



Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

Volume I: HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management

March 2006



Homeland
Security

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation
Program

Volume 1: HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program
Management

Revised March 2006

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Preface

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volume I was initially published in 2002 and provided an overview of the exercise design, development, conduct, and evaluation process as well as doctrine for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Preparedness Directorate's Office of Grants and Training (G&T) exercises. Subsequent volumes (II–IV) provided more detailed descriptions of the planning and evaluation process as well as sample exercise materials.

Since the initial versions of the HSEEP volumes were published, the homeland security community has experienced numerous changes, including the building of a new and cohesive Federal agency and the release and adoption of the National Response Plan (NRP), National Incident Management System (NIMS), National Preparedness Goal, Universal Task List (UTL), and Target Capabilities List (TCL). This 2006 release of the HSEEP volumes represents an exercise policy and program reflective of these changes.

The following changes have been made:

- The volumes have been made more user-friendly and concise.
- New policies have been incorporated (e.g., NIMS, NRP, National Preparedness Goal, UTL, TCL).
- References to G&T-specific doctrinal or grant-related requirements, such as the need for terrorism-related scenarios, have been eliminated.
- The order of Volumes II and III has been reversed to follow the natural progression of exercise design, development, conduct, and evaluation.

It is important to note that the fundamentals of the exercise design, development, planning, and evaluation process methodologies have not changed with these volume revisions.

Developing and implementing comprehensive exercise policies is a continually evolving process. As homeland security strategies, policies, and plans evolve, future revisions will be issued.

For sample exercise documents and more, visit the HSEEP website: <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.

Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

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For sample exercise documents and more, visit the HSEEP website: <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.

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Introduction

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program

Following the domestic terrorist attacks in 1995 and 2001 and the establishment of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002, homeland security professionals at all levels of government and in all types of communities have prepared to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from a variety of threats to public safety. Exercises play a crucial role in preparedness, providing opportunities for emergency responders and homeland security officials to practice and assess their collective capabilities. The DHS Preparedness Directorate's Office of Grants and Training (G&T)—formerly the Office for Domestic Preparedness—is responsible for updating and disseminating the HSEEP reference volumes on behalf of DHS.

Purpose

The purpose of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is to provide common exercise policy and program guidance that constitutes a national standard for homeland security exercises. HSEEP includes consistent terminology that can be used by all exercise planners, regardless of the nature and composition of their sponsoring agency or organization. The volumes also provide tools to help exercise managers plan, conduct, and evaluate exercises to improve overall preparedness.

HSEEP reflects lessons learned and best practices of existing exercise programs and can be adapted to a variety of scenarios and incidents (e.g., natural disasters, terrorism, technological disasters). The HSEEP reference volumes integrate language and concepts from the National Response Plan (NRP), the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the National Preparedness Goal, the Universal Task List (UTL), the Target Capabilities List (TCL), existing exercise programs, and prevention and response protocols from all levels of government. In the spirit of NIMS, all efforts should be made to ensure consistent use of the terminology and processes described in HSEEP.

Organization

This document is the first of five HSEEP volumes, all of which are available at the DHS website (<http://www.dhs.gov>) and the HSEEP website (<http://hseep.dhs.gov>). The volumes are organized as follows:

HSEEP Volume I: HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management provides guidance for building and maintaining an effective exercise program and summarizes the planning and evaluation process described in further detail in Volumes II through V.

HSEEP Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct helps planners outline a standardized foundation, design, development, and conduct process adaptable to any type of exercise.

HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning offers proven methodology for evaluating and documenting exercises and implementing an Improvement Plan (IP).

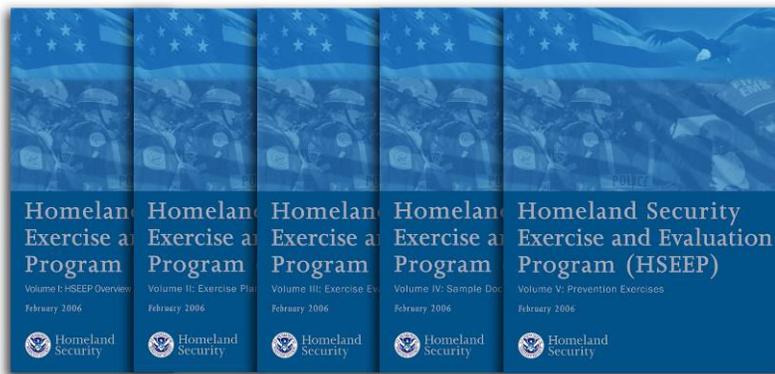
HSEEP Volume IV: Sample Exercise Documents and Formats provides sample exercise materials referenced in HSEEP Volumes I, II, III, and V. HSEEP Volume IV is located on the HSEEP website. Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

HSEEP Volume V: Prevention Exercises (due out late 2006) contains guidance consistent with the HSEEP model to assist jurisdictions in designing and evaluating exercises that test pre-incident capabilities such as intelligence analysis and information sharing.

For sample exercise documents and more, visit the HSEEP website: <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.
Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

This volume, *HSEEP Volume I: HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management*, which provides an overview of HSEEP and guidance on program management, is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1:** Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Overview
- Chapter 2:** Exercise Program Management
- Chapter 3:** Exercise Project Management Overview
- Chapter 4:** Capabilities-Based Exercises and Program Management
- Appendix A:** Exercise Programs and Resources
- Appendix B:** Acronyms
- Appendix C:** Exercise Project Management Timeline



Security Guidance

While most of the content found in HSEEP is not sensitive or classified, some HSEEP materials (e.g., scenario examples), particularly those in Volume IV, may necessitate restrictions on distribution. Exercise materials that are produced in accordance with HSEEP guidance and are deemed sensitive should be designated as *For Official Use Only* (FOUO). FOUO identifies unclassified information of a sensitive nature, not otherwise categorized by statute or regulations, of which the unauthorized disclosure could adversely impact a person's privacy or welfare, the conduct of Federal programs, or programs or operations essential to national interest. Examples of materials that may require FOUO designation include scenario information, the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL), and the After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP). Access to FOUO information is on a "need-to-know" basis. FOUO information may be shared with other agencies; Federal, State, tribal, or local government; and law enforcement officials, provided a specific need-to-know has been established and the information is shared in furtherance of a coordinated and official governmental activity.

Chapter 1: Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Overview

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security will . . . launch a consolidated and expanded training and evaluation system to meet the increasing demand. This system would be predicated on a four-phased approach: requirements, plans, training (and exercises), and assessments (comprising evaluations and Improvement Plans).

— National Strategy for Homeland Security,
July 2002

Exercises allow homeland security personnel, from first responders to senior officials, to train and practice prevention, protection, response, and recovery capabilities in a risk-free environment. Exercises are also a valuable tool for assessing and improving performance, while demonstrating community resolve to prepare for major incidents. Through exercises, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Preparedness Directorate's Office of Grants and Training (G&T) aims to help entities within the homeland security community gain objective assessments of their capabilities so that gaps, deficiencies, and vulnerabilities are attended to prior to a real incident.

