

[Protective Marking]

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)  
After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)

[Full Exercise Name]  
[Exercise Name Continued]

[Note for After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) Example:

- Text found in this document that is highlighted and bracketed is included to provide instruction or to indicate a location to input text.
- All text that is not highlighted is to be included in the final version of the AAR/IP.]

[FULL EXERCISE NAME]

[Exercise Dates]

# AFTER ACTION REPORT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN

[Publication Date]

[On the cover page, insert additional graphics such as logos, pictures, and background colors as desired. The word “Draft” should be included before the phrase “After Action Report/Improvement Plan” on the cover page and in the header/footer of all versions except the final AAR/IP.]

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Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)  
After Action Report/Improvement Plan  
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**[Full Exercise Name]**

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## HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

1. The title of this document is [complete and formal title of document].
2. The information gathered in this AAR/IP is classified as [For Official Use Only (FOUO)] and should be handled as sensitive information not to be disclosed. This document should be safeguarded, handled, transmitted, and stored in accordance with appropriate security directives. Reproduction of this document, in whole or in part, without prior approval from [agency] is prohibited.
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# CONTENTS

**Administrative Handling Instructions ..... 1**

**Contents ..... 3**

**Executive Summary ..... 5**

**Section 1: Exercise Overview ..... [p]**

    Exercise Details ..... [p]

    Exercise Planning Team Leadership ..... [p]

    Participating Organizations ..... [p]

**Section 2: Exercise Design Summary ..... [p]**

    Exercise Purpose and Design ..... [p]

    Capabilities and Activities Identified for Demonstration ..... [p]

    Scenario Summary ..... [p]

    Planned Simulations ..... [p]

**Section 3: Analysis of Capabilities ..... [p]**

    [Capability 1] ..... [p]

    [Capability 2] ..... [p]

    [Capability 3] ..... [p]

**Section 4: Conclusion ..... [p]**

**Appendix A: Improvement Plan ..... [p]**

**Appendix B: Lessons Learned [Optional] ..... [p]**

**Appendix C: Participant Feedback Summary [Optional] ..... [p]**

**Appendix D: Exercise Events Summary Table [Optional] ..... [p]**

**Appendix E: Performance Ratings [Optional] ..... [p]**

**Appendix F: Acronyms ..... [p]**

[If an AAR contains graphics, figures, or tables, they should be numbered and listed in the Contents section (e.g. Figure 1, Table 1, etc.).]

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[When writing the Executive Summary, keep in mind that this section may be the only part of the AAR/IP that some people will read. Introduce this section by stating the full name of the exercise and providing a brief overview of the exercise. This brief overview should discuss why the exercise was conducted; the exercise objectives; and what Target Capabilities List (TCL) capabilities, activities, and scenario(s) were used to achieve those objectives. All of these areas will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapters of the AAR/IP. In addition, the Executive Summary may be used to summarize any high-level observations that cut across multiple capabilities.]

The [agency or jurisdiction] [scenario type] [exercise type] exercise [exercise name] was developed to test [agency or jurisdiction]'s [Capability 1], [Capability 2], and [Capability 3] capabilities. The exercise planning team was composed of numerous and diverse agencies, including [list of agencies participating in planning team]. The exercise planning team discussed [include a brief overview of the major issues encountered, discussed, and resolved during the exercise planning process. Topics to address in this section could include the length of the planning process, the reasoning behind the planning team's choice of objectives to exercise, etc.]

Based on the exercise planning team's deliberations, the following objectives were developed for [exercise name]:

- Objective 1: [Insert 1 sentence description of the exercise objective]
- Objective 2: [Insert 1 sentence description of the exercise objective]
- Objective 3: [Insert 1 sentence description of the exercise objective]

The purpose of this report is to analyze exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

[In general, the major strengths and primary areas for improvement should be limited to three each to ensure the Executive Summary is high-level and concise.]

### Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this exercise are as follows:

- [Use complete sentences to describe each major strength.]
- [Additional major strength]
- [Additional major strength]

### Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the exercise, several opportunities for improvement in [jurisdiction/organization name]'s ability to respond to the incident were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

- [Use complete sentences to state each primary area for improvement and its associated key recommendation(s).]
- [Additional key recommendation]
- [Additional key recommendation]

[End this section by describing the overall exercise as successful or unsuccessful, and briefly state the areas in which subsequent exercises conducted by these jurisdictions and/or organizations should focus.]

## SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW

[Information in the Exercise Overview should be “structured data”—written as a list rather than in paragraph form—in order to facilitate preparation of other parts of the AAR/IP, maintain consistency within AAR/IPs, and facilitate the analysis of AAR/IPs for program reporting.]

### Exercise Details

#### Exercise Name

[Insert formal name of exercise, which should match the name in the header.]

#### Type of Exercise

[Insert the type of exercise as described in Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program Volume I (e.g. seminar, workshop, drill, game, tabletop, functional exercise, or full-scale exercise.)

#### Exercise Start Date

[Insert the month, day, and year that the exercise began.]

#### Exercise End Date

[Insert the month, day, and year that the exercise ended.]

#### Duration

[Insert the total length of the exercise, in day or hours, as appropriate.]

#### Location

[Insert all applicable information regarding the specific location of the exercise; including any city, State, Federal region, international country, or military installation.]

#### Sponsor

[Insert the name of the Federal agency or agencies that sponsored the exercise, as well as any co-sponsors if applicable. Also list any applicable points of contacts.]

#### Program

[Insert the name of the program (e.g. Fiscal Year 2007 State Homeland Security Grant Program) from which exercise funding originated.]

#### Mission

[Insert the appropriate mission areas of the exercise (e.g. Prevent, Protect, Response, and/or Recovery).]

#### Capabilities

[Insert a list of the target capabilities addressed within the exercise.]

#### Scenario Type

[Name the exercise scenario type (e.g. chemical release).]

### Exercise Planning Team

[The name of each member of the planning team leadership should be listed along with their role in the exercise, organizational affiliation, job title, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address.]

## Participating Organizations

[Insert a list of the individual participating organizations or agencies, including Federal, State, Tribal, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local and international agencies, and contract support companies as applicable.]

### Number of Participants

[Insert a list of the total number of each of the following exercise participants, as applicable:]

- Players
- Controllers
- Evaluators
- Facilitators
- Observers
- Victim Role Players]

## SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

[The Exercise Design Summary is intended to provide a summary of the exercise design process.]

### Exercise Purpose and Design

[This section should be a brief (one-to-two paragraph) summation of why the exercise was conducted and what the exercise participants hoped to learn. It should also include a brief history of how the exercise was organized, designed, funded, etc.]

### Exercise Objectives, Capabilities, and Activities

[The purpose of this section is to list exercise objectives and align them with associated capabilities from the Target Capabilities List (TCL). For each TCL capability, there is an Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG) which lists specific activities which must be performed to demonstrate a capability. In addition to TCL capabilities, the EEG activities relevant to each objective should also be included in this section. Begin this section with the following text.]

Capabilities-based planning allows for exercise planning teams to develop exercise objectives and observe exercise outcomes through a framework of specific action items that were derived from the Target Capabilities List (TCL). The capabilities listed below form the foundation for the organization of all objectives and observations in this exercise. Additionally, each capability is linked to several corresponding activities and tasks to provide additional detail.

Based upon the identified exercise objectives below, the exercise planning team has decided to demonstrate the following capabilities during this exercise:

- **Objective 1:** [Insert a one sentence description of each objective].
  - [Capability Title]: [Activity 1]; [Activity 2]; and [Activity 3].
  - [Capability Title]: [Activity 1]; [Activity 2]; and [Activity 3].

### Scenario Summary

[For an operations-based exercise, this section should summarize the scenario or situation initially presented to players, subsequent key events introduced into play, and the time in which these events occurred. For a discussion-based exercise, this section should outline the scenario used and/or modules presented to participants.]

## SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

This section of the report reviews the performance of the exercised capabilities, activities, and tasks. In this section, observations are organized by capability and associated activities. The capabilities linked to the exercise objectives of [full exercise name] are listed below, followed by corresponding activities. Each activity is followed by related observations, which include references, analysis, and recommendations.

[The format for Chapter 3, as described above, represents the preferred order for analysis of exercise observations. However, observations that are cross-cutting and do not apply to one, specific activity within the capability should be listed first, directly under the capability summary. Below the cross-cutting observations, you may then present the complete list of activities which apply to the observation.]

### CAPABILITY 1: [CAPABILITY NAME]

**Capability Summary:** [Include a detailed overview of the capability, drawn from the TCL capability description, and a description of how the capability was performed during an operations-based exercise or addressed during a discussion-based exercise. The exact length of this summary will depend on the scope of the exercise.]

