

Exercise Toolkit



Oakland County Health Division

Exercise Toolkit

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Introduction

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Domestic Preparedness has developed and implemented the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) to enhance and support prevention, response, and recovery capabilities at federal, state, and local levels. This is also a means to "standardize the language and concepts used by various agencies and organizations in the exercise planning process".

Exercise programs allow your agency to test the implementation of emergency management procedures and protocols, fine-tune the internal coordination of the emergency plan, and practice the coordination with other external response sectors. Depending on the scope and scale of the emergency preparedness exercises, a number of individuals, both internal and external response partners may be engaged.

An emergency preparedness exercise **program** is progressive in that it builds upon each successive exercise to move an agency toward improving its emergency preparedness capabilities. An exercise program of this kind has its own identified goals, and careful planning around these goals is vital to a successful program. This planning process includes clearly identifying the exercise objectives and then designing, developing, conducting, and analyzing an exercise accordingly. This is a process that will provide insight into what does and does not work for an agency.

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Local Responsibility

Oakland County Health Division is prepared to handle a public health emergency at the local level. With guidance from the state and federal government Oakland County Health Division is creating and testing plans to protect the residents in Oakland County.

There are many response sectors public health needs to plan and coordinate its exercise activities with. These activities are common to all response sectors.

Local Public Health is responsible for:

- ✓ Coordinating activities with the state health agency
- ✓ Identifying goals and objectives for exercises consistent with local public health risk, vulnerability, and needs assessments, as well as Homeland Security strategy
- ✓ Designing and conducting exercises that conform to HSEEP
- ✓ Providing plans, procedures and personnel to support the design, development, support, control and evaluation of public health exercises
- ✓ Providing an Improvement Plan (IP) based on the recommendations made in the After Action Report (AAR) issued, following the completion of the exercise
- ✓ Ensure all identified issues are tracked and addressed

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Basics for Exercise Planning

1. Build on the Public Health All Hazards Response Plan and National Incident Management System.
2. Work with Oakland County Health Division's Emergency Preparedness Unit to ensure state and federal guidelines are being met.
3. Coordinate exercise activities at the state and federal levels along with community partners.
4. A suite of common scenarios is available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/hseep.htm>.
5. Plan your exercise to match the needs of the public health sector by including criteria to assess the ability of public health performance, under specific public health emergencies and/or disasters.

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Planning Process

Use the checklist to help identify staff and procedures that are required to run an effective exercise. The state requires local health departments to test multiple situations and scenarios. When developing an exercise, contact Oakland County Health Division's Emergency Preparedness Unit for assistance and guidance with goals and objectives.

When creating an exercise look for the following:

- ✓ Notify and collaborate with Oakland County Health Division's Emergency Preparedness Unit
- ✓ Define the exercise's purpose
- ✓ Select a scenario, develop goals, and determine objectives for the exercise
- ✓ Set a time line for the planning process
- ✓ Coordinate a team of staff to assist in the planning process
- ✓ Schedule the event, location, date, time, and duration of the exercise
- ✓ Define the exercise control and prepare all documents and materials
- ✓ Include all departments and materials including communication needs, rules of conduct, security and safety issues, and logistics, e.g., parking, assembly areas, transportation, restrooms, food/water for participants, maps and directs, etc.
- ✓ Provide training on responsibilities/activities to all participants and evaluators

Planning Checklist

Exercise Development Steps	Start Date	End Date	Assigned Staff	Status
1. Planning				
Identify need for exercise				
Determine structure of planning team				
Develop exercise evaluation plan				
Develop public information plan				
2. Exercise Design				
Identify overarching goals				
Establish purpose				
Establish scope and scale				
Define extent of play				
Develop objectives				
Determine exercise type (format, e.g., TTX, FSE, etc.)				
Develop exercise scenario narrative summary				
Develop concept of operations				
Define exercise assumptions, artificialities				
Develop security plan (exercise safety)				
Develop exercise time line, master scenario events list, injects, and simulations				
Finalize scenario				