Well-designed and executed exercises are the most effective means of:

- testing and validating policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment, and interagency agreements;
- training personnel and clarifying roles and responsibilities;
- improving interagency coordination and communications;
- identifying gaps in resources;
- improving individual performance; and
- identifying opportunities for improvement.

The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is a capabilities- and performance-based exercise program that provides a standardized policy, doctrine, and terminology for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating homeland security exercises. HSEEP also provides tools and resources to facilitate the management of self-sustaining homeland security exercise programs.

In accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8) and the National Preparedness Goal, HSEEP doctrine utilizes a capabilities-based approach to both individual exercises and exercise program management. In the spirit of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), HSEEP promulgates standardized policies and terminology usable by homeland security officials and emergency responders at all levels of government. Therefore, HSEEP provides the Nation with a common, consistent platform for its homeland security exercise needs.

The Preparedness Cycle

NIMS defines the *preparedness cycle* as “planning, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking action to correct and mitigate.” Exercises play an important role in this broad preparedness cycle.

Exercises provide opportunities for Federal, State, and local leaders; homeland security officials; and emergency responders to practice and test capabilities that have been built up through an overlapping

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structure of planning, training, and equipment purchases. Exercises inform preparedness priorities by highlighting potential preparedness shortfalls prior to real incidents. These priorities then become the basis for future funding, training, and equipment purchases, which become the basis for future exercises.

The activities of the preparedness cycle are guided by the overarching framework provided by *HSPD-8: National Preparedness*. Issued on December 17, 2003, HSPD-8 establishes policies to strengthen the preparedness of the United States to prevent and respond to threatened or actual domestic terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies by:

- requiring a National Preparedness Goal that establishes measurable priorities and targets;
- establishing mechanisms to improve delivery of Federal preparedness assistance to State, local, and tribal governments; and
- outlining actions to strengthen preparedness capabilities of Federal, State, local, and tribal governments.

HSPD-8 complements and supports the earlier *HSPD-5: Incident Management*, which required DHS to coordinate with other Federal departments and agencies—as well as State, local, and tribal governments—to establish the NRP and NIMS. The NRP defines what needs to be done to manage a major incident, while NIMS defines how it needs to be done, using a standardized, consistent incident management system.

DHS—in coordination with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies and in consultation with State and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and private sector entities—developed the all-hazards National Preparedness Goal. The vision for the National Preparedness Goal is to:

engage Federal, State, local, and tribal entities; their private and non-governmental partners; and the general public to achieve and sustain risk-based target levels of capability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from major incidents in order to minimize the impact on lives, property, and the economy.

This goal is met by building and maintaining capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from major incidents, both natural and man-made. The ability of the homeland security community to achieve and sustain these capabilities requires engaging in *capabilities-based planning* by orienting the aforementioned preparedness cycle activities (planning, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and improvement planning) toward the achievement of target levels of capability.

HSPD-8 further directs that DHS, in coordination with other appropriate Federal departments and agencies, establish a “national program and a multi-year planning system to conduct homeland security preparedness-related exercises that reinforces identified training standards, provides for evaluation of readiness, and supports the National Preparedness Goal.” HSEEP provides the program structure, multi-year planning system, tools, and guidance necessary for entities to build and sustain exercise programs that enhance homeland security capabilities and, ultimately, preparedness.

For more on HSEEP’s role in the preparedness cycle, see *Chapter 4: Capabilities-Based Exercises and Program Management*.

Exercise Program Management

Exercise program management consists of the functions required for a jurisdiction or entity to sustain a variety of exercises, targeted toward preparedness priorities, on an ongoing basis. It includes project management, budgeting, grant management, staff hiring, funding allocation, and expenditure tracking.

For sample exercise documents and more, visit the HSEEP website: <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.

Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

The basis of effective exercise program management is a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. A Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (T&EPW) workshop is usually conducted in order to create a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. During the workshop, participants review priority preparedness capabilities and coordinate exercise and training activities that can improve those capabilities. As a result of the workshop, the Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan outlines multi-year timelines and milestones for execution of specific training and exercise activities.

Program management functions cyclically. First, a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan is developed in consideration of a jurisdiction's preparedness priorities. Next, specific exercise activities are carried out according to the multi-year plan's timelines and milestones. Finally, improvement plan action items identified in the exercises are taken into account when developing priorities for the next multi-year plan.

For more on Exercise Program Management, see *Chapter 2: Exercise Program Management*.

Exercise Project Management

Exercise project management is a component of exercise program management in which the activities needed to execute an individual exercise are carried out. Under HSEEP policy and guidance, exercise project management involves five phases, which are collectively known as the exercise cycle. Exercises executed in accordance with the phases of the HSEEP exercise cycle lead to tangible preparedness improvements, and provide participants with valuable opportunities to practice homeland security functions.

The five phases of the exercise cycle are as follows:

1. **Foundation:** The following activities must be accomplished to provide the foundation for an effective exercise: create a base of support (i.e., establish buy-in from the appropriate jurisdictions/agencies, and/or senior officials); develop a project management timeline and establish milestones, identify an exercise planning team, and schedule planning conferences.
2. **Design and Development:** Building on the exercise foundation, the design and development process focuses on identifying objectives, designing the scenario, creating documentation, coordinating logistics, planning exercise conduct, and selecting an evaluation and improvement methodology.
3. **Conduct:** After design and development steps are complete, the exercise takes place. Exercise conduct steps include setup, briefings, facilitation/control/evaluation, and wrap-up activities.
4. **Evaluation:** The evaluation phase documents strengths and weaknesses in an exercising jurisdiction's preparedness, as observed during exercise conduct. The evaluation phase for all exercises includes a formal exercise evaluation, integrated analysis, and an After Action Report / Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) that identifies action items to track throughout the subsequent improvement planning phase.
5. **Improvement Planning:** During improvement planning, the action items identified in the evaluation phase are assigned, with due dates, to responsible parties, tracked to implementation, and then validated during subsequent exercises.

For more on exercise project management, see *Chapter 3: Exercise Project Management*.

The HSEEP Blended Approach

In addition to providing a standardized policy, guidance, methodology, and language for program and project management, HSEEP facilitates the creation of self-sustaining, capabilities-based exercise programs by providing program management resources such as guidance, training, technology, and direct support.

HSEEP policy and guidance for homeland security exercises is based on established best practices. By employing a blended approach that also includes training, technology, and direct support, HSEEP ensures that entities at all levels of government have the tools they need to successfully implement its doctrine and policy.



Chapter 2: Exercise Program Management

This chapter describes important concepts and best practices in exercise program management. Detailed guidance and further description of any exercise planning, conduct, and evaluation concepts addressed in this chapter are contained in *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct* and *HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement*.

Effective program management involves a collaborative approach that integrates the capabilities and resources of various agencies, organizations, and individuals from both the public and private sectors. Exercise program management is directed toward achieving the objectives established during the multi-year planning process, as articulated in a jurisdiction’s Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. In the context of multi-year planning, this chapter provides guidance on engaging program stakeholders, managing program resources, and assigning areas of responsibility for exercise program management.

