS has provided Exercise Evaluation Guides based on operations-based exercises. These guides select specific Activities, Performance Measures and Tasks from the Target Capabilities List (TCL) as critical elements to monitor during an emergency exercise. As such, these Task and Performance centric EEGs are best suited for operations-based exercises, drills, and training. Discussion-based exercises provide another valuable aspect to assessing a community's preparedness capability based on discussions of plans, policies, procedures, mutual aid agreements, etc.

Discussion-based exercise tools for exercise facilitators and evaluators can follow a similar design as the EEGs for operations-based exercises. The following discusses each of the discussion-based exercise documents depicted in Figure 1 above.

Using the EEG Observation Form to Develop an Exercise Facilitator's Guide/Evaluator Form

Activity Map

Each EEG observation form has a “systems-based” graphic developed depicting a typical flow of the most significant Activities normally accomplished as part of the Capability’s response. Linkages indicating other TCL Capabilities which have a connection to this Capability are shown at the far left of the map. These include, for example, passing or receiving important information or resources, handling of victims, hazardous material, site clean-up, etc. This map of activities and relationships to other response capabilities is an invaluable tool to help evaluators prepare for their observation role. In the same manner, the Activity Map can help discussion-based exercise facilitators and evaluators prepare for the exercise as well as an aid in post-exercise analysis. Exercise facilitators may find it useful to have a copy of the Activity Maps for each of the Capabilities they might expect to discuss during the exercise. A quick glance at the Activity Map might provide useful insight and help formulate questions to ask the exercise participants concerning linkages to other response actions as the discussions progress. The Activity Maps are also helpful to the exercise designers as a guide, based on their scenario, as to which organizations and disciplines should participate in the exercise. An example Activity Map is provided in Figure D-2.

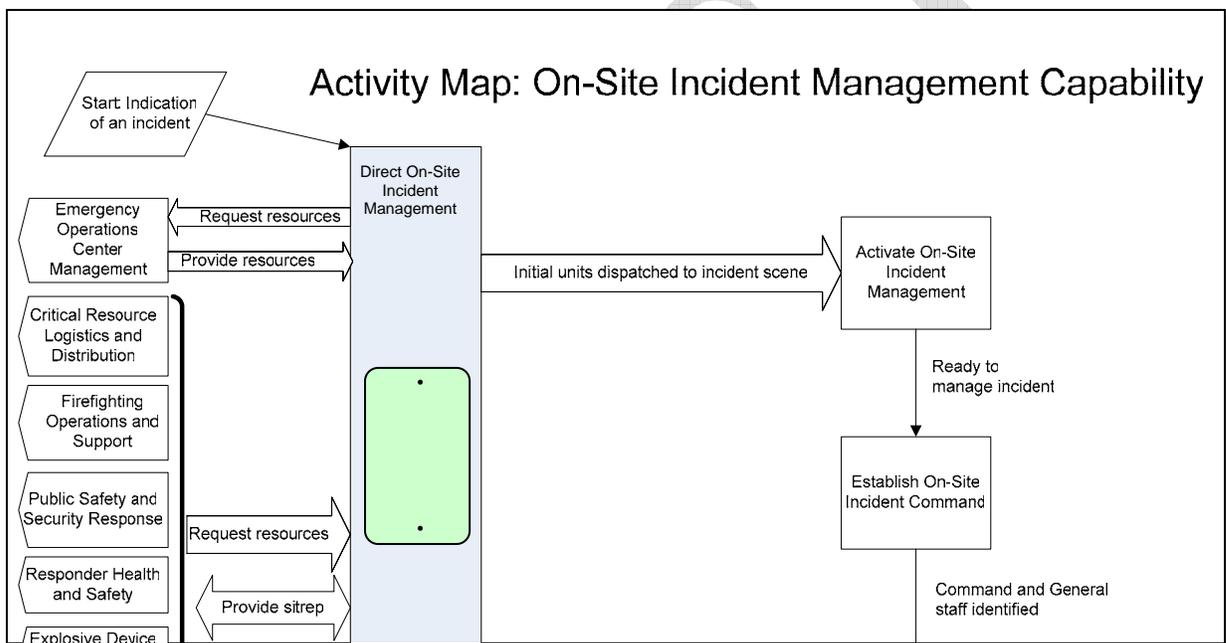


Figure D-2. Example EEG Observation Form Activity Map

EEG Activities, Performance Measures, Tasks and Observation Keys

In addition to the Activity Map, the EEG observation form lists the specific Activities, Performance Measures, and Tasks selected as the National baseline for exercise evaluation. In addition, evaluator Observation Keys have been developed for each Task as an aid to evaluators as to key actions that may be taken by responders. The format and content of this document can easily be adapted to a Facilitator’s Guide of specific questions keyed to the discussion-based exercise scenario and the emergency responders and decision makers participating in the exercise. The local exercise planning team can adapt this format by first deleting Activities, and Tasks that will not be part of the exercise and adding in Tasks of more local interest. The exercise planners should then remove the Observation Keys and replace them with suggested questions the facilitator might use to spark discussion of topics important to the goals and objectives of the exercise in addressing the Capabilities and Activities selected as the Goals and objectives for the exercise.

