Exercise Name]

Situation Manual

[Date]



**Exercise Overview**

| **Exercise Name** | [Insert the formal name of exercise, which should match the name in the document header] |
| --- | --- |
| **Exercise Dates** | [Indicate the start and end dates of the exercise] |
| **Scope** | This exercise is a [exercise type], planned for [exercise duration] at [exercise location]. 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** | [List exercise objectives] |
| **Threat or Hazard** | [List the threat or hazard (e.g. natural/hurricane, technological/radiological release)] |
| **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 total number of participants and participation level (i.e., Federal, State, local, Tribal, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and/or international agencies). Consider including the full list of participating agencies in Appendix B. Delete Appendix B if not required.] |
| **Point of Contact** | [Insert contact information for the point of contact for this exercise] |

**General Information**

**Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities**

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for 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 are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

| **Exercise Objective** | **Core Capability** |
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**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]

Each module begins with a multimedia update that summarizes key events occurring within that time period. After the updates, participants review the situation and engage in functional group discussions of appropriate [prevention/protection/mitigation/response/recovery] issues. For this exercise, the functional groups are as follows:

* [Functional group, e.g. Law Enforcement]
* [Functional group]
* [Functional group]
* [Functional group]

After these functional group discussions, participants will engage in a moderated plenary discussion in which a spokesperson from each group will present a synopsis of the group’s actions, based on the scenario.

**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.

**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.

**Controller/Facilitator.**

Controller/Facilitators plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site, and act in the roles of organizations or individuals that are not playing in the exercise. Controller/Facilitators direct the pace of the exercise, provide key data to players, and may prompt or initiate certain player actions to ensure exercise continuity. In addition, they issue exercise material to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and supervise the safety of all exercise participants.

**Simulators.**

Simulators are control staff personnel who role play nonparticipating organizations or individuals. They most often operate out of the Simulation Cell (SimCell), but they may occasionally have face-to-face contact with players. Simulators function semi-independently under the supervision of SimCell controllers, enacting roles (e.g., media reporters or next of kin) in accordance with instructions provided in the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL). All simulators are ultimately accountable to the Exercise Director and Senior Controller.

**Evaluators.**

Evaluators evaluate and provide feedback on a designated functional area of the exercise. Evaluators observe and document performance against established capability targets and critical tasks, in accordance with the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

**Actors.**

Actors simulate specific roles during exercise play, typically victims or other bystanders. [Delete bullet if not applicable]

**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).

**Please refrain from using 10-Codes and acronyms – plain speak will be the preferred method of communication**

**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.

**Assumptions**

Assumptions constitute the implied factual foundation for the exercise and, as such, are assumed to be present before the exercise starts. The following assumptions apply to the exercise:

The exercise is conducted in a **no-fault** learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.

The exercise is intended to allow for a free flow of discussion and learning, please set rank structure aside when critiquing or suggesting organizational implementations and changes.

Empower players within the exercise to utilize their knowledge, skills, abilities and voice.

The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented. However, this exercise is intended to be generic in its ability to be utilized by a multitude of jurisdictions within a wide variety of potential geographical areas. Thus, modifications to topography, fuel loads, and specific hazards within your jurisdiction may be utilized by the Controller for exercise adaptation.

Exercise simulation contains sufficient detail to allow players to react to information and situations as they are presented as if the simulated incident were real.

Participating agencies may need to balance exercise play with real-world emergencies. **Real-world emergencies take priority**.

You will get out of the scenario what you put into it. Active discussion is encouraged by all participants, regardless of rank.

No organization or entity is perfect. The expectation is that through the exercise, you will note flaws, budget shortfalls and other areas in need of improvement. Please allow this to be an accurate and honest assessment for your benefit and the benefit of your community.

**Artificialities**

During this exercise, the following artificialities apply:

* Exercise communication and coordination is limited to participating exercise organizations and venues.
* Only communication methods listed in the Communications Directory are available for players to use during the exercise.
* All players in the exercise will receive information at the same time.

**Exercise Logistics**

**Safety**

Exercise participant safety takes priority over exercise events. The following general requirements apply to the exercise:

A Safety Controller is responsible for participant safety; any safety concerns must be immediately reported to the Safety Controller. The Safety Controller and Exercise Director will determine if a real-world emergency warrants a pause in exercise play and when exercise play can be resumed.

For an emergency that requires assistance, use the phrase “real-world emergency.” The following procedures should be used in case of a real emergency during the exercise:

Anyone who observes a participant who is seriously ill or injured will immediately notify emergency services and begin treatment (if in protocol).

The controller aware of a real emergency will initiate the “real-world emergency”broadcast and provide the Safety Controller, Senior Controller, and Exercise Director with the location of the emergency and resources needed, if any. The Senior Controller will notify the [Control Cell or SimCell] as soon as possible if a real emergency occurs.

