

Exercise Technical Assistance Program (ExTAP)



OEM Exercise Program
2024

Exercise Technical Assistance Program (ExTAP) Guidance Document

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Introduction

Exercise is a critical component of the preparedness cycle. There is no better way to validate plans and identify areas upon which improvements can be made. However, the reality for many emergency management professionals is such that designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating an exercise on top of an already dynamic and complex day-to-day position is a significant challenge.

The Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) Exercise Program appreciates that many of Oregon's emergency managers are spread thin and exist with a perpetually full workload. With that in mind, OEM's Exercise Program has developed an Exercise Technical Assistance Program (ExTAP) to support the exercise efforts of our local, tribal and other state emergency management partners.

Purpose

The following guidance document is designed to clarify the support options and functions that the state exercise program can perform to support exercises across the state of Oregon. The intended audiences are tribal, local, and state agencies.

Scope

The OEM ExTAP offers technical assistance and direct support in the design, development, conduct and evaluation of exercise events hosted by emergency preparedness and response partners in Oregon. This Program is designed to empower partners, and build exercise experience, education, and expertise for statewide partners so they can host exercise events independently in the future. You have an ownership stake in exercise. We're not doing it for you, ***you're doing it!*** We're just here to help!

OEM Staff ExTAP Roles and Responsibilities

State Exercise Officer

The State Exercise Officer will work in concert with the Exercise Specialist, Regional Coordinators, Tribal Liaison, Exercise Director, and Safety Officer to provide the requested technical assistance.

Exercise Specialist

The Exercise Specialist will work in concert with the Exercise Officer, Regional Coordinators, Tribal Liaison, Exercise Director, and Safety Officer to provide the requested technical assistance.

Tribal Liaison and Regional Coordinators

OEM Tribal Liaison and Regional Coordinators are exceptional support resources.

Exercise Documentation

Exercise documentation provides the framework for exercise conduct and evaluation. The documentation helps the planning team apply the HSEEP Cycle. Below is a list of exercise documentation that OEM's Exercise Program Staff can assist with developing.

Operations-Based Exercise Documentation

Document	Description	Distribution
Exercise Plan (ExPlan)	A document that provides general information to exercise participants, including exercise objectives and scope, not including the scenario information.	Players and Observers
Player Handout	A document that supplements the Exercise Plan and provides players with a quick-reference guide; sometimes referred to as "a pocket-size trifold or bifold."	Players
Ground Truth	A document comprised of the detailed elements of a scenario that must remain consistent during exercise development and conduct to ensure that realism is maintained, and objectives can be achieved.	All Participants
Controller/ Evaluator (C/E) Handbook	A document that provides specific exercise information and guidance for controllers and evaluators, may be a standalone document or supplement to the Exercise Plan, and adjusted accordingly.	Controllers and Evaluators
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)	A document or system that is a chronological timeline of expected actions and scripted events to be injected into exercise play by controllers to generate or prompt player activity. It ensures necessary events happen so that all objectives are met. Larger, more complex exercises may also use a procedural flow, which differs from the MSEL in that it contains only expected player actions or events. The MSEL links simulation to action, enhances the exercise experience for players, and reflects an incident or activity meant to prompt players to action.	Controllers, Evaluators, and Simulator

Extent of Play Agreement	A document that is a formal written agreement outlining the participating jurisdiction's/organization's level of play during an exercise.	Exercise Planning Team
Exercise Evaluation Guide(s) (EEG)	A document that captures information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the exercise planning team. The EEG provides evaluators with a standardized tool to guide data collection and capture performance results. Since each jurisdiction/organization has unique targets and critical tasks, EEGs are developed specific to their plans, policies, procedures, and protocols.	Evaluators
Control Staff Instructions (COSIN)	A document for the Controller portion of the C/E Handbook for large exercises that provides detailed guidelines for control and simulation support and establishes a management structure for these activities. This section provides guidance for controllers, simulators, and evaluators on procedures and responsibilities for exercise control, simulation, and support.	Controllers, Simulators, and Exercise Support
Evaluation Plan (EvalPlan)	A document for evaluators that provides guidance, instructions, and structure on evaluating and observing during an exercise. It also provides essential materials required to perform their specific functions.	Evaluators

Discussion-Based Exercise Documentation

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

Participant Feedback Form	A document that provides a mechanism to collect input from all participants following an exercise and supports the development of an After-Action Report (AAR) and Improvement Plan (IP).	All Participants
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Exercise Conduct Roles and Functions

Oregon Department of Emergency Management Staff will **not** assume the role of **director, deputy director** or **safety officer** in a local or tribal exercise. These positions are to be staffed by representatives of the sponsoring jurisdiction or organization.