Exercise program requirements for State, local, and tribal governments using Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funds to support exercises can be found in *Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance*.

Multi-Year Planning

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the foundational document guiding a successful exercise program is a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. The multi-year plan provides a mechanism for long-term coordination of training and exercise activities toward a jurisdiction’s preparedness goals. This plan describes the program’s training and exercise priorities and associated capabilities. It also graphically illustrates a multi-year schedule for training and exercise activities that support those priorities.

A multi-year plan employs a building-block approach in which training and exercise activities focus on specific capabilities in a cycle of escalating complexity. See Figure 2-1 for a depiction of the building-block approach. For more on how a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan can be aligned with other activities to support a jurisdiction’s preparedness priorities, see *Chapter 4: Capabilities-Based Exercises and Program Management*.

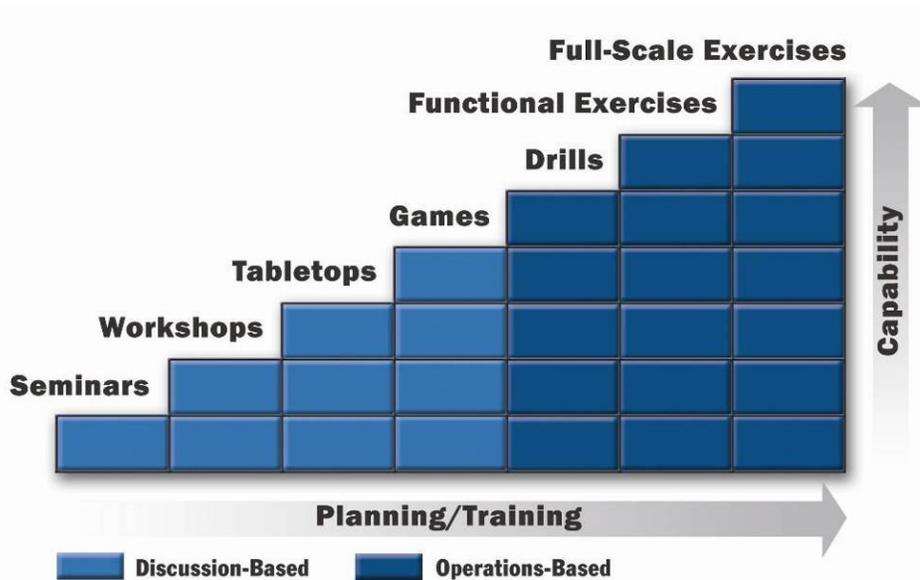


Figure 2-1 Depiction of the building-block approach

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Training and Exercise Plan Workshop

An annual Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (T&EPW) provides an opportunity to develop, review, or update a jurisdiction's Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. The T&EPW also provides a forum for determining how a jurisdiction will execute its multi-year plan in a given year. The purpose of the T&EPW and the Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan is to translate strategic goals and priorities into specific objectives and exercise activities, and to coordinate all exercise activities.

An effective exercise program uses a combination of exercise types to effectively accomplish exercise-specific objectives and program goals. Although each exercise type can be executed as a single activity, multi-year plans gradually build capabilities by employing a building-block approach of linked exercise activities that escalate in complexity, as illustrated in Figure 2-1. Because exercises are part of a broader preparedness cycle that also involves planning, equipment purchases, and training activities, multi-year plans should not schedule exercises without taking into consideration other issues—exercise scheduling should complement the full range of preparedness efforts and priorities being undertaken by a given jurisdiction or entity.

T&EPWs include representatives from the entire spectrum of an exercise program's stakeholders. Participants must be knowledgeable and have the authority to commit personnel and resources toward the activities scheduled in the multi-year plan.

Jurisdictions and entities conducting exercises may receive funds from a number of different Federal programs, and many of these programs have associated exercise requirements. Faced with various exercise requirements, jurisdictions and entities (e.g., law enforcement, health departments, Emergency Operations Centers [EOCs], citizen groups, transit agencies, power plants) with limited resources are encouraged to use T&EPWs to coordinate schedules at the State, regional, and local levels. A coordinated and integrated exercise program will eliminate duplicative efforts and therefore reduce the burden of conducting numerous exercises.

Expanded regional collaboration is identified in the National Preparedness Goal as a national priority. Exercise program managers should strive to include neighboring jurisdictions in their T&EPWs, in order to facilitate the execution of multi-function, multi-disciplinary exercises that involve cooperation among a region's various jurisdictions.

Engaging Program Stakeholders

Broad participation from all stakeholders is important for ensuring that training and exercises meet a wide range of preparedness needs. Broad stakeholder participation also helps ensure that exercises will be more realistic, encompassing the full spectrum of response disciplines.

Identifying Exercise Stakeholders

Exercise program managers should identify as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, and seek to create a database cataloging stakeholder points of contact (POCs). This database lists each POC's contact information, areas of expertise, and prior exercise experience.

When identifying stakeholders, exercise program managers should consider individuals with direct or indirect impact on exercises, including:

- individuals with administrative responsibility relevant to exercise conduct (e.g., Federal, State,

and local agency procurement officers);

- representatives from all first responder disciplines to be included in exercises;
- representatives from volunteer or non-governmental organizations, such as CitizenCorps Councils and the American Red Cross;
- representatives from important private sector entities, such as the media; and
- Federal, State, and local officials who impact or are affected by exercise activities.

Once a comprehensive set of stakeholders has been identified, exercise program managers can help to integrate them into the exercise program by having them annually participate in the T&EPW, as discussed above. If program managers are attempting to build a new exercise program, they can begin by hosting an exercise working group involving representatives from all stakeholding entities. Stakeholders should be trained in HSEEP guidance and policy so that they can take advantage of the benefits of HSEEP's standardized methodology and terminology.

Communicating with Exercise Stakeholders

In order to engage stakeholders and secure their buy-in for exercise activities, exercise program managers develop a stakeholder communications plan. This plan contains clearly defined communications objectives (e.g., to coordinate exercise efforts, to solicit feedback) and details both the timeframes and methods for regular communication. A jurisdiction's Federal and/or State reporting obligations can also be addressed as part of an effective communications plan.

Resource Management

An effective exercise program must efficiently utilize available financial, personnel, and non-monetary resources.

Exercise Budget Management

Effective budget management is essential to the success of an exercise program, and it is important for exercise managers to maintain awareness of their available resources and expected expenditures. Preliminary budgets should be developed in advance of funding allocations on the basis of worst-case scenarios, using previous-year budgets to help create estimates. Budgets should reflect an exercise program's priorities as captured in the Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan, and should be maintained in order to meet reporting requirements of Federal and State homeland security agencies, as well as other grant providers. Program managers with budgetary responsibility should work with procurement officers, accountants, auditors, and grant administrators to identify financial management requirements. At the very least, a program budget should track:

- POCs responsible for managing funds;
- amounts of funding awards;
- sources of funding awards;
- allowable funding expenditures;
- conditions or restrictions on expenditures; and
- expenditures and draw down against the funding source (i.e., procurement).

