

Prepare to Respond: Beyond the Day-to-Day

Exercise Design

The Tabletop Exercise

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Eagle Crest Resort

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Exercise Design

The Tabletop Exercise

In this session...

- **Show the value of a well-designed table top exercise**
- **Develop and execute a table top exercise**

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Reasons for Doing Exercises

- Clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Improve interagency coordination.
- Find resource gaps.
- Develop individual performance.
- Identify opportunities for improvement.

Discuss or Do ?

- Discussion-based exercises, as the name suggests, center on participant discussion.
- Operations-based exercises focus on action-oriented activities such as deployment of resources and personnel.



The Building Block Approach

- **Key Concept: Exercises should be planned in a cycle that increases in complexity. Each successive exercise should build on the scale and experience of the previous one.**



Discussion-Based Exercises

- Provide a forum for discussing or developing plans, agreements, training and procedures.
- Are generally less complicated than operations-based types.
- Typically focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues.

Discussion-Based Exercises

- Do not involve deployment of resources.
- Include seminars, workshops, tabletops, and games.



Seminars

- **An informal discussion-based exercise led by a presenter or facilitator, used to teach or orient participants.**



In a Seminar – participants...

- **Get exposed / oriented to new or existing plans, policies, or procedures.**
- **Research or assess interagency capabilities or inter-jurisdictional operations.**
- **Construct a common framework of understanding.**

Table Top Exercises

- A tabletop exercise (TTX) involves senior staff, elected or appointed officials, or other key personnel in an informal group discussion centered on a hypothetical scenario.



In a TTX – participants...

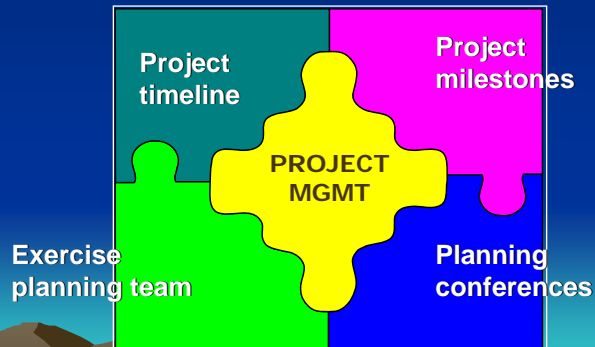
- Identify plan's strengths and shortfalls.
- Enhance their understanding of new concepts.
- Seek to change existing attitudes and perspectives.

Exercise Program Management

- Multi-year training & exercise program planning.
- Budgeting / grant writing.
- Planning & executing individual exercises.
- Tracking improvements.

Exercise Project Management

- Exercise project management is the next step after program management.



HSEEP Compliance

1. Conduct an annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshop, and maintain a Multiyear Training and Exercise Plan.
2. Plan and conduct exercises in accordance with the guidelines set forth in HSEEP policy.



HSEEP Compliance

3. Develop and submit (to participants) a properly formatted After Action Report / Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).
4. Track and implement corrective actions identified in the AAR/IP.

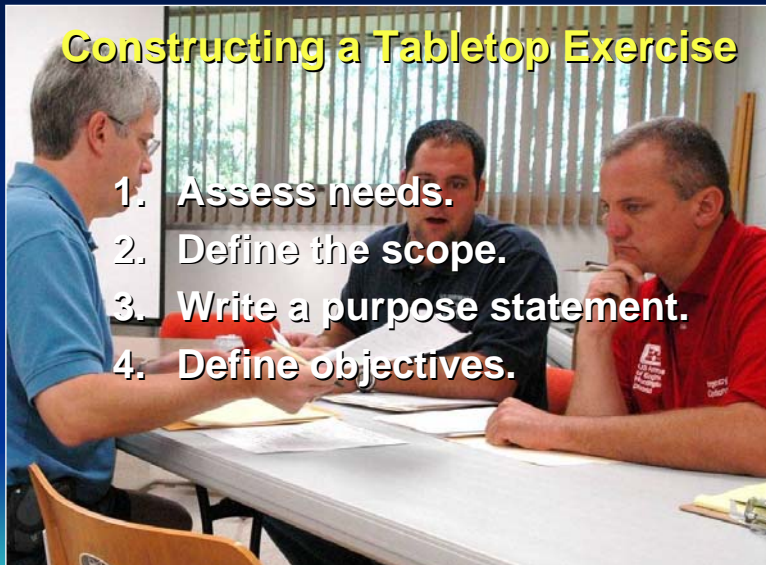
Planning Conferences

**HSEEP
REQUIRED**

**But a good
idea, anyway!**



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise



1. Assess needs.
2. Define the scope.
3. Write a purpose statement.
4. Define objectives.

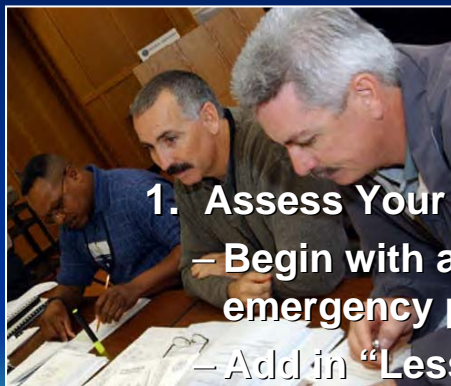
Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