Simulation Cell Support

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

Simulation Cell Lead

The Simulation Cell Lead oversees the Exercise Simulation Cell, “SimCell”. This function delivers messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise. The SimCell Lead oversees:

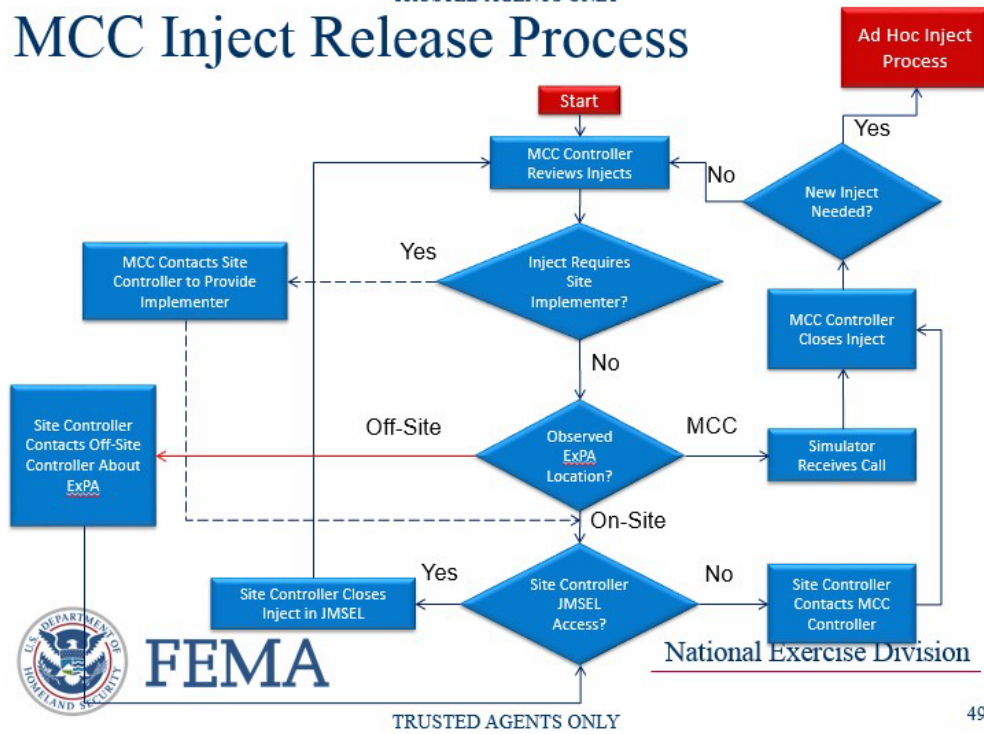
- The implementation of the developed Master Scenario Events List (MSEL),
- Exercise simulators distribution of exercise injects in accordance with the developed Master Scenario Events List (MSEL), and
- Development of additional injects to spur exercise play and completion of identified exercise objectives.

Simulator

A simulator works in the Simulation Cell, “SimCell”, to deliver messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise. This position reports to the SimCell Lead.

Simulation Cell Controller	An individual that delivers scenario messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise.
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MCC Inject Release Process



Evaluation Support

The Evaluation Team is responsible for the development of the overall exercise evaluation construct and all evaluation documentation. This position will assign evaluation staffing in conjunction with the exercise planning team; will collect and review the policies, plans, and procedures to be examined during exercise conduct to finalize exercise objectives; match capability targets to exercise objectives; and determine critical tasks to be evaluated in order to complete exercise evaluation guides.

