

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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North Central WV LEPC Newsletter

Local Emergency Planning Committee

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Hello North Central WV Counties!

It was great to see a lot of you at the annual WV LEPC/SERC Conference in Canaan Valley State Park. There was a lot of good information exchanged during the sessions, and it was fun getting to know you personally during the lunches, picnic, at the bar, etc.

Our very own Tucker County made a great host, and led a much needed exchange about what the role of the LEPC should be. During this session, EPA OSC Bob Kelly offered to draft an LEPC Handbook to help provide guidance, and standardize the approach LEPCs take to planning and responding to emergencies in their community. You will likely be seeing more about this in the future.

In this issue, we discuss the building-block approach to exercises, which I hope many of you will find useful given the recent requirements of FEMA's EMPG Grants for an exercise program.

Thanks, and feel free to drop me a line anytime!

Sincerely,

Raj Sharma



Serving the North Central WV Counties of Barbour, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, and Upshur.

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Upcoming Event

The 2011 Emergency Preparedness and HazMat Response Conference is in Pittsburgh this year!



The registration fee is \$275 each, or \$250 for three or more attending from the same organization. Attendees who register by September 30 will receive a \$40 discount for a low registration fee of only \$235. If three or more are attending from the same organization, the early bird rate is only \$200 per registration. All multiple registration forms must be received simultaneously.

Numerous topics and training opportunities for the following groups are included in the Agenda:

- Local emergency planning committee representatives
- Environmental, emergency and safety staff from federal facilities
- Environmental, health and safety, and operations representatives from industry
- First response personnel from fire, emergency medical, and law enforcement agencies
- State emergency response commission members
- Hazmat response teams
- Emergency managers and planners
- Regulatory compliance specialists
- Emergency medical personnel
- Medical, safety and environmental personnel from hospitals
- Maritime industry personnel
- Transportation and distribution industry personnel
- Power and utility industry staff
- Safety and environmental personnel from colleges and universities
- Counter-terrorism professionals and specialists

Call the Conference Hotline at (800) 364-7974, or, review the agenda and register online at: <http://www.2011conference.net/attendee-registration.html> today! We hope to see you this year in Pittsburgh, PA!

Exercises: A Building-Block Approach

As many of you may know, the FEMA Grant Programs Information Bulletin No. 366, dated July 7, 2011, requires that Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) State grantees develop and maintain a progressive exercise program consistent with the National Exercise Program Base Plan. **This includes conducting no less than four quarterly exercises of any type (Drills, Tabletop, or Functional), along with one Full-Scale exercise, within a 12 month period** beginning on the date of the particular Grant award. It is also important to note that “real-world” events do not count in meeting this new requirement.

As an aid to assist you in the development of these important exercise requirements, EPA recommends that Counties use the “Building Block” approach shown below.



An explanation of each “Building Block” is discussed below:

Discussion-Based Exercises

Discussion-based exercises are normally used as a starting point in the building-block approach of escalating exercise complexity. Discussion-based exercises include seminars, workshops, tabletop exercises (TTXs), and games. These types of exercises typically highlight existing plans, policies, interagency/inter-jurisdictional agreements, and procedures. Discussion-based exercises are valuable tools for familiarizing agencies and personnel with current or expected capabilities of an entity. Discussion-based exercises typically focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues. Facilitators and/or presenters usually lead the discussion, keeping participants on track toward meeting exercise objectives.

Seminars

Seminars are informal discussions, unconstrained by real-time portrayal of events and led by a presenter. They are generally employed to orient participants to, or provide an overview of, authorities, strategies, plans, policies, procedures, protocols, response resources, and/or concepts and ideas. Seminars provide a good starting point for entities that are developing or making major changes to their plans and procedures.

Workshops

After seminars, workshops represent the second tier of exercises in the HSEEP building-block approach. They differ from seminars in two important respects: participant interaction is increased, and the focus is on achieving or building a product (such as a draft plan or policy). Workshops are often employed in conjunction with exercise development to determine objectives, develop scenarios, and define evaluation criteria.

A workshop may also be used to produce new standard operating procedures (SOPs), emergency operations plans (EOPs), Mutual Aid Agreements (MAAs), multi-year plans, or improvement plans. To be effective, workshops must be highly focused on a specific issue, and the desired outcome or goal must be clearly defined.

