

# Creating exercises to meet the requirements of the Regulation

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# What is an Exercise?

- A single event (with a start and finish) in which players strive to achieve a specific set of objectives.
- Focuses on a specific scenario that simulates an emergency event.
- No Plan is complete until it has been exercised.



# Why Exercise?

- Test or evaluate emergency operations, policies, plans, procedures or facilities.
- Reveal planning weaknesses and resource gaps
- Train personnel in emergency management duties
- Improve coordination and integration
- Improve individual performance and clarify roles and responsibilities
- Demonstrate operational capability
- Develop enthusiasm, knowledge, skill and willingness to participate in response activities
- Gain public recognition of the emergency management program
- Required by Legislation

# Types of Exercises

- Two Categories
- Discussion-based
  - Seminars
  - Workshops
  - **Tabletops**
  - Immersive simulations
- Operations-based
  - Drills
  - **Functional**
  - **Full-scale**



# The Tabletop Exercise

- A facilitated discussion in which players discuss a specific disaster scenario.
- Include a scenario, followed either with questions, inputs or both.
- The scenario and questions are **based on exercise objectives**
- They are followed up with a Hot Wash and an After Action Report / Improvement Plan



# The Functional Exercise

- Functional exercises evaluate multiple functions at a single site (example: EOC)
- Require considerable preparation time and exercise staff
- Use simulated messages, personnel and equipment
- They are followed up with a Hot Wash and an After Action Report / Improvement Plan.

# The Full Scale Exercise

- Mock disaster situations
- Evaluate multiple functions at multiple sites.
- Highly realistic
- Involve actual movement of personnel and equipment
- Should be a culmination of all preceding exercises
- Require a great deal of preparation time, exercise staff, and possibly outside actors
- Can be very expensive
- They are followed up with a Hot Wash and an After Action Report / Improvement Plan.

# ‘Hot Wash’

- A debriefing that takes place immediately following an exercise. It is an opportunity for players to review what happened during the exercise, to clarify to evaluators why they made certain decisions and took certain actions, and to be self-critical and identify areas of improvement.
- The Hot Wash is typically followed up by a formal debriefing a few days following the exercise.

# MB Approved Exercises

- What is a “sufficient magnitude” exercise?
  - Involves emergency management
  - Includes objectives
  - Involves assessing, decision making, determine course of action (not a drill)
  - Consider stressing abilities, resources (outside the box)
  - Followed by Exercise Report / After Action Report

# The Exercise Report

- Date and Location(s)
- Start and End Times
- Exercise Type
- Objectives/Goals
- Scenario
- Agencies/Participants
- Key Findings
- Debrief
- Improvement Plan (optional)

# Exercise Goals and Objectives

- Exercise objectives describe the specific actions that need to occur in order for the exercise to successfully complete its purpose.
- Objectives are a key tool in the development of the exercise because they:
  - Describe desired learning outcomes of the exercise (expected actions)
  - Provide a framework for developing a scenario
  - Provide a focus for exercise evaluation
  - Mitigate scope creep

# Sample Objective

- *“List the chain of decisions required to authorize a total evacuation of community X”*
- This objective is **SMART**:
  - **Specific** – as it has players perform a specific action
  - **Measureable** – as it leads to the creation of a product that can be evaluated
  - **Achievable** – as the task can be completed within the timeframe of the exercise with the materials and subject matter expertise provided
  - **Realistic** – as it focuses on an event that may exist in the real world
  - **Task-orientated** – as it asks players to perform an observable action

# Exercise Scenario

- Backdrop of the exercise and used to drive exercise action
- Consists of a description of the hazard and the events surrounding the emergency situation
- Use case studies and subject matter expertise to ground the scenario in reality and reflect how hazards would play out in the real world.
- Goal: a realistic scenario that provides the opportunity for players to achieve exercise objectives.

# Exercise Scenario

- In discussion-based exercises the scenario is delivered in the form of a narrative
- Read to players or presented using multimedia
- Purpose of the narrative is to introduce players to the hazard and current situation, leading them right up to the point where they can start making decisions.
- May be a single narrative or multiple

Class Discussion Activity

# **EXCERPTS FROM REPORTS**

# Example 1

- “The team gathered at the municipal emergency operations centre and we practiced setting it up”



## Example 2

- “The fire department, RCMP, and CN Rail police responded to a simulated train derailment in the town”

## Example 3



- “The EOC was activated to coordinate a partial evacuation of the town due to gas leak and explosion risk. The ESS Team opened the community hall as a Reception Centre and offered registration and feeding services.”

# Example 4

- Three municipalities conducted a joint full scale tornado exercise. 'Town A' deployed fire crews to assess damage and direct people to the Reception Centre which was set up and operated by 'RM B'. The EOC was activated and run by 'City C'.



## Example 5

- “The primary objective of our functional exercise was to evaluate our procedure for supporting a mass casualty incident occurring at the airport and the exercise went very well.” Next time we will invite airport officials, EMS and the local Health Authority.”

# Activity

- Divide into small groups
- Draft an exercise idea with the following headings using your worksheet:
  - objectives
  - participants
  - functions/activities to be focused on
  - site(s)
  - hazard or incident or problem/scenario

# Let's Discuss!

Questions:

What type of exercise is it?

Is it of 'sufficient magnitude'?

Approved or not approved?

# Summary

- Differences between tabletop, functional and full scale exercises
- Elements of the Exercise Report
- Why we need exercise objectives
- Purpose of scenarios
- Reviewed examples