



Department of
Military

TEMA

Tabletop in a Box

Train the Trainers

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Introductions

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Objectives

- Define Exercise Purpose
- Define Tabletop Exercise
- Learn how to create
- Learn how to implement
- Learn how to begin the review process and why

The Goal

To become comfortable with the process and eliminate the fear of exercising

What is the purpose of an Exercise?



Exercise

To test and validate plans and capabilities, and identify both capability gaps and areas for improvement.

In simple terms... TO GET BETTER!

The best way to eliminate the “human factor” is to test your plans through Exercising them

What is a Tabletop Exercise?



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Discussion Based

- **A Tabletop Exercise is intended to generate discussion of various issues regarding a hypothetical, simulated emergency.** They can be used to enhance general awareness, validate plans and procedures, rehearse concepts, and/or assess the types of systems needed to guide the prevention of, protection from, mitigation of, response to, and recovery from a defined incident. Generally, they are aimed at **facilitating conceptual understanding, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, and/or achieving changes in perceptions.**

Discussion Based

- During a Tabletop Exercise, players are encouraged to discuss issues in depth, collaboratively examining areas of concern and solving problems. **The effectiveness is derived from the energetic involvement of participants and their assessment of recommended revisions to current policies, procedures, and plans.**

How do we create a Tabletop Exercise?

Creation Guide

Consider the following items:

- Elected and appointed official's intent and guidance
- Multi-year Training and Exercise Plan
- Relevant After Action Reviews/Improvement Plans from real-world events and exercises
- Threat Hazard Identification Risk Assessment or other risk, threat, and hazard assessments
- Organizational plans and procedures
- Grant or cooperative agreement requirements.

Creation Guide (continued)

- Identify threats (give them context and be realistic)
- Set Objectives
- Develop the exercise scenario
- Create documentation
- Coordinate logistics
- Planning for exercise control and evaluation
- Establish extent and time of “play”

The Scenario

- Be creative
- Meet your objectives
- Try to make it as realistic as possible
- Challenge everyone involved
- Utilize past events / training as a reference

*** If you are stuck – look for assistance**

Exercise Questioning

Based on your scenario, develop a line of questioning that will encourage discussion and help to meet your objectives

What? Where? How? Why? When? Who?

Be Creative and Realistic

Before Implementation

Create organizational support

Explain the “Why” behind the exercise to all concerned parties. If you can create “buy-in” within the organization, you will have more people interested in participating.

(That translates to BETTER DISCUSSION)

Implementation

Encourage understanding of “No-Fault” Environments and emphasize the understanding.

- With Leadership
- With Personnel
- With All Participants

Starting your Exercise

- Introduce yourself to the participants
- Give some background about yourself
- Explain safety procedures / exit procedures
- Identify “Real World Emergency” procedures
- Emphasize:

EXERCISE EXERCISE EXERCISE

Objectives

- Lay out and explain your objectives to the participants in the simplest form possible
- Encourage active participation (and explain why it's important)
- Begin your Exercise
- Follow your schedule

The Exercise

- Expect the unexpected
- Be ready to assist
- Keep participants on target (don't let rabbit holes go too deep) by guiding conversations
- Stay friendly, stay professional, and keep on task

Review Process

What is a Hot-wash?



HOTWASH

This is a quick (nothing over 30 minutes) way to gather immediate feedback on your exercise

- Top 3 Strengths
- Top 3 Weaknesses
- Other Remarks and Comments

After Action Review

Were there...

- Confusion about responsibilities?
- Poor decisions?
- Newly identified vulnerabilities?
- Weak points?

This is the time to discuss shortcomings and identify areas that need to be addressed

Improvement Plan

Based on all of the data collected from the hot-wash and after action review, form your Improvement Plan

THIS IS THE “WHY” BEHIND EXERCISING

- Identify all of the issues and vulnerabilities
- Assign them for correction
- Ensure that they are corrected
- Exercise the updated plan

Wrap Up

Questions?

In Summary

- Defined Exercise Purpose
- Defined Tabletop Exercise
- Learned how to create
- Learned how to implement
- Learned how to begin the review process and why

Are we more comfortable with this process?

Thank you for your time and participation!!!

For Additional Information:

Tennessee Emergency Management Agency

<https://www.tn.gov/tema/emergency-community/exercises.html>

Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program

<https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/hseep-resources>