



Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

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Introduction

Purpose

The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) provides a set of fundamental principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. Exercises are an important component of preparedness, by providing the whole community¹ with the opportunity to shape planning, assess and validate [capabilities](#),² and address areas for improvement. An exercise is an event or activity, delivered through discussion or action, to develop, assess, or validate plans, policies, procedures, and capabilities that jurisdictions/organizations can use to achieve planned objectives.

Through HSEEP, exercise program managers can develop, execute, and evaluate exercises that address the priorities established by a jurisdiction's/organization's senior leaders. The [National Preparedness Goal](#),³ strategy documents, Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) processes, capability assessments, and results from previous exercises and real-world incidents impact the priorities. These priorities guide the overall direction of an exercise program where individual exercises anchor to a common set of priorities or objectives, which increase in complexity over time. These priorities guide the design and development of individual exercises and allow planners to identify and align objectives to the capabilities being evaluated. Exercise evaluation assesses the ability to meet the objectives and capabilities by documenting strengths, areas for improvement, capability performance, and corrective actions in an After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP).

Through Improvement Planning, jurisdictions/organizations take the corrective actions identified during exercises to improve plans, build and sustain capabilities, and maintain readiness. Stakeholders are reminded of the importance of implementing corrective actions.

In this way, the use of HSEEP—in line with the National Preparedness Goal, the [National Preparedness System](#) (NPS),⁴ and stakeholder preparedness priorities—supports efforts across the whole community that improve the nation's capacity to build, sustain, and deliver capabilities to better respond to a real-world incident.

Role of Exercises

Exercises play a vital role in preparedness. A well-designed exercise provides a low-risk environment to familiarize personnel with roles and responsibilities; foster meaningful interaction and communication across jurisdictions/organizations; assess and validate plans, policies, procedures, and capabilities; and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Exercises bring together and strengthen the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and

¹ The whole community means involving people (individuals and families, including those with access and functional needs, businesses, faith-based and community organizations, nonprofit groups, schools and academia, media outlets, and all levels of government including state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal partners) in the development of national preparedness documents and ensuring their roles and responsibilities are reflected in the content of the materials.

² Capabilities are the means to accomplish a mission, function, or objective based on the performance of related tasks, under specified conditions, to target levels of performance. For additional information on the core capability development sheets see <https://www.fema.gov/core-capability-development-sheets>.

³ Refer to the National Preparedness Goal: <https://www.fema.gov/national-preparedness-goal>.

⁴ Refer to the National Preparedness System: <https://www.fema.gov/national-preparedness-system>.

recover from all hazards. Overall, exercises help the whole community address the priorities established by a jurisdiction's/organization's leaders; and evaluate progress towards meeting preparedness goals.

Applicability and Scope

The HSEEP doctrine is flexible, scalable, adaptable, and for use by stakeholders across the whole community and all mission areas. Using HSEEP supports the NPS by providing a consistent approach to exercises and measuring progress toward building, sustaining, and delivering capabilities. To achieve whole community preparedness goals, agencies, jurisdictions/organizations, and stakeholders (for example, public health, transportation, education, etc.) that do not use the core capabilities as outlined in the National Preparedness Goal should use their relevant capabilities and elements to better prepare for real-world incidents.

The foundation of the HSEEP doctrine incorporates lessons learned and best practices from the exercise community and current policies and plans that support training, technology systems, tools, and technical assistance. Exercise practitioners are encouraged to apply and adapt the HSEEP doctrine to meet their specific needs.

Supersession

The 2020 iteration of the HSEEP doctrine supersedes the 2013 version.

Doctrine Organization

The organization of the HSEEP doctrine follows:

- **Chapter 1, Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Fundamentals**, describes the basic principles and methodology of HSEEP.
- **Chapter 2, Program Management**, provides guidance for overseeing and integrating a variety of exercises over time, conducting an Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW), and developing a multi-year Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP).
- **Chapter 3, Exercise Design and Development**, describes the methodology for developing exercise objectives, conducting planning meetings, developing exercise documentation, and planning for exercise logistics, control, and evaluation.
- **Chapter 4, Exercise Conduct**, provides guidance on setup, exercise play, and wrap-up activities.
- **Chapter 5, Exercise Evaluation**, provides the approach to exercise evaluation planning and conduct through data collection, analysis, and development of an After-Action Report (AAR).
- **Chapter 6, Improvement Planning**, addresses corrective actions identified in the exercise Improvement Plan and the process of tracking corrective actions to resolution.

Revision Process

The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) National Exercise Division reviews the HSEEP doctrine and methodology every six years, or as needed.

Tools

The Preparedness Toolkit (PrepToolkit) is a web-based application that allows the whole community access to a wide variety of resources to manage preparedness activities. The system is designed to support implementation of the NPS by providing exercise planners, program managers, resource typing and mutual aid coordinators, threat and hazard planners, and other key stakeholders access to technologies that align to the six NPS elements. PrepToolkit supplies a technology platform that supports implementation of HSEEP and aids exercise planners in program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. Refer to <https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/hseep-resources> for more information.

Training

Training provides the whole community with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform key tasks required by specific capabilities. Jurisdictions/organizations should make training decisions based on information derived from the assessments, strategies, and plans developed in previous steps of the Integrated Preparedness Cycle. The National Training Program provides an organized approach to training for emergency managers and emergency response providers across the nation that supports the [National Preparedness Guidelines](#).⁵ The National Preparedness Online Course Catalog provides searchable, integrated information on courses provided or managed by FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP), the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), the National Fire Academy, and the National Training and Education Division (NTED).⁶

⁵ For more information on the National Preparedness Guidelines refer to: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/16886>.

⁶ For more information on training refer to: <https://www.fema.gov/training>, <https://www.firstrespondertraining.gov/frts>, and <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/>.

1. Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Fundamentals

Overview

The HSEEP doctrine consists of fundamental principles that frame a common approach to exercises. The intent is to enhance consistency in exercise conduct and evaluation while ensuring exercises remain a flexible, accessible way to improve our preparedness across the nation.

Fundamental Principles

Applying the following principles to the management of an exercise program and executing individual exercises is important to an effective evaluation of capabilities:

- **Senior Leader Guidance:** The early and frequent engagement of senior leaders is the key to the success of any exercise program. Senior leaders provide the overarching guidance and direction for the exercise and evaluation program as well as specific intent for individual exercises.
- **Informed by Risk:** Identifying and assessing risks and associated impacts helps jurisdictions/organizations identify and evaluate priorities, objectives, and capabilities through exercises.
- **Capability-Based, Objective-Driven:** Jurisdictions/Organizations can use exercises to evaluate current capability levels/targets and identify gaps. Exercises focus on assessing performance against capability-based objectives.
- **Progressive Exercise Planning Approach:** A progressive approach includes the use of various exercises aligned to a common set of program priorities and objectives with an increasing level of complexity over time. Progressive exercise planning does not always imply a linear progression of exercise types.
- **Whole Community Integration:** The use of HSEEP encourages exercise planners, where appropriate, to engage the whole community throughout program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.
- **Common Methodology:** HSEEP includes a common methodology for exercises across all mission areas. The methodology enables jurisdictions/organizations a shared understanding of program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning and fosters exercise-related interoperability and collaboration.

The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Cycle

HSEEP uses a common approach for planning, conducting, and evaluating individual exercises. The following chapters contain more detailed descriptions of each phase, as depicted in **Figure 1.1**.

Program Management

Program management involves a collaborative approach that integrates resources, jurisdictions/organizations, and individuals to identify and achieve program priorities. An effective exercise program maximizes efficiency, resources, time, and funding by ensuring a coordinated and integrated approach to building, sustaining, and delivering capabilities. Through the management of an exercise program, senior leaders provide oversight for specific preparedness activities sustained over time.

Exercise Design and Development

During exercise design and development, the exercise planning team members use the intent and guidance of senior leaders and the program priorities to shape the individual or series of exercises. Involving the risk and hazard assessments, plans, policies, and procedures, grant or cooperative agreements, and relevant After-Action Reports (AARs) and Improvement Plans (IPs), exercise planners ensure that exercises assess and validate a jurisdiction's/organization's capabilities.

Exercise Conduct

Exercise conduct involves activities such as preparing for exercise play, managing exercise play, and conducting immediate exercise wrap-up activities. For a discussion-based exercise, conduct entails presentation, facilitation, and discussion. For an operations-based exercise, conduct, encompasses all operations occurring between the designated Start of the Exercise (StartEx) and End of the Exercise (EndEx).

Exercise Evaluation

An effective evaluation assesses performance against exercise objectives and identifies and documents strengths and areas for improvement relative to capabilities. Evaluation is important and considered in all phases of the exercise planning cycle, beginning when the exercise planning team meets to establish objectives and initiate exercise design through improvement planning.

Improvement Planning

Improvement Planning activities can help shape a jurisdiction's/organization's preparedness priorities and support continuous improvement. Actions identified during Improvement Planning help to strengthen elements of a jurisdiction's/organization's capability to plan, organize/equip, train, and exercise.

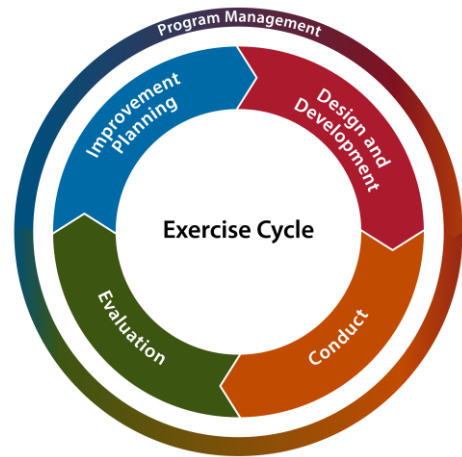


Figure 1.1: The HSEEP Cycle

2. Program Management

Overview

Program management is the process of overseeing and integrating a variety of exercises over time. An effective exercise program helps jurisdictions/organizations maximize efficiency, resources, time, and funding by ensuring that exercises are part of a coordinated, integrated planning approach to building, sustaining, and delivering capabilities. This integrated planning approach begins when senior leaders, working with whole community stakeholders, identify and develop a set of multi-year preparedness priorities based on relevant threats, hazards, and risks.

Integrated Preparedness Cycle

The Integrated Preparedness Cycle of planning, organizing/equipping, training, exercising, and evaluating/improving is a continuous process that ensures the regular examination of ever-changing threats, hazards, and risks, as shown in **Figure 2.1**.

The Cycle involves the assessment of threats, hazards, and risks; new and updated plans; and improvements implemented from previously identified shortfalls or gaps. The preparedness priorities are developed to ensure that the needed preparedness elements are incorporated. This cycle provides a continual and reliable approach to support decision making, resource allocation, and measure progress toward building, sustaining, and delivering capabilities based on a jurisdiction's/organization's threats, hazards, and risks.

Through the Integrated Preparedness Cycle, the program manager understands the full breadth of preparedness activities that impact their jurisdiction/organization and allows for a more deliberate approach to multi-year preparedness activity planning. Ultimately, this integrated approach becomes a means to achieve whole community preparedness in a consistent and measurable way.

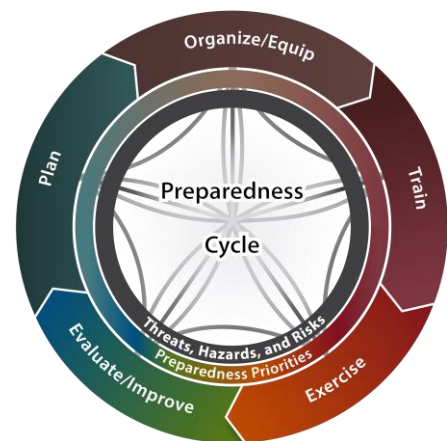


Figure 2.1: The Integrated Preparedness Cycle

Linkage of Integrated Preparedness Cycle and Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

The exercise phase of the Integrated Preparedness Cycle is linked to the program management process and starts the design and development of individual exercises within HSEEP. Multi-year preparedness priorities guide the exercise program to produce quality individual exercises. These individual exercises are used to build, sustain, and deliver capabilities.

Effective program management is comprised of the following components:

- Engaging senior leaders;
- Establishing multi-year preparedness priorities;
- Conducting an Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW);
- Developing a multi-year Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP);
- Maintaining program reporting of exercise outcomes; and
- Managing exercise program resources.

Through effective program management, each exercise becomes a supporting component of a larger exercise program and integrated preparedness with overarching priorities.

Figure 2.2 shows the relationship and linkage of the Integrated Preparedness Cycle and the HSEEP Cycle. Exercise practitioners are encouraged to apply and adapt HSEEP program management guidance to meet their specific needs.

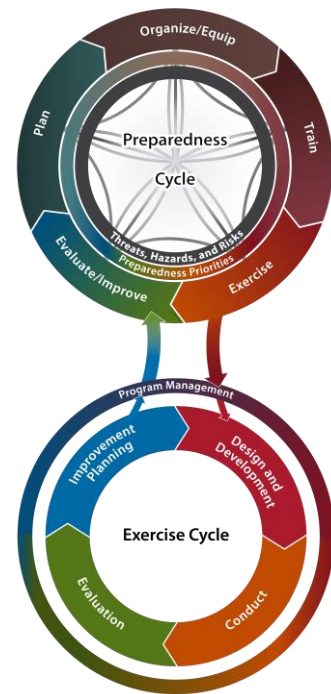


Figure 2.2: The Relationship of the Integrated Preparedness Cycle and the HSEEP Cycle

Engage Senior Leaders

Involving senior leaders early and often in the exercise process is critical in providing both the strategic direction for the exercise program and specific guidance for individual exercises. In developing individual exercises, the exercise planning team should continue to engage the appropriate senior leaders throughout the exercise planning cycle to achieve the leaders' intent for the exercise.

Preparedness Priorities

Preparedness priorities should be established by senior leaders and informed by risk and capability assessments, findings, and corrective actions from previous events and external requirements like regulations and grant guidance. Preparedness priorities should be comprehensive to meet whole community needs and drive preparedness activities throughout the Integrated Preparedness Cycle. For exercises, these priorities guide the development of exercise objectives, related training, staffing, resourcing, and other planning activities to ensure individual exercises assess and validate preparedness in an integrated and coordinated way.

Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW)

The Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW) is a meeting that establishes the strategy and structure for an exercise program, in addition to broader preparedness efforts, while setting the foundation for the planning, conduct, and evaluation of individual exercises. This meeting occurs on a periodic basis depending on the needs of the program and any grant or cooperative agreement requirements.

Purpose

The purpose of the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW) is to use the guidance provided by senior leaders to identify and set preparedness priorities and develop a multi-year schedule of preparedness activities.

The process confirms:

- Coordination of whole community initiatives;
- Prevention of duplication of efforts;
- Assurance of the efficient use of resources and funding; and
- Avoidance of overextending key agencies and personnel.

During the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW), participation from the whole community ensures preparedness activities are included in the program's priorities.

Participation

When identifying stakeholders, program managers should consider individuals from jurisdictions/organizations throughout the whole community, including but, not limited to:

- Senior leaders responsible for providing direction and guidance for preparedness priorities, planning activities, and those responsible for providing resources to support preparedness efforts;
- Relevant planning, training, exercise, and grant program managers who would be responsible for carrying out the activities identified during the workshop;
- Individuals with knowledge of the community's/organization's risks and capabilities;
- Representatives from relevant disciplines that would be part of the exercises or any real-world incidents, including appropriate local, regional, or federal department and agency representatives;
- Individuals with administrative responsibility relevant to exercise conduct;
- Advocates for individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs⁷; and
- Community representatives to include businesses, the healthcare sector, volunteer organizations, nongovernmental organizations, nonprofits, faith-based, and social support organizations.

⁷ "Access and functional needs" includes children, seniors, racially and ethnically diverse communities, and people with limited English proficiency.

Conduct of the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW)

During conduct of the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW), participants review and consider various factors to develop the preparedness priorities and the multi-year schedule. Guidance from senior leaders confirms whole community involvement in this process, to include the factors listed in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Factors for Consideration in Developing Exercise Program Priorities

Focus	Factors to Consider
Threats and Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jurisdictional threats and hazards ▪ National threats and hazards ▪ Hazard vulnerability analysis ▪ Risk assessments
Areas for Improvement and Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Real-world incident corrective actions ▪ Exercise corrective actions ▪ Identified and/or perceived areas for improvement ▪ Validating training efforts ▪ Newly acquired capabilities and resources
External Sources and Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industry reports ▪ State or national preparedness reports ▪ Homeland security strategies ▪ Grants or funding-specific requirements
Accreditation Standards and Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accreditation requirements ▪ Local, state, and federal regulations

Utilizing the above factors, the workshop facilitator leads group discussions to review program priorities and develop a multi-year schedule. **Table 2.2** shows the conduct of the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW).

Table 2.2: Conduct of the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW)

Element	Aspects and Activities
Focus	A forum to identify priorities and the strategies employed to achieve those priorities, whether that's coordinating and integrating current activities in an organized manner or identifying areas where additional activities are needed.

Element	Aspects and Activities
Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate senior leader and stakeholder guidance ▪ Review jurisdiction/organization capabilities ▪ Collect and assemble data from the Integrated Preparedness Cycle (plan, organize/equip, train, exercise, evaluate/improve) ▪ Review new and revised plans, policies, and procedures ▪ Review corrective actions from previous exercises (AAR/IP) ▪ Consider using multiple exercise types to accomplish multi-year goals ▪ Identify funding ▪ Discuss scheduling conflicts ▪ Review program reports
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read-ahead material ▪ Meeting agenda documents ▪ Presentations materials ▪ Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW) guide ▪ Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) template
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritization and schedule of future preparedness activities ▪ Development of the Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP)
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribution of finalized Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) ▪ Periodic review of current Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP)

At the end of the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW), program managers will have a clear understanding of specific multi-year preparedness priorities and any available information on previously planned preparedness activities that align to those priorities. Once the preparedness priorities are outlined, stakeholders develop the multi-year Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP).

Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP)

The Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) is a document for combining efforts across the elements of the Integrated Preparedness Cycle to make sure that a jurisdiction/organization has the capabilities to handle threats and hazards. Through effective program management, each planning, organizing/equipping, training, exercising, and evaluating/improving activity becomes a supporting component of the larger preparedness priorities. These preparedness priorities help exercise planners design and develop a multi-year exercise program of individual exercises that target resources to where they are most useful. Reference the National Preparedness Goal for information regarding how resources are critical for those responsible in delivering capabilities toward national preparedness. This progressive approach ensures jurisdictions/organizations select the appropriate exercise type as described in the following sections.

Progressive Approach

A progressive, multi-year exercise program enables jurisdictions/organizations to participate in a series of increasingly complex exercises, with each exercise building upon the previous one.

Regardless of exercise type, each exercise within the series is linked to a set of common program priorities and designed to test associated capabilities. By identifying other preparedness activities or requirements as part of the integrated preparedness planning process, jurisdictions/organizations address known shortfalls prior to exercising capabilities.

Discussion-Based Exercises

Discussion-based exercises include seminars, workshops, tabletop exercises (TTXs), and games. These types of exercises familiarize players with or develop new plans, policies, procedures, and agreements. Discussion-based exercises focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues, and facilitators or presenters lead the discussion, keeping participants moving towards meeting the exercise objectives. The following tables (**Table 2.3,**

Table 2.4, Table 2.5, and **Table 2.6**) provide the important information for each type of discussion-based exercise:

Table 2.3: Discussion-Based Exercise Types: Seminar

Seminar:	
A discussion-based exercise that orients participants to or provides an overview of authorities, strategies, plans, policies, procedures, protocols, resources, concepts, and ideas.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a common framework of understanding ▪ Provide a good starting point for developing or making major changes to existing plans, policies, or procedures
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Usually in the form of multiple presentations, subject-matter expert (SME) panels, or case study discussions ▪ Lecture-based ▪ Led by a seminar facilitator/presenter ▪ Limited feedback or interaction from participants
Participant Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gain awareness of or assess interagency capabilities or inter-jurisdictional operations ▪ Set objectives for future capabilities
Conduct Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimal time constraints ▪ Effective for small or large groups
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A report that captures the discussion, issues raised, and (if appropriate) action items that will address these issues ▪ An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)

Table 2.4: Discussion-Based Exercise Types: Workshop

Workshop: A discussion-based exercise often employed to develop policy, plans, or procedures.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participant interaction with a focus on achieving or building a product Should have clearly defined objectives, products, or goals and focus on a specific issue
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A group of individuals in a venue conducive to discussion Lectures, presentations, panel or case-study discussions, or decision support tools Facilitated working breakout sessions Led by a workshop facilitator/presenter
Participant Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a product as a group Obtain consensus Collect or share information
Conduct Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective for small and large groups Broad attendance by relevant stakeholders Conducted based on clear objectives/goals More participant discussion than lecture-based Frequently uses breakout sessions to explore parts of an issue with similar groups
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Operations Plans Mutual Aid Agreements Standard Operating Procedures Continuity of operations plans Workshop Summary Report An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)

Table 2.5: Discussion-Based Exercise Types: Tabletop Exercise

Tabletop Exercise (TTX): A discussion-based exercise in response to a scenario, intended to generate a dialogue of various issues to facilitate a conceptual understanding, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and/or achieve changes in perceptions about plans, policies, or procedures.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate discussion of various issues regarding an exercise scenario Facilitate conceptual understanding, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and/or achieve changes in perceptions

Element	Considerations and Activities
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scenario is presented to describe an event at a simulated time ▪ Players apply their knowledge and skills to a list of problems presented by the facilitator ▪ Problems are discussed as a group, and resolution may be reached and documented for later analysis ▪ Plenary or breakout session(s) ▪ Discussion led by a facilitator(s) ▪ Presentation
Participant Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance general awareness ▪ Enhance roles and responsibility understanding ▪ Validate plans and procedures ▪ Discuss concepts and/or assess types of systems in a defined incident
Conduct Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires an experienced facilitator ▪ In-depth discussion ▪ Problem-solving environment ▪ All participants should be encouraged to contribute to the discussion and be reminded that they are making decisions in a no-fault environment
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommended revisions to current plans, policies, and procedures ▪ An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)

Table 2.6: Discussion-Based Exercise Types: Game

Game:	
<p>A discussion-based exercise that is a structured form of play designed for individuals or teams in a competitive or noncompetitive environment. It is an event players take part in and are guided by clear rules, data, and procedures for its execution. Games are designed to depict an actual or hypothetical situation to ensure that the participants make decisions and take actions that would be plausible. Games can be used to reinforce training, stimulate team building, or enhance operational and tactical capabilities.</p>	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simulation of operations that explore the consequences of player decisions and actions ▪ Identification of critical decision-making points is a major factor in the success of evaluating a game
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Usually in an environment that can involve two or more teams, using rules, data, and procedures designed to depict an actual or hypothetical situation ▪ Decision-making may be either slow and deliberate or rapid and more stressful, depending on the exercise design and objectives ▪ The open, decision-based format of a game can incorporate “what if” questions that expand exercise benefits ▪ Depending on the game’s design, the consequences of player actions can be either pre-scripted or decided dynamically

Element	Considerations and Activities
Participant Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore decision-making processes and consequences ▪ Conduct “what-if” analyses of existing plans ▪ Evaluate existing and potential strategies
Conduct Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No actual resources used ▪ Often involves two or more teams ▪ May include models and simulations of increasing complexity as the game progresses ▪ May or may not include pre-scripted activities
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validate plans, policies, and procedures or evaluating resource requirements ▪ An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)

Operations-Based Exercises

Operations-based exercises include drills, functional exercises (FE), and full-scale exercises (FSE). These exercises validate plans, policies, procedures, and agreements; clarify roles and responsibilities; and identify resource gaps. Operations-based exercises include a real-time response such as initiating communications or mobilizing personnel and resources. The following tables (**Table 2.7**, **Table 2.8**, and **Table 2.9**) provide the important information for each type of operations-based exercise:

Table 2.7: Operations-Based Exercise Types: Drill

Drill: An operations-based exercise often employed to validate a single operation or function.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinated, supervised activity to validate a specific function or capability in a single agency/organization, often employed to validate a single operation or function ▪ Provide training on new equipment, validate procedures, or practice and maintain current skills
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be standalone or used as a series of drills ▪ Clearly defined plans, procedures, and protocols need to be in place
Participant Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate new procedures, policies, and/or equipment ▪ Practice and maintain skills ▪ Prepare for future exercises
Conduct Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Immediate feedback ▪ Realistic environment ▪ Narrow focus ▪ Performance in isolation ▪ Results are measured against established standards

Element	Considerations and Activities
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine if plans can be executed as designed ▪ Assess whether more training is required ▪ Reinforce best practices ▪ An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)

Table 2.8: Operations-Based Exercise Types: Functional Exercise

Functional Exercise (FE):	
An operations-based exercise is designed to test and evaluate capabilities and functions while in a realistic, real-time environment; however, movement of resources is usually simulated.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validate and evaluate capabilities, multiple functions and/or sub-functions, or interdependent groups of activities ▪ Exercise plans, policies, procedures, and staffs involved in management, direction command, and control functions ▪ Apply established plans, policies, and procedures under crisis conditions
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Events are projected through a realistic exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity typically at the management level ▪ Controllers typically use a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) to ensure participant activity remains within predefined boundaries ▪ Evaluators observe behaviors and compare them against established plans, policies, procedures, and standard practices (if applicable)
Participant Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validate and evaluate capabilities ▪ Focused on plans, policies, and procedures
Conduct Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducted in a realistic environment ▪ Usually simulated deployment of resources and personnel ▪ Use of Simulation Cell and Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) ▪ Simulators can inject scenario elements ▪ Include controller and evaluators
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management evaluation of Emergency Operations Center (EOCs), command post, headquarters, and staffs ▪ Performance analysis ▪ Cooperative relationships are strengthened ▪ An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)

Table 2.9: Operations-Based Exercise Types: Full-Scale Exercise

Full-Scale Exercise (FSE):	
An operations-based exercise that is typically the most complex and resource-intensive of the exercise types and often involves multiple agencies, jurisdictions/organizations, and real-time movement of resources.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Often includes many players operating under cooperative systems such as the Incident Command System (ICS) Unified Command ▪ Focus on implementing and analyzing the plans, policies, and procedures that may have been developed in discussion-based exercises and honed during previous, smaller exercises
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity at the operational level ▪ Involves multiple agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions ▪ Use of a MSEL drives player actions ▪ SimCell controllers inject scenario elements ▪ The level of support needed may be greater than that needed for other types of exercises ▪ Conducted in a realistic environment to mirror a real incident by presenting complex problems
Participant Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate roles and responsibilities as addressed in plans and procedures ▪ Coordinate between multiple agencies, organizations and jurisdictions
Conduct Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rapid problem solving; critical thinking ▪ Mobilization of personnel and resources ▪ Exercise site is usually large with many activities occurring simultaneously ▪ Site logistics require close monitoring ▪ Safety issues, particularly regarding the use of props and special effects, must be monitored ▪ Demonstrate roles and responsibilities as addressed in plans and procedures
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validate plans, policies, and procedures ▪ Evaluate resource requirements ▪ An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)

Program Reporting

Program reporting is intended to provide senior leaders with an analysis of issues, trends, and key outcomes from all exercises conducted as part of the exercise program, along with a continuous update on corrective actions. Reporting is a communications tool to inform senior leaders and guides the development of future preparedness activities. Program reporting, similar to the Rolling Summary Report, is not a collection of After-Action Reports, but it does feed into the Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) and is part of a continuous improvement process.

Information in the report should:

- Inform senior leaders on the exercise program;
- Provide data to support preparedness assessments and reporting requirements; and
- Enable exercise planners to modify objectives and the exercise schedule to reflect knowledge gathered from the exercises.

Manage Exercise Program Resources

An effective exercise program utilizes the full range of available resources. Exercise program managers should plan an exercise budget, appropriate program staffing, and other needed resources.

Exercise Budget Management

Effective budget management is essential to the success of an exercise program and for exercise managers to maintain awareness of available resources and expected expenditures. In developing and maintaining an exercise program budget, exercise program managers work with stakeholders to identify financial resources and define monitoring and reporting requirements for individual exercises.

Staffing

Exercise program managers should identify the administrative and operational staff needed to oversee the exercise program and to carry out the necessary exercises to improve capabilities across the whole community. The Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) is one tool for determining staffing needs, in addition to grant funds or other programmatic considerations. Exercise program managers should identify gaps between staffing availability and staffing needs and consider alternative means of obtaining needed staff.

Other Resources

Exercise program managers may consider other resources that can support exercises, such as:

- Information technology (for example, modeling and simulation capabilities, etc.);
- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs);
- Exercise tools and resources (for example, document templates, etc.);
- Materials from previous exercises;
- Training courses;
- Mutual aid agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, and Memoranda of Agreement;
- Technical assistance; and
- Equipment and props (for example, smoke machines, mannequins, moulage kits, etc.).

3. Exercise Design and Development

Overview

In the design and development phase, exercise planners use the intent and guidance of senior leaders and the program priorities to plan individual exercises. Exercise planning teams apply the guidance to shape the major concepts and planning considerations for a single exercise or series of exercises.

The steps of exercise design and development include:

- Setting the exercise foundation by reviewing senior leader guidance, the Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP), and other factors to develop exercise-specific objectives and align capabilities within a scenario;
- Defining exercise planning activities;
- Developing the Exercise Planning Team;
- Designing the exercise to include the purpose, scope, objectives, evaluation parameters, scenario, documentation, and planning for media and public affairs; and
- Developing the exercise to include planning for discussion-based and operations-based logistics, facilitation, control, exercise evaluation, and exercise conduct.

Exercise planners apply and adapt the HSEEP doctrine to exercise design and development to meet specific needs.

Exercise Foundation

The exercise foundation is a set of components that drive the exercise design and development process. The program manager considers the preparedness priorities from the Integrated Preparedness Cycle as outlined in the Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) to design and develop individual, or a series of, exercises. The transition is shown in **Figure 3.1**.

The exercise planning team reviews and considers the following items before the design phase:

- The senior leader intent and guidance;
- The Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP);
- Any relevant After-Action Reports/Improvement Plans (AARs/IPs) from real-world incidents and exercises;
- Program reports from the exercise program managers;
- The Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) or other threat, hazard, and risk assessments;
- The Stakeholder Preparedness Review, or other capability assessments;

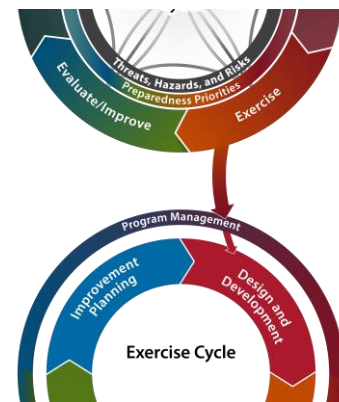


Figure 3.1: Individual Exercise Design and Development Process

- The organization/jurisdiction plans, policies, and procedures; and
- Any grant or cooperative agreement requirements.

Exercise Planning Activities

This section describes the types of planning activities most useful in exercise design and development. The primary planning activities include establishing an exercise timeline and assembling the exercise planning team. The exercise planning team is typically formed following the Concept and Objectives (C&O) Meeting. At that time, the exercise planning team members decide the type and number of additional planning meetings necessary.

Exercise Planning Meetings

Meetings serve as a structured event or forum for completing the major milestones of exercise design and development. The range of planning meetings are described in the following tables (Table 3.1, Table 3.2, Table 3.3, Table 3.4, and Table 3.5), though not all meetings may be used for every exercise. While the planning meetings are critical for accomplishing tasks as a planning team, much of the development work will be accomplished between formal meetings.

Table 3.1: Planning Meeting Types: Concept and Objectives (C&O) Meeting

Concept & Objective (C&O) Meeting:	
A meeting that is the formal beginning of the exercise planning process. It is held to identify the scope and exercise objectives. For less complex exercises and for organizations with limited resources, the C&O Meeting can be conducted in conjunction with the Initial Planning Meeting (IPM).	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Meeting Focus	The formal beginning of the planning process. Program priorities and objectives are determined during the C&O Meeting.
Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exercise scope ▪ Proposed objectives and aligned capabilities linked to threats and risks ▪ Location, date, and duration ▪ Participants and anticipated extent of play ▪ Exercise Planning Team makeup ▪ Assumptions and artificialities ▪ Control and evaluation concepts ▪ Security organizations and structure ▪ Available resources ▪ Logistics ▪ Planning timeline and milestones ▪ Local issues, concerns, and sensitivities ▪ Engagement with senior leaders for guidance and intent
Exercise Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting agenda and briefing, which includes the background and rationale for conducting the exercise

Element	Considerations and Activities
Exercise Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exercise concept ▪ Exercise timeline (group consensus) ▪ Extent of participant play ▪ Identification of planning team members ▪ Planning timeline, milestones, and meeting dates
Follow-up	Compile and distribute the C&O Meeting minutes and include the next meeting time, date, and location.

Table 3.2: Planning Meeting Types: Initial Planning Meeting (IPM)

Initial Planning Meeting (IPM):	
A meeting that is held to refine the scope and exercise objectives. For less complex exercises and for organizations with limited resources, the C&O Meeting can be conducted in conjunction with the IPM.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Meeting Focus	Formal beginning of the development phase. The IPM also focuses on refining the scope and the objectives for the exercise.
Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clearly defined objectives and aligned capabilities linked to threats and risks ▪ Evaluation requirements, including Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG) capability targets and critical tasks ▪ Relevant plans, policies, and procedures to be evaluated ▪ Exercise scenario ▪ Modeling and simulation ▪ Participants extent of play ▪ Optimum duration of the exercise ▪ Exercise planners' roles and responsibilities ▪ Decision to record exercise proceedings (audio or video) ▪ Local issues, concerns, or sensitivities ▪ Discussion points typically covered during a C&O Meeting, if one is not held ▪ Consensus regarding the date, time, and location for next meeting ▪ Re-engagement with senior leaders to ensure alignment with guidance and intent
Exercise Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read-ahead document ▪ Agenda material ▪ Briefing for presenting an overview of the exercise and meeting discussion points ▪ Threat and hazard identification assessments ▪ Proposed room layout (discussion-based) ▪ Map of proposed venue sites (operations-based) with description of local environment ▪ Copy of proposed timeline and milestones for design and development ▪ Copies of presentation briefing for meeting

Element	Considerations and Activities
Exercise Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any outcomes from C&O Meeting; if a C&O Meeting was not conducted ▪ Clearly defined objectives and aligned capabilities ▪ Initial capability targets and critical tasks (reviewed and confirmed prior to the next meeting) ▪ Scenario variables (threat, scope, venue, conditions) ▪ List of participating organizations and extent of play ▪ Develop exercise draft documentation (Situation Manual [SitMan], Exercise Plan [ExPlan], etc.) ▪ Identification and availability of all source documents (plans, policies, procedures) needed for exercise documentation ▪ Refined exercise planning timeline ▪ Identification of available subject-matter experts (SMEs) (scenario vetting) ▪ Preferred communication methods among planning team ▪ Clearly identified and assigned responsibility for logistical issues ▪ List of tasks to be accomplished by next planning meeting, to include date and responsible planning team member ▪ Agreed-upon date, time, and location of next planning meeting
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compile and distribute the IPM, meeting minutes, including the next meeting time, date, and location ▪ Between meetings the planning team collaborates on assignments and prepares draft exercise documentation ▪ Distribute draft documentation prior to the next scheduled meeting

Table 3.3: Planning Meeting Types: Midterm Planning Meeting (MPM)