5. Compose a narrative.
6. Write major and detailed events.
7. List expected actions.
8. Prepare messages.



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

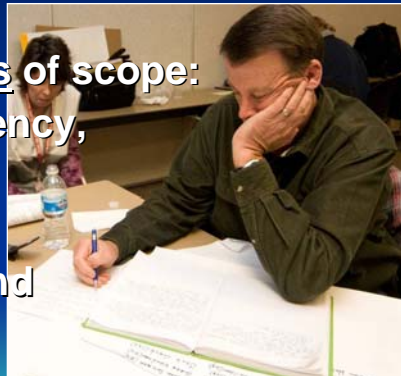
1. Assess Your (Exercise) Needs.
 - Begin with a review of your emergency plan.
 - Add in “Lessons Learned.”



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

2. Define Scope.

- Five key elements of scope:
 - Type of emergency,
 - Location,
 - Functions,
 - Participants, and
 - Exercise type.



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

3. Write Purpose Statement.

- A *broad statement* of the exercise goal.
- Governs the selection of the objectives.



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

4. Define Objectives.

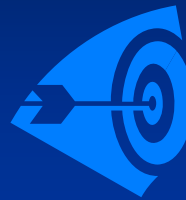
An objective is a description of the performance you expect from participants to demonstrate competence.



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

Objectives – drive everything!

- Must be clear, concise, and focused on participant performance.
- Use “SMART” Guidelines.
- For “average exercise”.. 10 or fewer.



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

5. Compose a narrative.

- Set the mood for the exercise – motivate the participants!
- Set the stage for later action.



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

A good narrative:

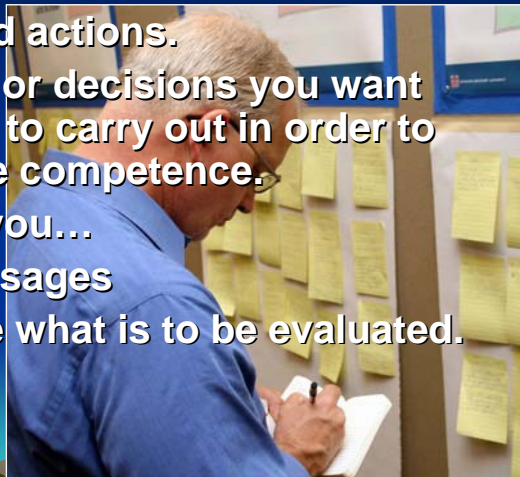
- Usually one to five paragraphs long.
- Specific and phrased in present tense.
- Written in short sentences.
- May develop chronologically
- May emphasize the emergency environment.

Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

6. Write major and detailed events.
 - Major events are big problems resulting from the emergency.
 - Detailed events should prompt one or more expected actions from one or more participating organizations.
 - May be a list of specific events closely linked with expected actions.

Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

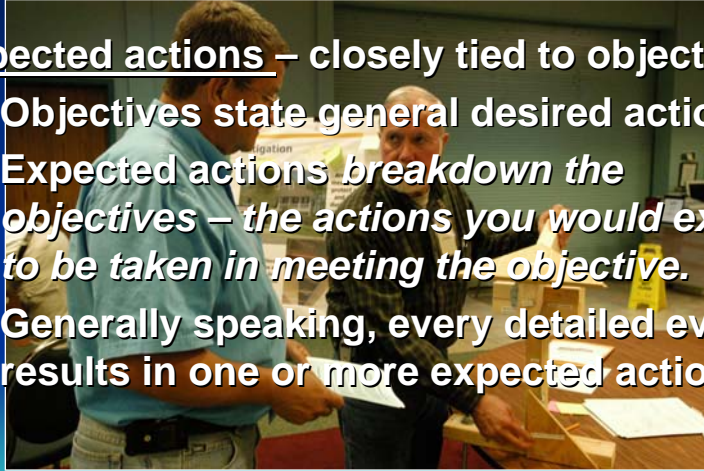
7. List expected actions.
 - The actions or decisions you want participants to carry out in order to demonstrate competence.
 - Also helps you...
 - Write messages
 - Determine what is to be evaluated.



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

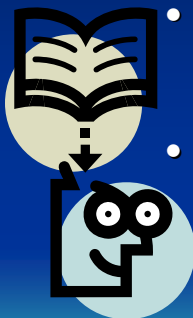
Expected actions – closely tied to objectives.

- Objectives state general desired actions.
- Expected actions *breakdown the objectives – the actions you would expect to be taken in meeting the objective.*
- Generally speaking, every detailed event results in one or more expected actions.



Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

8. Prepare messages.



- Messages communicate detailed events to exercise participants.
- Messages serve one purpose: To evoke a response – to cause exercise participants to make decisions and take actions that meet the exercise objectives.

Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

Master Scenario of Events List (MSEL)

- Chart of events
 - With time of occurrence
 - From whom to whom
 - Means of transmission
 - Expected actions

Constructing a Tabletop Exercise

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Exercise Design The Tabletop Exercise

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