APPENDIX D: Discussion-based Exercise EEG Guidance

The two examples below demonstrate the use of an EEG observation form to develop a discussion-based Exercise Facilitator’s Guide/Evaluator Form.

Example A – Extract of Original EEG observation form (unmodified)
Exercise Notes - Performance Measures and Tasks

Capability Description and Outcome provided within each EEG.

Jurisdiction :	Name of Exercise :	
Location :	Date :	
Evaluator :	Evaluator Contact Info. :	
<p>1. Activity Description: In response to notification of incident, activate, staff, and organize the EOC in accordance with emergency plans and standard operating procedures; plan, direct, and coordinate information and activities internally within EOC functions, and externally with other multi-agency coordination entities and the public information system; coordinate logistical support to maintain an operationally functioning EOC until deactivation</p>		
<p>A. Performance Measures (check those that were observed and provide comments)</p>		
Measure	Industry Consensus Standard	Org-specific if no standard or is different
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Time for emergency operations center (EOC) activation upon notification of the incident	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. EOC is appropriately staffed to meet incident demands <i>a. Yes/No</i>	N/A	
<p>B. Tasks Observed (check those that were observed and provide comments)</p>		
Tasks/Observation Keys	Time of Observation/Comments/Notes	
Activity Start: Request to activate EOC	<i>Record short specific notes to include: What happened? When? Where? How did it happen? Who was involved?</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Establish organization/operation of EOC <i>a. Appropriate sections, branches, divisions, and groups are identified</i> <i>b. Liaison(s) for appropriate external entities requested, as needed</i> <i>c. EOC reporting requirements established</i> <i>d. Incident log initiated and maintained</i> <i>e. Required forms, reports, documentation, and follow-up notations completed and submitted</i> <i>f. Documentation library established</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Ensure that all appropriate functional areas are staffed <i>a. Staff arrives in a timely manner</i> <i>b. Staff have access to materials to support operations (e.g., plans, procedures, incident management)</i>		

APPENDIX D: Discussion-based Exercise EEG Guidance

B. Tasks Observed (check those that were observed and provide comments)

Tasks/Observation Keys	Time of Observation/Comments/Notes
<p><input type="checkbox"/> 3. Ensure appropriate maintenance and rest cycles are included in resource (personnel and equipment) management activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>a. Resources are rotated and released, as needed</i><i>b. Maintenance is scheduled, as appropriate</i><i>c. Equipment rehabilitation and re-supply is authorized</i><i>d. Return of resources is facilitated (Note: When appropriate decisions to demobilize resources may offend local sensitivities, decisions are deferred to higher level)</i>	

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Example B – Extract Modified as a Discussion-based Exercise Facilitator Guide
Exercise Notes - Performance Measures and Tasks

Capability Description and Outcome provided within each EEG.

Jurisdiction :	Name of Exercise :
Location :	Date :
Mission :	Evaluator :
Tier :	Evaluator Contact Info. :

1. Activity Description: In response to notification of incident, activate, staff, and organize the EOC in accordance with emergency plans and standard operating procedures; plan, direct, and coordinate information and activities internally within EOC functions, and externally with other multi-agency coordination entities and the public information system; coordinate logistical support to maintain an operationally functioning EOC until deactivation

A. Performance Measures (check those that were observed and provide comments)

Measure	Industry Consensus Standard	Org-specific if no standard or is different
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Deleted		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. EOC is appropriately staffed to meet incident demands <i>a. Yes/No</i>	N/A	

B. Tasks Observed (check those that were observed and provide comments)

Tasks/Observation Keys	Time of Observation/Comments/Notes
Activity Start: Request to activate EOC	<i>Record short specific notes to include: What was discussed? Decisions made? Shortfalls Discovered? Actions Requiring Follow-up? How is information shared with other agencies and with the public?</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Deleted	