Define resources, requirements and logistics plan				
Develop briefing materials:				
Just-In-Time Training (see appendix)				
Job Action Guidelines (JAGs) (see appendix)				
3. Conduct The Exercise				
Conduct senior management pre-exercise briefings				
Conduct controller/facilitator, data collector/evaluator, observer, player training				
Conduct data collector/evaluator, observer, player pre-exercise briefing				
Conduct exercise				
4. Evaluate The Process				
Conduct participant hot wash (see appendix)				
Conduct controller, data collector/evaluator critique				
Collect exercise observation/data collection forms (notes)				
Develop initial After Action Report (AARP)(see appendix)				
Coordinate and evaluate findings				

Conduct senior management post-exercise briefing				
Prepare final AARP				
5. Post Exercise				
Develop improvement plan				
Track corrective actions				
Share lessons learned				

Planning Template – Tabletop Exercise

Date Scheduled:	Initiation Time:	Duration of Exercise:
Facilitator:		Site:
Purpose: Scope:		
Objectives:		
Players:		
Narrative (<i>background information leading up to the scenario</i>):		
Scenario Development (Move I)		

Problem Statements (*questions the facilitator can verbally present which are then discussed by the group*)

Scenario Development (Move II)

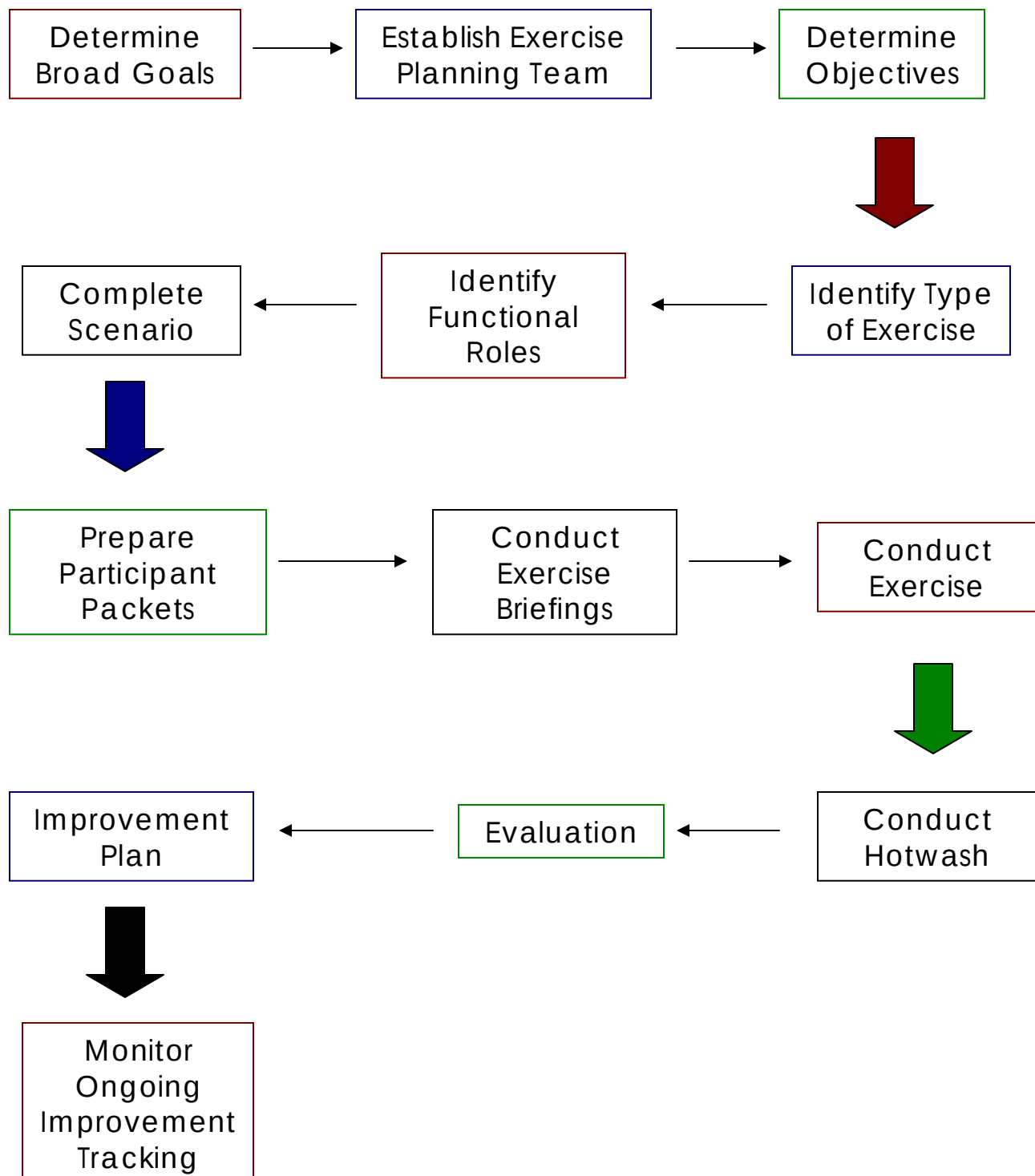
Problem Statements:

Scenario Development (Move III)

Problem Statements:

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Exercise Flowchart



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Planning Team Organization

A planning team must be created for Functional Exercises (FE) and Full-Scale Exercise (FSE).

The team's size should be modified to fit the scope of a particular exercise. The roles and responsibilities for the planning team must be clearly defined, and should include delegation of responsibilities among team members, as itemized below:

- ✓ Command Group:
Responsible for assigning tasks and responsibilities, establishing the time line, and guiding and monitoring the development of the exercise. Typically this role consists of a single Team Leader—often the Health Officer or the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. In cases where large departments or large-scale exercises are involved, other staff members may assist the Team Leader.
- ✓ Operations Group:
Responsible for ensuring accuracy and applicability of the scenario and the evaluation criteria. Participants in this group typically include departmental Subject Matter Experts (SME) and technical experts (e.g., epidemiologists for surveillance activities, environmental health specialists for environmental health sampling, and public health nurses for mass prophylaxis and immunization clinic set-up).
- ✓ Planning Group:
Responsible for collecting and reviewing all policies and procedures applicable to the exercise. Also responsible for development of simulation and injects (intermediate changes or challenges to the exercise participants) needed to sustain exercise flow. In small departments or for small-scale exercises, the Planning Group may be combined with the Operations Group.
- ✓ Logistics Group:
Responsible for gathering all supplies, materials, equipment, services or facilities required for the implementation of the exercise. For small-scale exercises, the “group” may consist of a single senior administrative support person working closely with the Planning Group.

- ✓ Administration/Finance Group:
Responsible for keeping an account of the costs involved in conducting the exercise. For small agencies, this “group” may be comprised of a single individual, and may be the same administrative support person assigned to the Logistics Group.

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Exercise Objectives

The objectives for any exercise must be challenging yet achievable and should support your agency's overall mission and preparedness plan. Objectives should be based on the following:

1. The department's current stage of emergency preparedness capability;
2. Gaps, weaknesses, or areas of concern affecting the department's performance as identified through prior exercises;
3. Level of staff knowledge and understanding of the roles and responsibilities; and
4. Applicability to emerging problems.

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Types of Exercises

A. Discussion-based Exercises

Orientation Exercise (Workshops or Seminars)

The purposes of an orientation exercise is to: (1) familiarize new staff with the agency's emergency response plan and/or (2) familiarize experienced staff with new or changing information/procedures. An organization may carry out an orientation exercise using a variety of circumstances, including the initiation of a new plan, procedure, or mutual aid agreement, or in the event of new staffing, leadership, facilities, or risk(s). The focus is usually on a single function, with roles and responsibilities clearly identified. It typically requires a scheduled meeting of pertinent agency staff. No previous experience is needed, and minimal staff preparation and lead time are required. Orientation exercises make use of various training techniques, including lectures, films, slides, videotapes, and panel discussions.

