FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

State of Oregon

Office of Emergency Management



[Exercise Name]

FACILITATOR HANDBOOK

**[MONTH] [YEAR] (Draft)**

This Facilitator Handbook provides exercise Facilitators with all the necessary tools for their roles in the exercise. It contains information found in the Situation Manual provided to Players and Observers and has been augmented with information necessary to conduct the exercise and facilitate valuable discussion. Therefore, under no circumstance should it be distributed to anyone outside of the Exercise Planning Team. Failure to comply may disqualify persons from participating in the exercise.

**THIS PAGE LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY**

FACILITATOR *QUICKSTART* GUIDE

EFFECTIVELY FACILITATING AN OREGON TABLETOP EXERCISE

**THE ROLE DEFINED**

Facilitators guide exercise play and are responsible for ensuring that participant discussions remain focused on the exercise objectives and making sure all issues are explored as thoroughly as possible within the available time.

**AN EFFECTIVE FACILITATOR**

* Keeps discussions on track and drives play to meet exercise objectives.
* Controls group dynamics and manages strong personalities.
* Speaks competently and confidently without dominating the conversation.
* Has subject-matter expertise or experience.
* Has an awareness of local plans and procedures.

 Captures key findings and discussion points

**MITIGATING EXERCISE FAILURE EARLY**

Oftentimes a failed tabletop exercise (i.e., the objectives were never addressed and/or no meaningful insight documented) can be traced to failed/poor exercise facilitation. Mitigating poor facilitation requires the Exercise Planning Team to identify and task the best/most appropriate person to the fill the Facilitator role; however, the most obvious choice (based upon conventional wisdom, position, personality, etc.) is not always the best/appropriate choice for a variety of other reasons including their direct involvement in the organization’s regular and emergency operations which challenges the objectivity of a Facilitator.

Ideally, the Facilitator has subject-matter knowledge, is familiar with Oregon emergency management at the state and local levels, and has facilitation experience; however, the ability to keep discussions on track is more important than specific subject-matter expertise. Persons asked to serve as Facilitator are *strongly* encouraged to self-assess the appropriateness of their tasking and discuss any concerns with the Exercise Director as early as possible.

**FACILITATING EXERCISE PLAY (DISCUSSION)**

A key Facilitator role is to encourage all participants to contribute to the discussion, and to remind them that they are discussing hypothetical situations in a no-fault environment. Facilitators also build and maintain an environment where all the participants feel comfortable speaking honestly and where differences of opinion are respected. Facilitators should ensure that everyone feels included in the conversation and has an opportunity to participate. **Facilitators should not lecture or dominate the discussion, but rather to keep conversations moving.** Additionally, Facilitators may want to use an issues list or “parking lot” to document valid points that are raised by participants during the exercise but that risk taking the conversation off topic; these items can be assigned for later discussion to the appropriate persons.

**ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS**

Facilitators should discourage side conversations, ensure cellular phones are turned off or made silent, and control group dynamics. Table arrangements for the exercise should try to maximize the interaction between the Facilitator and participants. During the exercise, Facilitators need constantly to be aware of time constraints, notifying participants about progress and moving the discussion toward completion of exercise objectives when time is running short.

This guide is designed to provide the reader a quick and easy to read to list of reminders and suggestions on effectively serving as a Facilitator for discussion-based exercises, and is intended to be read well before the day of the exercise. Exercise Facilitators are strongly encouraged to complete the FEMA IS-120a and IS-130a fundamental exercise coursework.

About this Facilitator Handbook

* This Facilitator Handbook is intended to provide Facilitators with the information required to effectively facilitate exercise discussions and ensure effective objective driven play.
* This document contains the information in the Situation Manuel (SitMan) provided to exercise Players and Observers and has been augmented with additional information intended only for the Facilitator. This supplementary information has been formatted for easy identification as shown in the text box below.
* Under no circumstance should this document or the supplementary information contained within be provided to Players in any form. Failure to comply may disqualify Players from participating in the exercise.

**Facilitator Note:** This manual contains information from the Situation Manual augmented with supplementary information that can be found in text boxes like this one.

Handling Instructions

1. This Facilitator Handbook is intended FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. This document should be safeguarded, handled, transmitted, and stored in accordance with the appropriate security directives. Reproduction of this document, in whole or in part, without prior approval from [Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM)] is prohibited.
2. At a minimum, the attached materials should only be disseminated on a need-to-know basis to applicable partners.
3. Points of Contact: [List all points of contact (POC) using the format below.]

