

# Elliptic MRC Thunder Tabletop Exercise

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## Situation Manual

[05/17/2023]

This Situation Manual (Sit-Man) provides exercise participants with all the necessary tools for their roles in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, facilitators, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the Sit-Man.

## EXERCISE OVERVIEW

<b>Exercise Name</b>	<b>Elliptic MRC Thunder</b>
<b>Exercise Dates</b>	<b>05/17/2023</b>
<b>Scope</b>	Elliptic MRC Thunder is a tabletop exercise hosted by NACCHO and planned for MRC workshops. The purpose of this exercise is to assess, examine, validate, and demonstrate the ability of MRC units to prepare for, respond to and recover from a catastrophic hurricane that impacts their region.
<b>Mission Area(s)</b>	Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery
<b>MRC Unit Factors for Success</b> <b>PHEP Capabilities</b>	<p><b>MRC Unit Factors for Success</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Develop Procedures for Volunteer Recruitment</li> <li>6. Develop and Implement Procedures for Volunteer Screening and Selection</li> <li>7. Develop a Volunteer Training Program</li> <li>8. Develop Policies and Procedures for Volunteer Utilization</li> <li>11. Develop and Implement Strategies for Risk Management</li> <li>12. Participate in Activities that Fulfill MRC Unit’s Mission</li> </ul> <p><b>PHEP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Volunteer Management</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p><b>Module 1: Rapid/Pre-Deployment Phase</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate procedures and practices for rapid recruiting and identify the type and number of volunteers needed for the missions requested.</li> <li>2. Assess procedures and practices used in rapid screening, vetting, registering, and selecting volunteers to support the mission request.</li> <li>3. Evaluate current training plans to identify gaps and additional resource areas based on the response mission.</li> <li>4. Explore potential areas of risks for the unit and evaluate the risk management plan.</li> </ul>



**Module 2: Deployment Phase**

5. Evaluate processes to notify volunteers with the desired skills and quantity needed to support emergency activities, including communicating with volunteers during adverse events.
6. Assess procedures to organize, assemble and deploy volunteers that have the necessary credentials and skills consistent with community plans to ensure the effective utilization of MRC volunteers and resources in both emergency operations and non-emergency activities.
7. Assess systems used for tracking and managing volunteers as indicated by the incident and by relevant job functions.

**Module 3: Post Deployment Phase**

8. Evaluate processes and procedures to release and track volunteers following completion of service in emergency operations and missions.
9. Assess plans to support volunteer post-deployment including medical screening, stress, and well-being assessments and when requested or indicated referral to medical and mental/behavioral health services.
10. Review process to conduct an after-action review (AAR) of appropriate activities, events, and emergency operations.

**Threat or Hazard**

Natural-Climate Change-Hurricane.

**Scenario**

The National Hurricane Center (NHC) reported that after a week in warm open waters, tropical storm MRC is approximately 200 miles off the coast of the south and southeast regions (ASPR Regions 4 & 6). The National Hurricane Center issued a hurricane watch for large portions of the southeast coast. Forecasters are already warning of the potential for this storm to become extremely powerful. Two days later, May 13, 2023, the storm strengthened, and the NHC issues a Hurricane and floods Warning for the two regions. Currently a Category 5 hurricane, MRC continues to gain strength and is projected to make landfall within 72 hours. The governors in affected states have declared a state of emergency and have issued evacuation orders for significant portions of the region.

**Sponsor**

National Association of County & City Health Officials

**Participating Organizations**

MRC Units in ASPR Regions Four & Six

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned MRC Factors for Success are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objectives	MRC Unit Factors for Success	Phase/ Module
Evaluate procedures and practices for rapid recruiting and identify the type and number of volunteers needed for the missions requested.	5. Develop Procedures for Volunteer Recruitment	<b>Module 1: 1: Rapid/Pre-Deployment Phase</b>
Assess procedures and practices used in rapid screening, vetting, registering, and selecting volunteers to support the mission request.	6. Develop and Implement Procedures for Volunteer Screening and Selection	<b>Module 1: 1: Rapid/Pre-Deployment Phase</b>
Evaluate current training plans to identify gaps and additional resource areas based on the response mission.	7. Develop a Volunteer Training Program	<b>Module 1: 1: Rapid/Pre-Deployment Phase</b>
Explore potential areas of risks for the unit and evaluate the risk management plan.	11. Develop and Implement Strategies for Risk Management	<b>Module 1: 1: Rapid/Pre-Deployment Phase</b>
Evaluate processes to notify volunteers with the desired skills and quantity needed to support emergency activities, including communicating with volunteers during adverse events.	8. Develop Policies and Procedures for Volunteer Utilization	<b>Module 2: - Deployment Phase</b>

Exercise Objectives	MRC Unit Factors for Success	Phase/ Module
Assess procedures to organize, assemble and rapidly deploy volunteers that have the necessary credentials and skills consistent with community plans to ensure the effective utilization of MRC volunteers and resources in both emergency operations and non-emergency activities.	8. Develop Policies and Procedures for Volunteer Utilization  12. Participate in Activities that Fulfill MRC Unit’s Mission	<b>Module 2: Deployment Phase</b>
Assess systems used for tracking and managing volunteers as indicated by the incident and by relevant job functions.	8. Develop Policies and Procedures for Volunteer Utilization	<b>Module 2: Deployment Phase</b>
Evaluate processes and procedures to release and track volunteers following completion of service in emergency operations and missions.	8. Develop Policies and Procedures for Volunteer Utilization	<b>Module 3: Post-Deployment Phase</b>
Assess plans to support volunteer post-deployment including medical screening, stress, and well-being assessments and when requested or indicated referral to medical and mental/behavioral health services.	8. Develop Policies and Procedures for Volunteer Utilization  8. Develop and Implement Strategies for Risk Management	<b>Module 3: Post-Deployment Phase</b>
Review process to conduct an after-action review (AAR) of appropriate activities, events, and emergency operations.	12. Participate in Activities that Fulfill MRC Unit’s Mission	<b>Module 3: Post-Deployment Phase</b>

**Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities**

## Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Facilitators.** Facilitators provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required.

