

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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North Central WV LEPC Newsletter

Local Emergency Planning Committee

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Dear North Central WV Counties:

We've changed the WV sub-areas slightly, so for those of you who don't know me, my name is Raj Sharma, and I am an On-Scene Coordinator in the U.S. EPA Mid-Atlantic office in Philadelphia, PA.

In this role, I respond to environmental emergencies, and conduct short-term cleanups, such as of old industrial sites or abandoned warehouses.

I have also been assigned to North Central WV to be a liason for area planning and emergency preparedness. One of the things I like to do is to put together a quarterly newsletter to share information, and give you a broader perspective on nation-wide issues. I hope you find it useful.

In this issue, you will find a terrific article by Fred Cowie where he gives tips on putting on a great exercise.

I very much hope to get out to your LEPC meetings and drills/exercises when I can - and if I'm invited!

Hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,

Raj Sharma



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Upcoming Events

Register Now: National Brownfields 2011 Conference

Brownfields 2011: Life, Liberty, and Sustainability
April 3 – 5, 2011 : Philadelphia, PA



The National Brownfields Conference is the official U.S. EPA and ICMA cosponsored conference focused on brownfields redevelopment and revitalization. Now in its fourteenth year, the conference continues to be the premier national event for discovering solutions to cleanup challenges, examining lessons from the field, and turning environmental liabilities into useful resources.

The Greater Philadelphia area is pleased to invite you to celebrate the EPA's Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program at Brownfields 2011. On April 3–5 more than 6,000 experts and practitioners will descend on the City of Brotherly Love for two and a half days of innovative sessions, mobile workshops, and a wealth of networking and information-sharing opportunities. Registration for this unique event is FREE!

Conference Overview

Why Attend?

You won't want to miss out on the opportunities that Brownfields 2011 will offer, including:

- More than 100 lively panel sessions and interactive roundtable discussions
- Real-world projects showcased in mobile workshops and walking tours
- Exciting plenary speakers and networking events
- Film screenings and special events
- More than 200 solutions-oriented product and service providers in the Exhibit Hall
- The Economic Redevelopment Forum

Who Attends?

The National Brownfields Conference attracts a diverse audience, including:

- Local, state, and federal government leaders
- Federal and state contractors
- Real estate developers and investors
- Financial and insurance providers and risk management practitioners
- Economic development officials and community development organizations
- Construction and building firms
- Environmental and civil engineers, planners, and public works officials
- Information technology professionals
- Academic administrators and students
- Attorneys

<http://www.brownfields2011.org>

Ten Steps to a Great Little Exercise

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Introducing Dr. Fred Cowie

Dr. Cowie, who likes to be called Fred, served for over 10 years with the Disaster and Emergency Services Division of the State of

Montana. Fred acted as Liaison to Indian Nations for Emergency Management, Liaison to Law Enforcement for Terrorism, HazMat Manager and Grants Manager. He coordinated the founding of, and was Administrative Assistant for the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC).

Fred also started and managed the Indian Nations HazMat Conference in conjunction with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. He founded the Montana Terrorism Conference, as well as the Montana SERC Conference. Fred has acted as trainer and lecturer for many groups, including the NCAI, EPA, DOT, FEMA, RMIN, many Indian nations, states, fire departments, emergency management offices and professional organizations. In 2002-03 he designed the Montana Amber Alert System and developed and managed the Methamphetamine Conference for the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation. Fred, as a parent, was the keynote speaker for the Montana conference of disabled persons, their caregivers and their service providers.

Fred has written several short articles on [topics](#) I believe are very interesting to the LEPC world and he has graciously given his permission to reproduce them for this newsletter.

Here is the first article, enjoy!

If you want to have a successful exercise, and we all do, then it has to be designed, hence the FEMA phrase: “exercise design” course. However, I like the phrase “exercise development” better, for design denotes engineering and engineers are not the most people-friendly folks and exercises are all about people. Exercise development, on the other hand, alludes to a natural growth process and to something we call progress, and those are the keys to having a great little exercise. Great big exercises should be built from and on the foundation of our great little exercises. It ain’t rocket science, but it is logical. So here are the ten steps that I have found to be the most efficient and effective keys to successful and fun exercises.

1. **Never bring in a canned exercise**, one of those designed by some consultant or other outside entity. Remember, it’s not about “design” but about “development.” However, after your team has done a series of self-developed, home-grown exercises, they might want to be “tested” by outsiders with their “canned exercises,” but that’s a much later step in the whole, long exercise process and should never, ever be a first, second, or third step in the process.
2. **Explain these few terms, early on, to all potential players: drill, tabletop exercise, functional exercise, and field/full-scale exercise.** Everyone can come up with on-line official definitions for these, but I have found confusion reigns because of non-technical use of these similarly-sounding terms. I like to simplify things and say, “for our purposes,” we will use these words with these definitions.
 - ❖ **Drill:** An in-house, agency only, practice of specific skills. These are practice sessions for agency employees performing day-to-day duties. Remember, there’s no use exercising if agency employees can’t perform their jobs well.
 - ❖ **Tabletop Exercise:** Around a real table, maybe with a few props, gather all involved response

agency reps to do a walk through of how the exercise should work out. Design flaws, timing sequences, enhancements, etc., should all become evident to these skilled responders.