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

Control Support

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

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

Position	Description
Lead Controller	An individual that monitors exercise progression, communicates exercise activities throughout all venues, and manages the control staff.
MSEL Manager	An individual that manages the timely and accurate delivery of injects and player expected actions and decides on the need to release contingency injects.
Ground Truth Advisor	An individual responsible for ensuring that the scenario details remain consistent during exercise conduct.
Venue Controller	An individual that is responsible for setting up and operating a specific exercise location. Venue Controllers manage exercise play and may prompt or initiate certain players to ensure continuity and flow.
Observer/Media Area Controller	An individual responsible to ensure that observers and the media stay in their designated areas and do not interfere with the exercise.
Facilitator/Presenter	An individual responsible for keeping a discussion focused on exercise objectives and exploring all issues within the time allotted during discussion-based exercises, or an individual designated to deliver information in a structured setting.

Structured Planning Meetings

The exercise program will not assume the roles of Director, Deputy Director, or Safety Officer. These are roles that must be staffed by the sponsoring jurisdiction, agency or organization

Planning Meeting Types

Five different types of planning meetings may occur during the planning process.

1. **Concept and Objectives Meeting (C&O)**
2. **Initial Planning Meeting (IPM)**
3. **Midterm Planning Meeting (MPM)**
4. **Master Scenario Events List Meeting (MSEL)**
5. **Final Planning Meeting (FPM)**

Concept and Objectives Meeting (C&O)

The Concept and Objectives (C&O) meeting marks the formal beginning of the exercise planning process. Elected and appointed officials, representatives from all supporting organizations, and the exercise planning team leader attend the C&O meeting. Based on guidance from elected/appointed officials, exercise program priorities are defined and objectives are determined and aligned to core capabilities. In addition, the remainder of the exercise planning team members is identified.

Initial Planning Meeting (IPM)

The Initial Planning Meeting (IPM) marks the formal beginning of the exercise development phase. Its purpose is to determine exercise scope by getting intent and direction from elected and appointed officials and gathering input from the exercise planning team; and to identify exercise design requirements and conditions (e.g., assumptions and artificialities), exercise objectives, participant extent of play, and scenario variables (e.g., time, location, hazard selection). The IPM is also used to develop exercise documentation by obtaining the planning team's input on exercise location, schedule, duration, and other relevant details.

During the IPM, exercise planning team members are assigned responsibility for activities associated with designing and developing exercise documents, such as the Exercise Plan (ExPlan) and the Situation Manual (SitMan) and coordinating exercise logistics.

Midterm Planning Meeting (MPM)

Midterm Planning Meetings (MPMs) provide additional opportunities to engage elected and appointed officials and to settle logistical and organizational issues that may arise during exercise planning. A walkthrough of the exercise site or venue will be conducted during this meeting. (If only three planning meetings are held (i.e., IPM, MPM, and Final Planning Meeting [FPM]), a portion of the MPM should be devoted to developing the Master Scenario Exercise List.)

Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Meeting

Complex exercises may require one or more additional planning meetings, known as Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) meetings. MSEL meetings are used to review and edit the scenario timeline. The MSEL is a chronological listing that supplements the exercise scenario with event synopses, expected participant responses, objectives, and core capabilities to be addressed, responsible personnel, and specific injects and methods used to provide them.

Final Planning Meeting (FPM)

The Final Planning Meeting (FPM) is the final forum for reviewing exercise processes and procedures. Both before and after the FPM, the exercise team leader should engage elected and appointed officials to ensure that the exercise is aligning with their intent, address any questions, and receive any last-minute guidance. At the time of the FPM, there should be no major changes in the design of the exercise, scope, or supporting documentation.

An FPM should be conducted for all exercises to ensure that all elements of the exercise are ready for conduct.

After-Action Support Resources

After-Action Meeting

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

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

Annex A: ExTAP Initial Contact Form Question Guidance

The purpose of the ExTAP Initial Contact Form is to provide a uniform process for requesting exercise support from the Oregon Department of Emergency Management's Exercise Program.

Primary point of contact for the exercise.

- The individual in your agency or jurisdiction will be designated to be the director of the exercise.

Point of contact email address.

- Email will be the principal method of communication, please provide the email address of the individual listed as the exercise primary point of contact.

Exercise point of contact phone number.

- Phone calls and text messaging will be the auxiliary method of communication, please provide the phone number of the individual listed as the exercise primary point of contact.

Tribal nation, jurisdiction, agency, or organization.

- List the sponsoring organization or jurisdiction for this exercise.

In which OEM Region will the exercise activity take place?

