



Examine the ability of the whole community to implement integrated emergency medical services, medical care, and response operations against infectious diseases or other public health incidents by conducting biosurveillance; detecting, categorizing, controlling, and containing threats; implementing medical and nonmedical countermeasures; rapidly communicating with external partners and the public; and addressing the aftereffects of any health emergency.

The National Exercise Program (NEP) is a two-year cycle of selected exercises across the nation that examines and validates capabilities in all preparedness mission areas. The 2019-2020 NEP cycle is guided by nine Principals’ Strategic Priorities, established by the National Security Council and informed by national preparedness data.

What are Public Health Emergencies exercises?

Exercises Aligned to This Priority Should:

- Detect, categorize, control, and contain the threat posed by any type of public health emergency
- Conduct integrated response operations across the whole community, with emphasis on bridging the gap between emergency management and public health partners
- Implement medical and nonmedical countermeasures
- Rapidly communicate with external partners and the public

Case Study: Public Health Exercises

In 2017 and 2018, the **Tranquil Shift and Tranquil Terminus** exercise series tested and validated the nation’s capability to safely and securely transport highly infectious patients, both abroad and domestically, to regional treatment centers. This was the largest patient movement exercise series to date, involving international and domestic partners, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of State, and the Department of Transportation.

Related Core Capabilities

- Intelligence and Information Sharing
- Logistics and Supply Chain Management
- On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement
- Operational Coordination
- Planning
- Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
- Public Information and Warning
- Screening, Search, and Detection

Why is this important?

States, territories, tribes, urban areas, and other communities use the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR) to assess their preparedness. FEMA includes the results of the THIRA and SPR, along with several other preparedness indicators, in the annual National Preparedness Report. Analytic results help shape planning, training, exercise, and other prioritization decisions at all levels.

National Preparedness Report

- State and local authorities have identified challenges in **delivering supplies to affected individuals** during a public health emergency
- Complex public health incidents that do not fall within the Stafford Act, such as the Ebola virus epidemic, the Flint, Michigan water contamination, and the Zika virus outbreak, continue to challenge Federal response

Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

- In the 2017 THIRA, jurisdictions reported pandemics as the **second most frequently identified** natural hazard, with 42% of jurisdictions selecting that hazard in their assessments



Lessons Learned and Emerging Threats

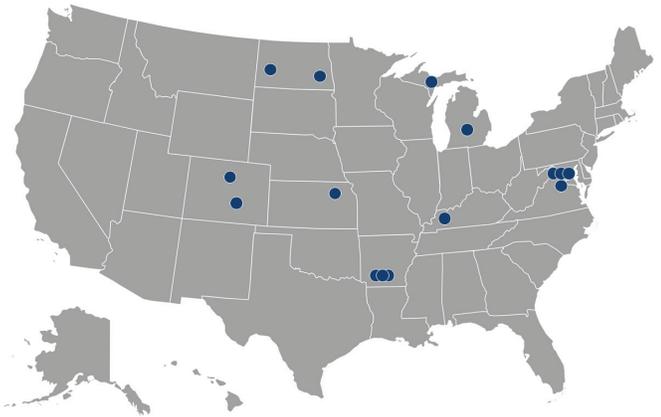
- Following the Ebola epidemic, the Independent Panel on the HHS Ebola Response found that the United States **was not prepared to respond** to emergent health crises requiring a rapid and integrated domestic and international response
- The United States faces a range of potential epidemic threats and hazards, including the **Zika virus, avian influenza, and the Middle East respiratory syndrome**



What are the major challenges?

An analysis of 15 exercise after-action reports revealed common challenges:

- Providing local emergency managers with necessary equipment to secure areas that pose a public health risk
- Establishing formal processes for jurisdictions to request and implement shared medical resources
- Developing a common operating procedure among responders to ensure accurate information is passed to public health agencies
- Continuing to increase emergency response personnel's disease response knowledge through annual training
- Ensuring school reunification and relocation center plans adequately address public health emergencies
- 2017 NEP exercises revealed capability gaps related to public health, including the lack of a unified and integrated patient tracking system to ensure a cohesive response between healthcare providers and emergency responders following a large-scale incident



Distribution of jurisdictions that submitted AARs for exercises aligning to Public Health Emergencies capabilities

What can I do?

Training and exercises can help all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and other partners across the whole community be better prepared. The National Exercise Division at FEMA is committed to providing assistance to partners in planning, designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating their own exercises that validate core capabilities.

Exercise Starter Kits

Exercise Starter Kits are pre-packaged sets of guides and templates to help exercise planners develop tabletop exercises that can be tailored to the specific threats, resources, and operational plans of their community.

Spotlight Initiative

Offered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the **Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE)** web portal at asprtracie.hhs.gov provides a collection of free disaster medical and public health preparedness materials, access to technical assistance specialists for one-on-one support, and peer discussion boards.

Training Courses

Examples of relevant training courses are provided below. Course offerings frequently change; please visit firstrespondertraining.gov for a full list of training courses and resources.

- AWR-118:** Biological Incidents Awareness
- AWR-323-W:** Disease Containment Measures
- AWR-900:** Framework for Healthcare Emergency Management
- IS-522:** Exercising Continuity Plans for Pandemics
- IS-930:** Emergency Responder Health Monitoring and Surveillance: A Guide for Key Decision Makers
- MGT-319:** Medical Countermeasures: Points of Dispensing, Planning and Response

FEMA training courses are provided at no cost to first responders.

Nominate an Exercise to the National Exercise Program

Benefits of participating in the NEP include:

- Receiving technical assistance and support for your exercises from experienced exercise specialists
- Access to exercise templates, tools, and other resources to help you design, conduct, and evaluate your exercises
- The ability to pursue new exercise ideas and broaden the impact of your exercises to a wider group of stakeholders
- The opportunity to influence national preparedness policy and resource allocation decisions at all levels by contributing exercise findings

How to Participate in the NEP

1. Visit fema.gov/nep to learn more about the 2019-2020 cycle
2. Download and complete the Exercise Nomination Form
3. Work with your FEMA Regional Exercise Officer (fema.gov/reos) and submit the Exercise Nomination Form to nep@fema.dhs.gov
4. The FEMA National Exercise Division will respond to discuss your exercise