Midterm Planning Meeting (MPM): A meeting that serves as a forum to develop exercise scenario details and timeline.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Meeting Focus	The MPM is a continuation of the development phase. This meeting is primarily focused on scenario development and serves as a check-in for exercise product development.
Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comments on draft exercise documentation ▪ Construction of the scenario timeline ▪ Development of the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL), if a MSEL meeting is not scheduled ▪ Identification of exercise venue artificialities and/or limitations ▪ Agreement on final logistical items ▪ Assignment of additional responsibilities ▪ Re-engage with senior leaders to ensure alignment with guidance and intent

Element	Considerations and Activities
Exercise Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda material ▪ Briefing for presenting an overview of the exercise and meeting discussion points ▪ IPM minutes ▪ Draft scenario timeline ▪ Draft documentation (Facilitator Guide, Controller/Evaluator [C/E] Handbook, etc.) ▪ Other selected documentation needed to illustrate exercise concepts and provide planning guidance
Exercise Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviewed exercise documentation (SitMan, ExPlan, etc.) ▪ Draft Facilitator Guide or C/E Handbook, including EEGs ▪ Well-developed scenario to include injects (if no MSEL Meeting is scheduled) ▪ Agreement on the exercise site ▪ Identified logistics planning requirements ▪ Finalization of date, time, and location on the MSEL Meeting and Final Planning Meeting (FPM)
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compile and distribute the MPM meeting minutes, including the next meeting date, time, and location ▪ Between meetings the planning team collaborates on assignments and prepares draft exercise documentation ▪ Distribute draft documentation prior to the next scheduled meeting

Table 3.4: Planning Meeting Types: Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Meeting

Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Meeting: A meeting for operations-based exercises that serves as a forum to build the MSEL in detail.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Meeting Focus	The MSEL meeting focuses on reviewing the timeline and developing the MSEL. Exercise planners from participating departments, agencies, jurisdictions, and organizations are included to identify activities that must occur during the exercise.
Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tasks, conditions, and standards required to meet objectives ▪ Key events and critical tasks ▪ Event originator, target player, expected player actions, and timeframe ▪ Contingency injects to prompt player action (if needed)
Exercise Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda material ▪ Previous meeting minutes ▪ Draft exercise documentation ▪ Applicable plans, policies, and procedures ▪ Agreed-upon template used to create the MSEL

Element	Considerations and Activities
Exercise Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key event injects and delivery timeline identified ▪ Assignment of responsibility for conducting remaining events ▪ Revisions of draft scenario-based documentation ▪ Timeline for completion
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compile and distribute the MSEL meeting minutes, including the next meeting date, time, and location ▪ Between meetings the planning team collaborates on assignments and prepares draft exercise documentation ▪ Distribute draft documentation prior to next scheduled meeting

Table 3.5: Planning Meeting Types: Final Planning Meeting (FPM)

Final Planning Meeting (FPM):	
A meeting that serves as the formal end of the exercise planning process. It is held to finalize exercise documentation and logistics.	
Element	Considerations and Activities
Meeting Focus	Should be conducted for all exercises to ensure that all elements of the exercise are ready for conduct. Prior to the FPM, the planning team receives final drafts of all exercise materials. No major changes to the exercise’s design, scope, or supporting documentation should take place at or following the FPM.
Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct a comprehensive final review ▪ Approve all remaining draft documents (for example, SitMan, MSEL, C/E Handbook) and presentation materials ▪ Resolve any open planning issues and identify last-minute concerns ▪ Review all exercise logistical activities (for example, schedule, registration, attire, special needs) ▪ Re-engage with senior leaders to ensure alignment with guidance and intent
Exercise Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda materials ▪ Briefing for presenting an overview of the exercise and meeting discussion points ▪ Previous meeting minutes from the IPM, the MPM, and the MSEL, if needed ▪ All draft exercise documents and documentation ▪ Previously finalized documents
Exercise Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final approval of exercise documents and material for production ▪ Identified issues resolved ▪ Attendees understand and approve exercise processes and procedures ▪ Task assignments and logistical elements, including facilities, equipment, and schedules are confirmed

Element	Considerations and Activities
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalize all publications ▪ Prepare all supporting materials ▪ Rehearse presentations and briefings ▪ Prepare to conduct the exercise ▪ Disseminate documentation and any additional instructions to all appropriate personnel prior to the exercise

Exercise Planning Team Considerations

The exercise planning team manages and is responsible for exercise design, development, conduct, and evaluation. The membership of an exercise planning team fits the type and scope of an exercise and is a manageable size yet represents the full range of participating jurisdictions/organizations and stakeholders. For multi-jurisdictional/organizational exercises, planning team members include representatives from each functional area or relevant discipline.

Typically, planning team members are not exercise players; they are trusted agents. With limited resources, exercise planning team members may act as both planners and players but must be careful not to divulge sensitive exercise information. Planning team members also help with producing and distributing pre-exercise materials and conducting exercise planning meetings, briefing, and training sessions.

To design and develop exercises most effectively, exercise planning teams:

- Identify and understand the desired objectives and associated capabilities for the exercise;
- Adhere to a clear organizational structure with roles and responsibilities;
- Use proven project management practices, processes, and tools, such as project plans and timelines, status reports, and other communications;
- Incorporate evaluation planning and SMEs during design and development;
- Use SMEs to develop a realistic and challenging scenario; and
- Identify the type of security clearance levels needed (if required).

Community representative and individual with disabilities and access and functional needs should be invited to participate throughout the planning process. In doing so, exercise planners incorporate a broad set of perspectives and promote early understanding of roles, responsibilities, and planning assumptions.

Exercise Planning Team Positions

Regardless of the scale and complexity of an exercise, the exercise planning team should adhere to a coherent organizational structure that delineates roles and responsibilities. An Exercise Director provides strategic oversight and direction to the exercise planning team leader, who manages the exercise planning team. In developing a structure, the Exercise Director considers adequate span of control and requirements needed for the exercise type. The same personnel may fulfill multiple roles, depending on available resources. The functional organizational structure

shown in **Figure 3.2** can vary to reflect the scope of the exercise and the resources and personnel available to support the design and development, conduct, and evaluation of the exercise.

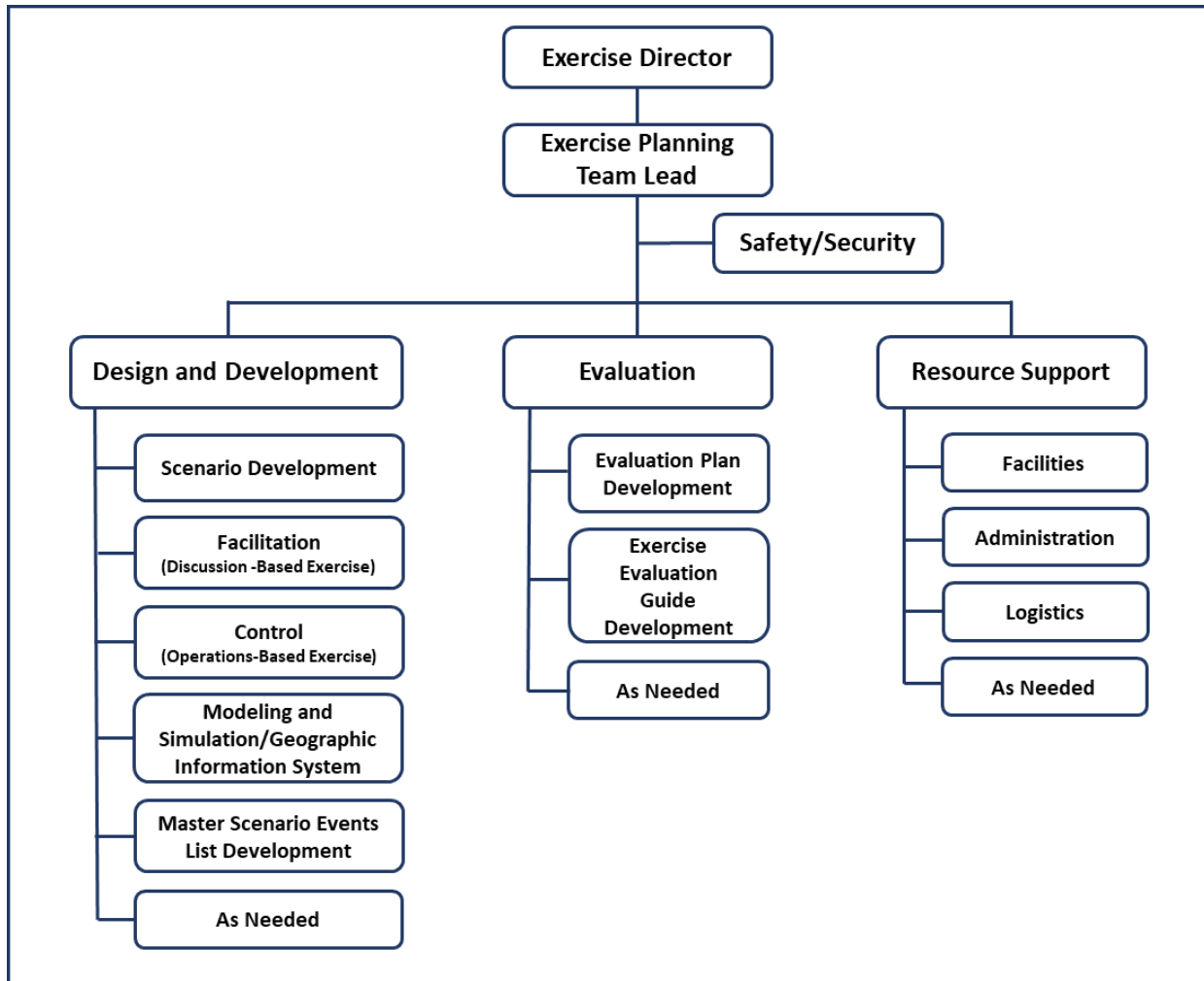


Figure 3.2: Example of a Functional Organizational Structure for an Exercise Planning Team

Table 3.6 describes the functions of an exercise planning team.

Table 3.6: Functions of an Exercise Planning Team

Functions	Description
Exercise Director	Responsible for the strategic oversight and direction on the HSEEP Cycle for an individual exercise.
Exercise Planning Team Lead	Responsible for the management of the exercise planning team and coordinates with the Exercise Director and senior leaders.
Safety/Security	Responsible to ensure that the exercise is conducted in a safe and secure environment.

Functions	Description
Design and Development	Responsible for compiling and developing all exercise background and facilitation or control, providing technical or functional expertise for scenario development, developing the simulation construct as applicable, and working with the evaluation and resource/support functions to ensure all exercise design and development needs are met.
Scenario	Responsible for developing a model or outline, either written or depicted by an event timeline, of the simulated sequence of events that drive the player's discussion or actions.
Control (Operations-Based Exercise)	Responsible for the control structure needed for an operations-based exercise. This includes the master control cell, individual venue control, and simulation and modeling requirements. Will work with the evaluation component in completing the C/E Handbook.
Facilitation (Discussion-Based Exercise)	Responsible for the facilitator guide for discussion-based exercises, once the conduct and evaluation materials have been completed; managing the recruitment and training of facilitators as necessary; and working with evaluation planners to confirm the facilitator is properly directed regarding objectives and areas of focus.
Modeling and Simulation/GIS	Responsible for coordinating the use of modeling, simulation, and GIS for both discussion- and operations-based exercises. Ensures modeling is coordinated with the scenario and ground truth elements and that simulation is coordinated with the control element during exercise design and development.
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL, Operations-Based Exercise)	Responsible for working with all other elements of exercise design and development, as well as nonparticipating jurisdictions and subject-matter experts (SMEs), to design and develop the MSEL timeline and events to properly drive exercise play.
Evaluation	Responsible for the development of the overall exercise evaluation construct and all evaluation documentation; assigns evaluation staffing in conjunction with the exercise planning team. Collects and reviews the policies, plans, and procedures to be examined during exercise conduct to finalize exercise objectives, match capability targets to exercise objectives, and determine critical tasks to be evaluated in order to complete exercise evaluation guides.
Evaluation Plan	Responsible for the development of the evaluation plan that provides guidance, instructions, and structure on evaluating and observing during an exercise.
Exercise Evaluation Guide	Responsible for the development of the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) used for the exercise.
Resource Support	Responsible for logistics, administration, facility, and finance support for planning meetings, exercise documentation, and other planning considerations.
Facilities	Responsible for coordinating the needed venue locations for exercises, including meeting rooms, conference centers, training locations, and locations for operations-based exercises.

Functions	Description
Administration	Responsible for meeting scheduling and administrative support, such as distributing meeting invitations, read-ahead materials, and meeting minutes; providing and collecting sign-in sheets; and note taking during planning meetings.
Logistics	Responsible to ensure venues are adequately equipped with audiovisual equipment, tables, and chairs and coordinates refreshments if required.

Exercise Design

The core components of design include clarifying the purpose, establishing the exercise scope, setting objectives, developing evaluation parameters, creating a scenario, developing documentation, and determining media and public affairs guidance. The exercise planning meetings serve as the principal mechanism for completing the major steps of exercise design.

Exercise Purpose

The purpose of the exercise derives from a set of key factors determined from:

- A multi-year Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP);
- Any existing plans, policies, and procedures;
- THIRA or other threat, hazard, or risk assessments;
- Any past exercise or real-world AAR/IPs; and
- Any grant or cooperative agreement requirements.

A review of the factors ensures the exercise builds and sustains a jurisdiction's/organization's capabilities while taking prior circumstances into consideration during the exercise design process. Once the review is complete, each exercise is designed to meet the intent of the exercises within the Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP).

Exercise Scope

Determining the exercise scope enables planners to “right-size” an exercise to meet the objectives while staying within the resource and personnel constraints of the participating jurisdictions/organizations.

Table 3.7: Elements that Define Scope

Element	Description
Exercise Type	Exercise type is based on the exercise purpose. For instance, if the intent is to review and discuss a new policy, plan, or set of procedures, a discussion-based exercise may be appropriate. If the intent is to assess the responders' ability to implement a plan, policy, or set of procedures, an operations-based exercise may be appropriate.

Element	Description
Participation Level	Participation level of jurisdictions/organizations provides information such as dates and times of participation, number of personnel involved, positions of personnel (operational, agency directors), available resources, and the intended outcomes. Participation level limitations may include scheduling conflicts, real-world incidents, or other competing requirements. Consider simulation to alleviate the participation level limitations. To ensure a successful exercise, the use of an Extent of Play Agreement outlines the agreement to participate.
Exercise Location	Exercise location is based on the exercise type. Discuss and decide suitable locations for the exercise to determine the scope or define artificialities required to simulate real-world incidents.
Exercise Duration	Exercise duration is based on resources and exercise objectives. When selecting the exercise duration, the planning team should determine how long the exercise will take to address the exercise objectives effectively.
Other Considerations	Other considerations may determine exercise activities that are useful to a jurisdiction/organization. Clearly defining the exercise scope early in the design process helps exercise planners keep the exercise to a manageable and realistic level.

Exercise Objectives

Based on direction from senior leaders, the exercise planning team selects one or more exercise program priorities on which to focus an individual exercise. These priorities drive the development of exercise objectives that a jurisdiction/organization wishes to achieve during an exercise. The objectives are aligned to a common set of capabilities which enables:

- A systematic tracking of progress throughout exercise programs and cycles;
- A standardized exercise data collection informing preparedness assessments; and
- The fulfillment of grant or funding-specific reporting requirements.

Figure 3.3 shows how the exercise program priorities are developed and the relationship between the exercise program priorities, exercise objectives, and capabilities.



Figure 3.3: Priorities, Objectives, and Capabilities

Exercise objectives should incorporate senior leaders’ intent; exercise participants’ plans, policies, and procedures; operating environment; corrective actions from previous exercises and real-world incidents; and desired outcomes. The exercise planning team should select a reasonable number of objectives to facilitate effective scenario design, exercise conduct, and evaluation. An objective should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), as shown in **Figure 3.4**.






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

Figure 3.4: SMART Guidelines for Exercise Objectives

Example of a SMART Objective
Demonstrate the ability of Central City staff to receive, develop, and disseminate a public alert utilizing Central City's notification system regarding a HAZMAT spill within 15 minutes of initial notification, in accordance with the Communications Annex in the Emergency Operations Plan.

Evaluation Parameters

The development of exercise evaluation parameters begins early in the exercise process and helps to guide the development of the exercise scenario, discussion questions or event timeline, and evaluation documentation. Once the exercise objectives are aligned to capabilities, the exercise planning team identifies the linked capability targets and critical tasks. **Chapter 5: Exercise Evaluation** provides additional details regarding capability targets and critical tasks.

Scenario

A scenario is a model or outline of the simulated sequence of events that drives participant discussions or actions. The scenario can be a written narrative or depicted by an event timeline. The scenario should be plausible, realistic, and challenging so participants can meet the objectives. After developing the scope and objectives, the exercise planning team should select and develop the scenario to enable an exercise to assess objectives and capabilities.

The elements of a scenario are:

- The conditions allowing players to demonstrate their ability to meet exercise objectives;
- The technical details necessary to accurately depict scenario conditions and events (for example, the date and time of event and damage resulting from the event); and
- A general context or comprehensive narrative.

Threat, Hazard, and Risk

The type of threat, hazard, or risk defines a scenario allowing for assessment of the objectives and capabilities of the exercise. Threat, hazard, and risk identification originates from the organization's/jurisdiction's THIRA or other threats, hazards, or risk assessments. Risk analyses enable jurisdictions/organizations to identify potential events that stress preparedness capabilities.

Modeling and Simulation

Modeling and simulation bring versatility, cost savings, and fidelity to exercises when incorporated into the development of the scenario and overall exercise design. A model is a representation of a system at a point in time or space intended to expand an understanding of the real system. Simulation is a method of implementing the performance of a model, or combination of models, over time. Modeling and simulation may apply to situations where achieving reality is difficult. The use of modeling and simulation realistically replicates variables such as disease propagation, radiation, and chemical attacks.

Exercise Documentation

Exercise documentation provides the framework for exercise conduct and evaluation. The documentation helps the planning team apply the HSEEP Cycle. **Table 3.8** and **Table 3.9** list the most commonly used exercise design and development documents, identified by the exercise type and relevant audience.