Table-Top Exercises

TTXs involve key personnel discussing hypothetical scenarios in an informal setting. This type of exercise can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures or to assess the systems needed to guide the prevention of, response to, and recovery from a defined incident. TTXs typically are aimed at facilitating understanding of concepts, identifying strengths and shortfalls, and achieving changes in the approach to a particular situation. Participants are encouraged to discuss issues in depth and develop decisions through slow-paced problem solving, rather than the rapid, spontaneous decision making that occurs under actual or simulated emergency conditions. The effectiveness of a TTX is derived from the energetic involvement of participants and their assessment of recommended revisions to current policies, procedures, and plans.

TTX methods are divided into two categories: basic and advanced. In a basic TTX, the situation established by the scenario materials remains constant. It describes an event or emergency incident (i.e., scenario) and brings discussion participants up to the simulated present time. Players apply their knowledge and skills to a list of problems presented by the leader/moderator; problems are discussed as a group; and the leader generally agrees on and summarizes the resolutions.

In an advanced TTX, play revolves around delivery of pre-scripted messages to players that alter the original scenario. The exercise controller (or moderator) usually introduces problems one at a time in the form of a written message, simulated telephone call, videotape, or other means. Participants discuss the issues raised by the simulated problem, applying appropriate plans and procedures.

TTXs are effective for evaluating group problem solving, personnel contingencies, group message interpretation, information sharing, interagency coordination, and achievement of specific objectives.

Games

A game is a simulation of operations that often involves two or more teams and uses rules, data, and procedures to depict an actual or assumed real-life situation. The goal of a game is to explore decision-making processes and the consequences of those decisions. A game does not require use of actual resources, and the sequence of events affects, and is in turn affected by, decisions made by players.

With the evolving complexity and sophistication of current simulations, opportunities to provide enhanced realism for game participants have increased. Computer-generated scenarios and simulations can provide a

more realistic and time-sensitive method of introducing situations for analysis. Planner decisions can be input into realistic models to show the effects of decisions made during a game. Internet-based, multi-player games offer many additional benefits, such as saving money by reducing travel time, offering more frequent training opportunities, and taking less time away from primary functions. They also provide a collaborative environment that reflects realistic occurrences.

Operations-Based Exercises

Operations-based exercises represent the next level of the exercise cycle. They are used to validate the plans, policies, agreements, and procedures solidified in discussion-based exercises. Operations-based exercises include drills, functional exercises (FEs), and full-scale exercises (FSXs). They can clarify roles and responsibilities, identify gaps in resources needed to implement plans and procedures, and improve individual and team performance. Operations-based exercises are characterized by actual reaction to simulated intelligence; response to emergency conditions; mobilization of apparatus, resources, and/or networks; and commitment of personnel, usually over an extended period of time.

Drills

A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to validate a single, specific operation or function in a single agency or organizational entity. Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, develop or validate new policies or procedures, or practice and maintain current skills. Typical attributes of drills include:

- A narrow focus, measured against established standards;
- Immediate feedback;
- A realistic environment; and
- Performance in isolation.

Functional Exercises

A Functional Exercise (FE) is designed to validate and evaluate individual capabilities, multiple functions, activities within a function, or interdependent groups of functions. Events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity at the management level. An FE simulates the reality of operations in a functional area by presenting complex and realistic problems that require rapid and effective responses by trained personnel in a highly stressful, time-constrained environment.

Response and recovery-focused FEs generally concentrate on exercising the plans, policies, procedures, and staffs of the direction and control branches of Incident Command (IC), Unified Command (UC), and/or multi-agency coordination centers (e.g., EOCs). Movement of personnel and equipment is simulated.

Prevention-focused FEs usually concentrate on exercising the plans, policies, procedures, agreements, networks, and staffs of fusion centers or law enforcement agencies with counterterrorism missions. Adversary actions are largely simulated and delivered in the form of shared intelligence; however, some of these actions may be carried out by simulated adversaries, or Red Teams, in a separate but coordinated category of exercise play. See *HSEEP Volume V: Prevention Exercises* for more information on prevention-focused exercises.