Fire Safety and evacuation procedures apply (please locate all exits in your facility and discuss proper exit strategy)

**Fire Safety [delete section if not applicable]**

Standard fire and safety regulations relevant to the [jurisdiction, venue, or organization] will be followed during the exercise. [Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]

**Emergency Medical Services [delete section if not applicable]**

The sponsor organization will coordinate with local emergency medical services in the event of a real-world emergency. [Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]

**Electrical and Generating Device Hazards [delete section if not applicable]**

All applicable electrical and generating device safety requirements should be documented prior to the start of the exercise. [Insert any organization- or venue-specific guidelines or protocols.]

**Weapons Policy [delete section if not applicable]**

All participants will follow the relevant weapons policy for the exercising organization or exercise venue. [Please see Appendix [X] for a detailed description of the weapons policy.]

**Site Access**

**Security**

If entry control is required for the exercise venue(s), the sponsor organization is responsible for arranging appropriate security measures. To prevent interruption of the exercise, access to exercise sites and the [Control Cell and/or SimCell] is limited to exercise participants. Players should advise their venue’s controller or evaluator of any unauthorized persons.

**Media/Observer Coordination [delete section if not applicable]**

Organizations with media personnel and/or observers attending the event should coordinate with the sponsor organization for access to the exercise site. Media/Observers are escorted to designated areas and accompanied by an exercise controller at all times. Sponsor organization representatives and/or the observer controller may be present to explain exercise conduct and answer questions. Exercise participants should be advised of media and/or observer presence.

**Exercise Identification [delete section if not applicable]**

Exercise staff may be identified by badges, hats, and/or vests to clearly display exercise roles; additionally, uniform clothing may be worn to show agency affiliation. Table 2 describes these identification items.

| **Group** | **Color** |
| --- | --- |
| Exercise Director | White |
| Facilitator | White |
| Controllers | Blue |
| Evaluators | Red |
| Actors | Black |
| Support Staff | Gray |
| Observers/VIPs | Orange |
| Media Personnel | Purple |
| Players, Uniformed | Yellow |
| Players, Civilian Clothes | Yellow |

**Post-exercise and Evaluation Activities**

**Debriefings**

Post-exercise debriefings aim to collect sufficient relevant data to support effective evaluation and improvement planning.

**Hot Wash**

At the conclusion of exercise play, controllers facilitate a Hot Wash to allow players to discuss strengths and areas for improvement, and evaluators to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes. All participants may attend; however, ***observers are not encouraged to attend the meeting***. The Hot Wash should not exceed 30 minutes. A hot wash is “*the immediate "after-action" discussion and evaluation of an agency's (or multiple agencies') performance following an exercise, training session, or major event*.” Please set aside all rank structure, personal history with individuals and ego. This is an opportunity for all involved players to have a voice.

**Participant Feedback Forms**

Participant Feedback Forms provide players with the opportunity to comment candidly on exercise activities and exercise design. Participant Feedback Forms should be collected at the conclusion of the Hot Wash. Please actively encourage all participants to engage and complete all feedback forms.

**Exercise Evaluation**

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the exercise objectives and aligned capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks, which are documented in Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs). Evaluators have EEGs for each of their assigned areas. 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).

**Participant Information and Guidance**

**Exercise Rules**

The following general rules govern exercise play:

* Real-world emergency actions take priority over exercise actions.
* Exercise players will comply with real-world emergency procedures, unless otherwise directed by the control staff.
* All communications (including written, radio, telephone, and e-mail) during the exercise will begin and end with the statement “**This is an exercise**.”
* Exercise players who place telephone calls or initiate radio communication with the SimCell must identify the organization or individual with whom they wish to speak.

**Players Instructions**

Players should follow certain guidelines before, during, and after the exercise to ensure a safe and effective exercise.

**Before the Exercise**

* Review appropriate organizational plans, procedures, and exercise support documents.
* **Be at the appropriate site at least 30 minutes before the exercise starts**. Wear the appropriate uniform and/or identification item(s).
* Sign in when you arrive.
* If you gain knowledge of the scenario before the exercise, notify a controller so that appropriate actions can be taken to ensure a valid evaluation.
* Review all “real world emergency” and safety procedures

[Read your Player Information Handout, which includes information on exercise safety.]

**During the Exercise**

Respond to exercise events and information as if the emergency were real, unless otherwise directed by an exercise controller.

Controllers will give you only information they are specifically directed to disseminate. **You are expected to obtain other necessary information through existing emergency information channels.**

Do not engage in personal conversations with controllers, evaluators, or observers (unless a specific question regarding their field of expertise needs to be answered). If you are asked an exercise-related question, give a short, concise answer. If you are busy and cannot immediately respond, indicate that, make note of that and report back with an answer as soon as possible.