Table 3.8: Discussion-Based Exercise Documentation

Document	Description	Distribution
Situation Manual (SitMan)	A document that provides background information and serves as the primary reference material for exercise participants (core document for discussion-based exercises).	All Participants
Player Handout	A document that supplements or replaces the Situation Manual and presentation, providing players a quick-reference guide, sometimes referred to as a "placemat."	Players
Facilitator Guide	A document that outlines instructions and key issues discussed and utilized by the exercise facilitator to move participants through exercise play.	Exercise Facilitator(s)
Presentation	A multimedia display that provides background information for participants during exercise conduct.	All Participants
Exercise Evaluation Guide(s) (EEG)	A document that captures information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the exercise planning team. The EEG provides evaluators with a standardized tool to guide data collection and capture performance results. Since each jurisdiction/organization has unique targets and critical tasks, EEGs are developed specific to their plans, policies, procedures, and protocols.	Evaluators
Participant Feedback Form	A document that provides a mechanism to collect input from all participants following an exercise and supports the development of an After-Action Report (AAR) and Improvement Plan (IP).	All Participants

Table 3.9: Operations-Based Exercise Documentation

Document	Description	Distribution
Exercise Plan (ExPlan)	A document that provides general information to exercise participants, including exercise objectives and scope, not including the scenario information.	Players and Observers
Player Handout	A document that supplements the Exercise Plan and provides players with a quick-reference guide; sometimes referred to as “a pocket-size trifold or bifold.”	Players
Ground Truth	A document comprised of the detailed elements of a scenario that must remain consistent during exercise development and conduct to ensure that realism is maintained, and objectives can be achieved.	All Participants
Controller/ Evaluator (C/E) Handbook	A document that provides specific exercise information and guidance for controllers and evaluators, may be a standalone document or supplement to the Exercise Plan, and adjusted accordingly.	Controllers and Evaluators
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)	A document or system that is a chronological timeline of expected actions and scripted events to be injected into exercise play by controllers to generate or prompt player activity. It ensures necessary events happen so that all objectives are met. Larger, more complex exercises may also use a procedural flow, which differs from the MSEL in that it contains only expected player actions or events. The MSEL links simulation to action, enhances the exercise experience for players, and reflects an incident or activity meant to prompt players to action.	Controllers, Evaluators, and Simulator
Extent of Play Agreement	A document that is a formal written agreement outlining the participating jurisdiction’s/organization’s level of play during an exercise.	Exercise Planning Team
Exercise Evaluation Guide(s) (EEG)	A document that captures information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the exercise planning team. The EEG provides evaluators with a standardized tool to guide data collection and capture performance results. Since each jurisdiction/organization has unique targets and critical tasks, EEGs are developed specific to their plans, policies, procedures, and protocols.	Evaluators
Control Staff Instructions (COSIN)	A document for the Controller portion of the C/E Handbook for large exercises that provides detailed guidelines for control and simulation support and establishes a management structure for these activities. This section provides guidance for controllers, simulators, and evaluators on procedures and responsibilities for exercise control, simulation, and support.	Controllers, Simulators, and Exercise Support
Evaluation Plan (EvalPlan)	A document for evaluators that provides guidance, instructions, and structure on evaluating and observing during an exercise. It also provides essential materials required to perform their specific functions.	Evaluators

Document	Description	Distribution
Participant Feedback Form	A document that the exercise team uses to collect observed strengths, areas for improvement, and input about exercise conduct and logistics from participants.	All Participants

Areas to consider when developing the exercise documentation are:

- **Exercise Marking:** Documents and messages should be clearly identified as exercise-related products.
- **Classification:** Determine the importance of specific requirements for security. Documents that are sensitive or classified need to be marked according to regulations or guidance (for example, classified, For Official Use Only [FOUO], secret, etc.).
- **Accessibility:** Verify consideration and accessibility of presentations and documents (for example, large print, compact disc, Braille), closed captioning or another form of text display, or the provision of sign language interpreters.
- **Distribution:** Understanding the types of information and the dissemination of information needs to be considered (for example, the printing and circulating classified scenario details).

Table 3.10 describes other documentation used during an exercise where applicable.

Table 3.10: Other Exercise Documentation

Document	Description	Distribution
Table Tents	An item on each table identifying the functional area seated at that table.	All Tables
Name Badge	An item that each participant wears to clearly identify their name and agency/organization.	All Participants
Liability Waiver Form	A document that each actor should receive and sign prior to the start of the exercise. Signing a waiver form releases liability for all exercise planners and participants. Exercising entities should use discretion when recruiting actors under the age of 18 years because of additional challenges and concerns related to liability. If the exercise requires volunteers younger than 18 years, parents or legal guardians must sign their waiver forms.	Actors
Photo Consent Form	A document for photographs prior to the exercise. Signing the form releases permission for all exercise participants photographed, allowing their photo to be used for informational and educational purposes.	All Participants
Weapons and Safety Policy	A document for all exercises, where applicable, shall employ a written weapons and safety policy in accordance with applicable state or local laws and regulations. Exercise sponsors should coordinate the application of a weapons and safety policy with the appropriate safety and legal departments as necessary. All players are expected to fully adhere to this policy; however, site security personnel may continue to carry assigned weapons.	All Participants

Document	Description	Distribution
Symptomology Card	An item containing the signs and symptoms that an exercise actor will portray, as well as information helpful for players.	Actors and Players
Press Release	A document that the exercise planning team develops for the media and the public to inform them about the exercise.	Media and Public

Planning for Media and Public Affairs

Media and public affairs can be important participants for an exercise. The exercise planning team should work to incorporate media-related issues into exercise planning.

Press Release

Before an exercise, the exercise planning team may develop a written press release to disseminate to media outlets, including web-based and social media outlets, observers, senior leaders, and other very important persons (VIPs), as appropriate. The press release informs the media and the public about general exercise information. The press release does not contain detailed scenario information, such as the type of threat or hazard, nor contain information that might hinder meeting exercise objectives if a participant reads the release.

The contents of a media or public information release include the following:

- An introduction, including sponsor and exercise program information;
- The exercise scope and objectives;
- Any general scenario information; and
- The participating agencies or disciplines.

Public Announcement

Public announcements should occur before any exercise involving public space or space viewable to the public and help avoid public confusion. The announcement will also help the public avoid congestion near the exercise site by providing suggestions for alternate routes. Examples of announcements are local media, community alert and notification systems, and directly on signs near the exercise site.

Media Policy

The agency or jurisdiction/organization sponsoring the exercise should decide whether to invite media representatives to the exercise. If invited, media representatives conduct interviews with exercise planners and participants prior to the exercise.

At discussion-based exercises, media representatives should not be present during the discussion of any potentially sensitive information. Also, avoid the filming of exercise conduct, which may hinder discussion or the flow of play.

Exercise Development

Exercise development involves planning for the critical elements of exercise logistics, facilitation, control, and evaluation. Exercise logistics are important to create a smooth and seamless exercise.

Discussion-Based Exercise Logistics Planning

Logistics for discussion-based exercises include facility and room, audio/visual requirements, supplies, food, and refreshments, registration and badging, table and breakout identification, parking, and media, public affairs, and VIPs.

Facility and Room

Meetings, briefings, and exercises should be conducted in facilities appropriate for the exercise scope and attendance. Reserve facilities solely for exercise purposes, free from distractions, and accessible to all participants.

Exercise planners should account for the following considerations:

- Ensure enough tables and chairs for every participant;
- Arrange tables to best suit the meeting or exercise (for example, U-shaped layout for exercises requiring facilitation and participant interaction);
- A facility with room acoustics that encourage discussion;
- A facility with the accessibility of parking and restrooms for all participants, to include any special needs requirements;
- A venue consistent with the number of attendees expected; the fire marshal office or similar entity determines the maximum occupancy capacity, and this should not be exceeded; and
- Appropriate power, internet bandwidth, and cell phone reception and service to support exercise play.

Audio/Visual Requirements

Identify audio/visual requirements early, including individuals assigned to ensure equipment is properly functioning. Audio/visual equipment may include a projector, screens, microphones, and speakers.

Supplies, Food, and Refreshments

Obtain supplies such as writing utensils, notepads, easels, copies of plans and procedures, name badges, and any other necessary equipment before the exercise and provide to the participants. The exercise planning team should consider, in accordance with applicable funding guidance or venue policies, whether to provide food and refreshments for participants.

Registration and Badging

Participants should register upon arrival at the exercise venue. Participants should, at a minimum, provide their name, jurisdiction/organization, telephone number, and e-mail address. The exercise planning team retains copies of the sign-in sheets for follow-up correspondence. If appropriate for security purposes, participants should wear a form of identification such as uniforms or badges with name and jurisdiction/organization.

Table and Breakout Identification

Table tents are used to identify participants by either organizational or functional areas. Before exercise conduct, place table tents on each table to ensure that participants are sitting in the correct locations. If additional breakout rooms are needed, place signage and table tents in those areas to ensure that participants are identified.

Parking

Clearly label established parking areas for participants arriving in personally owned vehicles. If needed, law enforcement personnel may direct vehicles to proper parking areas.

Media, Public Affairs, and VIPs

Media, public affairs, and VIP personnel should always have an escort. Identify a designated location for the media prior to the start of the exercise.

Discussion-Based Exercise Facilitation Planning

Exercise facilitation is a method that uses a facilitator/presenter with an awareness of appropriate plans, policies, and procedures. This facilitation typically occurs in a plenary session or in breakout groups.

Staffing

The planning team identifies the number of facilitators/presenters needed for exercise conduct. Facilitators/Presenters deliver scenario information and maintain a focused discussion. If participants divide into groups for part of conduct, assign a table facilitator/presenter to each group.

Facilitation Structure

The facilitation structure is the framework that allows facilitators/presenters to coordinate amongst one another. This structure becomes part of a larger organizational structure during conduct. The Lead Facilitator/Presenter ensures that the discussions stay on track and objectives are being met. If breakouts are needed to further enhance the exercise, additional facilitators/presenters may be needed for each breakout session.

Configuration for the breakouts can be either by functional areas or organizational areas. Functional areas are personnel that have the same subject matter expertise in a specific field (fire and rescue, law enforcement, etc.). Organizational areas are personnel that have a particular purpose (public safety, emergency management, etc.). **Figure 3.5** shows an example of an exercise facilitation structure.

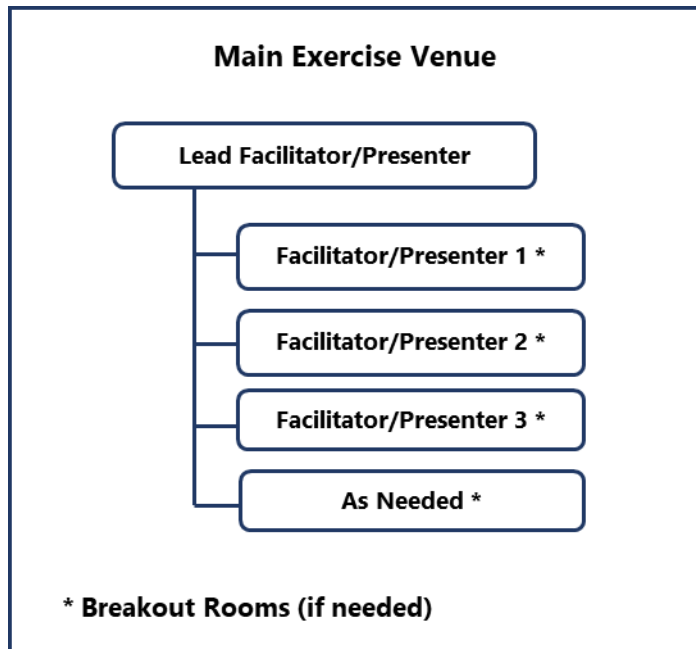


Figure 3.5: Example of a Discussion-Based Exercise Facilitation Structure

Table 3.11 describes the positions used in the exercise facilitation organization.

Table 3.11: Positions of an Exercise Facilitation Structure

Position	Description
Lead Facilitator/Presenter	An individual responsible for keeping a discussion focused on exercise objectives and exploring all issues within the time allotted during discussion-based exercises, or an individual designated to deliver information in a structured setting.
Facilitator/Presenter	Additional individual responsible for keeping a discussion focused on objectives for each of the breakout groups as needed.

Prior to the exercise, the facilitator/presenter conducts a walkthrough of the exercise design, event timeline, delivery methods, and facilitation techniques with all exercise facilitators/presenters, evaluators/note-takers, and the Exercise Director.

Operations-Based Exercise Logistics Planning

Logistics for operations-based exercises include facilities and exercise areas; audio/visual requirements; supplies, food, and refreshments; registration and badging; parking and transportation; actors; and media.

Facilities and Exercise Areas

Operations-based exercises often have several areas for exercise conduct. Ensure any special needs requirements are considered. Table 3.12 shows the facilities and exercise areas, descriptions, and types.

Table 3.12: Facilities and Exercise Areas, Descriptions, and Types

Area	Description	Type
Exercise Play Area	A location where player activities and tasks are demonstrated during an exercise.	Player Venue
Response Route	A location for responding emergency units from the assembly area to the staging area or other exercise sites during a response-focused exercise.	Player Venue
Exercise Assembly Area	A location for participants and resources to gather and dispatch, managed by controller(s).	Controller Venue
Master Control Cell	A location where overall coordination is managed between venue control cells, simulation cells, and other control areas.	Controller Venue
Venue Control Cell	A location where controllers manage individual injects designed for their relevant players.	Controller Venue
Simulation Cell	A location from which controllers deliver messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise.	Controller Venue
Emergency Medical Services Area	A location for real-world response support, such as treatment sector areas, ambulance staging, and transportation coordination points.	Controller Venue
Observer and Media Area	A location where observers and real-world media representatives can view the exercise but not interfere with exercise play.	Controller Venue

Audio/Visual Requirements

Identify audio/visual requirements early, including individuals assigned to ensure equipment is properly functioning.

Supplies, Food, and Refreshments

Exercise planners should not assume participants will bring necessary supplies with them. Obtain any supplies (for example, vests, clipboards, signage, writing utensils, notepads, easels, copies of plans and procedures, name badges, and any other necessary equipment) before the exercise conduct and ensure they are provided to participants. The exercise planning team should consider, in accordance with applicable funding guidance or venue policies, whether to provide food and refreshments for participants. Hydration and relief stations are an important logistical aspect of an operations-based exercise.

Registration and Badging

Participants should register upon arrival and for security purposes should wear a form of identification such as uniforms or badges with name and jurisdiction/organization. Participants should, at a minimum, provide their name, jurisdiction/organization, telephone number, and e-mail address. The exercise planning team retains copies of the sign-in sheets for follow-up correspondence.

Parking and Transportation

Clearly label established parking areas for participants arriving in personally owned vehicles at all venues. If needed, law enforcement personnel may direct vehicles to proper parking areas and transportation to pre-position controllers, players, and actors in advance of the exercise.

Actors

Actors add realism and prompt players to react to a scenario event. Exercise planning team members can recruit from various organizations.⁸

Prior to the exercise, actors should receive the following:

- A liability waiver form for signature;
- Actor instructions, including information on when to arrive, where to report, and other logistical details; and
- Symptomology cards, when applicable.

Media, Public Affairs, and VIPs

Media, public affairs, and VIP personnel should always have an escort. Identify a designated location for the media prior to the start of the exercise.

Operations-Based Exercise Control Planning

Exercise control maintains exercise scope, pace, and integrity during conduct under safe and secure conditions. Elements of exercise control include staffing, control structure, control cell, simulation cell, MSEL, controller training, communications, and safety and security.

Staffing

The exercise planning team identifies the number of controllers needed during the exercise to deliver and track information. As a guiding principle, place at least one controller at every venue whenever possible to help ensure a safe exercise with proper security controls. Resource constraints may make placing a controller at every site challenging; therefore, multitasking personnel as both a controller and an evaluator is an option.

Control Structure

The control structure is the framework that allows controllers and simulators to communicate and coordinate at multiple locations. The control structure ensures exercise play progresses to meet exercise objectives and deliver and track exercise information. This structure becomes part of a larger organizational structure during conduct. **Figure 3.6** shows an example of a control structure with multiple control cells.

⁸ Examples of organizations are local colleges and universities, medical and nursing schools, drama clubs, theaters, civic groups, emergency response academies, Community Emergency Response Teams, and federal and state military units. Including volunteer actors from within the access and functional needs population provides an opportunity to exercise in a variety of operational environments.