APPENDIX D: Discussion-based Exercise EEG Guidance

B. Tasks Observed (check those that were observed and provide comments)	
Tasks/Observation Keys	Time of Observation/Comments/Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Ensure that all appropriate functional areas are staffed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Given the scenario, how would you organizationally structure the EOC?</i> b. <i>What functional (ESF or support) areas would be staffed?</i> c. <i>Which agencies would be represented in the command staff?</i> d. <i>How would incident priorities and resource allocation issues be coordinated within the command structure?</i> e. <i>Would liaisons positions be established? If so, from which entities and for what purpose?</i> 	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Ensure appropriate maintenance and rest cycles are included in resource (personnel and equipment) management activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>What plans and/or procedures are in place to address long-term staffing for the EOC?</i> b. <i>What plans and/or procedures are in place to provide surge capacity (facility and staffing)?</i> c. <i>What plans and/or procedures are in place to ensure continuity of EOC operations?</i> d. <i>Is the EOC likely to be physically accessible to the agencies or participants required to address this type of scenario?</i> e. <i>Is an alternative EOC location available? Under what conditions would the alternate EOC be used?</i> 	

Example B replaces the Observation Keys for each Task with suggested facilitator questions that have been developed by the local exercise planning team based on the scenario and the participants expected at the discussion-based exercise. Example B also demonstrates the ability of the exercise planning team to delete specific Performance Measures and Tasks from the original EEG to develop a Facilitator Guide that reflects the exercise goals and objectives, scenario, participants present, and time limitations of the exercise.

AAR/IP Reporting

When developing local discussion-based exercise evaluation tools, it is important to maintain the consistency and use of the activities, measures and tasks within the original EEG. This will help integrate discussion-based AAR/IPs with AAR/IPs from other exercises to demonstrate improvement of capabilities throughout the preparedness cycle and within a comprehensive exercise program.

Some discussion-based exercises may have a very limited area of interest and may develop several detailed questions on just a few Activities, Performance Measures, or Tasks. Other discussion-based exercises might be more interested in inter-agency and inter-organizational communications and therefore select only the Activities, Performance Measures, and Tasks associated with the exercise goals and objectives.

Using the HSEEP EEG Analysis Form to Develop a Discussion-based AAR/IP Development Tool for Exercise Evaluators

The EEG analysis form provides a 4-Step process for documenting and describing the actions taken during an operations-based exercise. For discussion-based exercises, the EEG analysis form can be used to document and describe the discussion, decisions, and issues that were identified during and following the exercise.

Producing a discussion-based EEG analysis form should be accomplished in the same manner as the discussion-based EEG observation form was developed for the matching Capability. That is, deleted and added Activities, Tasks, and Performance Measures on the EEG observation form should have the same changes made to the matching EEG analysis form.

The 4 Steps of the EEG analysis form for operations-based exercises are designed to help evaluators maintain focus while developing short descriptive narratives of exercise events thus reducing post exercise workload on evaluators, and evaluation team leaders. The same can be said for the discussion-based exercise version of the EEG analysis form. Following the EEG analysis form design for discussion-based exercises will also provide a direct linkage between the EEG analysis form with several of the reporting criteria of the AAR/IP.

Just as in the EEG analysis form for operations-based exercises Steps 1-3 allow for evaluator reports to be developed for each Activity within the Capability. Completing Step 4 is only required when:

- Exercise participation and actions of responders fall below normal and expected parameters which were not caused by a failure in the conduct of the exercise, e.g. the failure of a controller to provide critical situation data, unexpected weather conditions, real world emergencies.
- Exercise participation and actions of responders were well above expected parameters. These may be exceptional actions taken by responders in an ad hoc, yet safe, deviation from plans and procedures in which the new actions should be considered for future revisions of plans and procedures and/or made available as a best practice or lesson learned for sharing with other response organizations.

Appendix E – Acronyms

AAR	After-Action Report
AAR/IP	After-Action Report/Improvement Plan
C/E	Controller and evaluator
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EEG	Exercise Evaluation Guide
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EvalPlan	Evaluation Plan
ExPlan	Exercise Plan
FOUO	For official use only
HazMat	Hazardous materials
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
HSPD-8	Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8
IED	Improvised explosive device
IP	Improvement Plan
JIC	Joint Information Center
LLIS	Lessons Learned Information Sharing
MAA	Mutual aid agreement
MSEL	Master Scenario Events Lists
NGO	Non-governmental organization
POC	Point of contact
RDD	Radiological dispersal device
SBU	Secure but unclassified
SitMan	Situation Manual
TCL	Target Capabilities List
UTL	Universal Task List
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction