

## Lesson Overview

This lesson introduces the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) developed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

## Lesson Objectives

Upon completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe the eight steps of the HSEEP evaluation and improvement planning process.
- Explain the relationship between the HSEEP process and a Corrective Action Program (CAP).
- Identify key tools to use within the evaluation and improvement planning process.

This lesson should take approximately 25 minutes to complete.

## Applying Methodologies

The purpose of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is to provide a national standard for exercises. This standard is based on capabilities-based planning and emphasizes the need to build capabilities suitable for responding to a wide range of hazards.

HSEEP provides consistent terminology and tools for all exercise planners. Although these features are standardized, HSEEP can be applied to the full spectrum of hazardous scenarios and incidents.

The HSEEP process has eight steps:

### Evaluation and Improvement Process: Steps 1-4

The first four steps of the process address evaluation planning, observation, and analysis.

1. **Plan and Organize the Evaluation.** Step 1 is part of the exercise design process. In it, the Exercise Planning Team determines what information to collect, who will collect it, and how it will be collected.
2. **Observe the Exercise and Collect Data.** Step 2 occurs during the exercise. In it, expert evaluators collect data and record observations. They also collect data from records and logs.
3. **Analyze Data.** During Step 3, evaluators use Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) to analyze data and reconstruct exercise events.
4. **Develop the Draft After Action Report.** In Step 4, the Evaluation Team develops the draft After Action Report (AAR). It describes what happened in the exercise, issues to be addressed, best practices, and recommendations for improvement.

### **Evaluation and Improvement Process: Steps 5-8**

The second four steps of the process are detailed below. These steps focus on using information gained from exercises to implement improvements to a jurisdiction's capabilities.

5. **Conduct an After Action Conference.** In Step 5, evaluators, participating agency representatives, and senior officials attend an After Action Conference. Its purpose is to review the draft After Action Report (AAR), define actions agencies can take to improve performance, and validate recommendations.
6. **Identify Improvements to be Implemented.** During the After Action Conference, attendees identify corrective actions that address the areas for improvement and recommendations listed in the draft AAR. These corrective actions are captured on the Improvement Plan (IP).
7. **Finalize the After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).** In Step 7, the exercise planning and evaluation teams incorporate corrections, clarifications, and other participant feedback into the AAR/IP.
8. **Track Implementation.** In Step 8, each agency or jurisdiction monitors corrective actions identified in the finalized AAR/IP.

### **HSEEP and the Corrective Action Program (CAP)**

The jurisdiction's work is not done when it has completed these eight steps. Long after the exercise is over, the jurisdiction's program managers will track and analyze the implementation of corrective actions listed in the After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).

By tracking and recording progress on corrective actions, the jurisdiction engages in a continuous Corrective Action Program (CAP). Through the CAP, the implementation of corrective actions leads to concrete improvements to preparedness.

### **HSEEP Tools and Resources**

The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) offers tools and resources to support exercise planners throughout the eight-step process.

These tools include:

- **Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).** EEGs provide evaluators with consistent standards and guidelines for observation, data collection, analysis, and report writing.
- **After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) Template.** A standard template is available for the AAR/IP, the main product of the evaluation and improvement planning process. The AAR/IP captures recommendations for post-exercise improvements and defines specific corrective actions.
- **Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning Guidance.** HSEEP offers comprehensive guidance on how to evaluate and document exercises, as well as how to implement an Improvement Plan (IP).

These tools will be reviewed in depth later in this course.

### **Lesson Summary**

In this lesson, you learned:

The purpose of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is to provide a national standard for exercises.

HSEEP is based on capabilities-based planning and emphasizes the need to build capabilities suitable for responding to a wide range of hazards.

The eight steps of the HSEEP exercise evaluation and improvement planning process are:

1. Plan and Organize the Evaluation.
2. Observe the Exercise and Collect Data.
3. Analyze Data.
4. Develop the Draft After Action Report (AAR).
5. Conduct an After Action Conference.
6. Identify Improvements to be Implemented.
7. Finalize the After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).
8. Track Implementation.

After the exercise is over, the jurisdiction's program managers track the implementation of corrective actions listed in the After AAR/IP.

By tracking and recording progress on corrective actions, the jurisdiction engages in a continuous Corrective Action Program (CAP).

HSEEP offers tools and resources to support exercise planners throughout its eight-step process. These tools include:

1. Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).
2. After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) Template.
3. Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning Guidance.