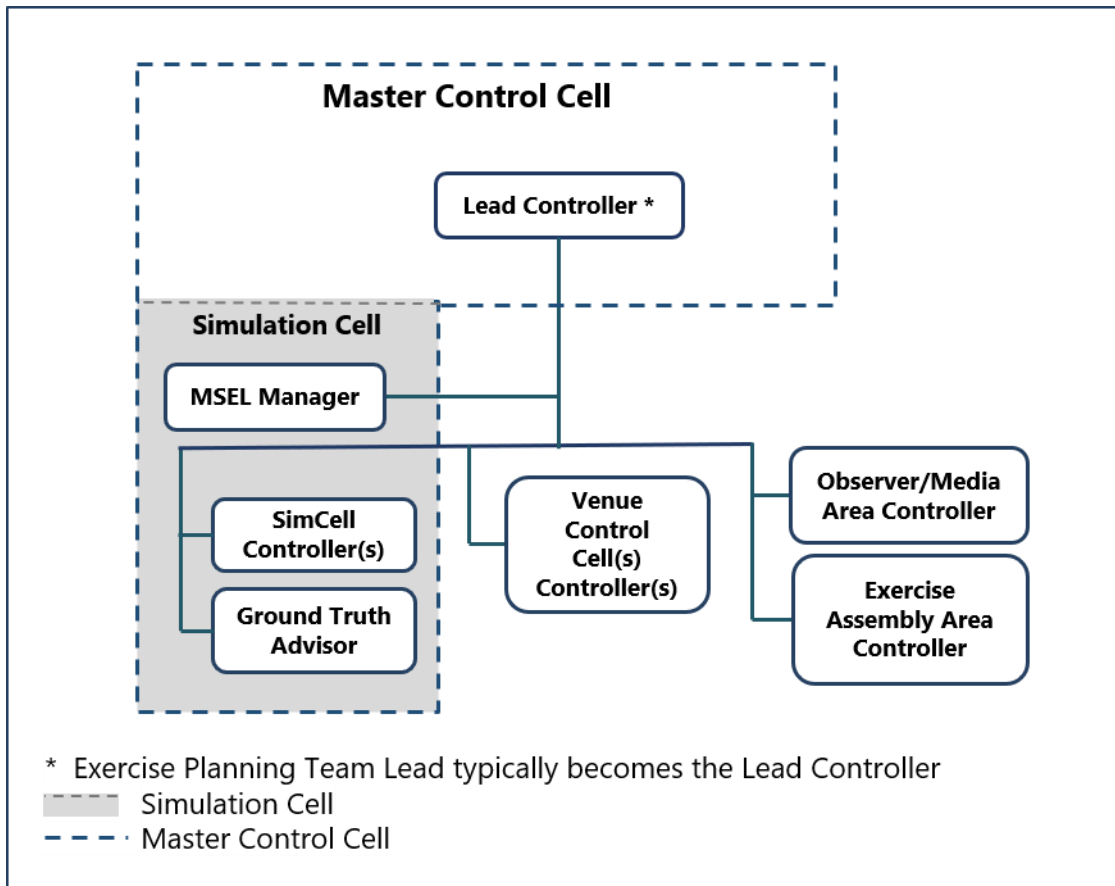


Figure 3.6: Example of an Operations-Based Exercise Control Structure

Table 3.13 describes the positions used in an operations-based exercise control structure.

Table 3.13: Positions of an Operations-Based Exercise Control Structure

Position	Description
Lead Controller	An individual that monitors exercise progression, communicates exercise activities throughout all venues, and manages the control staff.
MSEL Manager	An individual that manages the timely and accurate delivery of injects and player expected actions and decides on the need to release contingency injects.
Simulation Cell Controller	An individual that delivers scenario messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise.
Ground Truth Advisor	An individual responsible for ensuring that the scenario details remain consistent during exercise conduct.
Venue Controller	An individual that is responsible for setting up and operating a specific exercise location. Venue Controllers manage exercise play and may prompt or initiate certain players to ensure continuity and flow.
Observer/Media Area Controller	An individual responsible to ensure that observers and the media stay in their designated areas and do not interfere with the exercise.

Position	Description
Exercise Assembly Area Controller	An individual responsible for the logistical organization of the exercise assembly area, including placement locations for units entering the exercise assembly area, release of dispatched units into the field, and coordination of routes and overall safety within the assembly area.

Master Control Cell (MCC)

An MCC is a location where overall coordination is managed between venue control cells (VCCs), simulations cells, and other control areas. An MCC compiles all the information into a common operating picture for the exercise and ideally will contain a Point of Contact (POC) or a liaison representing each participating jurisdiction/organization. If an exercise contains multiple geographic locations, consider establishing several VCCs to communicate and coordinate through. When an exercise requires the establishment of multiple VCCs, defining the roles and relationships and the decision-making hierarchy is important. In smaller exercises, there may be only the MCC for which all information is shared. In exercises involving both classified and unclassified information, separate control cells with appropriate security firewalls should be set up to keep classified and unclassified information separate.

Simulation Cell (SimCell)

The SimCell is a location from which simulation controllers deliver scenario messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or jurisdiction/organization that is not participating in the exercise. Depending on the type of exercise, the SimCell may require a telephone, computer, e-mail account, radio, or other means of communication. Moreover, if an exercise uses a SimCell to drive exercise play, a determination is made on how to staff and integrate the SimCell the broader control structure.

Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)

A MSEL is a document or system that is a chronological timeline of expected actions and scripted events to be injected into exercise play by controllers to generate or prompt player activity. It ensures necessary events happen so that all objectives are met. Larger, more complex exercises may also use a procedural flow, which differs from the MSEL in that it contains only expected player actions or events. The MSEL links simulation to action, enhances the exercise experience for players, and reflects an incident or activity meant to prompt players to action.

Additional descriptive event types can be added to the MSEL to support exercise play when needed. These events are the foundation of the exercise and are the individual building blocks of the MSEL. There are three types of events that make up the MSEL and support exercise play.

Table 3.14 shows the event types that can be used in a MSEL.

Table 3.14: MSEL Event Types

Event Types	Description
Inject	A MSEL event introduced to a player by the control staff, representing non-playing entities, to build the exercise environment based on the exercise scenario and to drive operations-based exercise play.

Event Types	Description
Contingency Inject	A MSEL event introduced to a player by the control staff when a key player expected action did not occur as planned, to provide an additional opportunity to meet exercise objectives.
Expected Action	A MSEL event that represents an anticipated action to be taken by a player during the exercise.

Each MSEL entry should include the following:

- Event number;
- Designated scenario time;
- Event type;
- Inject mode;
- From (Non-playing entity delivered by the Control Staff);
- To (Intended player);
- Message;
- Expected participant response;
- Exercise objective; and
- Notes section (for controllers and evaluators to track actual events against those listed in the MSEL, with special instructions for individual controllers and evaluators).

Scenario timelines listed in the MSEL should be as realistic as possible and based on input from SMEs. If the activity occurs sooner than the MSEL writers anticipated, then controllers and evaluators should note the time the activity occurred, but play should not be interrupted.

Typically, there is one MSEL per exercise, and it may be in a short format, long format, or both. A short format lists the events in a single row in a spreadsheet and is a quick reference guide during exercise play. A long format includes more detailed descriptions of expected actions and contains scripted language for actors and simulators. The MSEL may be projected onto a large screen in a control cell or simulation cell and shared across multiple venues during the exercise.

Controller Training

Controller training includes a summary of the exercise design, including the exercise objectives, a MSEL review, delivery methods, venues, timeline, communications plan, and evaluation criteria.

Communications

The C/E Handbook or Control Staff Instructions (COSIN) provides a communication plan for controllers and instructions on whom they will communicate with, what they need to communicate, and how they will communicate. Communication can occur through many forms such as phone, radio, e-mail, face-to-face, network system, or a combination. Depending on the method used, the essential equipment should be provided to the controllers and the control cells.

Safety and Security

Controllers also play an important role in ensuring that the exercise is a safe and secure environment. In exercises involving potentially dangerous field play or the use of classified materials, the control team designates a Safety and/or Security Controller as appropriate to focus on those areas of control.

The planning team should consider the following to ensure a safe and secure environment:

- Appointing a Safety and/or Security Controller;
- Dedicating real-world medical (not involved in the exercise) and emergency procedures to contact and deploy Emergency Medical Services;
- Outlining safety requirements and policies, to include other safety issues outside the scope of the exercise (for example, weather, heat stress, hypothermia, etc.);
- Using local law enforcement to provide site security where appropriate; and
- Identifying and adhering to appropriate security standards to ensure that sensitive or classified information is not compromised.

Planning for Exercise Evaluation

Planning and organization prior to an exercise are imperative to effective and successful exercise evaluation. The exercise planning team identifies evaluation elements early in the exercise design process following the development of the exercise objectives. An evaluation team determines the appropriate structure, organizes the team, and develops a comprehensive plan to address the evaluation of the exercise. Evaluation is further explained in **Chapter 5: Exercise Evaluation**.

Preparing for Exercise Conduct

The exercise planning team finalizes all aspects of the exercise to prepare for conduct. Preparations include finalizing materials, rehearsing presentations and briefings, and training participants for the exercise. Prior to the exercise, the appropriate personnel receive documentation and additional instructions needed for conduct.

To prevent jeopardizing mission performance in response to real-world incidents, the exercise planning team should develop a contingency process to halt, postpone, or cancel an exercise as necessary. If the conduct of the exercise is put at risk, the Exercise Director and exercise planning team should convene and determine the appropriate course of action. Following a decision, the course of action should be communicated to all exercise planners, participants, and other key stakeholders through formal communications mechanisms.

4. Exercise Conduct

Overview

Exercise conduct involves activities such as preparing for exercise play, managing exercise play, and conducting immediate exercise wrap-up activities. Exercise practitioners are encouraged to apply and adapt the HSEEP doctrine during exercise conduct to meet specific needs. Throughout the exercise conduct process, the engagement of senior leaders by practitioners confirms the exercise is consistent with the original guidance and intent.

Discussion-Based Exercises

Exercise/Play Preparation

Members of the exercise planning team assigned to exercise setup should visit the exercise site to arrange the room, test the audio/visual equipment, and discuss administrative and logistical issues.

Prior to exercise conduct, the exercise planning team delivers the necessary exercise materials and equipment, which may include the following:

- Any Situational Manuals (SitMan) or other written materials for exercise participants;
- The presentations;
- The appropriate audio/visual equipment, including televisions, projectors, projection screens, microphones, and speakers;
- The table tents for each table;
- The name tents for each participant;
- The badges identifying the role of each exercise participant;
- The sign-in sheets; and
- The Participant Feedback Forms.

A rehearsal of the exercise structure and presentations helps to ensure an understanding of facilitator and evaluator roles and responsibilities, event timing, audio/visual equipment, and location-specific details, including access and security. On the day of the exercise, planning team members should arrive several hours before Start of Exercise (StartEx) to set up activities and arrange for registration.

Exercise Play/Conduct

For a discussion-based exercise, conduct entails a facilitated discussion based on a scenario, objectives, or goals. The Exercise Director provides opening statements to the participants and welcomes them to the exercise. The Facilitator/Presenter then begins the discussion by presenting the scenario and keeping the discussions on track. The Lead Evaluator is responsible to ensure that all notes and observations are taken and provided back to the Exercise Director. If any additional resource requirements are needed, the Resource Lead is responsible.

If breakouts are needed to further enhance the exercise, additional facilitators/presenters, evaluators/note takers may be added and will be responsible to their individual section leads. Additional facilities, administration, or logistics personnel, if needed, will report to the Resource Lead. **Figure 4.1** shows the relationship of a discussion-based organizational structure.

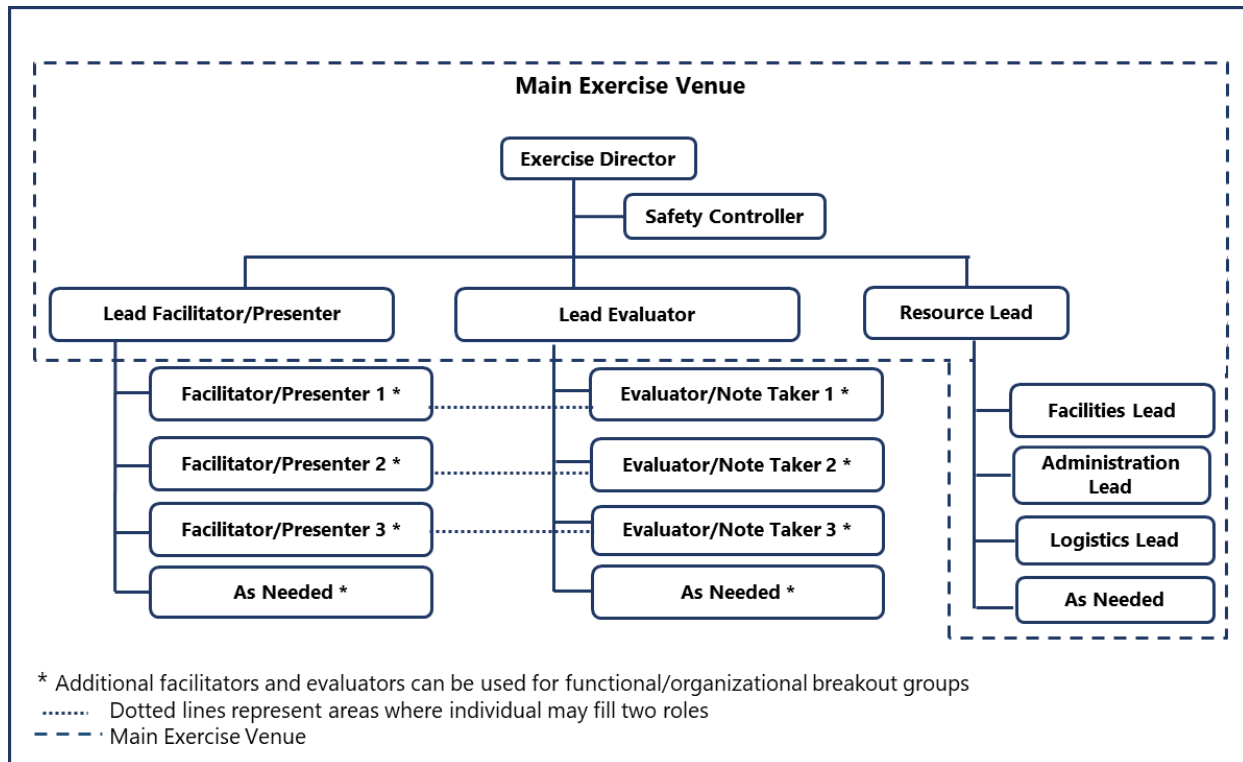


Figure 4.1: Example of a Discussion-Based Control Structure

Table 4.1 describes the positions of a discussion-based exercise control organization.

Table 4.1: Positions of a Discussion-Based Exercise Control Structure

Position	Description
Exercise Director	An individual that provides the strategic oversight and direction on the HSEEP Cycle for an individual exercise.
Safety Controller	An individual responsible to ensure that the exercise is conducted in a safe environment.
Lead Facilitator/Presenter	An individual that oversees all facets of the facilitation process or the presentation(s), to include recruiting and assigning additional facilitators or presenters.
Facilitator/Presenter	An individual responsible for keeping a discussion focused on exercise objectives and exploring all issues within the time allotted during discussion-based exercises, or an individual designated to deliver information in a structured setting.
Lead Evaluator	An individual that oversees all facets of the evaluation process, to include recruiting, assigning, and training evaluators.

Position	Description
Evaluator	An individual chosen, based on their expertise in the functional areas, to observe and collect exercise data and analyze results.
Note Taker (as needed)	An individual that records what is said during breakout groups, interviews, or hotwash discussions, allowing the facilitator, presenter, or interviewer to focus on soliciting information and asking follow-up questions, and supports data collection and data management throughout the evaluation process.
Resource Lead	An individual responsible for obtaining proper venues, equipment, and supplies for exercise conduct, as well as providing support for media and VIP observers.
Facilities Lead	An individual responsible for managing exercise venue considerations, such as set up, tear down, and table and breakout room assignments, as required.
Administration Lead	An individual responsible for managing the registration process, printed documents, sign-in sheets, and badges.
Logistics Lead	An individual responsible to ensure proper room function and set up for audio/visual requirements, as well as obtaining necessary equipment, food, and drinks; works with the facilities lead.

Conduct activities for a discussion-based exercise include the following considerations:

- Presentation is a crucial vehicle for conveying information to the players;
- Facilitators/presenters help evaluators/note takers collect useful data by keeping discussions focused on exercise objectives, capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks;
- Facilitators/Presenters make sure all issues are explored within the time allotted; and
- Ensuring a safe and secure exercise environment.

All facilitators/presenters should take, and compile notes relevant to the groups' discussions. If multiple facilitators/presenters were used, the Lead Facilitator/Presenter will collect all notes from each of the additional facilitators/presenters. This information will be used to generate the After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).

Operations-Based Exercises

Play Preparation

Depending on the scope of the exercise, the appropriate exercise planning team members should begin event setup as many days before the exercise as necessary. A communication check is important prior to the Start of Exercise (StartEx) to ensure all forms of communications are working correctly.

Prior to exercise conduct, the exercise planning team delivers the necessary exercise materials and equipment, which may include:

- Arranging the briefing rooms;
- Testing the audio/visual equipment;

- Placing props and effects;
- Marking the appropriate exercise areas and the perimeters; and
- Checking for potential safety issues.

A rehearsal of the exercise structure is vital to ensure an understanding of controller and evaluator responsibilities, transportation, event timing, audio/visual and communications equipment, and location-specific details, including access and security. On the day of the exercise, all exercise planning team members should arrive prior to Start of Exercise (StartEx) to complete any remaining logistical or administrative items and set up registration.

Exercise Play/Conduct

During conduct of operations-based exercises, the Exercise Planning Team Leader often serves as the Lead Controller. Controllers and evaluators report activities to the Lead Controller, who is responsible for monitoring exercise progression, communicating exercise activities throughout all venues, and managing the control staff. **Figure 4.2** shows an example of an operations-based exercise control organizational structure.