If you do not understand the scope of the exercise, or if you are uncertain about an organization’s participation in an exercise, ask the controller.

Parts of the scenario may seem implausible. Recognize that the exercise has objectives to satisfy and may require incorporation of unrealistic aspects. Every effort has been made by the exercise’s trusted agents to balance realism with safety and to create an effective learning and evaluation environment.

All exercise communications will begin and end with the statement **“This is an exercise.”** This precaution is taken so that anyone who overhears the conversation will not mistake exercise play for a real-world emergency.

When you communicate with the SimCell, identify the organization or individual with whom you wish to speak.

**Speak when you take an action**. This procedure will ensure that evaluators are aware of critical actions as they occur.

**Maintain a log of your activities**. Many times, this log may include documentation of activities that were missed by a controller or evaluator.

**Delegate.** Utilize the other players in the exercise. Assign roles and proceed forward.

**Encourage participation by all players.** The goal is to actively incorporate all players in a learning environment that is meant for all to gain knowledge and experience.

**After the Exercise**

Participate in the Hot Wash at your venue with controllers and evaluators. All players are actively encouraged to participate. Constructive problem solving, critical thinking and active need assessments are encouraged from all players.

Complete the Participant Feedback Form. This form allows you to comment candidly on emergency response activities and exercise effectiveness. Provide the completed form to a controller or evaluator. If you are not comfortable putting your name on the feedback form, please leave the name bar blank. Do not allow confidentiality to limit your feedback. Honest and accurate feedback is needed from all.

Provide any notes or materials generated from the exercise to your controller or evaluator for review and inclusion in the AAR.

**Simulation Guidelines**

Because the exercise is of limited duration and scope, certain details will be simulated. The physical description of what would fully occur at the incident sites and surrounding areas will be relayed to players by simulators or controllers. A SimCell will simulate the roles and interactions of nonparticipating organizations or individuals. [Include any additional simulations to be used in the exercise.]

**Module 1: [Module Name]**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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.

**[Functional Group(s)]**

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 in the EEGs.]

**Module 2: [Module Name]**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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.

**[Functional Group(s)]**

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 in the EEGs.]

**Module 3: [Module Name]**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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.

**[Functional Group(s)]**

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 in the EEGs.]

**Exercise Schedule**

**Note:** Because this information is updated throughout the exercise planning process, appendices may be developed as stand-alone documents rather than part of the SitMan.

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| --- | --- |
| **TIME** | **ACTIVITY** |
| **0900** | **Welcome / Opening remarks** |
| **0915** | **Module #1** |
| **1015** | **Module #2** |
| **1115** | **Module #3** |
| **1215** | **Hot Wash** |
| **1245** | **Closing Remarks** |
|  | **\*Please fill out all required Participant Feedback Forms**  **\*Please turn in all notes or materials generated from the exercise**  **\*All times are subject to adaptation as needed** |

**Exercise Participants**

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| **Participating Organizations** |
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| Local Organizations |
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**Relevant Plans**

[Insert excerpts from relevant plans, policies, or procedures to be tested during the exercise.]

**Communications Plan**

**Note:** This COMPLAN can be inserted as an Appendix in the Exercise Plan (ExPlan) and/or Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Handbook. Alternately, it can be used as a standalone document.

**All spoken and written communications will start and end with the statement “This is an exercise.”**

**Player Communications**

**Exercise communications do not interfere with real-world emergency communications.** Players use routine organization communications systems. Additional communication assets may be made available as the exercise progresses. Each venue or organization coordinates its internal communication networks and channels.

**Please refrain from using 10-Codes and acronyms – plain speak will be the preferred method of communication**

**Controller Communications**

The principal methods of information transfer for controllers during the exercise are [landline or cellular telephone, radio, fax, and e-mail]. The controller communications network allows the Exercise Director or Senior Controller to make and announce universal changes in exercise documentation, such as changes to the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL).

The primary means of communication among the SimCell, controllers, and Players is [means of communication, e.g., radio (channels), telephone]. A list of key [telephone and fax numbers and radio call signs] will be available before the exercise starts.

**Communications Check**

Before the exercise, the [Control Cell or Simulation Cell] conducts a communications check with all interfacing communications nodes to ensure redundancy and uninterrupted flow of control information.

**Player Briefing**

Controllers may be required to provide scenario details to participants to begin exercise play. Technical handouts or other materials also may be provided to orient players with the exercise.

**Public Affairs**

The sponsor organization and participating organizations are responsible for coordinating and disseminating public information before the exercise. Each venue should follow internal procedures.