**Activity 1.1:** [Using the EEGs, identify the activity to which the observation(s) below pertain.]

**Observation 1.1:** [Begin this section with a heading indicating whether the observation is a “Strength” or an “Area for Improvement.” A strength is an observed action, behavior, procedure, and/or practice that is worthy of recognition and special notice. Areas for improvement are those areas in which the evaluator observed that a necessary task was not performed or that a task was performed with notable problems. Following this heading, insert a short, complete sentence that describes the general observation.]

**References:** [List relevant plans, policies, procedures, laws, and/or regulations, or sections of these plans, policies, procedures, laws, and/or regulations. If no references apply to the observation, it is acceptable to simply list “N/A” or “Not Applicable.”]

1. [Name of the task and the applicable plans, policies, procedures, laws, and/or regulations and 1-2 sentences describing their relation to the task]
2. [Name of the task and the applicable plans, policies, procedures, laws, and/or regulations and 1-2 sentences describing their relation to the task]
3. [Name of the task and the applicable plans, policies, procedures, laws, and/or regulations and 1-2 sentences describing their relation to the task]

**Analysis:** [The analysis section should be the most detailed section of Chapter 3. Include a description of the behavior or actions at the core of the observation, as well as a brief description of what happened and the consequence(s) (positive or negative) of the action or behavior. If an action was performed successfully, include any relevant

innovative approaches utilized by the exercise participants. If an action was not performed adequately, the root-causes contributing to the shortcoming must be identified.]

**Recommendations:** [Insert recommendations to address identified areas for improvement, based on the judgment and experience of the evaluation team. If the observation was identified as a strength, without corresponding recommendations, insert “None.”]

1. [Complete description of recommendation]
2. [Complete description of recommendation]
3. [Complete description of recommendation]

[Continue to add additional observations, references, analyses, and recommendations for each capability as necessary. Maintain numbering convention to allow for easy reference.]

## SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

[This section is a conclusion for the entire document. It provides an overall summary to the report. It should include the demonstrated capabilities, lessons learned, major recommendations, and a summary of what steps should be taken to ensure that the concluding results will help to further refine plans, policies, procedures, and training for this type of incident.]

[Subheadings are not necessary and the level of detail in this section does not need to be as comprehensive as that in the Executive Summary.]

## APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for [identify the State, county, jurisdiction, etc., as applicable] as a result of [full exercise name] conducted on [date of exercise]. These recommendations draw on both the After Action Report and the After Action Conference. [The IP should include the key recommendations and corrective actions identified in *Chapter 3: Analysis of Capabilities*, the After Action Conference, and the EEGs. The IP has been formatted to align with the *Corrective Action Program System*.]

Table A.1 Improvement Plan Matrix

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
[Capability 1: Capability Name]	1. Observation 1	1.1 Insert Recommendation 1	1.1.1 Insert Corrective Action 1	Planning	State X EMA	EMA Director	Dec 1, 2006	Sep 1, 2007
			1.1.2 Insert Corrective Action 2	Planning	State X EMS System	EMS System Director	Dec 1, 2006	Feb 1, 2007
		1.2 Insert Recommendation 2	1.2.1 Insert Corrective Action 1	Training	State X EMA	EMA Director	Dec 1, 2006	Jan 1, 2007
			1.2.2 Insert Corrective Action 2	Systems/Equipment	State X EMA	EMA Director	Dec 1, 2006	Mar 15, 2007
	2. Observation 2	2.1 Insert Recommendation 1	2.1.1 Insert Corrective Action 1	Planning	State X EMS System	EMS System Director	Dec 1, 2006	Jan 15, 2007
			2.1.2 Insert Corrective Action 2	Systems/Equipment	State X EMA	EMA Director	Dec 1, 2006	Jan 1, 2007

[Optional]

## APPENDIX B: LESSONS LEARNED

While the After Action Report/Improvement Plan includes recommendations which support development of specific post-exercise corrective actions, exercises may also reveal lessons learned which can be shared with the broader homeland security audience. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maintains the *Lessons Learned Information Sharing* (LLIS.gov) system as a means of sharing post-exercise lessons learned with the emergency response community. This appendix provides jurisdictions and organizations with an opportunity to nominate lessons learned from exercises for sharing on *LLIS.gov*.

For reference, the following are the categories and definitions used in *LLIS.gov*:

- **Lesson Learned:** Knowledge and experience, positive or negative, derived from actual incidents, such as the 9/11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina, as well as those derived from observations and historical study of operations, training, and exercises.
- **Best Practices:** Exemplary, peer-validated techniques, procedures, good ideas, or solutions that work and are solidly grounded in actual operations, training, and exercise experience.
- **Good Stories:** Exemplary, but non-peer-validated, initiatives (implemented by various jurisdictions) that have shown success in their specific environments and that may provide useful information to other communities and organizations.
- **Practice Note:** A brief description of innovative practices, procedures, methods, programs, or tactics that an organization uses to adapt to changing conditions or to overcome an obstacle or challenge.