Tabletop Exercise (TTX)

A TTX is a low-stress event to stimulate discussion of a simulated situation. Participants discuss issues in depth and make decisions using slow-paced problem-solving methods in contrast to the fast-paced, spontaneous decision making typical of actual or simulated emergency conditions. TTXs are designed as an early step along the way of functional and full-scale exercises. Constructive problem solving is the goal of such an exercise. A copy of the appropriate emergency plan and other pertinent materials are available for reference during a TTX; these notions serve as a reference tool for evaluating the exercise.

A TTX begins with a briefing by the facilitator to orient participants and simulators to the TTX objectives, ground rules, and communication and simulation procedures. The scenario narrative is then presented in an intelligence briefing. The scenario is generally invented and describes an event or emergency incident, bringing participants up to a simulated "present moment" in time. The selected event should be one that is realistic for the agency (e.g. a hurricane on the Eastern seaboard, a transportation event at a major railroad hub, etc.). Materials may be distributed to provide details about the imaginary jurisdiction, or participants may be instructed to use their knowledge of

actual resources. The facilitator announces the beginning and end of the exercise, and introduces the first problem, along with subsequent messages, to the participants.

B. Operation-based Exercises

Drill

The purpose of a drill is to use repetition to instruct thoroughly. Drills can be used to test personnel training, response time, interagency cooperation and resources, and work force and equipment capabilities. Drills optimally take place after orientation; staff should have an understanding of the agency function that will be tested in the drill and be given an opportunity to ask questions.

How a drill begins depends on the type of drill being conducted. Drill categories include, but are not limited to, notification, communication, command post, and evacuation. In most cases, a general briefing by the drill designer sets the scene and reviews the drill's purpose and objectives. Operational procedures and safety precautions are reviewed before the drill begins. Personnel are required to report, either in person or by telephone or e-mail, to a designated drill site or contact location. Both planned and spontaneous messages sustain the drill's action.

Functional Exercise (FE)

The purpose of an FE is to test and evaluate the capabilities of an emergency response system. Events and situations that would actually occur over an extended period of time are depicted or described. Time transitions advance the activity while staying within the time allotted for the exercise (e.g., "It is now 24 hours later"). The objectives of an FE determine how it is to be organized. For example, a "no-notice" exercise does not have a start time; in such an exercise, the objectives would include testing staff members' ability to move into their emergency response roles and activities quickly and efficiently. Other FEs, however, may be announced in advance.

Immediately before the start of the FE, participants are briefed on the objectives, procedures, time frame, and recording requirements. FEs depend on reaction to simulated information delivered by paper, telephone, or radio to individuals or agencies that must then coordinate responses with other players. The messages can be pre-scripted or developed by the simulation cell during the course of the exercise.

Full-scale Exercise (FSE)

The purpose of an FSE is to test and evaluate a major portion of the emergency operations plan in an interactive manner over an extended period. FSEs typically involve more than one agency. As with an FE, the objectives of an FSE must be specified, and the actual exercise begins with a simulated event that prompts the initiation of the plan. An FSE differs from a functional drill in that field personnel from the participating agencies physically proceed to the location of the mock emergency. The FSE includes all of the activities taking place at the emergency operations center (EOC) as well as on-scene use of simulated victims, equipment, and work force. Activities at the scene serve as input and require coordination with the EOC. An FSE combines the planned and spontaneous messages characteristic of FEs with actions from the field.

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Developing a Scenario

Use the goals and objectives that are identified in the planning steps to create a scenario. The goals and objectives can be a guide to assist departments or areas concerning what will be tested during the exercise. Use the following tips to assist in creating a successful exercise:

1. Use agency specialist to assist in creating a scenario that pertains to their department (e.g., include Communications Department because it is an essential part of every exercise).
2. Research and gather background information to make the scenario realistic.
3. Draft and review the scenario with the exercise planning team.
4. Do a “talk-through” with the entire planning committee to identify problems and areas that may need improved or changed.
5. Finalize the scenario, including developing simulations and injects needed for the scenario to flow as information changes. Injects are unexpected situations that are revealed to participants during the exercise. They are usually events or situations that an organization may not have planned for (e.g., power outage, terrorist attack, disease outbreak, etc.). This is also a good time for the evaluators to see how well an agency handles the unexpected.