Exercise programs should define monitoring and reporting requirements that meet all relevant legal and grant-related standards.

For sample exercise documents and more, visit the HSEEP website: <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.

Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

Program Staffing

Staffing needs are determined largely by the activities mandated in the Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. Program managers identify the administrative and operational staff needed to implement the exercise program, including appropriate personnel to monitor grant expenditures. They assess their current staff availability, including full-time and detailed staff, part-time staff, and contractual support. They also identify gaps between staffing availability and staffing needs, and communicate these gaps to homeland security program administrators to determine if funding is available for staffing. For cases in which direct funding cannot be procured, program managers should consider alternative means of procuring staff, such as the use of Federal and State grants, detailing of stakeholder personnel, and addition of volunteers or interns. Program managers must consider whether or not security clearances are required for program staff.

Non-Monetary Resources

Exercise program managers should identify non-monetary resources and promising practices that can support exercises. Such resources include equipment (e.g., smoke machines); exercise training courses (e.g., Emergency Management Institute [EMI]); guidance (e.g., HSEEP); materials from previous exercises; mutual aid agreements (MAAs); technical assistance; and information technology (e.g., HSEEP Toolkit). A number of organizations—such as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), National Governors’ Association (NGA), and *Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov)*—may be able to communicate promising practices that will facilitate exercise activities. When appropriate, information about these resources is distributed to exercise stakeholders.

Exercise Phases

Multi-year planning, stakeholder engagement, and resource management are essential ongoing processes that provide the basis for the planning, conduct, and evaluation of individual exercises. The success of individual exercises relies on the execution of five distinct phases, which are collectively known as the exercise cycle: foundation, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.

Exercise foundation, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning are all discussed in detail in *Chapter 3: Exercise Project Management Overview*. For the purpose of exercise program management, it is important to assign clear roles and responsibilities for each of these phases, and establish mechanisms of monitoring and reporting to ensure that the steps are carried out in accordance with the priorities and schedule of the exercising jurisdiction’s Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan.



Exercise Types

The HSEEP methodology is defined and operated using seven exercise types, as shown in Table 2-1. The type of exercise that best meets a jurisdiction’s requirements is identified through analysis of the capabilities the jurisdiction is attempting to build; the training and exercises it has already conducted; and

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the resources available for exercise planning, conduct, and evaluation. A detailed planning process has been defined for each type of exercise and can be found in *HSEEP Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct*. Exercise program managers should take advantage of the full range of exercise types, consistent with the building-block approach, when scheduling exercise activities in their jurisdiction’s multi-year plan.

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

Table 2-1 Properties of the seven HSEEP exercise types

Discussion-Based Exercises

Discussion-based exercises are normally used as a starting point in the building-block approach of escalating exercise complexity. Discussion-based exercises include seminars, workshops, tabletop exercises (TTXs), and games. These types of exercises typically highlight existing plans, policies,

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Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

interagency/interjurisdictional agreements, and procedures. Discussion-based exercises are valuable tools for familiarizing agencies and personnel with current or expected jurisdictional/organizational capabilities. Discussion-based exercises typically focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues. Facilitators and/or presenters usually lead the discussion, keeping participants on track toward meeting exercise objectives.

Seminars

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

Workshops

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

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

Tabletop Exercises

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

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

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

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

Games

A game is a simulation of operations that often involves two or more teams, usually in a

competitive environment, using rules, data, and procedures designed to depict an actual or assumed real-life situation. A game does not require use of actual resources, and the sequence of events affects, and is in turn affected by, decisions made by players. The goal of a game is to explore decision-making processes and the consequences of those decisions.

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

DHS conducts ongoing analysis of commercial- and government-sector models, games, and simulations to identify those of value for exercise use. A list of government and commercially developed models, games, and simulations that have been evaluated against its training and exercise requirements for the enhancement of homeland security preparedness can be found the HSEEP website (<http://hseep.dhs.gov>). Jurisdictions/organizations should consult these reports before deciding which games, models, or simulations to employ in their homeland security programs.

Operations-Based Exercises

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

Drills

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

- a narrow focus, measured against established standards;
- instant feedback;
- a realistic environment; and
- performance in isolation.

Functional Exercises

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

Response and recovery-focused FEs are generally focused on exercising the plans, policies, procedures, and staffs of the direction and control nodes of Incident Command and Unified Command. Movement of

personnel and equipment is simulated.

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

Full-Scale Exercises

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

Response-focused FSEs include many first responders operating under the principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to effectively and efficiently respond to an incident. First responders and resources are mobilized and deployed to the scene where they conduct their actions as if a real incident had occurred (with minor exceptions).

Chapter 3: Exercise Project Management Overview

This chapter provides a brief overview of the process of planning, conducting, and evaluating exercises. Detailed guidance and further descriptions of many of the exercise concepts and materials addressed in this section are contained in *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct* and *HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning*. Examples of the referenced materials are contained in *HSEEP Volume IV: Sample Exercise Documents and Formats*.

Successfully executing an exercise involves considerable coordination among participating agencies and officials. The HSEEP methodology divides individual exercises into five overarching phases: foundation, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. *Appendix C, Exercise Project Management Timeline*, provides a detailed checklist of actions to take while planning discussion- and operations-based exercises.

Phase 1: Foundation

Establishing a foundation for a successful exercise involves the following steps: developing an exercise planning timeline with milestones, selecting participants for a planning team, and scheduling planning conferences. Project management skills are essential during the foundation phase of the exercise process.

Exercise Planning Timelines

Exercise planning timelines establish target timeframes for attaining significant, exercise-related milestones, such as planning conferences, training, exercise conduct, and after-action reporting. These timelines must be consistent with the scheduling component of the jurisdiction's Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan.

Timelines will vary based on exercise scope and complexity. For example, exercise planners generally employ longer timelines for tabletop exercises (TTXs) than for workshops and seminars, and longer timelines still for complex or multi-jurisdictional full-scale exercises (FSEs). Timelines also may vary based on the jurisdiction's experience in conducting exercises, available resources, and planning team size. Examples of exercise planning timelines containing milestones are available in Appendix C of this volume and in *HSEEP Volume IV: Sample Exercise Documents and Formats*.

Exercise Planning Team

The exercise planning team is responsible for successful execution of all aspects of an exercise, including exercise planning, conduct, and evaluation. The planning team determines exercise objectives; tailors the scenario to jurisdictional needs; and develops documents used in exercise simulation, control, and evaluation. While each exercise has its own planning team, personnel may carry over from one exercise to the next, and jurisdictions may find it advantageous to include team members with previous exercise planning experience.

The exercise planning team should seek to incorporate representatives from each major participating jurisdiction and agency, but be kept to a manageable size. The membership of an exercise planning team can be modified to fit the type or scope of an exercise. For example, an FSE may require more logistical coordination—and therefore more operational personnel on the planning team—than a discussion-based exercise.