### Exercise Lessons Learned

[Insert an account of any observations nominated for inclusion in the DHS *LLIS.gov* system. If there are not any nominations, a simple statement to that effect should be included here.]

[Optional]

## APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

[Provided in this section is a sample Participant Feedback Form, which should be distributed to exercise participants at a post-exercise hot wash. Appendix C of the AAR/IP should provide a summary of the feedback received through this form.]

### PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

Exercise Name: [Full Exercise Name]

Exercise Date: [Date]

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_ Player \_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_ Facilitator \_\_\_ Evaluator

#### PART I: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

1. Based on the exercise today and the tasks identified, list the top 3 strengths and/or areas that need improvement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is there anything you saw in the exercise that the evaluator(s) might not have been able to experience, observe, and record?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Identify the corrective actions that should be taken to address the issues identified above. For each corrective action, indicate if it is a high, medium, or low priority.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe the corrective actions that relate to your area of responsibility. Who should be assigned responsibility for each corrective action?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 5. List the applicable equipment, training, policies, plans, and procedures that should be reviewed, revised, or developed. Indicate the priority level for each.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### PART II – EXERCISE DESIGN AND CONDUCT: ASSESSMENT

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided below, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

Table C.1: Participant Assessment

Assessment Factor	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
a. The exercise was well structured and organized.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
b. The exercise scenario was plausible and realistic.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
c. The facilitator/controller(s) was knowledgeable about the area of play and kept the exercise on target.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
d. The exercise documentation provided to assist in preparing for and participating in the exercise was useful.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
e. Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
f. The participants included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
g. This exercise allowed my agency/jurisdiction to practice and improve priority capabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
h. After this exercise, I believe my agency/jurisdiction is better prepared to deal successfully with the scenario that was exercised.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

### PART III – PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

[Optional]

## APPENDIX D: EXERCISE EVENTS SUMMARY TABLE

[In formulating its analysis, the evaluation team may assemble a timeline of key exercise events. While it is not necessary to include this timeline in the main body of the AAR/IP, the evaluation team may find value in including it as an appendix. If so, this section should summarize what actually happened during the exercise in a timeline table format. Focus of this section is on what inputs were actually presented to the players and what actions the players took during the exercise. Successful development of this section is aided by the design, development, and planning actions of the exercise design team. Prior to the exercise, the exercise design team should have developed a timeline of anticipated key events.]

[An example of the format for the Exercise Events Summary Table is presented below.]

**Table D.1: Exercise Events Summary**

Date	Time	Scenario Event, Simulated Player Inject, Player Action	Event/Action
02/20/06	0900	Scenario Event	Explosion and injuries reported at subway station 13
02/20/06	0902	Player Action	Subway services stopped in accordance with protocols; notifications started
02/20/06	0915	Player Action	Evacuation ordered for planning zone 2A
02/20/06	0940	Simulated Player Inject	Traffic at a standstill on major egress route 1 reported to players (Response generated issue because personnel to staff traffic control points were not deployed)

[Optional]

## APPENDIX E: PERFORMANCE RATING

[When a jurisdiction/organization elects to use performance ratings, or when initiatives require a rating within the AAR/IP, the following approach can be used. A qualitative performance rating is assigned to each activity demonstrated within its capability area. The performance rating is based on a systemic review by the lead evaluator of exercise performance based on evaluator analysis of how well the participants demonstrated the capability outcome. The results should be summarized within this appendix and should be based on the supporting narrative contained within the body of the AAR/IP.]

The performance rating categories refer to how well each activity was performed during the exercise and are detailed in the table below.

**Table E.1: Performance Ratings**

Rating	Description
Performed without Challenges	The performance measures and tasks associated with the activity were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.
Performed with Some Challenges, but Adequately	The performance measures and tasks associated with the activity were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.
Performed with Major Challenges	The performance measures and tasks associated with the activity were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or, was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.
Unable to be Performed	The performance measures and tasks associated with the activity were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).

## APPENDIX F: ACRONYMS

[Any acronym used in the AAR should be listed alphabetically and spelled out.]

**Table F.1:** *Acronyms*

Acronym	Meaning