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Exercise Resources

Just In Time Training (JITT)

JITT is used to educate and orientate exercise participants about terms, policies, and exercise operation details. JITT are supposed to be quick and to the point. The JITT should not go into a lot of detail. This needs to be a quick run-through of what the participants need to know. The site commander may ask the chiefs to give a more detailed JITT to their units/sections. See appendix for an example.

Job Action Guideline (JAG)

JAGs tell participants what “role” they will be playing during the exercise. The position or duty assigned during an exercise may be different than the participant’s everyday job duties. The JAG will list the title, person they report to, and the actions or duties they will fulfill. As a person’s “role” or assignment changes, they will need to receive a new JAG. The JAGs should be basic when describing the person’s duties. In an exercise or real life event, people may have to be asked to change tasks.

Player Handbook

The purpose of a Player Handbook is to provide essential information to all participants involved in the exercise. Depending on the scope of the exercise, participating staff may receive a copy of the handbook prior to the exercise. The handbook should contain the following sections when applicable:

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Scope
- Objectives
- Concept of Operations
- Rules of the Exercise
- Exercise Assumptions
- The Exercise Process
- Limitations and Restrictions of the Exercise
- Data Recording Mechanism(s) (e.g., logs, worksheets, automated systems, etc.)
- Post-exercise Hotwash
- Participant Assignments

Hot Wash/Debriefing

Used after the exercise to capture the results from the participants to improve future exercises. The hot wash is conducted by the Incident or Site Commander. The proceedings should be documented by a note-taker or recorder, then analyzed by the exercise team.

After Action Report (AAR)

The AAR is used to document the outcome of an exercise. (See appendix for listed details of what to include in the report.)

Tracking Improvement Checklist

Items or tasks to be considered for improving the emergency preparedness plan based on the After Action Report.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluator

Used to collect observations in the field during the exercise. Player action is observed and recorded. The selected data collector determines if the criteria selected by the planning team were met or not met, not observed or not applicable during their observation. Observation methods are Look, Listen, and Ask, but do not interfere with the operations being conducted. (See appendix for example.)

Participant Evaluation

This form is used to gather specific feedback from exercise participants. The data is analyzed for improving future exercises. The form should include an area to determine what areas or plans worked or needed improvement. (See appendix for example.)

Just-In-Time Training Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to provide chiefs and unit leaders with the necessary information to train staff on their assigned duties during the exercise.

Lead Staff: Name_____ **Position**_____

1. *Distribute the job action sheets to your staff.*
2. *Review the following information with your staff and check each item as completed.*

A. Basic ICS Principles

- ☐ Refer to Attached Handout on ICS Basic Principles

B. Clinic Functions/Operations

- ☐ Describe the purpose
- ☐ Review the floor plan and flow chart
- ☐ Describe the activities that take place within the assigned section
- ☐ Stress that no one should talk to the media. If they are approached by the media they should be referred to the public information officer

C. General Housekeeping Items:

- ☐ Explain the primary roles of partners at the site
 - Stress that staff may be asked to assist in different roles depending upon the need
- ☐ Describe the location of the following:
 - Restrooms
 - Supplies
 - First-aid supplies

D. Job Action Sheet

- ☐ Review the job action sheet and explain the duties in more detail
- ☐ Go over the length of the shift
- ☐ Ensure training is received on the equipment necessary to perform the job
- ☐ Review forms applicable to the job
- ☐ Provide instructions for personal protective equipment for staff and patients
- ☐ Explain the checkout process

Sign and date after all checked items are reviewed.