The exercise planning team is managed by a lead exercise planner and can most effectively be structured using the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS), as stated in the National Incident

Management System (NIMS). The team’s project management principles should reflect NIMS, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and a manageable span of control. Figure 3-1 depicts this type of exercise planning team organization.

Planning team members also help develop and distribute pre-exercise materials and conduct exercise briefings and training sessions. Due to this high level of involvement, planning team members are ideal selections for controller and evaluator positions during the exercise. However, the advanced scenario and events knowledge gained by exercise planning team members renders them ineligible to participate in the exercise as players.



Figure 3-1 Depiction of an ICS-based exercise planning team

Exercise Planning Conferences

Table 3-1 provides an overview of the types of planning conferences—in typical chronological order—that have been found to be the most useful in the next phase in the exercise cycle, exercise design and development. Exercise scope, type, and complexity determine the number of meetings necessary to successfully carry out the planning process. See Appendix C for more detailed guidance on exercise planning timelines.

Exercise Planning Conferences	Description	Exercise Type	Timing Prior to Exercise
Concept and Objectives (C&O) Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies the type, scope, objectives, and purpose of the exercise ▪ Is typically attended by the sponsoring agency, lead exercise planner, and senior officials 	Large-scale, high profile or series of exercises	Prior to, or concurrently with, IPC
Initial Planning Conference (IPC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lays the foundation for exercise development ▪ Gathers input from exercise planning team on the scope, design, objectives, scenario, exercise location, schedule, duration, and other details required to develop exercise documentation ▪ Assigns responsibility to planning team members 	All	Discussions-based: 3 months Operations-based: 6 months
Mid-Term Planning Conference (MPC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resolves logistical and organizational issues that arise during planning such as staffing, scenario and timeline development, scheduling, logistics, administrative requirements, and draft documentation review ▪ May be held separately or in conjunction with a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Conference 	Operations-based	3 months
Final Planning Conference (FPC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses a forum to review the process and procedures for exercise conduct, final drafts of exercise material, and logistical requirements ▪ Ensures there are no major changes made to the design or scope of the exercise or to any supporting documentation 	All	Discussions-based: 6 weeks Operations-based: 6 weeks

Table 3-1 *Exercise Planning Conferences*

Phase 2: Design and Development

The design and development process builds on exercise foundation and focuses on identifying objectives, designing the scenario, creating documentation, coordinating logistics, planning exercise conduct, and selecting a focus for evaluation and improvement planning. Each of these elements is discussed in more

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Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

detail in *HSEEP Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct* and *HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning*. Templates for all documents can be found in *HSEEP Volume IV: Sample Documents and Formats*.

Objectives

Exercise objectives establish specific goals for the exercise. Well-defined objectives provide a framework for scenario development, guide individual organizations' objective development, and inform exercise evaluation criteria. Jurisdictions should frame exercise objectives with the aim of attaining capabilities established as priorities at the Federal, State, and local level, as captured in the jurisdiction's Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. Objectives should reflect specific capabilities established as priorities by the exercising jurisdiction, and the tasks associated with those capabilities (see the Target Capabilities List [TCL] and Universal Task List [UTL]). HSEEP advocates the use of objectives that are simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and task-oriented (SMART). Exercise planners should limit the number of exercise objectives to enable timely execution and to facilitate design of a realistic scenario.

Scenario

A scenario provides the backdrop and storyline that drive an exercise. The first step in designing a scenario is determining the type of threat/hazard (e.g., chemical, explosive, cyber, natural disaster) to be used in an exercise. The hazards selected for an exercise should realistically stress the capabilities a jurisdiction is attempting to improve through its exercise programs. A hazard should also be a realistic representation of potential threats faced by the exercising jurisdiction.

The next step in designing the scenario is to determine the venue (i.e., facility or site) in which exercise play will take place. Venue selection should reflect the hazard selected, allowing for realistic, exercise-based simulation of the hazard.

Documentation

The list below briefly describes the important document types associated with most exercises. The types of documentation described here are all discussed in more detail in *HSEEP Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct*.

- A **Situation Manual (SitMan)** is a participant handbook for discussion-based exercises, particularly TTXs. It provides background information on exercise scope, schedule, and objectives. It also presents the scenario narrative that will drive participant discussions during the exercise.
- The **Exercise Plan (ExPlan)**, typically used for operations-based exercises, provides an exercise synopsis and is published and distributed to players and observers prior to the start of the exercise. The ExPlan addresses exercise objectives and scope, and it assigns roles and responsibilities that must be carried out for successful exercise execution. The ExPlan does not contain detailed scenario information, such as the hazard to be employed.
- The **Controller and Evaluator (C/E) Handbook** supplements the ExPlan, containing more detailed information about the exercise scenario and describing exercise controllers' and evaluators' roles and responsibilities. Because the C/E Handbook contains information on the scenario and exercise administration, it is distributed only to those individuals specifically designated as controllers or evaluators.
- The **Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)** is a chronological timeline of expected actions and scripted events (i.e., injects) to be inserted into exercise play by controllers in order to generate or prompt player activity. It ensures necessary events happen so that all exercise objectives are met.

- **Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)** help evaluators collect and interpret relevant exercise observations. EEGs provide evaluators with information on what tasks they should expect to see accomplished during an exercise, space to record observations, and questions to address after the exercise as a first step in the analysis process. In order to assist jurisdictions in exercise evaluation, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has created standardized EEGs that reflect capabilities-based planning tools, such as the TCL and the UTL. The HSEEP EEGs can be found in *HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning*. The HSEEP EEGs have been developed for use by experienced exercise evaluators and practitioners.
- Exercise **policies** are implemented to prevent, or at a minimum, mitigate the impact of an action that may cause bodily harm to participants, destruction of property, or embarrassment to the jurisdiction or agency conducting the exercise.

Logistics

Logistical details are important (but often overlooked) aspects of an exercise. They can make the difference between a smooth, seamless exercise and one that is confusing. Discussion-based exercises require attention to logistical details, such as the availability of appropriately sized and comfortable meeting and briefing rooms, food and refreshments, audiovisual equipment, facilitation and note-taking supplies, badges and table tents, registration assistance, and direction signs. Operations-based exercises require badge/role identification, access to restrooms, food and water, on-site communications, arrangement of videotaping, props, site security, adherence to the weapons check policy, and observation of safety precautions.

Phase 3: Exercise Conduct

After design and development activities are complete, the exercise takes place. Prominent steps in exercise conduct include setup; briefings; management of facilitators, controllers, evaluators, players, and actors; and wrap-up activities.

Setup

The exercise planning team should visit the exercise site on the day prior to the event to set up the site. On the day of the exercise, planning team members should arrive several hours before the scheduled start to handle any remaining logistical or administrative items pertaining to setup and to arrange for registration.

For a discussion-based exercise, room layout is particularly important. When setting up an operations-based exercise, planners must consider the assembly area, response route, response operations area, parking, registration, observer/media accommodations, and a possible Simulation Cell (SimCell) facility. Restrooms and water must be available to all participants, observers, and actors. All individuals permitted at the exercise site must wear some form of identification. Perimeter security and site safety during setup and conduct are essential.