## Exercise Structure

This exercise will be a multimedia, facilitated exercise. Players will participate in the following 3 modules:

- **Module 1: Rapid/Pre-Deployment Phase**
- **Module 2: Deployment Phase**
- **Module 3: Post-Deployment Phase**

Each module begins with a multimedia update that summarizes key events occurring within that time. After the updates, participants review the situation and engage in functional group discussions of appropriate prevention, response, or recovery issues.

## Exercise Guidelines

- This exercise will be held in an open, low-stress, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
- Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., you may use only existing assets) and insights derived from your training.
- Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your organization's final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.
- Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve response efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus.

## Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation. During this exercise, the following apply:

- The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.
- The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.
- All players receive information at the same time.

## **Exercise Evaluation**

Players will be asked to participate in a hot wash to record the top three strengths and the top three items requiring improvement as observed during the exercise. The hotwash is an opportunity for players to voice their opinions on the exercise and their own performance while the events are still fresh in their minds. Takeaways from the hot wash will be used to evaluate and improve future MRC exercises.

## MODULE 1: RAPID/PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE

### Key Issues

- Determining unit's mission and capabilities.
- Determining response missions and roles for MRC volunteers.
- Preparing for a rapid deployment

### Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 1. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time. The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

- 1) What systems, policies or procedures do you have in place to assess the situation and the risks associated for volunteers' safety and health before fulfilling the requests?
- 2) What information should be communicated to existing volunteers at this time? What is the messaging process and current message?
- 3) How will the unit rapidly recruit new volunteers to support the disaster?
- 4) What kind of procedures does your unit have for rapid volunteer screening and selection?
- 5) What training is needed to prepare volunteers for rapid deployment? Please give examples.
- 6) Do you have mission sets available?
- 7) What policy do you have to make sure volunteers have all necessary safety and health measures to reduce volunteer's safety and health risks?



## MODULE 2: DEPLOYMENT PHASE

### Key Issues & Implications

- The hurricane resulted in more than 1,000 fatalities and 5,000 people have sustained injuries requiring professional treatment in the affected areas.
- Tourists and residents in low-lying areas were ordered to evacuate 48 hours prior to projected landfall.
- Major portions of coastal cities are flooded.
- Shelters throughout the two regions are reaching capacity.
- Serious need for food supply and drinking water.
- Sewage treatment plants in the regions have been flooded and sustained damage from the storm.
- Determining impacts on MRC volunteers to determine impacts on workforce.
- Allocating volunteers.

### Potential Mission Areas Activated:

- Shelters Support for general, medical, and animal shelters
- Points of Dispensing (Medical Countermeasures, supplies)
- Public Health Outreaches (Health education & promotion)
- Medical evacuations & Health Care Systems support.
- Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) And Call Centers

### Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 2. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

- 8) What procedures or systems are used to utilize, manage, and track volunteers?
- 9) What procedures does your unit have in place to rapidly organize, assemble, and deploy volunteers?
- 10) Does your unit have just-in-time training, job action sheets or checklist in place to response to such missions?
- 11) What resources are most needed to support MRC volunteers responding rapidly?
- 12) How does your unit maintain consistent communication with stakeholders and the response agency throughout the disaster? Are you notifying your MRC Regional Liaison for situational awareness?

- 13) What system or forms of communication will be utilized to communicate with volunteers?
- 14) How are you communicating incident-specific safety and health risks to volunteers?
- 15) What system, policies or procedures do you have in place to monitor volunteers' safety and health during the incident response?
- 16) What type of volunteer legal protections are in place to activate?

## MODULE 3: POST-DEPLOYMENT PHASE

- Response has been ongoing for over 1 week and the immediate needs of the region are being addressed. The operation is beginning to transition to a recovery phase.

### Key Issues:

Tracking volunteers' hours  
Volunteer demobilization  
Volunteer health and safety, including mental health  
After action reviews

### Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 3. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time. The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

- 17) What process do you have in place to release and demobilize volunteers?
- 18) What strategies for risk management are implemented to protect your unit and the MRC volunteers?
- 19) What system, policies or procedures do you have in place to monitor volunteers' safety and health after missions are completed?
- 20) How does your unit conduct after-action reviews and develop after-action reports and improvement plans?

## APPENDIX A: EXERCISE SCHEDULE

Time	Activity
<b>03/15/2023</b>	
08:30-08:35	Welcome and Opening Remarks
08:35-09:35	Module 1: Briefing, Caucus Discussion
09:35-10:00	Brief-Back
10:00-10:10	Break
10:10-10:45	Module 2: Briefing, Caucus Discussion
10:45-11:00	Brief-Back
11:00-11:30	Module 3: Briefing, Caucus Discussion
11:30-11:45	Brief-Back
11:45-12:00	Evaluation