Lead Staff Signature_____ **Date**_____

Job Action Guideline (JAG) Example

Site Commander (Public Health)

Location: NEHC
Reports To: Emergency Operations Center

Position Description:

Organize and direct NEHC.

Give overall direction for emergency response and operation.

Typical Duties and Responsibilities may include:

- ☐ Obtain a full briefing of the incident
- ☐ Appoint all Command Staff and Section Chiefs that are required for this response and establish assistants; distribute the section packets which contain any forms pertinent to section and positions
- ☐ Activate NEHC Command Center
- ☐ Brief staff on public health response plan protocols
- ☐ Review appropriate response plan(s) and protocols for the NEHC
- ☐ Confer with Command Staff, Section Chiefs and consultants to develop an incident action plan (IAP) for a defined period of time; establish priorities (Section Chiefs will communicate IAP to each section and pertinent consultants)
- ☐ Confer with Section Chiefs to identify and consider necessary services
- ☐ Determine staffing needs and acquire appropriate staff resources
- ☐ Implement personnel activation
- ☐ Review site design layout in view of the current event and projected patient numbers, including staff health and safety considerations
- ☐ Meet with Section Chiefs and provide staff orientation/briefing
- ☐ Provide Just-In-Time training to all staff
- ☐ Keep constant communication with EOC staff for updates and concerns
- ☐ Lead debriefing
- ☐ Prepare end of shift report and update with Incident Tracking Board and present to Director of Health & Human Services, County Executive and incoming Site Commander
- ☐ Plan for the possibility of extended deployment

Tracking Improvement Checklist

Planning Team:	Command	Operations	Logistics	Planning	Finance/ Admin	
Items for Action						Corrective Actions

After Action Report

The After Action Report (AAR) should include the following:

1. Executive Summary
Brief overview of the exercise, major strengths demonstrated during the exercise
2. Exercise Overview
Purpose, type of exercise(i.e., tabletop, drill, full-scale), scenario of the exercise (chemical agent release or threat, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive, etc.), location(s), participating organizations, exercise evaluation tools including where evaluators were positioned
3. Exercise Goals and Objectives
4. Synopsis of the Event (if applicable)
Chronology of events including dates, time, location(s), actions/response activities
5. Analysis of Mission Outcomes
Analysis outcomes provides an analysis of how well the participating agencies/jurisdictions addressed the mission outcomes. Mission outcomes are broad outcomes or functions that the public expects from its public officials and agencies. As defined by ODP's Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program – mission outcomes include: prevention/deterrence, emergency assessment, emergency management, hazard mitigation, public protection, victim care, investigation/apprehension, recovery/remediation. Exercise goals and objectives will define the mission outcomes that will be addressed by the exercise and that should be analyzed in this section of the AAR.
6. Analysis of Critical Task Performance
Reviews performance of the individual tasks. Those tasks that were preformed as expected require a short write up describing how the task was performed. For tasks that were not performed as expected, the write-up should describe what happened or did not happen and the root causes for the variance from the plan and/or established procedures or agreements. Recommendations for improvement should be presented for these tasks.

Example:

Task: *List overall task and number*

Issue: *List the issue number and statement*

Summary of Issue: *Briefly describe the issue*

Consequence: *Briefly state the consequence of the action*

Analysis: *Briefly explain the issue and the consequences*

Recommendations: *List the recommendation that would help to rectify the issue*

Actions: *List the action steps required to ensure that the recommendation is followed*

7. Conclusion (including Improvement Plan)

Lessons learned for improvement and major recommendations

Data Collector Observation Log

[illegible]

Example Evaluation

Participant Evaluation

OAKLAND COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH PARTICIPANT EVALUATION WORKSHEET

N= 30	YES	NO	N/A	No Answer
1. Were the objectives of the exercise accomplished?				
2. Did the activity test plans, policies, and procedures?				
3. Did the exercise have appropriate field and EOC personnel participating?				
4. Was the exercise well structured and organized?				
5. Did the simulation provide an active portrayal of field and non-field operations resources?				
6. Did the Emergency Operations Center coordinate and cooperate well as a team?				
7. Did your knowledge and experience of your role increase favorably because of this activity?				