Presentations/Briefings

Presentations and briefings are important tools for delivering necessary exercise-related information to participants. A discussion-based exercise generally includes a multimedia presentation to present the scenario and accompany the SitMan. An operations-based exercise may include briefings for controllers/evaluators, actors, players, and observers/media. Briefings and presentations are opportune times to distribute exercise documentation, provide necessary instructions and administrative information, and answer any outstanding questions.

Personnel

In both discussion-based and operations-based exercises, *facilitators* and *controllers* guide exercise play.

During a discussion-based exercise, the facilitator is responsible for keeping participant discussions on track with the exercise design objectives and making sure all issues and objectives are explored as thoroughly as possible within the available time. In an operations-based exercise, controllers plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise incident site, give key data to players, and may prompt or initiate certain player actions. All controllers are accountable to one senior controller.

Evaluators are selected from participating entities to evaluate and comment on designated functional areas of the exercise. Evaluators are chosen based on their expertise in the functional areas they evaluate. Evaluators have a passive role in the exercise and only record the actions/decisions of players; they do not interfere with exercise flow. Evaluators use EEGs to record observations and notes.

Players have an active role in responding to an incident by either discussing (in a discussion-based exercise) or performing (in an operations-based exercise) their regular roles and responsibilities.

Actors are volunteer victims who simulate specific roles, such as disaster casualties, to add realism to an exercise.

Simulators, generally controllers, perform the roles of individuals, agencies, or organizations that are not participating in the exercise in order to drive realistic exercise play.

Phase 4: Evaluation

Evaluation is the cornerstone of exercises; it documents strengths and opportunities for improvement in a jurisdiction's preparedness. The evaluation phase's analytical outputs feed into improvement planning activities. Evaluation takes place using pre-developed EEGs, such as the standardized EEGs provided in *HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement*.

The evaluation process for all exercises includes a formal exercise evaluation, integrated analysis, and drafting of an After Action Report / Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).

Debrief / Hot Wash

Both a hot wash (for exercise players) and a debrief (for facilitators or controllers/evaluators) follow discussion- and operations-based exercises.

A hot wash is conducted in each functional area by that functional area's controller(s) immediately following an exercise, and it allows players the opportunity to provide immediate feedback. A hot wash enables controllers and evaluators to capture events while they remain fresh in players' minds and to ascertain players' level of satisfaction with the exercise and determine any issues or concerns and proposed improvement items. The information gathered during a hot wash can be used during the AAR/IP process, while exercise-specific suggestions can be used to improve future exercises. Hot washes also provide opportunities to distribute Participant Feedback Forms, which solicit suggestions and constructive criticism geared toward enhancing future exercises.

A debrief is a more formal forum for planners, facilitators, controllers, and evaluators to review and provide feedback on the exercise. It may be held immediately following the exercise, or within a few days. The lead exercise planner facilitates discussion and allows each person an opportunity to provide an overview of the functional area observed. Discussions are recorded, and identified strengths and weaknesses are analyzed for inclusion in the AAR/IP.

After Action Report / Improvement Plan

An AAR/IP is used to provide feedback to participating jurisdictions on their performance during the exercise. The AAR/IP summarizes exercise events and analyzes performance of the tasks identified as

important during the planning process. It also evaluates achievement of the selected exercise objectives and demonstration of the overall capabilities being exercised. The IP portion of the AAR/IP includes recommendations for improvements, along with timelines for their implementation and assignment to responsible parties.

To prepare the AAR/IP, the exercise evaluators analyze data collected from the hot wash, debrief, Participant Feedback Forms, EEGs, and other sources (e.g., plans, procedures) and compare actual results with the intended outcome. The level of detail in an AAR/IP reflects the exercise type and scope. AAR/IP conclusions are discussed and validated at an After Action Conference that occurs within several weeks of the exercise's conclusion.

Phase 5: Improvement Planning

During improvement planning, action items from the AAR/IP—such as additional training, planning, and/or equipment acquisition—are assigned with due dates to responsible parties. They are then tracked to completion, ensuring that exercises result in tangible benefits to preparedness.

Improvement Plan

The IP portion of an AAR/IP converts lessons learned from the exercise into concrete, measurable steps that result in improved response capabilities. It specifically details the actions that the participating jurisdiction will take to address each recommendation presented in the draft AAR/IP, who or what agency will be responsible for taking the action, and the timeline for completion.

Improvement Tracking and Planning

Once recommendations, action items, responsibility, and due dates are clearly identified in the IP, the exercising entity ensures that each action item is tracked to completion. Exercising entities review all exercise evaluation feedback and resulting IPs to assess progress on enhancing preparedness. This analysis and information is incorporated into the capabilities-based planning process because it may identify needs for additional equipment, training, exercises, coordination, plans, and procedures that can be tested through future exercises.

Chapter 4: Capabilities-Based Exercises and Program Management

To meet the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) adopted a capabilities-based approach to preparedness planning. Capabilities-based planning is defined as planning, under uncertainty, 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 addresses uncertainty by analyzing a wide range of realistic scenarios to identify required capabilities, and is the basis for guidance such as the National Preparedness Goal, Target Capabilities List (TCL), and Universal Task List (UTL).

Capabilities-Based Exercise Program Management

Jurisdictions/organizations should exercise using a wide range of scenarios to enhance their capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from incidents involving varying threats, hazards, or sets of conditions. Capabilities-based planning provides the foundation for developing exercise program objectives, identifying sets of capabilities to exercise, and determining the conditions and scenarios that should be included and addressed in exercises.

DHS provides several tools that support the capabilities-based planning process and assist the homeland security community in aligning preparedness activities, including exercises, under the National Preparedness Goal. This chapter discusses these tools and provides guidance on how exercise program managers and planners can use capabilities-based planning to optimize their exercises.

Establishing Priorities Using Capabilities and Tasks

HSPD-8 requires the creation of a National Preparedness Goal. On March 31, 2005, the DHS Preparedness Directorate's Office of Grants and Training (G&T) issued the Interim National Preparedness Goal. It enables the Nation to answer the following three fundamental questions:

- *How prepared do we need to be?*
- *How prepared are we?*
- *How do we prioritize efforts to close the gap?*

In order to answer the first question, DHS developed a TCL. The TCL identifies the capabilities needed collectively by the Nation to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from incidents of national significance, including terrorism or natural disasters. The TCL is designed to assist jurisdictions in understanding what their preparedness roles and responsibilities are during a major incident.

While the TCL describes capabilities the Nation must build, the UTL, a companion document, describes the specific tasks that might be performed during an incident, and specifically enumerates *critical tasks*, which are defined as tasks that “must be performed during a major event to prevent occurrence, reduce loss of life or serious injuries, or mitigate significant property damage, or are essential to the success of a homeland security mission.” The UTL simply describes what tasks need to be performed. Federal, State, local, and tribal entities reserve the flexibility to determine who performs them and how to perform them. While no single jurisdiction or agency is expected to be able to perform all of the tasks, tasks are chosen based on specific roles, missions, and functions. The UTL is used by entities at all levels of government as a reference to help them plan, organize, equip, train, exercise, and evaluate personnel for the tasks that

they may need to perform before, during, and after major incidents. Both the UTL and TCL are considered “living” documents that will continue to be refined over time.

