

Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning

The purpose of this course is to provide learners with an understanding of the need for exercise evaluation and improvement planning, and to equip learners with methodologies for both.

This online course will:

- Provide the base for evaluation of exercises in which Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local jurisdictions participate along with non-governmental and private sector organizations.
- Reinforce identified training standards.
- Provide for evaluation of readiness.
- Support the National Preparedness Goal and National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- Provide structure, multi-year planning, tools, and guidance necessary for individuals to build and sustain exercise programs that enhance public and private sector preparedness.

Course Structure

To receive credit for the course, you must complete all lessons and pass the posttest. The last lesson provides instructions on how to complete the posttest.

Each lesson will take you between 20 to 50 minutes to complete. It is important to allow enough time to complete each lesson in its entirety. The lesson overview states the approximate length of the lesson. The progress bar will be displayed in the upper right corner of each content screen to help you gauge your movement through the course.

Remember...**YOU MUST COMPLETE THE ENTIRE LESSON TO RECEIVE CREDIT.** If you have to leave the lesson, do not exit from the course or close your browser. If you exit from the course, you will need to start that lesson over again.

Moving Through the Course

Working through the course is simple. On most screens, you will click on the Next button either at the top or bottom of the screen when you are ready to proceed. Green text provides instructions on how to proceed. Make sure to refer to the instructions on each screen.

When you see a dimmed Next button, it means you need to complete the Knowledge Review to proceed.

At any time you can access the following resources.

- Glossary Button - Click on the Glossary button to look up a term. You will not lose your place in the lesson when you access the glossary.
- Help Button - Click on the Help button to troubleshoot any technical problems or to review the how-to information. You will not lose your place in the lesson when you access the Help section.

Completing the Knowledge Reviews

“Knowledge Review” screens provide activities to help review the content covered in the course. Green text at the top of the screen provides instructions on how to complete each activity. A box will appear with feedback about the choices selected. After reading the feedback, click the Continue button in the upper right corner of the box to proceed.

Lesson Completion

When you reach the end of a lesson, you will be instructed to click on the Course Map button. Clicking this button is required to receive credit for the lesson. If you have not completed the lesson previously, you should not click on this button before reaching the final screen.

Course Objectives

The focus of this course is on the evaluation and improvement planning process. Its purpose is to support the individual who manages, participates in, reviews, or sponsors the exercise evaluation or improvement planning function.

At the end of the Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning course, participants will be able to:

- Describe the need for a systematic approach to exercise evaluation.
- List the eight steps of the exercise evaluation and improvement planning process.
- Identify pre-exercise activities necessary for a successful evaluation.
- Explain the function of Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) and their relationship to the Target Capabilities List (TCL)/Universal Task List (UTL).
- Describe post-exercise analysis activities.
- Explain the purpose and format of the After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).
- Describe how the Corrective Action Program (CAP) translates exercise outcomes into continual improvements to preparedness.

Estimated Time to Course Completion: 5 hours

Course Organization

This course consists of eight lessons:

- Lesson 1: Exercise Evaluation Overview
- Lesson 2: Exercise Evaluation Process
- Lesson 3: Planning and Organizing the Evaluation
- Lesson 4: Observing the Exercise and Collecting Data
- Lesson 5: Analyzing Data
- Lesson 6: The After Action Report and After Action Conference
- Lesson 7: The Corrective Action Program
- Lesson 8: Lesson Summary

It is designed for people who will manage the exercise evaluation and improvement planning function within their jurisdiction. Several lessons address specific evaluation functions and techniques, and could be used in evaluator training prior to an exercise. However, this course primarily focuses on planning, staffing, organizing, directing, and coordinating the exercise evaluation and improvement planning function.

Course Background

This course was introduced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 1992 as an instructor-led course. In 2002, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) developed the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), policy and guidance for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating exercises.

DHS and FEMA have worked collectively and collaboratively to standardize the language and concepts used in the exercise evaluation process. As such, this course has been reissued, incorporating the terms and methods outlined in HSEEP.

Course Prerequisites

Before completing this course, you should have already completed the following course:

- IS-120.A: Introduction to Exercises

This course is available as a web-based or paper-based independent study course.

Lesson Overview

This lesson provides an overview of the exercise development, evaluation, and improvement planning process. It also previews what you will learn in other course lessons about the exercise evaluation and improvement planning process.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Define exercise evaluation and improvement planning.
- Describe why systematic evaluation and improvement planning is important.

This lesson should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Remember, you must complete the entire lesson in one session to receive credit.

What Is An Exercise?

As you learned in IS-120.A: Introduction to Exercises, an exercise is a focused practice activity that places players in a simulated situation. During the situation, players need to function in the capacity that would be expected of them in a real event.

As you will learn throughout this course, exercises are conducted to support an overall assessment of a given capability.

There are two main benefits of conducting exercises:

- **Individual and team training:** Exercising enables people to practice and gain experience in their roles.
- **System improvement:** Exercising improves an organization's system for managing emergencies.

These benefits come not just from exercising, but from planning the exercise, controlling the exercise, evaluating the exercise, and acting upon resulting recommendations. An exercise has value only when it leads to improvement.

Exercise Evaluation Defined

Evaluation can be defined as the act of reviewing or observing and recording exercise activity or conduct, assessing behaviors or activities against exercise objectives, and noting strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, or other observations.

Evaluation should not be a single event in the exercise process: instead, it should be carefully integrated into overall exercise design.

The output of exercise evaluation is information used to improve performance. For this reason, exercise evaluation is part of an on-going process of improvements to preparedness.

Reference the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Policy and Guidance, Volume III, which contains detailed information on exercise evaluation.

Why Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning Is Important

Since September 11, 2001, Federal, State, and local governments have made major investments in improving the nation's preparedness to prevent, respond to, and recover from major disasters. The best way to determine the impact of these investments is to conduct preparedness exercises.

When conducted systematically, these exercises serve as gap analysis tools, helping communities identify gaps in policy, training and equipment. In this way, systematic exercises lay the foundation for a continuous cycle of improvement planning. They therefore maximize the value of preparedness investments to the community.