Full-Scale Exercises

The Full-Scale Exercise (FSX) is the most complex type of exercise. FSXs are multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, multi-organizational exercises that validate many facets of preparedness. They focus on implementing and analyzing the plans, policies, procedures, and cooperative agreements developed in discussion-based exercises and honed in previous, smaller, operations-based exercises. In FSXs, the reality of operations in multiple functional areas presents complex and realistic problems that require critical thinking, rapid problem solving, and effective responses by trained personnel. During FSXs, events are projected through a scripted exercise scenario with built-in flexibility to allow updates to drive activity. FSXs are conducted in real time, creating a stressful, time-constrained environment that closely mirrors real events. The level of support needed to conduct an FSX is greater than that needed during other types of exercises.

Response-focused FSXs include many first responders operating under the principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to effectively and efficiently respond to an incident. Personnel and resources are mobilized and deployed to the scene where they conduct their activities as if a real incident had occurred (with minor exceptions). An FSX may also include functional play from participants not located at the exercise incident response site, such as multi-agency coordination centers (MACCs), EOCs, or hospitals.

Important Web Addresses and Contact Information related to the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP):

Information related to after-action report generation can be obtained at the HSEEP website (<https://hseep.dhs.gov>). Time constraint questions and overall HSEEP guidance can be found on the following website: HSEEP@dhs.gov. Also, for HSEEP toolkit technical support, please contact the HSEEP helpdesk at support@hseep.net, or call them at 877-612-HELP (4357).

Here is a chart that provides important information on Player Action, Timelines, Scopes, etc.

We hope it will be of good use to you!

	Utility/ Purpose	Type of Player Action	Duration	Real-Time Play?	Scope
Discussion-Based Exercises	Familiarize players with current plans, policies, agreements, and procedures; develop new plans, policies, agreements, and procedures	Notional; player actions are imaginary or hypothetical	Rarely exceeding 8 hours	No	Varies
Seminar	Provide overview of new or current plans, resources, strategies, concepts or ideas	N/A	2-5 hours	No	Multi- or Single-agency
Workshop	Achieve specific goal or build product (e.g., exercise objectives, SOPs, policies, plans)	N/A	3-8 hours	No	Multi-agency/ Single function
Tabletop Exercise (TTX)	Validate plans and procedures by utilizing a hypothetical scenario to drive participant discussions	Notional	4-8 hours	No	Multi-agency/ Multiple functions
Game	Explore decision-making process and examine consequences of those decisions	Notional	2-5 hours	No (though some simulations provide real- or near-real-time play)	Multi-agency/ Multiple functions
Operations-Based Exercises	Validate plans, policies, agreements, and procedures; clarify roles and responsibilities; identify resource gaps	Actual; player action mimics reaction, response, mobilization, and commitment of personnel and resources	May be hours, days, or weeks, depending on purpose, type, and scope of the exercise	Yes	Varies
Drill	Validate a single operation or function of an agency	Actual	2-4 hours	Yes	Single agency/ Single function
Functional Exercise (FE)	Evaluate capabilities, functions, plans, and staffs of Incident Command, Unified Command, intelligence centers, or other multi-agency coordination centers (e.g., EOCs)	Command staff actions are actual; movement of other personnel, equipment, or adversaries is simulated	4-8 hours or several days or weeks	Yes	Multiple functional areas/ Multiple functions
Full-Scale Exercise (FSE)	Validate plans, policies, procedures, and cooperative agreements developed in previous exercises through their actual implementation and execution during a simulated scenario; includes actual mobilization of resources, conduct of operations, and integrated elements of functional exercise play (e.g., EOCs, command posts)	Actual	One full day or several days or weeks	Yes	Multi-agency/ Multiple functions

North Central West Virginia Bulletin Board

County	News / Event
Barbour	
Harrison	
Lewis/Upshur	Conducted an updated commodities flow study in July - received and additional \$ 6000.00 HMEP grant recently to update Risk/Vulnerabilities analysis with the data collected from the flow study. Currently updating SOG's for both County Emergency Response Agencies, to be completed in Dec 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

Finally, see how everyone went blonde for the LEPC/SERC Conference...



That's all for now. Stay safe!