The National Preparedness Goal establishes National Preparedness Priorities to guide the Nation’s preparedness efforts in the short term, as listed in Table 4-1. Each priority is linked to specific capabilities from the TCL. A successful capabilities-based exercise program focuses on the National Priorities and the capabilities associated with those priorities, as well as any additional priorities identified in a State Homeland Security Strategy.

Overarching Priorities	Associated Target Capabilities
Implement the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and National Response Plan (NRP)	All Target Capabilities
Expand Regional Collaboration	All Target Capabilities
Implement the National Infrastructure Protection Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Infrastructure Protection • Food and Agriculture Safety and Defense • Information Gathering and Recognition of Indicators and Warnings • Intelligence/Information Sharing and Dissemination • Intelligence Analysis and Production • Risk Management
Capability-Specific Priorities	Associated Target Capabilities
Strengthen Information Sharing and Collaboration Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence/Information Sharing and Dissemination • Law Enforcement Investigation and Operations
Strengthen Interoperable Communications Capabilities	Interoperable Communications
Strengthen Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE) Detection, Response, Decontamination Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBRNE Detection • Explosive Device Response Operations • Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)/ Hazardous Materials Response and Decontamination
Strengthen Medical Surge and Mass Prophylaxis Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass Prophylaxis • Medical Surge

Table 4-1 National Preparedness Priorities

This chapter provides guidance on how to manage an exercise program in accordance with the principles of capabilities-based planning. It also provides examples of how capabilities-based planning can help the design, conduct, and evaluation of specific exercises.

Capabilities-Based Planning Tools in Exercise Program Management

DHS’s National Exercise Program (NEP), along with State, regional, and local exercise programs, supports the capabilities-based planning process by providing a means to demonstrate and evaluate performance in a safe and controlled learning environment. After Action Report / Improvement Plans (AAR/IPs) document and summarize performance as part of the comprehensive preparedness assessment described in the National Preparedness Goal.

Federal, State, regional, and local exercise programs should integrate and support the nationwide shift toward capabilities-based planning, both through long-term strategic program management and through the design, development, conduct, and evaluation of individual exercises. Many of these concepts are further defined or described in Volume I, Chapter 3 or Volumes II and III.

The creation of capabilities-based exercise programs begins with a Multi-Year Training and Exercise

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Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

Plan. The Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan identifies a jurisdiction’s homeland security priorities as articulated in the jurisdiction’s homeland security strategy, and identifies the capabilities that are most relevant to achieving those priorities. It then outlines a multi-year schedule of training and exercise activities that a jurisdiction will undertake to enhance and validate its priority capabilities (See Figure 4-1).

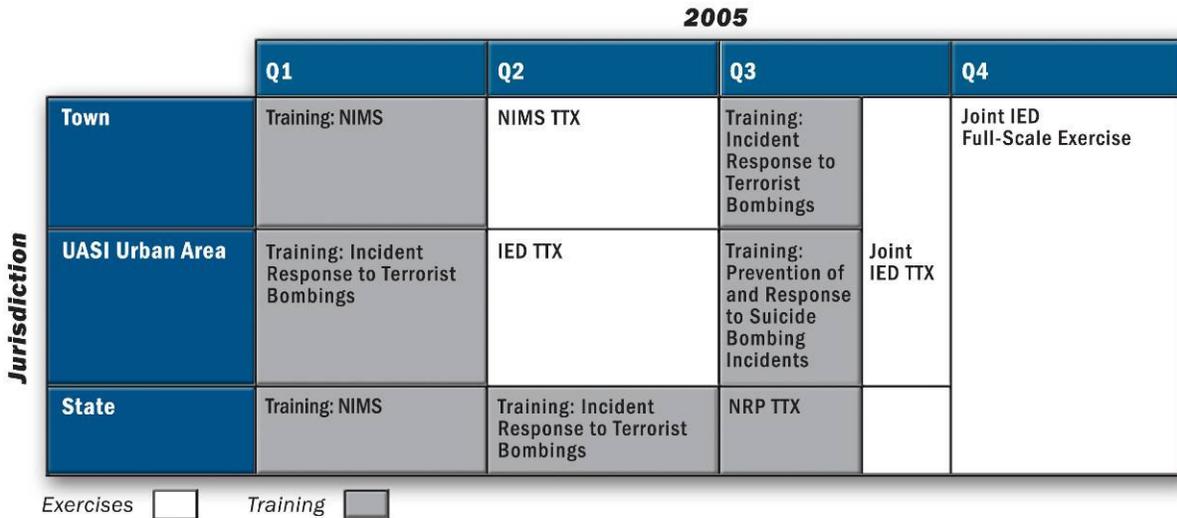


Figure 4-1 Notional multi-year training and exercise schedule

A Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan is developed in the context of a broader cycle of preparedness, which also includes equipment purchases, staffing decisions, and the development of policies and procedures. Training and exercise programs are most effective when the entire cycle of preparedness is aligned toward the development of specific capabilities.

For example, if a region conducted several exercises in a given year, and found that the most prominent recommendation from exercise After Action Report / Improvement Plans (AAR/IPs) was to improve interoperable communications for responding agencies, then that region would focus its preparedness cycle activities on capabilities directly related to interoperable communications. It would begin by updating its communications standard operating procedures (SOPs) and purchasing new equipment to promote interoperability. Next, the region would develop a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan to target training and exercise activities toward strengthening capabilities relevant to interoperable communications. The key steps in creating a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan are as follows:

1. **Identify jurisdictional preparedness priorities.** Such priorities are derived from National Preparedness Priorities, previous AAR/IPs, jurisdictional risk assessments, and/or existing capabilities that need to be validated.
In the example, the region would identify interoperable communications as a priority by referencing previous AAR/IPs, as well as the National Preparedness Goal’s National Preparedness Priorities, which include Strengthen Interoperable Communications Capabilities.
2. **Identify capabilities relevant to jurisdictional priorities.** A jurisdiction selects capabilities for which to train and validate through the use of exercises. Jurisdictions use the TCL to identify capabilities relevant to their priorities, and they select a range of priorities for which they can realistically train and exercise.

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In the example, the region would select the TCL's Interoperable Communications Capability for improvement through training, then validation through exercises.

3. **Schedule training and exercises that support identified capabilities.** Jurisdictions employ a building-block approach, depicted in Figure 2-1, for training courses and exercises, with training and exercise activities gradually increasing in difficulty and complexity. Training exercises are scheduled strategically to prepare responders for scheduled exercises.