Please rate the overall session on the scale below, with 1 being poor and 5 being good.

1 2 3 4 5

If you answered NO to any of the above questions, please provide an explanation below.

--

One thing that you would change:

--

Position:

IC:

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Glossary of Terms

- ✓ **Facilitators:** Exercise participants who lead the group discussions during tabletop exercises, and ensure that all scenario issues and questions are addressed during the exercise.
- ✓ **Controllers:** Exercise participants who monitor the flow of drills and full-scale exercises; may be members of the Exercise Planning Group. Controllers ensure that the exercise is conducted in accordance with the scenario, the time line, and other aspects of the exercise's scope and parameters. Controllers may require specialized briefings to prepare for their role.
- ✓ **Players:** LPHA personnel who perform their everyday duties during the exercise under an ICS/NIMS model. Job Action Sheets are used to identify and describe assigned roles.
- ✓ **Actors:** Exercise participants who act in the role of "patients" or "victims" during the exercise. These individuals may be volunteers or other members of the LPHA. The actors may require specialized briefings to prepare for their roles.
- ✓ **Timekeeper/Recorder:** Records the beginning and end of exercises and events (this function may be handled by the Facilitator if necessary).
- ✓ **Resource Person:** Obtains necessary exercise-related supplies and resources.
- ✓ **Briefer:** Conducts briefing for exercise participants and distributes exercise manuals; may also be combined with the Facilitator role.
- ✓ **Observers:** Involved in drills, exercises, and tabletops. Generally speaking, observers are invited guests who have no official role in the conduct of the exercise, although they may be asked to submit their observations.
- ✓ **Data Collectors:** Involved in drills, exercises, and tabletops. Responsible for observing player action and evaluating effectiveness based on defined objectives and evaluation criteria. Usually evaluate an area consistent with their expertise and will record and note the actions of the players.
- ✓ **Evaluators:** Individuals assigned responsibility for evaluating an aspect of the exercise consistent with their expertise. This process involves noting and recording the actions of the players during the exercise. Evaluators are also responsible for the After Action Report. Evaluators may or may not be employees of the LPHA, depending on the size

and scale of the exercise. Evaluators may require specialized briefings to prepare for their role.

- ✓ **Simulator/Simulation Cell:** Individuals or members of a team (or “cell”) whose task it is to artificially produce circumstances that simulate real-life emergencies (i.e., “simulations”) or role-play response activities.
- ✓ **Briefings:** Meetings held before the exercise to inform all participants about their roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ **Player Hotwash:** In general terms, a “hotwash” is a facilitator-led discussion group whose purpose is to identify key operational issues that require the attention of individuals at a level above the team. In this case, the player hotwash is facilitated by the evaluators and controllers, and involves the participation of all exercise players. The hotwash takes place immediately following the exercise, while events are still fresh in everyone’s minds. The player hotwash also provides a forum for all those involved in the exercise to air their concerns or identify issues for consideration in developing the Improvement Plan.
- ✓ **Scope of Play:** The parameters in which an exercise is conducted, including duration of the exercise, players involved, and level and details of involvement. Exercise activities are set within this scope to enable exercise participants to perform against the established objectives.
- ✓ **Debriefings:** Within a short time following the exercise, debriefings may be conducted with some or all participants to provide additional observations and insights.
- ✓ **After Action Report:** An After Action Report consists of information compiled from multiple inputs in order to decrease the reliance on any single observer/evaluator. The report includes directions for future improvement as well as documentation of the strengths and weaknesses of a particular specific response.

Acronyms

AAR	After Action Report
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FE	Functional exercise
FSE	Full-scale exercise
HO	Health Officer
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Commander
ICS	Incident Command System
JAG	Job Action Guideline

LLIS	Lessons Learned Information Sharing
LPHA	Local Public Health Agency
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NRP	National Response Plan
SNS	Strategic National Stockpile
TTX	Tabletop exercise