- The state of Oregon has 6 represented regions, each with a regional coordinator, and 9 federally recognized Tribal Nations represented by an OEM Tribal Liaison. Please indicate the region or Tribal Nation so that OEM can confirm the engagement of the appropriate Regional Coordinator and or Tribal Liaison.

Is the OEM Regional Coordinator or Tribal Liaison aware of the exercise?

- Indicate whether the Regional Coordinator and or Tribal Liaison has been informed of the exercise.

Jurisdiction Zip Code.

- Please supply the zip code of the sponsoring organization or jurisdiction. (This helps to inform our GIS program and determine where additional support can be focused)

Plan development support: While plan development support is outside the scope of the exercise program, we may be able to leverage a collaborative workshop to develop a

draft plan. Please indicate below the status of your plan development and whether additional planning support would be useful for you.

- Planning support resources are available to partners who require assistance with plan development. Once the plan has been fully drafted, the Exercise Program will be able to support exercise development to validate that plan.

What is the title of the plan being exercised?

- Enter the name of the plan, or the specific annex of the plan being exercised, including the date of the most recent updates.

Please indicate the anticipated exercise timeline.

- When do you intend to conduct the exercise.

What type(s) of exercise(s) are you considering?

- Please select all that apply.
- *Note that hosting a seminar before another type of exercise is an efficient way to satisfy a discussion-based exercise requirement.

What was the nature of the hazard being considered for the exercise?

- Indicate the category of the hazard being considered for the exercise.
- If unsure, please indicate so. The scenario aspect of the exercise can be determined in the design and development phase of the exercise planning cycle.

In what phase of the exercise do you require technical assistance?

- Lead Up Technical Assistance (Before)
 - (Planning, Design, Development)
- Conduct Technical Assistance (During)
 - (Control, Facilitation, Simulation, Evaluation)
- After-Action Process Technical Assistance (After)
 - After-Action Process Technical Assistance (Meetings, Documentation, Improvement Action Planning)

What type of Exercise Lead Up technical assistance are you requesting?

- Exercise Design and Development includes a series of structured meetings to ensure the products are being developed and the project milestones are being met by the planning team.

- Exercise Documentation varies depending on the type of exercise, but generally will include a standard suite of tools designed to provide framework for the exercise.

What type of Exercise Conduct support are you requesting?

- See Appendix C for a comprehensive list of functions the exercise program can and CANNOT perform.

What type of After-Action technical assistance are you requesting?

- See Appendix E for After-Action support resources.

What type of Exercise Design and Development support are you requesting?

See Appendix B for a comprehensive list of HSEEP consistent Exercise Documentation that the Exercise Program can help develop.

- See Appendix D for a comprehensive list of HSEEP consistent Exercise Planning Meetings that the Exercise Program can help facilitate.

What Type of Exercise Documentation Support are you requesting?

- See Appendix B for a comprehensive list of HSEEP consistent Exercise Documentation that the Exercise Program can help develop.

If you have any files, documents or planning materials that you would like to share with OEM Exercise Program staff upload here

- Please provide any material that has been developed for the exercise, that will help provide a more complete picture of the exercise for OEM exercise Program staff.

Selection Equity Matrix

The Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) is committed to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility as the foundation for our agency’s internal culture, and in our relations and service provisions to all communities we serve. The Exercise Program will undertake Technical Assistance as fairly, equitably and consistently as is possible. The Table below is a tool that will be used in the prioritization and selection of technical assistance requests.

Project Effort				Prioritization		
	Time Commitment	Exercise Type	Support Needs	TA Frequency	Recent Exercises	
Weight						
1	30 Days	Functional/FSE	4 Categories	Always Has OEM TA	2x Exercises/Year	
2	1-3 Months	Drill	3 Categories	Often Has OEM TA	2x Exercises/Year	
3	3-6 Months	Tabletop/Game	2 Categories	Regularly Has OEM TA	1x/Exercise Year	
4	6-9 Months	Workshop	1 Categories	Seldom Has OEM TA	1 Exercise Recently	
5	9-12 Months	Seminar	0 Categories	Never Has OEM TA	Never Exercised	

Support Needs	Weight
Design	1
Development	1
Conduct	1
After-Action	1

Exercise Planning Team Organization Chart

The organization chart below is a generic outline of an HSEEP consistent exercise planning team. Please note that the boxes are not necessarily individual people, but rather functions that must be performed in the design, development, execution and evaluation of your exercise.