- ❖ **Functional Exercise:** We will work on one ‘function,’ say communication. We might test different radio systems to see if they are compatible. We might check on the digital/analog interface problems. We might see if data is flowing horizontally between agencies, vertically inter-agency, and between levels of government. It is possible to test several critical functions simultaneously.
 - ❖ **Field or Full-Scale Exercise:** Far down the line, much later than one usually finds them, should be our local, full-scale, field exercises. Far, far too often we see failed exercises (this never should happen!) because our—or some—simple ten-step process wasn’t used and people get discouraged; time, energy and money were wasted; and no one comes to play next time because some previous exercise experience was so, so bad.
3. **This is not a “test.”** Get rid of the old para-military words and concepts that came from the old “civil defense” era when the Department of Defense was the lead “exercise” agency. Tests only work in agencies with chains of command, uniforms, badges, perhaps weapons, and where punishment is a management tool. We who love developing exercises to improve performance in use a different vocabulary.
 - ✓ **Practice:** Not a test, but an opportunity to practice those skills needed to succeed during emergency incidents in a controlled, well-developed environment.
 - ✓ **Coaches or mentors:** Not evaluators (grade-givers), but skilled professionals who are there to interact, coach and help us get better at what we do. We should have our best people be coaches, for they need the “practice” the least.
 - ✓ **Learning:** Not grades from disinterested evaluators, but help, insights and training opportunities facilitated by well-meaning, well-skilled supervisor types.
 - ✓ **Fun:** Not funny, not giggly fun, just good, clean fun. A feeling of a job well done. Excellence. Personal growth. Pride.
 4. **Get the right players on the team.** Hey, this is your town, your hospital, your fire department, your community. You know who the right players are. Official policy may say it has to be position holders, suits, or elected officials. Common sense and experience says it’s STP, the “same ten people.” Agencies have to be represented by people who can get the best participation and response from their agencies. And all agencies that will be involved as “lead” agencies in a real incident absolutely will have to come to the table. This means getting the right players takes good time management skills, face-to-face meetings, and some politicking. You need to do what it takes to get as close as you can get to an All-Star Team.
 5. **Use a local problem that really, truly needs solving.** This is the reason canned exercises hardly ever work, for they are designed around someone else’s, usually a consultant’s, favorite problem. Your development team, with reps of the key lead response agencies and organizations (be it school, co-op, railroad, hospital, etc.), has to find a real, local, serious problem that needs their attention. That way it’s an easy sell. Remember, good exercises need to be aggressively marketed to agency personnel and the public.
 6. **Give everyone some real work to do.** A key to good management is the realization that everyone comes to work to “work.” Boredom may kill more exercises than anything else. You have to keep good agency folks busy: fire, law, EMS, public works and public health personnel don’t have time to waste. Neither do personnel from volunteer organizations, private industry, schools, etc. If a particular functional group will have no role to play, either don’t bring them to the table, or find some active and necessary “support role” for them to perform. But never, ever, have good hard working responders just sitting around!

7. **Have a short and sweet debrief**, that day or soon thereafter. Have the lead agency go first, then next most involved agency or organization. What went well, what needs improvement? I have found they'll be harder on themselves than any IC would have been. Remember, it's about developing a great team to solve real problems, not about fault finding, grades, punishment, etc.
8. **Have a BBQ!** Seriously, I learned this from a pipeline company that wanted to make sure that all the players left feeling that a good time was had by all. And they did it all across the state. They told me it was done through their community relations department and was the best use of money their safety people could think of. Another hour of stress free team development was added to every exercise. I have seen pizza parties work well too. And I have seen homemade cookies do wonders at a debrief. Feed them and they will come—and they will stay!
9. **Communicate well, often, and over many media.** Your players, and their people, are all busy folks. After all, you don't want slackers, right? So tell them what's going on, ask them if they want e-mail alerts, text messages, interoffice mail, real mail, phone calls, etc. Or all of the above! Have someone dedicated to exercise-related communications, probably an incident commo type or an office support person who cares. This is a key function and you need a reliable, self-directed person to drive this basic exercise operation.
10. **Let people know what's going on.** By people I mean other agencies, people at the state, the feds, the public. Use your ICS PIO types, after all, they should care, they should have the requisite skills, and they will be the ones doing the public relations work and the public information dissemination during the exercise. Public support for response activities is critical for long term success and will be especially effective if a full-scale field exercise is imminent.

Naturally there are more things you can do, but if you just don't forget any of these ten simple steps you will be far more successful than if you just wing it or use an exercise design system that does not fit your hometown, local needs.

North Central WV U.S. EPA Cleanup Sites

| Site Name | EPA ID | City | County | Zip |
|--|--------------|------------|------------|-------|
| Big John Salvage - Hoult Rd | WVD054827944 | Fairmont | Marion | 26554 |
| Fairmont Cullet Pile Site | WV0001896919 | Fairmont | Marion | 26554 |
| Ordnance Works Disposal Area | WVD000850404 | Morgantown | Monongalia | 26505 |
| Sharon Steel Corporation (Fairmont Coke Works) | WVD000800441 | Fairmont | Marion | 26554 |

For more information, see site webpages at: <http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/super/wv.htm>

North Central West Virginia Bulletin Board

| County | News / Event |
|---------------|---|
| Barbour | |
| Harrison | |
| Lewis/Upshur | Special Needs registration beginning in January 2011. |
| Marion | |
| Monongalia | |
| Preston | |
| Randolph | |
| Taylor | |
| Tucker | |

Please E-mail LEPC News / Events / Contact Information to: sharma.raj@epa.gov

Region 3 Emergency Notification Numbers

National Response Center (NRC)
WV DEP 24-hour Hotline

(800) 424-8802
(800) 642-3074



That's all for now. Stay safe!