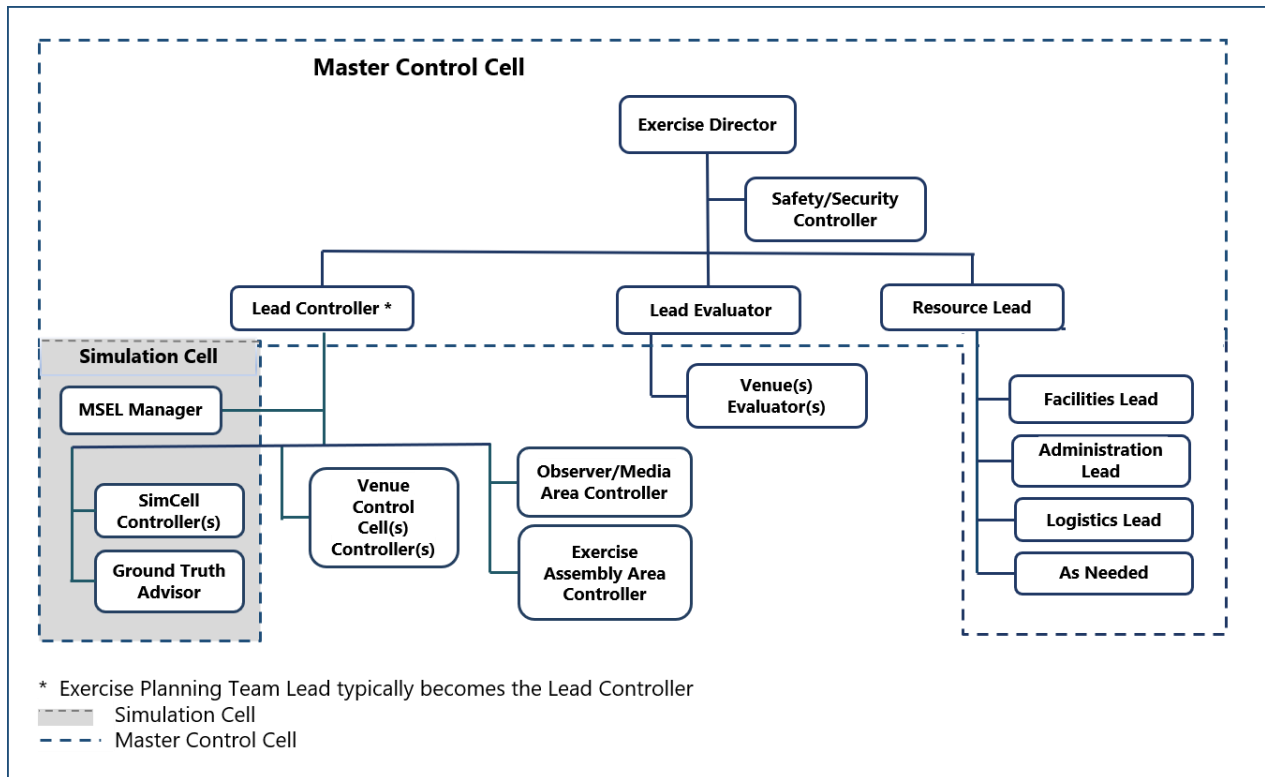


Figure 4.2: Example of an Operations-Based Exercise Control Structure

Table 4.2 describes the positions used in an operations-based exercise organization.

Table 4.2: Positions of an Operations-Based Exercise Control Structure

Position	Description
Exercise Director	An individual responsible for the strategic oversight and direction on the HSEEP Cycle phases for an individual exercise.
Safety/Security Controller	An individual responsible to ensure that the exercise is conducted in a safe and secure environment.
Lead Controller	An individual that monitors exercise progression, communicates exercise activities throughout all venues, and manages the control staff.
MSEL Manager	An individual that manages the timely and accurate delivery of injects and player expected actions and decides on the need to release contingency injects.
Simulation Cell Controller	An individual that delivers scenario messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise.
Ground Truth Advisor	An individual responsible for ensuring that the scenario details remain consistent during exercise conduct.
Venue Controller	An individual that is responsible for setting up and operating a specific exercise location. Venue Controllers manage exercise play and may prompt or initiate certain players to ensure continuity and flow.
Lead Evaluator	An individual that oversees all facets of the evaluation process, to include recruiting, assigning, and training evaluators.
Venue Evaluator	An individual responsible for observing exercise activity/play in an assigned exercise venue, area, or for a specific activity and collecting observations and data.
Resource Lead	An individual responsible for obtaining proper venues, equipment, and supplies for exercise conduct, as well as providing support for media and VIP observers.
Facilities Lead	An individual responsible to work closely with the logistics section to manage exercise venue considerations, such as set up, tear down, scheduling, and traffic.
Administration Lead	An individual responsible for managing the registration process, printed documents, sign-in sheets, and badges.
Logistics Lead	An individual responsible to ensure proper room function and set up for audio/visual requirements, as well as obtaining necessary equipment, food, and drinks; works with the facilities lead.
Exercise Assembly Area Controller	An individual responsible for the logistical organization of the exercise assembly area, including placement locations for units entering the exercise assembly area, release of dispatched units into the field, and coordination of routes and overall safety within the assembly area.
Observer/Media Area Controller	An individual responsible to ensure that observers and the media stay in their designated areas and do not interfere with the exercise.

Conduct activities for an operations-based exercise include:

- Ensuring a safe and secure exercise environment;
- Distributing exercise documents that outline roles, responsibilities, and a communication plan for the control staff;
- Communicating between the SimCell, venue controllers, and MSEL manager to ensure pace of the exercise play is appropriate;
- Ensuring the Exercise Assembly Area Controller remains in close communication with other controllers throughout the exercise; and
- The Exercise Assembly Area Controller ensures that units are deployed based on the timeline that is created by the planning team.

The Exercise Director and the planning team should have a contingency plan to pause, postpone, or cancel in the event of a real-world emergency impeding the exercise.

Briefings

Before an exercise, briefings educate participants about their roles and responsibilities. By scheduling separate briefings for senior leaders, controllers and evaluators, actors, players, and observers, exercise planning team members can avoid giving extraneous material to different groups. **Table 4.3** describes the exercise brief types.

Table 4.3: Types of Exercise Briefs

Brief	Description
Senior Leader Brief	A briefing occurs during the design and development and before the conduct of an exercise. The exercise planning team leader periodically consults with the senior leaders within the exercise planning team to ensure the exercise aligns with leader intent.
Controller and Evaluator Brief	A briefing is generally conducted before operations-based exercises. It begins with an exercise overview and then reviews the exercise location and area, schedule of events, scenario, control concept, controller and evaluator responsibilities, instructions on completing EEGs, and any miscellaneous information. Additional training for evaluators may be conducted.
Actor Brief	A briefing before the start of the exercise, prior to the actors taking their positions. The Actor Controller leads the actor briefing, a meeting generally conducted before the exercise, providing actors with an exercise overview, safety, real emergency procedures, acting instructions, schedule, identification badges, and symptomatology cards.
Player Brief	A briefing before the start of the exercise, for all players to address individual roles and responsibilities, exercise parameters, safety, security badges, and any remaining logistical exercise concerns or questions. Participant handouts and ExPlans or SitMans, depending on the type of exercise being conducted, are often distributed during this briefing. Following the exercise, controllers ensure that appropriate players attend the post-exercise hotwash in their respective functional areas.

Brief	Description
Observer Brief	A briefing before the start of the exercise that occurs the day of an exercise and informs observers and VIPs about the exercise background, scenario, schedule of events, observer limitations, and any other miscellaneous information. Often, observers are unfamiliar with public safety procedures and have questions about the activities; therefore, designating someone such as a public information officer to answer questions prevents observers from interrupting exercise participants.

Wrap-up Activities

Performing thorough exercise wrap-up ensures the collection of all relevant data to support effective evaluation and improvement planning. Immediately after the exercise, the exercise planning team members should conduct a short debrief to discuss the exercise and any issues or concerns and propose improvements. Planners should collect exercise attendance lists, provide copies to the exercise planning team leader, collect Participant Feedback Forms, and develop debrief notes.

Player Hotwash

The player hotwash is a meeting that provides an opportunity to discuss exercise strengths and areas for improvement immediately following the conduct of an exercise. An experienced facilitator leads the hotwash and ensures the discussion remains constructive. The information gathered during a hotwash contributes to the AAR/IP and any exercise suggestions can improve future exercises. A hotwash also provides an opportunity for players to provide clarification and time to fill-out Participant Feedback Forms, which helps to generate the AAR/IP.

Debrief

The Controller/Evaluator Debrief is a meeting for controllers, facilitators, and evaluators to assemble after the exercise to discuss observations and provide information to create a shared understanding of the exercise. The Controller/Evaluator Debrief allows each controller, facilitator, and evaluator an opportunity to provide an overview of the functional area observed and discuss the strengths and areas for improvement. The results captured during the debrief help develop the AAR/IP. During the debrief, controllers, facilitators, and evaluators complete and submit a Participant Feedback Form.

5. Exercise Evaluation

Overview

Through exercise evaluation, jurisdictions/organizations assess the capabilities needed to accomplish a mission, function, or objective. Evaluation ties objectives to priorities, assesses the performance of capability targets and critical tasks, and documents strengths and areas for improvement. Evaluation connects the exercise to Improvement Planning and feeds into the overall Integrated Preparedness Cycle. **Figure 5.1** shows exiting the HSEEP Cycle and entering the Integrated Preparedness Cycle. This transition is further explained in **Chapter 6: Improvement Planning**.

Effective evaluation should be integrated through the HSEEP Cycle and involves:

- Planning for exercise evaluation;
- Observing the exercise and collecting exercise data during exercise conduct;
- Analyzing collected data to identify strengths and areas for improvement; and
- Reporting exercise outcomes in an After-Action Report (AAR).

Using a common approach to evaluation supports consistent and meaningful reporting of exercise results.

Evaluation Planning

Evaluation planning begins during the initial planning phases of the exercise, as described in **Chapter 3: Exercise Design and Development**. Identifying clear evaluation requirements early in the planning process will ensure that the design, development, and conduct of the exercise best support an effective evaluation. Exercise planners should collaborate to ensure a consistent approach for evaluating an exercise. Also, engage senior leaders early in the evaluation planning to identify any focus areas, potential concerns, and specific evaluation requirements. The Evaluation Plan (EvalPlan) and/or Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Handbook are guidance documents for evaluators that provide guidance, instructions, and structure on evaluating and observing during an exercise.

Planning an exercise evaluation includes:

- Selecting the evaluation team requirements;
- Developing and finalizing the evaluation documentation and methodology; and
- Developing the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

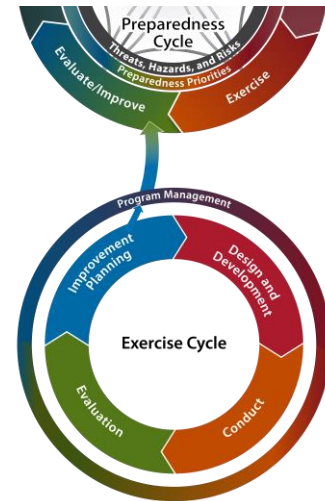


Figure 5.1: Exiting the HSEEP Cycle and Entering the Integrated Preparedness Cycle

Evaluation Team

Once the exercise planning team defines evaluation requirements, the Lead Evaluator oversees the recruiting, assigning, and training of evaluators.

The evaluation requirements should specify the following:

- The number of evaluators needed (for example, multiple locations or extended hours);
- The types of subject-matter expertise the evaluators should possess;
- The types of security clearance level (if required);
- The evaluator assignments; and
- The type of training or instruction needed prior to the exercise.

Team Composition

The Exercise Planning Team Lead should appoint a Lead Evaluator to oversee all facets of the evaluation process. The Lead Evaluator participates fully as a member of the exercise planning team and is familiar with the exercise objectives, mission areas, and capabilities associated with the plans, policies, and procedures, and decision-making processes. Whenever possible, evaluators/note takers should have experience and subject-matter expertise in their assigned functional area.

The Lead Evaluator determines the structure of the exercise evaluation team based on exercise scope, exercise objectives, associated capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks. Exercises that involve multiple jurisdictions/organizations and multiple venues should consider assigning evaluators/note takers to each venue location. The exercise evaluation team becomes part of a larger organizational structure during conduct. The evaluators/note takers at each of the venues will support the Lead Evaluator at their assigned locations. **Figure 5.2** shows an example of an evaluation team organization.

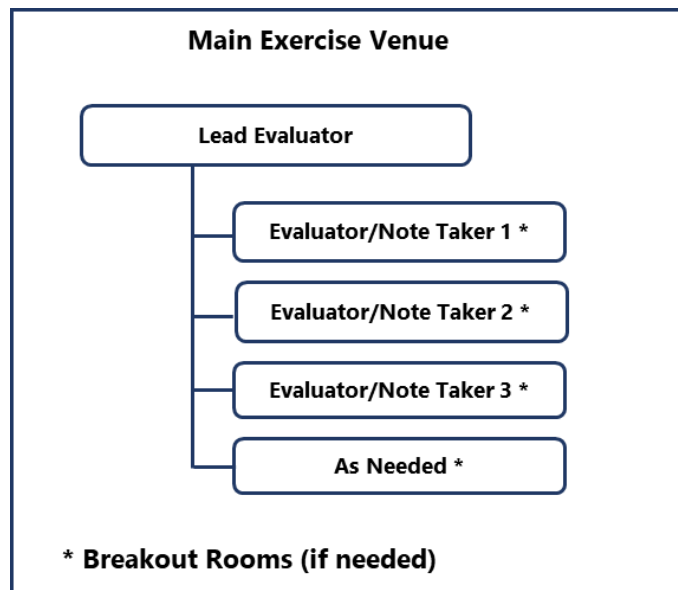


Figure 5.2: Example of an Exercise Evaluation Team

Table 5.1 Describes an Exercise Evaluation Team Organization.

Table 5.1: Positions of an Exercise Evaluation Team

Position	Description
Lead Evaluator	An individual that oversees all facets of the evaluation process, to include recruiting, assigning, and training of evaluator(s).
Evaluator	An individual chosen, based on their expertise in the functional areas, to observe and collect exercise data and analyze results.
Note Taker (as needed)	An individual that records what is said during breakout groups, interviews, or hotwash discussions, allowing the facilitator, presenter, or interviewer to focus on soliciting information and asking follow-up questions, and supports data collection and data management throughout the evaluation process.

Training

Evaluator training should include guidance on using evaluation tools, observing exercise discussions or operations, and data analysis.

Evaluator training should also include the following:

- General information about the exercise, including scope, objectives and aligned capabilities, scenario, and schedule;
- Relevant evaluator documentation (for example, Situational Manual (SitMan), C/E Handbook, evaluation tools); and
- Appropriate plans, policies, procedures, agreements, or other information.

Before exercise play begins, the Lead Evaluator should meet with all evaluators to verify roles, responsibilities, and assignments and to provide any significant updates. The briefing provides an opportunity for evaluators/note takers to ask questions and to ensure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The briefing may occur in conjunction with the Controller/Evaluator Brief to include instructions for control staff on delivering the injects and evaluators/note takers completing EEGs. Depending on the organization of the exercise, briefings may occur at more than one exercise venue.

Evaluation Documentation

The exercise planning team and Lead Evaluator should determine the tools, data collection methods, and documentation needed based on the level of complexity and scope. **Table 5.2** provides the document, description, and distribution of evaluation documentation.

Table 5.2: Evaluation Documentation

Document	Description	Distribution
Facilitator/ Evaluator Handbook	A document that provides specific exercise information and guidance for facilitators/presenters and evaluators/note takers for a discussion-based exercise.	Facilitators/Presenters and Evaluators/Note Takers

Document	Description	Distribution
Controller/ Evaluator Handbook	A document that provides specific exercise information and guidance for controllers and evaluators/note takers, may be a standalone document or supplement to the Exercise Plan, and adjusted accordingly.	Controllers and Evaluators/Note Takers
Evaluation Plan	A document for evaluators/note takers that provides guidance, instructions, and structure on evaluating and observing an exercise. It also provides essential materials required to perform their specific functions.	Controllers and Evaluators/Note Takers
Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG)	A document that captures information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the exercise planning team. The EEG provides evaluators/note takers with a standardized tool to guide data collection and capture performance results. Since each jurisdiction/organization has unique targets and critical tasks, EEGs are developed specific to their plans, policies, procedures, and protocols.	Evaluators
Participant Feedback Form	A document that the exercise team uses to collect observed strengths, areas for improvement, and input about exercise conduct and logistics from participants.	All Participants

Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG) Development

EEGs provide a consistent tool to guide exercise observation and data collection. EEGs align to exercise objectives and capabilities and list the relevant capability targets and critical tasks. **Figure 5.3** shows the relationship of program management to the development of EEGs. Capability targets are the performance thresholds established by the jurisdiction/organization for each capability. Capability targets are composed of three parts: a critical task, an impact, and a timeframe. Identified targets are part of a jurisdiction’s/organization’s Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) or other threat and hazard identification or risk assessment processes.

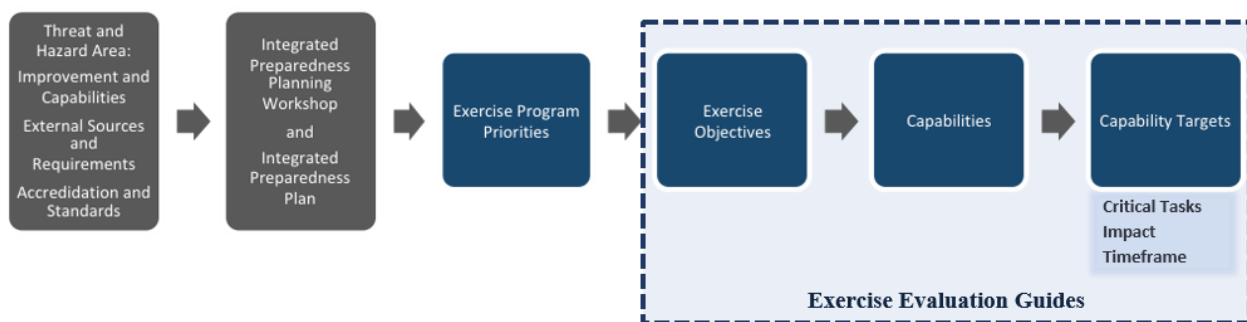


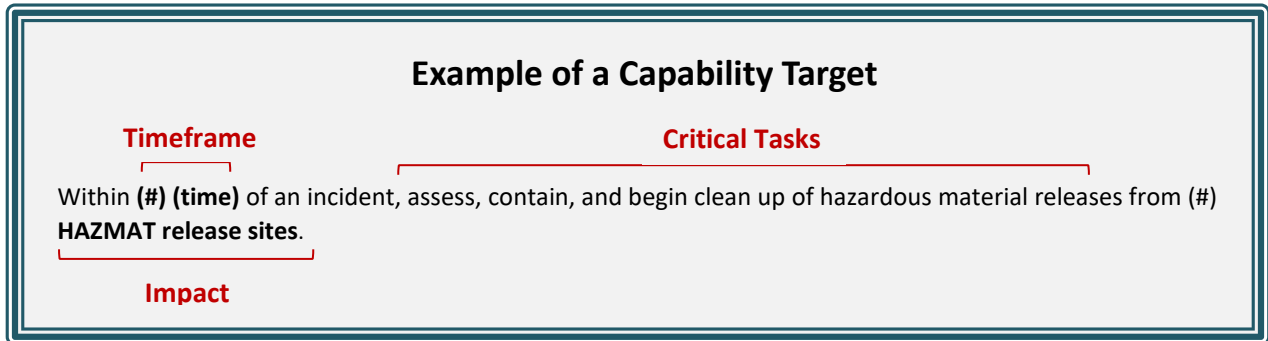
Figure 5.3: Development of an Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG)

Critical tasks are distinct specific actions needed to achieve the capability target. Critical tasks may derive from the jurisdictional/organizational operations plans, standard operating procedures, or discipline-specific standards. These tasks reflect the types of activities emergency managers routinely plan for and are broadly applicable to a wide range of threats and hazards.