**[Exercise Title (e.g., Exercise Director]**

[Name]

[Daily Operations Title]

[Agency]

[Street Address]

[City, State, Zip]

[xxx-xxx-xxxx] (office)

[xxx-xxx-xxxx] (cell)

[e-mail]

**Table of Contents**

[Exercise Overview 1](#_Toc425847537)

[Exercise Name 1](#_Toc425847538)

[Exercise Dates 1](#_Toc425847539)

[Scope 1](#_Toc425847540)

[Mission Area(s) 1](#_Toc425847541)

[Core Capabilities 1](#_Toc425847542)

[Objectives 1](#_Toc425847543)

[Threat or Hazard 1](#_Toc425847544)

[Scenario 1](#_Toc425847545)

[Sponsor 2](#_Toc425847546)

[Participating Organizations 2](#_Toc425847547)

[General Information 3](#_Toc425847548)

[Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities 3](#_Toc425847549)

[Participant Roles and Responsibilities 3](#_Toc425847550)

[Exercise Structure 4](#_Toc425847551)

[Exercise Guidelines 4](#_Toc425847552)

[Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities 4](#_Toc425847553)

[Exercise Evaluation 5](#_Toc425847554)

[Module 1: [Module Title] 7](#_Toc425847555)

[[Month, Day, Year]: [Time] 7](#_Toc425847556)

[[Month, Day, Year]: [Time] 7](#_Toc425847557)

[[Month, Day, Year]: [Time] 7](#_Toc425847558)

[Key Issues 7](#_Toc425847559)

[Questions 7](#_Toc425847560)

[Module 2: [Module Title] 9](#_Toc425847561)

[[Month, Day, Year]: [Time] 9](#_Toc425847562)

[[Month, Day, Year]: [Time] 9](#_Toc425847563)

[[Month, Day, Year]: [Time] 9](#_Toc425847564)

[Key Issues 9](#_Toc425847565)

[Questions 9](#_Toc425847566)

[Module 3: [Module Title] 11](#_Toc425847567)

[[Month, Day, Year]: [Time] 11](#_Toc425847568)

[[Month, Day, Year]: [Time] 11](#_Toc425847569)

[[Month, Day, Year]: [Time] 11](#_Toc425847570)

[Key Issues 11](#_Toc425847571)

[Questions 11](#_Toc425847572)

**Appendices (maintained as separate documents)**

Appendix A Exercise Schedule

Appendix B Exercise Participants

Appendix C Relevant Plans

Appendix D Acronyms

Exercise Overview

## Exercise Name

[Insert the formal name of the exercise, which should match the name in this document’s header]

## Exercise Dates

[Insert the start and end dates of the exercise]

## Scope

This exercise is a [discussion-based tabletop exercise], planned for [exercise duration] at [exercise venue]. Exercise play is limited to [exercise parameters].

## Mission Area(s)

[Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and/or Recovery]

## Core Capabilities

[List the core capabilities being exercised]

## Objectives

Exercise design objectives are focused on [insert description]. The objectives are as follows:

1. [List exercise objectives]
2. [List exercise objectives]
3. [List exercise objectives]
4. [List exercise objectives]

**Facilitator Note:** Remind participants that the exercise objectives were developed during the exercise planning process for very specific reasons and the success of the exercise hinges on focusing discussion on them. As a reminder to you, the exercise objectives are what drive exercise play. Discussion should be redirected to address the objectives listed above as required throughout the exercise.

## Threat or Hazard

[List the specific threat(s) or hazard(s) associated with the exercise scenario (e.g., natural/earthquake, technological/radiological release, human-caused/terrorism)]

## Scenario

[Insert a brief overview of the exercise scenario, including scenario impacts (2-3 sentences)]

## Sponsor

[Insert the name of the sponsor organization, as well as any grant programs being utilized, if applicable]

## Participating Organizations

[Insert a brief summary of the participants and exercise role (i.e. Federal, State, local, Tribal, non-governmental organizations (NGOs)). Consider including a full list of participating agencies in Appendix B (delete appendix B if not required)]

General Information

## Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the intent of the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned core capabilities were selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

**Exercise Objective:** [Insert objectives]

**Core Capability:** [Insert core capability aligned to each objective]

**Exercise Objective:** [Insert objectives]

**Core Capability:** [Insert core capability aligned to each objective]

**Exercise Objective:** [Insert objectives]

**Core Capability:** [Insert core capability aligned to each objective]

**Exercise Objective:** [Insert objectives]

**Core Capability:** [Insert core capability aligned to each objective]

## Participant Roles and Responsibilities

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

* **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
* **Observers.** Observers do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development of Player responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.
* **Facilitators.** Facilitators provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required. Key Exercise Planning Team members also may assist with facilitation as subject matter experts (SMEs) during the exercise.
* **Evaluators.** Evaluators are assigned to observe and document certain objectives during the exercise. Their primary role is to document Player discussions, including how and if those discussions conform to plans, polices, and procedures.
* **Observers.** Observers visit or view selected segments of the exercise. Observers do not play in the exercise, nor do they perform any control or evaluation functions. Observers view the exercise from a designated observation area and must remain within the observation area during the exercise. Very Important Persons (VIPs) are also Observers, but they frequently are grouped separately.
* **Media Personnel.** Some media personnel may be present as Observers, pending approval by the sponsor organization and the Exercise Planning Team. [Delete bullet if not applicable]
* **Support Staff.** The exercise Support Staff includes individuals who perform administrative and logistical support tasks during the exercise (e.g., registration, catering).

## Exercise Structure

This exercise will be a multimedia, facilitated exercise. Players will participate in the following [insert number of modules] modules:

* Module 1: [Module name, e.g. Incident Notification]
* Module 2: [Module name]
* Module 3: [Module name]

[Insert additional modules and exercise structure details as appropriate]

## Exercise Guidelines

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

## Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

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

* [The exercise is designed to evaluate capabilities, plans, systems, and processes rather than individual actions or abilities.]
* [The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.]
* [Participating agencies may need to balance exercise play with real-world emergencies. Real-world emergencies take priority.]

## Exercise Evaluation

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the exercise objectives and aligned capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks, which are documented in [insert document title]. Additionally, Players will be asked to complete participant feedback forms. These documents, coupled with Facilitator observations and notes, will be used to evaluate the exercise and compile the After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP).

**THIS PAGE LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY**

Module 1: [Module Title]

## [Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

* [Insert any spontaneous scenario injects for desired outcome of discussion. Be sure to update the formatting when finished]

## [Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

* [Insert any spontaneous scenario injects for desired outcome of discussion. Be sure to update the formatting when finished]

## [Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

* [Insert any spontaneous scenario injects for desired outcome of discussion. Be sure to update the formatting when finished]

## Key Issues

* [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]

## Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 1. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

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

**Facilitator Note:** The questions below serve as a baseline for discussion. As the exercise Facilitator you are empowered to augment, change, or eliminate them as necessary to drive the discussion towards, or back towards, the stated objectives.

[Functional Group]

1. [List suggested discussion questions. Questions should be developed by the Exercise Planning Team with input from the Evaluators. Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

[Functional Group]

1. [List suggested discussion questions. Questions should be developed by the Exercise Planning Team with input from the Evaluators. Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Module 2: [Module Title]

## [Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

* [Insert any spontaneous scenario injects for desired outcome of discussion. Be sure to update the formatting when finished]

## [Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

* [Insert any spontaneous scenario injects for desired outcome of discussion. Be sure to update the formatting when finished]

## [Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

* [Insert any spontaneous scenario injects for desired outcome of discussion. Be sure to update the formatting when finished]

## Key Issues

* [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]

## Questions

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

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

**Facilitator Note:** The questions below serve as a baseline for discussion. As the exercise Facilitator you are empowered to augment, change, or eliminate them as necessary to drive the discussion towards, or back towards, the stated objectives.

[Functional Group]

1. [List suggested discussion questions. Questions should be developed by the Exercise Planning Team with input from the Evaluators. Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

[Functional Group]

1. [List suggested discussion questions. Questions should be developed by the Exercise Planning Team with input from the Evaluators. Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Module 3: [Module Title]

## [Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

* [Insert any spontaneous scenario injects for desired outcome of discussion. Be sure to update the formatting when finished]

## [Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

* [Insert any spontaneous scenario injects for desired outcome of discussion. Be sure to update the formatting when finished]

## [Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

* [Insert any spontaneous scenario injects for desired outcome of discussion. Be sure to update the formatting when finished]

## Key Issues

* [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module.]

## Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 3. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

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

**Facilitator Note:** The questions below serve as a baseline for discussion. As the exercise Facilitator you are empowered to augment, change, or eliminate them as necessary to drive the discussion towards, or back towards, the stated objectives.

[Functional Group]

1. [List suggested discussion questions. Questions should be developed by the Exercise Planning Team with input from the Evaluators. Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

[Functional Group]

1. [List suggested discussion questions. Questions should be developed by the Exercise Planning Team with input from the Evaluators. Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]