In the example, the region would begin its Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan schedule with training activities focusing on interoperable communications or multi-agency coordination, such as National Incident Management System (NIMS) training courses. Training would be followed by a series of exercises, of increasing complexity, focused on validating the plans, equipment, and training relevant to interoperable communications capabilities. This sequence could:

- *begin with a seminar to review and discuss the revised communications SOPs;*
- *continue with tabletop exercises (TTXs) in which representatives from various response disciplines discuss the communications challenges posed by a potential improvised explosive device (IED) incident, and validate their planned response procedures;*
- *continue with multiple functional exercises (FEs) focused on interoperable communications among different jurisdictions and agencies at various stages of response to an IED incident; and*
- *culminate in a full-scale exercise (FSE) that tests the effectiveness of existing plans and resources throughout all phases of IED response and recovery.*

For more information about the different types of exercises and/or the Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan discussed above, see *Chapter 3: Exercise Program Management*.

Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Capabilities-Based Exercises

Once a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan is developed, it is executed and implemented in accordance with the schedule.

Successfully executing each exercise activity scheduled in a jurisdiction's multi-year plan relies on completion of an exercise cycle consisting of the five phases described in chapter 1 of this manual: Foundation, Design and Development, Conduct, Evaluation, and Improvement Planning.

The requirements for each phase of the exercise cycle are described in detail in *Chapter 3: Exercise Project Management Overview*. The sections that follow discuss how to incorporate capabilities-based planning into each of the five phases.

Foundation

The foundation of individual exercises is a group of planning activities that ensure success. These planning activities consist of:

- establishing a base of support from the appropriate jurisdictions/agencies, and/or senior officials;
- forming an exercise planning team;
- scheduling planning conferences; and
- creating a detailed project management timeline.

These activities should be undertaken with awareness of the targeted evaluation and improvement

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capabilities. For a detailed discussion of these foundational activities, please see the *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volume II: Exercise Planning and Conduct*.

Design and Development

The capabilities identified as priorities in a jurisdiction’s Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan are the starting point for exercise design and development. Exercises are designed to measure and validate a jurisdiction’s performance of these capabilities.

Creating exercise objectives that reflect a jurisdiction’s priority capabilities and the critical tasks associated with those capabilities is key to successful exercise design and development. As depicted in Figure 4-2, the TCL can be used as a reference because it catalogs UTL critical tasks associated with each capability. Exercise objectives should be simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and task-oriented (SMART).

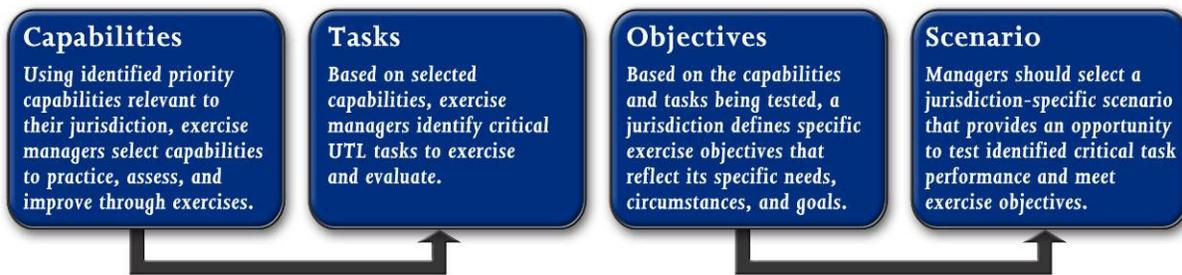


Figure 4-2 Referencing capabilities and tasks to create exercise objectives and scenarios

The National Planning Scenarios, which were developed by a Federal Interagency working group and contain 15 scenarios illustrating a current range of threats and hazards the Nation faces, can provide a useful tool in exercise scenario design. However, while planners may use the National Planning Scenarios as a reference or model for their exercise’s scenario, *exercising jurisdictions are not expected to replicate the National Planning Scenarios in their exercises*. Rather, planners should develop a scenario capable of fulfilling their exercise objectives, while providing a vehicle for exercise play that realistically reflects the hazards and threats their jurisdiction faces.

The design and development phase of the exercise cycle also includes creation of documentation, logistical planning, exercise conduct planning, and selection of Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) that match exercise objectives.

Conduct

Exercise conduct tests a jurisdiction’s performance of priority capabilities through effective execution of the scenario as well as pre-developed and ad-hoc injects. If used, injects are designed to stress the level of capability that already exists, without overwhelming participants.

Evaluation

Exercises should be performance-based and require demonstration, practical application, and evaluation of proficiency in the discrete, essential tasks that enable a homeland security mission to be successfully accomplished. Discussion-based exercises—seminars, workshops, TTXs, and games—provide forums for reviewing the adequacy of plans, policies, functions, and interagency/inter-jurisdictional agreements. During these exercises, evaluators observe discussions to assess the adequacy of and familiarity participants have with these plans, resources, and relationships. Operations-based exercises—drills, FEs, and FSEs—are designed to validate personnel and equipment performance in meeting critical tasks, capability outcomes, and homeland security missions. During these exercises, evaluators observe and

For sample exercise documents and more, visit the HSEEP website: <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.

Readers with Internet connectivity may click on exercise materials referenced in this volume to link to HSEEP Volume IV.

assess actual performance in preventing or responding to a simulated disaster.

Exercises are evaluated against the relevant performance objectives that are linked to each capability in the TCL. This can be done through the use of EEGs, which are mapped to the TCL and UTL.

Jurisdictions may prepare briefings to familiarize evaluators with personnel, resource, and technical issues pertaining to performance of priority capabilities and associated critical tasks, while providing a clear framework for critical task performance evaluation. Evaluators are then strategically positioned to observe and record successes or shortcomings in performance of priority capabilities and critical tasks.

Exercises are immediately followed by a hot wash (for players) and/or debrief (for controllers, moderators, and evaluators), during which issues and observations arising from the exercise are discussed. During these events, moderators or discussion leaders center discussions largely on the capabilities and critical tasks on which the exercise is focused. Issues and observations recorded during the exercise, as well as those recorded during post-exercise discussions, are captured in an AAR/IP. Once the AAR/IP is drafted, exercise planners may schedule an After Action Conference to specifically address AAR recommendations in the IP. Overall, the AAR/IP focuses on results in meeting TCL performance objectives for priority capabilities and critical tasks.



Figure 4-3 *Improvement planning in the preparedness cycle*

Improvement Planning

Once recommendations have been documented in the AAR/IP and discussed at the After Action Conference, it is necessary to identify action items for improvement and to pursue their implementation by assigning responsibility and due dates. The action items identified in the previous year's exercise IPs are reflected in the following year's Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan and schedule. This concept is

illustrated in Figure 4-3.

Following the regional example described on page 27, if a post-exercise evaluation concluded that the region's emergency response personnel needed to create standardized terminology for evacuation procedures, then the region's next Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan addresses this issue through the scheduling of drills or exercises designed to test whether or not a standard terminology had been introduced and successfully incorporated into SOPs and emergency operations plans (EOPs).

By tying all phases of an exercise—from foundation to improvement planning—to the TCL and other capabilities-based planning guidance, exercise managers can ensure that their exercise activities effectively practice, evaluate, and improve the preparedness capabilities that are identified as priorities at the Federal, State, and local levels.