Capability targets include specific and measurable metrics that describe the capabilities. Additionally, the capability targets establish a benchmark that the whole community can use to

track progress over time such as assessing current response to threats and hazards and means of improvement. Capability targets are composed of three parts and shown below in the example provided:

- Critical Task, which represents the specific action needed to achieve the capability target;
- Impact, which represents the size of the capability requirement; and
- Timeframe, which represents the time in which the action must be performed.



The purpose of an EEG is to:

- Streamline data collection and provide a consistent process for assessing preparedness;
- Assist jurisdictions/organizations to map exercise results to exercise objectives, capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks for additional analysis and assessment; and
- Support development of the AAR.

Exercises assess a jurisdiction's/organization's ability to meet its capability targets. Capability targets, when incorporated into planning and used as exercise evaluation criteria, can measure how effectively a plan meets the goal and how well the participants perform the tasks in the plan. The after-action and continuous improvement process can validate current capabilities already in place and describe areas for improvement. The after-action and continuous improvement process can help the whole community identify how to close capability gaps and bring them closer to meeting the target established.

Observation and Data Collection

Exercise observation and data collection can differ between discussion-based exercises and operations-based exercises. Discussion-based exercises often focus on issues involving plans, policies, and procedures. Evaluators/Note Takers collect observations from participants' discussions. Operations-based exercises focus on issues affecting the operational conduct of capabilities and critical tasks and implementation of plans, policies, and procedures. Evaluators/Note Takers collect and record participant actions, which form the analytical basis for determining the successful demonstration of critical tasks and capability targets.

Observation

Exercise evaluators/note takers should observe exercise activity in a non-attribution environment, in accordance with the EvalPlan. Evaluators/Note Takers observe many of the following:

- Activation or implementation of plans, policies, processes, and procedures, requests for resources, use of mutual aid agreements, etc.;
- Roles and responsibilities and authorities of the government agencies, jurisdictions, and private organizations;
- Pertinent decisions made or decision-making processes; and
- Information sharing with other agencies and the public.

Data Collection

Data collection is critical to providing an overall understanding of the exercise. Collecting data using a variety of methods, tools, and techniques provides the information needed for continuous improvement activities and resourcing decisions, rather than relying on assumptions. It supports root cause analysis by providing a fact-based record of what actions were taken, what key decisions were made, and the outcomes of those actions and decisions.

Evaluators and Note Takers should document relevant actions or discussions and retain their notes and records to support the development of the AAR. As necessary, the Lead Evaluator may assign evaluators/note takers to collect additional data, such as plans, policies, procedures, Incident Action Plans, and other documentation associated with the exercise. Data collection does not only come from evaluators, it can also come from observers, controllers, safety personnel, etc.

In addition to EEGs, evaluators can use a variety of data collection methods as part of their evaluation plan, including direct observation, interviews and hotwashes, document reviews, participant feedback forms, or surveys. **Table 5.3** below outlines some considerations for each collection method.

Table 5.3: Data Collection Methods

Method	Considerations
Direct Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offers real-time data collection ▪ Requires large resources to observe multiple venues simultaneously
Documentation Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serves as authoritative record of activities ▪ Can be time-consuming and labor intensive to review and synthesize
Feedback Forms and Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Easy to administer and provides firsthand information from participants ▪ Open-ended feedback often varies in specificity and quality and offers limited opportunity for follow-up
Interviews (individual or group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enables in-depth discussions of key issues, often involving SMEs ▪ Can be difficult to schedule during or immediately following an exercise or incident
Hotwash and Debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable group discussion with participants ▪ Led by an individual to ensure open, collaborative discussion

Data Analysis

During data analysis, the exercise evaluation team first consolidates the data collected during the exercise and determines whether participants performed critical tasks and met capability targets. Evaluators consider participant performance against all targets to determine the overall ability to perform capabilities. Additionally, the exercise evaluation team documents strengths and areas for improvement over the course of exercise play. This provides the evaluators with not only what happened, but why events happened.

In both discussion-based and operations-based exercises, evaluators identify issues by comparing exercise objectives to actual performance. Through this comparison, evaluators identify which capabilities (and their associated activities, performance measures, and tasks) were successfully demonstrated in the exercise. They also identify which capabilities need improvement.

Evaluators should consider the following questions to identify issues:

- What happened? What was supposed to happen based on current plans, policies, and procedures?
- Was there a difference? What was the impact?
- Were the consequences of the action (or inaction/decision) positive, negative, or neutral?
- Do plans, policies, and procedures support activities and associated tasks?
- Are players familiar with these documents?
- What are the strengths and areas of improvement to remedy deficiencies?

After evaluators identify discrepancies between what happened and what was supposed to happen (the issues), they explore the source of these issues. Evaluators and exercise program managers can use a variety of analysis techniques to support improvement planning for each individual exercise as well as the overall exercise program, including:

- Data Synthesis;
- Event Reconstruction;
- Trend Analysis; and
- Root Cause Analysis.

Data Synthesis

Data synthesis is the process of compiling and reviewing data from multiple sources to identify issues and support analysis. This phase enables analysts to collate and analyze large amounts of information, identify potential issues requiring resolution, and examine the strength of evidence (or remaining gaps) for each issue.

Event Reconstruction

Event reconstruction is consolidating information from multiple sources into a single, fact-based account of what happened, including key decisions, actions, and communications. For each decision, action, or communication, analysts try to identify the who, what, when, where, and how. The reconstruction activity is not concerned with understanding the why of a specific action.

Trend Analysis

Trend analysis identifies patterns in strengths, areas for improvement, and major changes in observations over time. For example, a trend analysis on reoccurring trends of various threat/hazard and capability topics guides planning, training, exercise design and development, and future disaster-related efforts.

Root Cause Analysis

Root cause analysis focuses on identifying the most basic causal factor for why an expected action did not occur or was not performed as expected. Determining the underlying reason behind an identified issue allows the evaluator to direct improvement. Consider asking the following questions to narrow down the issue of concern:

- Were the objectives for each critical task met? If not, what factors contributed to this result?
- Did discussions or activities suggest the critical tasks performed sufficiently to meet the capability targets? If not, what were the resulting impacts or consequences?
- What improvements are required? Are other resources needed? If so, how will they be obtained?
- What strengths are required to carry out those tasks? What decisions would need to be made, and who would make them?

The importance of determining root cause is to understand that each step is a symptom (or effect) of the next item and a cause of the previous item. There are several different analysis tools available for determining root cause and **Figure 5.** provides one example.

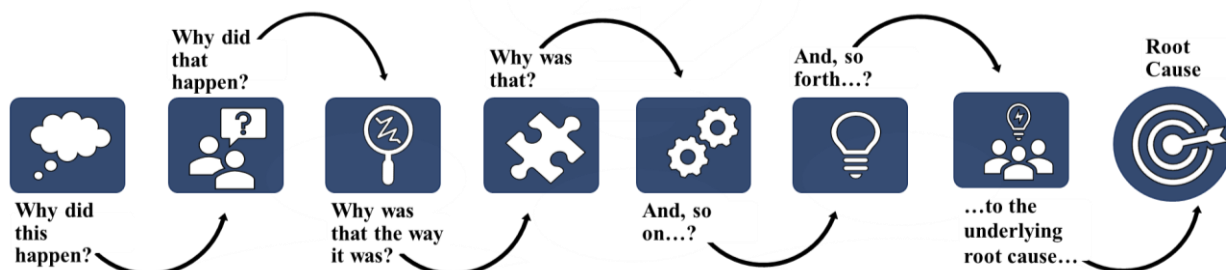


Figure 5.4: Example of a Root Cause Analysis

After identifying issues and analyzing the data, evaluators develop recommendations for improvement aimed at enhancing preparedness, which are then compiled into the draft AAR/IP.

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

The AAR/IP is a document that generally includes an exercise overview, analysis of capabilities, and a list of corrective actions. The length, format, and development timeframe of the AAR/IP depend on the exercise type and scope. These parameters should be determined by the exercise planning team, based on the expectations of senior leaders. The AAR/IP should include an overview of performance related to each exercise objective and associated capabilities.

The ability to communicate exercise evaluation results to stakeholders is crucial to the improvement planning process. Time spent planning for data collection, collecting data, and

conducting analysis supports the development of clear observations and recommendations for inclusion in your AAR/IP.

The observations developed for the AAR/IP should be categorized as either strengths or areas for improvement, as explained in **Table 5.4: Categories of an AAR/IP Observation** and the example below. Observations do not have to be lengthy to be impactful. A strongly written observation includes a clear and direct statement of the issue identified, a brief description of the analysis, and the impact or result of the issue. A brief summary of the analysis completed can be included to help stakeholders understand how the evaluation team arrived at the conclusion.

Table 5.4: Categories of an AAR/IP Observation

Observation Type	Description
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actions that went exceptionally well given the circumstances ▪ The impact of positive performance on desired or expected outcomes ▪ Activities that yielded better results than could have been expected
Areas for Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes did not meet expectations or intent ▪ The negative impact of actual performance on desired or expected outcomes ▪ The factors that contributed to the inability to meet critical tasks, capability targets, or desired outcomes

Example of an Observation

Issue Identified

Root Cause

The HAZMAT team did not arrive to the release site for (#) (time). New EOC personnel **have not been trained** on dispatch procedure which **delayed the HAZMAT team response**.

Impact or Result

Consider these tips when organizing your observations into the AAR/IP:

- Focus on issues that are critical to the success of a mission or represent a trend;
- Observations help guide corrective action planning by focusing time and resources on issues that have the greatest impact on preparedness;
- If possible, include data on consequences and likelihood of reoccurrences or what would happen if no action is taken; and
- A report should include the observations, but the After-Action Meeting (AAM) will give leadership a chance to further organize the observations and order the development of action plans.

The evaluation team develops and provides the draft AAR/IP to the Exercise Director, who distributes the draft to participating jurisdictions/organizations. Senior leaders or their designees review and confirm observations, strengths, and areas for improvement identified in the draft AAR/IP.

After-Action Meeting (AAM)

The purpose of the AAM is to serve as a forum to review the revised the draft AAR/IP. Participants should seek to reach final consensus on strengths, areas for improvement, draft corrective actions, concrete deadlines, and owners/assignees for implementation of corrective actions. **Table 5.5** provides the meeting focus, discussion points, tools, outcomes, and follow-up actions for an AAM:

Table 5.5: After-Action Meeting

Element	Considerations and Activities
Meeting Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The AAM is an interactive session providing attendees the opportunity to discuss and validate the analytical findings and corrective actions in the draft AAR/IP
Discussion Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revise the draft AAR/IP ▪ Discuss exercise results ▪ Identify areas for improvement ▪ Identify corrective actions
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft AAR ▪ Draft IP
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final consensus on AAR/IP ▪ Consensus on draft corrective actions ▪ Proposed concrete deadlines for the implementation of corrective actions ▪ Consensus on the assigned corrective actions to preparedness stakeholders
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute the finalized AAR/IP ▪ Track and report corrective actions

Participant jurisdictions/organizations are responsible for developing implementation processes and timelines and keeping their senior leaders informed of the implementation status.

Improvement Plan (IP)

The IP includes all consolidated corrective actions. The IP may be an appendix to the AAR. The AAR/IP is then final and distributed to exercise planners, participants, and other preparedness stakeholders, as appropriate. **Chapter 6: Improvement Planning** describes the process in further detail.

6. Improvement Planning

Overview

Improvement Planning is a process by which the areas for improvement from the exercise are turned into concrete, measurable corrective actions that strengthen capabilities. In this way, Improvement Planning activities can help shape a jurisdiction's/organization's preparedness priorities and support continuous improvement. The Improvement Planning activities now transition from the HSEEP Cycle back to the Integrated Preparedness Cycle.

Actions identified during Improvement Planning help to strengthen elements of a jurisdiction's/organization's capability to plan, organize/equip, train, and exercise. The transition is shown in **Figure 6.1**.

Effective Improvement Planning serves as an important tool throughout the Integrated Preparedness Cycle by:

- Prioritizing corrective actions identified from individual exercises;
- Providing valuable input into strategy development and program priorities;
- Initiating a review or new development of plans, policies, and procedures; and
- Identifying and obtaining needed training, equipment, and other resources.

SMART Corrective Actions

Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) corrective actions are actionable steps intended to resolve capability gaps and shortcomings identified in exercises.

Figure 6.2 depicts guidelines for developing SMART corrective actions.

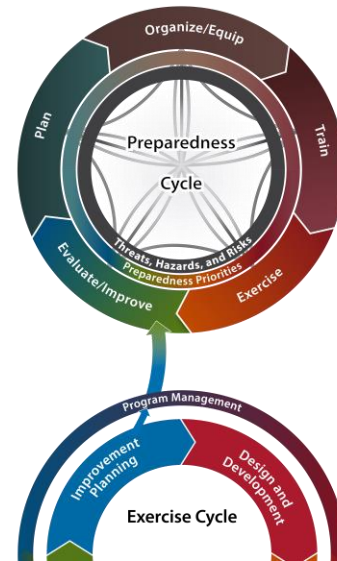


Figure 6.1: Exiting the HSEEP Cycle and Entering the Integrated Preparedness Cycle






SMART Guidelines for Corrective Actions		
Specific		Corrective actions should address the five Ws – who, what, when, where, and why. The action should be tied back to an objective that was evaluated.
Measurable		Corrective actions should include numeric or descriptive measures that define quantity, quality, cost, etc. The focus should be on the outcomes of the corrective action.
Achievable		Corrective actions should be within the control, influence, and resources of the responsible owner/assignee.
Relevant		Corrective action should be instrumental to the mission of the organization and linked to its goals or strategic intent. Validation of the corrective action ensures that it meets the goals and intent.
Time-bound		Corrective actions should have a specified and reasonable timeframe to be completed

Figure 6.2: SMART Guidelines for Corrective Actions

Example of a SMART Corrective Action
<p>Central City will hold a seminar to address the confusion that exists within the multiple organizations that respond to HAZMAT incidents within the city. The goals of the seminar will focus on eliminating this confusion between the responding organizations and will clarify the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of each. Final planning and details for the seminar should be completed by September 1, 2020 (90 days), with identification of all necessary players to be invited by September 15, 2020 (105 days).</p>

During development of corrective actions, the jurisdiction's/organization's Point of Contact (POC) assumes the responsibility for the identified issues. Lastly, the jurisdiction's/organization's POC determines an initial list of appropriate corrective actions to resolve the identified issues.

The jurisdiction's/organization's POC may use the following questions to guide the discussion when developing corrective actions:

- What changes to plans and procedures will improve performance?
- What changes to organizational structures will improve performance?
- What changes to management processes will improve performance?
- What changes to equipment or resources will improve performance?
- Was training provided and did the training improve performance?

Corrective Action Tracking and Implementation

Corrective actions captured in the AAR/IP should be tracked and continually reported on until completion. These efforts are part of a more comprehensive continuous improvement process that applies before, during, and after an exercise. Stakeholders should also ensure a system is in place to validate previous corrective actions that were successfully implemented. Over time, corrective actions effectively integrated back into the Integrated Preparedness Cycle will yield continuous improvements.

Improvement Planning to Support Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is a method in which capabilities are periodically examined to make sure they are sufficient, accurate, and effective to handle the threats, hazards, and risks a jurisdiction/organization may face. Identifying strengths, areas for improvement, and corrective actions that result from exercises help jurisdictions/organizations build, sustain, and deliver capabilities as part of a continuous improvement process.

Continuous improvement includes:

- **A Consistent Approach:** Jurisdictions/Organizations should employ a consistent approach for continuous improvement-related activities across applicable mission areas—Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery. A consistent approach enables a shared understanding of terminology, functions, processes, and tools. The approach also fosters continuous improvement-related interoperability and collaboration across a jurisdiction's/organization's components.
- **Supporting Preparedness:** Jurisdictions/Organizations support the development and sustainment of capabilities across the whole community, which contributes to supporting preparedness. Continuous improvement activities also ensure that jurisdictions/organizations can support assessments of preparedness in a timely, actionable, and meaningful way.
- **Effective Issue Resolution and Information Sharing:** Through Improvement Planning, jurisdictions/organizations complete continuous improvement action items at the lowest level possible, while facilitating the sharing of strengths and areas for improvement.

Application of the above principles and the conduct of Improvement Planning ultimately support the Integrated Preparedness Cycle. By continually examining the implementation of corrective actions, jurisdictions/organizations can identify capability gaps and determine what corrective actions require validation through exercises. Improvement Planning activities can help shape a jurisdiction's/organization's preparedness priorities and support continuous improvement in the building and sustaining of capabilities.

Acronyms

Abbreviation	Description
AAM	After-Action Meeting
AAR	After-Action Report
AAR/IP	After-Action Report/Improvement Plan
C&O	Concept and Objectives
C/E	Controller/Evaluator
CDP	Center for Domestic Preparedness
COSIN	Control Staff Instructions
EEG	Exercise Evaluation Guide
EMI	Emergency Management Institute
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOUO	For Official Use Only
FPM	Final Planning Meeting
GIS	Geographic Information System
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
IP	Improvement Plan
IPM	Initial Planning Meeting
IPP	Integrated Preparedness Plan
IPPW	Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop
MPM	Midterm Planning Meeting
MSEL	Master Scenario Events List
NPS	National Preparedness System
NTED	National Training and Education Division
POC	Point of Contact
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SME	Subject-Matter Expert
THIRA	Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
VIP	Very Important Person

Glossary of Terms

The table below provides a description for commonly used terms in HSEEP.

Term	Description
A	
Actor	An individual who simulates a specific role, such as a disaster casualty victim, to add realism to an exercise.
Actor Brief	A briefing before the start of the exercise, prior to the actors taking their positions. The Actor Controller leads the actor briefing, providing actors with an exercise overview, safety, real emergency procedures, acting instructions, schedule, identification badges, and symptomatology cards.
Actor Controller	An individual responsible for briefing, scheduling, and controlling the actors used during an operations-based exercise.
Administration	Responsible for meeting scheduling and administrative support, such as distributing meeting invitations, read-ahead materials, and meeting minutes; providing and collecting sign-in sheets; and note taking during planning meetings.
Administration Lead	An individual responsible for managing the registration process, printed documents, sign-in sheets, and badges.
After-Action Meeting (AAM)	A meeting that serves as a forum to review the revised AAR and the draft IP. Participants should seek to reach final consensus on strengths, areas for improvement, draft corrective actions, concrete deadlines, and owners/assignees for implementation of corrective actions.
B	
Best Practices	Peer-reviewed techniques, procedures, and solutions that prove successful and are solidly grounded in actual experience in plans, operations, equipment, training, and exercises.
C	
Capabilities-Based Planning	A process 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 is the basis for guidance such as the National Preparedness Goal.
Capability	An ability to be planned, organized, equipped, trained, and exercised through personnel or resources to achieve an intended target.
Capability Target	A performance threshold established by the jurisdiction/organization for each capability.
Concept and Objectives (C&O) Meeting	A meeting that is the formal beginning of the exercise planning process. It is held to identify the scope and exercise objectives. For less complex exercises and for organizations with limited resources, the C&O Meeting can be conducted in conjunction with the IPM.

Term	Description
Contingency Inject	A MSEL event introduced to a player by the control staff when a key player expected action did not occur as planned, to provide an additional opportunity to meet exercise objectives.
Control Staff Instructions (COSIN)	A document for the Controller portion of the C/E Handbook for large exercises that provides detailed guidelines for control and simulation support and establishes a management structure for these activities. This section provides guidance for controllers, simulators, and evaluators on procedures and responsibilities for exercise control, simulation, and support.
Controller	An individual who manages exercise play and monitors the pace of the exercise. Controllers may prompt or initiate certain player actions to maintain exercise pace and flow.
Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Brief	A meeting before an operations-based exercise that provides an exercise overview and responsibilities of controllers and evaluators, to include instructions on delivering the MSEL and completing EEGs.
Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Debrief	A meeting for controllers and evaluators to assemble after the exercise to discuss observations and provide information to create a shared understanding of the exercise.
Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Handbook	A document that provides specific exercise information and guidance for controllers and evaluators. It may be a standalone document or supplement to the Exercise Plan and adjusted accordingly.
Core Capabilities	Distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery as outlined in the National Preparedness Goal.
Corrective Action	An item outlined in an IP that is intended to resolve areas for improvement.
Critical Tasks	An item where distinct specific actions are needed to achieve the capability target.
D	
Design and Development	Responsible for compiling and developing all exercise background and facilitation or control, providing technical or functional expertise for scenario development, developing the simulation construct as applicable, and working with the evaluation and resource/support functions to ensure all exercise design and development needs are met.
Drill	An operations-based exercise often employed to validate a single operation or function.
E	
Emergency Medical Services Area	A location for real-world response support, such as treatment sector areas, ambulance staging, and transportation coordination points.
End of Exercise (EndEx)	An event that concludes an exercise.

Term	Description
Evaluation	Responsible for the development of the overall exercise evaluation construct and all evaluation documentation; assigns evaluation staffing in conjunction with the exercise planning team. Collects and reviews the policies, plans, and procedures to be examined during exercise conduct to finalize exercise objectives, match capability targets to exercise objectives, and determine critical tasks to be evaluated to complete exercise evaluation guides.
Evaluation Plan (EvalPlan)	A document for evaluators that provides guidance, instructions, and structure on evaluating and observing during an exercise. It also provides essential material required to perform their specific functions.
Evaluator	An individual chosen based on their expertise in the functional areas to observe and collect exercise data, and analyze results.
Exercise	An event or activity delivered through discussion or action to develop, assess, or validate capabilities to achieve planned objectives.
Exercise Assembly Area	A location for participants and resources to gather and dispatch, managed by controller(s).
Exercise Assembly Area Controller	An individual responsible for the logistical organization of the exercise assembly area, including placement locations for units entering the exercise assembly area, release of dispatched units into the field, and coordination of routes and overall safety within the assembly area.
Exercise Director	An individual responsible for the strategic oversight and direction on the HSEEP Cycle phases for an individual exercise.
Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG)	A document that captures information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the exercise planning team. The EEG provides evaluators with a standardized tool to guide data collection and capture performance results. Since each jurisdiction/organization has unique targets and critical tasks, EEGs are developed specific to their plans, policies, procedures, and protocols.
Exercise Plan (ExPlan)	An operations-based exercise document for players that includes an exercise overview, objectives and aligned capabilities, roles and responsibilities, logistics, schedule, and communications plan.
Exercise Planning Team	Individuals that are responsible for the design, development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning for an individual exercise.
Exercise Planning Team Lead	An individual responsible for the management of the exercise planning team and coordinates with the Exercise Director and senior leaders.
Exercise Play Area	A location where player activities and tasks are demonstrated during an exercise.
Exercise Play Rules	Items that identify the parameters that exercise participants follow during an exercise.
Exercise Program Manager	An individual responsible for overseeing and integrating preparedness activities for a jurisdiction/organization over time

Term	Description
Expected Action	A MSEL event representing an anticipated action to be taken by a player during the exercise.
Extent of Play Agreement	A document that is a formal written agreement outlining the participating jurisdiction's/organization's level of play during an exercise.
F	
Facilitated Discussion	A method that uses a facilitator with functional or subject-matter expertise and awareness of appropriate plans and procedures for discussion-based exercises.
Facilities	Responsible for coordinating the needed venue locations for exercises including meeting rooms, conference centers, training locations, and locations for operations-based exercises.
Facilities Lead	An individual responsible to work closely with the logistics section to manage exercise venue considerations, such as set up, tear down, scheduling, and traffic.
Final Planning Meeting (FPM)	A meeting that serves as the formal end of the exercise planning process. It is held to finalize exercise documentation and logistics.
Full-Scale Exercise	An operations-based exercise that is typically the most complex and resource-intensive of the exercise types and often involves multiple agencies, jurisdictions/organizations, and real-time movement of resources.
Functional Exercise	An operations-based exercise designed to assess and evaluate capabilities and functions while in a realistic, real-time environment; however, movement of resources is usually simulated.
G	
Game	A discussion-based exercise that is a structured form of play designed for individuals or teams in a competitive or noncompetitive environment. It is an event experienced by the players and guided by clear rules, data, and procedures for its execution. Games are designed to depict an actual or hypothetical situation to ensure that the participants make decisions and take actions that would be plausible. Games can be used to reinforce training, stimulate team building, or enhance operational and tactical capabilities.
Ground Truth	A document comprised of the detailed elements of a scenario that must remain consistent during exercise development and conduct to ensure that realism is maintained, and objectives can be achieved.
Ground Truth Advisor	An individual responsible for ensuring that the scenario details remain consistent during exercise conduct.
H	
Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)	A document that provides a set of guiding principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.

Term	Description
I	
Improvement Plan (IP)	A document that includes a consolidated list of corrective actions, responsible parties, and a timeline for completion.
Initial Planning Meeting (IPM)	A meeting that is held to refine the scope and exercise objectives. For less complex exercises and for organizations with limited resources, the C&O Meeting can be conducted in conjunction with the IPM.
Inject	A Master Scenario Events List event introduced to a player by the control staff, representing non-playing entities, to build the exercise environment based on the exercise scenario and to drive operations-based exercise play.
Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP)	A document for combing efforts across components of the Integrated Preparedness Cycle to make sure that a jurisdiction/organization has the capabilities to handle threats and hazards.
Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW)	A meeting that establishes the strategy and structure for an exercise program and preparedness efforts while setting the foundation for the planning, conduct, and evaluation of individual exercises.
L	
Lead Controller	An individual that monitors exercise progression, communicates exercise activities throughout all venues, and manages the control staff.
Lead Evaluator	An individual that oversees all facets of the evaluation process, to include recruiting, assigning, and training evaluators.
Lead Facilitator/Presenter	An individual responsible for keeping a discussion focused on exercise objectives and exploring all issues within the time allotted during discussion-based exercises, or an individual designated to deliver information in a structured setting.
Liability Waiver Form	A document that each actor should receive and sign prior to the start of the exercise. Signing a waiver form releases liability for all exercise planners and participants. Exercising entities should use discretion when recruiting actors under the age of 18 years because of additional challenges and concerns related to liability. If the exercise requires volunteers younger than 18 years, parents or legal guardians must sign their waiver forms.
Logistics	Responsible to ensure venues are adequately equipped with audio/visual equipment, tables, and chairs and coordinates refreshments if required.
Logistics Lead	An individual responsible to ensure proper room function and setup for audio/visual requirements, as well as obtaining necessary equipment, food, and drinks; works with the facilities lead.
M	
Main Exercise Venue	A location designated as the primary facility or geographic area where participants gather to conduct an exercise.
Master Control Cell	A location where overall coordination is managed between venue control cells, simulation cells, and other control areas.

Term	Description
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)	A document or system that is a chronological timeline of expected actions and scripted events to be injected into exercise play by controllers to generate or prompt player activity. It ensures necessary events happen so that all objectives are met. Larger, more complex exercises may also use a procedural flow, which differs from the MSEL in that it contains only expected player actions or events. The MSEL links simulation to action, enhances exercise experience for players, and reflects an incident or activity meant to prompt players to action.
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Manager	An individual that manages the timely and accurate delivery of injects and player expected actions and decides on the need to release contingency injects.
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Meeting	A meeting for operations-based exercises that serves as a forum to build the Master Scenario Events List in detail.
Midterm Planning Meeting (MPM)	A meeting that serves as a forum to develop exercise scenario details and timeline.
Mitigation	The capabilities necessary to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters.
N	
National Preparedness Goal (NPG)	A document that defines what it means for the whole community to be prepared for all types of disasters and emergencies. The NPG describes 32 core capabilities that address the greatest risks to the nation.
National Preparedness System	A method that outlines an organized process for everyone in the whole community to move forward with preparedness activities and achieve the National Preparedness Goal.
Note Taker	An individual that records what is said during breakout groups, interviews, or hotwash discussions, allowing the facilitator, presenter, or interviewer to focus on soliciting information and asking follow-up questions, and supports data collection and data management throughout the evaluation process.
O	
Objectives	An item with a distinct outcome that a jurisdiction/organization wishes to achieve during an exercise. An objective should be: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).
Observer	An individual that does not directly participate in but may watch selected segments of the exercise as it unfolds.
Observer Brief	A briefing before the start of the exercise that occurs on the day of an exercise and informs observers and VIPs about the exercise background, scenario, schedule of events, observer limitations, and any other miscellaneous information. Often, observers are unfamiliar with public safety procedures and have questions about the activities; therefore, designating someone, such as a public information officer, to answer questions prevents observers from interrupting exercise participants.

Term	Description
Observer/Media Area	A location where observers and real-world media representatives can view the exercise but not interfere with exercise play.
Observer/Media Area Controller	An individual responsible to ensure that observers and the media stay in their designated areas and do not interfere with the exercise.
P	
Participant	A player, facilitator/controller, evaluator, simulator, actor, observer, VIP, media, or other staff member involved in conducting an exercise.
Participant Feedback Form	A document that the exercise team uses to collect observed strengths, areas for improvement, and input about exercise conduct and logistics from participants.
Pause Exercise (PauseEx)	An event that suspends exercise play.
Photo Consent Form	A document for photographs prior to the exercise. Signing the form releases permission for all exercise participants photographed, allowing their photo to be used for informational and educational purposes.
Planning Meetings	Meetings that serve as a structured event or forum for completing the major milestones of exercise design and development.
Player	An individual that has an active role in the exercise by either discussing or performing a regular role and responsibility in response to a scenario.
Player Brief	A briefing for all players before the start of the exercise to address individual roles and responsibilities, exercise parameters, safety, security badges, and any remaining logistical exercise concerns or questions. Participant handouts and ExPlans or SitMans, depending on the type of exercise being conducted, are often distributed during this briefing. Following the exercise, controllers ensure that appropriate players attend the post-exercise hotwash in their respective functional areas.
Player Handout	A document that supplements or replaces the Situation Manual and presentation, providing players a quick-reference guide; sometimes referred to as a “placemat.”
Player Hotwash	A meeting that provides an opportunity to discuss exercise strengths and areas for improvement immediately following the conduct of an exercise.
Preparedness	The continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action to ensure effective coordination.
Presenter	An individual designated to deliver information in a structured setting.
Press Release	A document that the exercise planning team develops for the media and the public to inform them about the exercise.
Prevention	The capabilities necessary to avoid, prevent, or stop a threatened or actual act of terrorism.
Program Management	A process of overseeing and integrating preparedness activities for a jurisdiction/organization over time.

Term	Description
Props	Items that are nonfunctional replications of objects used during the exercise that require certain actions from players.
Protection	The capabilities necessary to secure the homeland against acts of terrorism and manmade or natural disasters.
R	
Recovery	The capabilities necessary to assist communities affected by an incident to recover effectively. Support for recovery ensures a continuum of care for individuals to maintain and restore health, safety, independence, and livelihoods, especially those who experience financial, emotional, and physical hardships.
Resource Lead	An individual responsible for obtaining proper venues, equipment, and supplies for exercise conduct, as well as providing support for media and VIP observers.
Resource/Support	Responsible for logistics, administration, facility, and finance support for planning meetings, exercise documentation, and other planning considerations.
Response	The capabilities necessary to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs after an incident has occurred.
Response Route	A route for responding emergency units from the assembly area to the staging area or other exercise sites during a response-focused exercise.
Rolling Summary Report	A document that provides stakeholders with an analysis of issues, trends, and key outcomes from all exercises conducted as part of the exercise program.
Root-Cause Analysis	A method used to trace the origin of an event back to earlier events and their respective causes.
S	
Safety/Security Controller	An individual responsible to ensure that the exercise is conducted in a safe and secure environment.
Scenario	A model or outline, either written or depicted by an event timeline, of the simulated sequence of events that drive the player's discussion or actions.
Scope	An item that is defined by exercise type, participation level, exercise duration, and exercise location that enables planners to meet exercise objectives while staying within the resource and personnel constraints.
Seminar	A discussion-based exercise that orients participants to or provides an overview of authorities, strategies, plans, policies, procedures, protocols, resources, concepts, and ideas.
Senior Leader	An individual that provide the overarching guidance and direction for the exercise program and intent for individual exercises.

Term	Description
Senior Leader Brief	A briefing during the design and development and before the conduct of an exercise. The exercise planning team leader periodically consults with the senior leaders on the exercise planning team to ensure the exercise aligns with leader intent.
Simulation	A method of implementing the performance of a model, or combination of models, over time.
Simulation Cell (SimCell)	A location from which controllers deliver scenario messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise.
Simulation Cell (SimCell) Controller	An individual that coordinates with the MSEL manager or may act as the MSEL manager and directs simulators and actors.
Simulators	An individual that delivers scenario messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise.
Situation Manual (SitMan)	A document that provides background information and serves as the primary reference material for exercise participants (core document for discussion-based exercises).
Span of Control	A method that defines the ideal number of functions, people, or things for which an individual or organization is responsible.
Special Effects	Items used for operations-based exercises that require trained and licensed personnel and special permission for use.
Sponsor	An individual or agency who funds and hosts the exercise.
Start of Exercise (StartEx)	An event that marks the official beginning of an exercise.
Subject-Matter Expert (SME)	An individual who has special skills and knowledge about a function or topic.
Symptomology Card	An item containing the signs and symptoms that an exercise actor will portray, as well as information helpful for players.
T	
Tabletop Exercise (TTX)	A discussion-based exercise in response to a scenario intended to generate a dialogue of various issues to facilitate a conceptual understanding, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and/or achieve changes in perceptions about plans, policies, or procedures.
Trusted Agent	An individual on the exercise planning team who is trusted not to reveal exercise and scenario details to players or third parties before exercise conduct.
V	
Venue	A location where the exercise conduct is taking place.
Venue Control Cell	A location where controllers manage individual injects designed for their relevant players.

Term	Description
Venue Controller	An individual that is responsible for setting up and operating a specific exercise location. Venue Controllers manage exercise play and may prompt or initiate certain players to ensure continuity and flow.
Venue Evaluator	An individual responsible for observing exercise activity/play in their assigned exercise venue, area, or for a specific activity.
W	
Weapons and Safety Policy	A document for all exercises, where applicable, that shall employ a written weapons and safety policy in accordance with applicable state or local laws and regulations. Exercise sponsors should coordinate the application of a weapons and safety policy with the appropriate safety and legal departments as necessary. All players are expected to fully adhere to this policy; however, site security personnel may continue to carry assigned weapons.
Whole Community	Individuals, to include families, businesses, faith-based and community organizations, nonprofit groups, schools and academia, media outlets, and all levels of government who are involved in preparedness efforts.
Workshop	A discussion-based exercise often employed to develop policy, plans, or procedures.

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