

Lesson Overview

This lesson explains how to plan and organize exercise evaluations.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Define the pre-exercise responsibilities of the Exercise Planning Team.
- Describe how capabilities and objectives impact evaluation requirements.
- Identify key evaluation tools and documentation.
- List key elements in recruiting, assigning, and training evaluators.
- Identify the contents of the Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Briefing.

This lesson should take approximately 50 minutes to complete.

Planning and Organizing the Evaluation

Planning and organizing the evaluation is the first step of the exercise evaluation and improvement planning process. It is the responsibility of the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Planning Team

The Exercise Planning Team structures the exercise and oversees its execution. The Team typically includes members from each major jurisdiction and agency that is participating in the exercise. These members may include:

- Emergency program managers.
- Exercise officers.
- Training officers.
- Department heads.

The members may represent any major discipline in the emergency response community, including law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), public health, or fire departments.

One team member will be designated the Exercise Planning Team Leader. This person will oversee the design and development of the exercise, a task which includes managing personnel and delegating tasks.

Learn more about the Exercise Planning Team:

- The Exercise Planning Team is responsible for all aspects of an exercise, including exercise planning, conduct, and evaluation.
- Exercise Planning Team members are ideal selections for controller and evaluator positions during the exercise, especially because their advanced knowledge of the scenario makes them ineligible to participate as players.

Exercise Planning Team Responsibilities

To prepare for the exercise evaluation, the Exercise Planning Team will:

1. Appoint a Lead Evaluator.
2. Develop evaluation requirements.
3. Draft evaluation documentation.
4. Recruit, assign, and train evaluators.
5. Finalize an Evaluation Plan.
6. Conduct a Controller/Evaluator (C/E) briefing.

This lesson is structured around these six responsibilities.

The Exercise Planning Team can refer to HSEEP Volume III for detailed guidance on each responsibility.

Appoint a Lead Evaluator

Early in the exercise planning process, the Exercise Planning Team Leader should appoint a Lead Evaluator to participate on the Team and oversee all facets of the evaluation.

The Lead Evaluator should be a senior-level individual familiar with the following:

- Prevention, protection, response, and recovery issues and objectives associated with the exercise.
- Plans, policies, and procedures of the exercising jurisdiction.
- Incident Command and decision-making processes of the exercising jurisdiction.
- Inter-agency and/or inter-jurisdictional coordination issues relevant to the exercise.

Appoint a Lead Evaluator

The Lead Evaluator must have the knowledge and analytical skills to undertake a thorough and accurate analysis of all capabilities being tested during the exercise. He or she must also have the management skills to oversee a team of evaluators whose responsibilities vary throughout the exercise.

Learn about the Lead Evaluator's responsibilities before the exercise:

- Developing evaluation requirements and corresponding documentation, such as Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).
- Selecting, assigning, and training evaluators.
- Preparing an Evaluation Plan (EvalPlan), based on guidance from HSEEP Volume III.
- Assembling evaluator packets that include necessary maps, documents, and an assignment list.

Learn about the Lead Evaluator's responsibilities during the exercise:

1. The Lead Evaluator ensures that individual evaluators are:
 - a. In the right locations.
 - b. Equipped with appropriate documentation and supplies.
 - c. Observing and documenting the achievement of exercise objectives.
 - d. Provided with back-up, if necessary.
2. In addition, the Lead Evaluator is responsible for:
 - a. Overseeing all activities of evaluators.
 - b. Providing input to the Lead Controller.
 - c. Collating incoming data.
 - d. Providing input to the Exercise Planning Team Leader on objective accomplishment.

Learn about the Lead Evaluator's responsibilities after the exercise:

1. After the exercise, the Lead Evaluator:
 - a. Oversees the analysis of data collected from the evaluators.
 - b. Coordinates the involvement of evaluators in post-exercise meetings.
 - c. Coordinates and reviews the preparation of written reports.
 - d. Oversees the development of the After Action Report (AAR) based on data analysis, text commentary, after action briefings, and hotwash discussions.
 - e. Guides the development of the Improvement Plan (IP).

Develop Evaluation Requirements

After selecting the Lead Evaluator, the Exercise Planning Team will develop the evaluation requirements for the exercise. These requirements include plans, documentation, and personnel needed to effectively observe, collect data, and analyze information.

The Exercise Planning Team will base evaluation requirements on the specific priority capabilities that the jurisdiction seeks to test through the exercise.

As you learned in Lesson 2, capabilities-based planning is the heart of the exercise evaluation and improvement planning process. The documents driving capabilities-based planning are the Target Capabilities List (TCL) and Universal Task List (UTL). When the Exercise Planning Team selects capabilities to exercise, it should reference the TCL and UTL to review associated tasks that should be validated during the exercise.

Develop Evaluation Requirements (Continued)

After determining the capabilities that the exercise seeks to test, the Exercise Planning Team will use these capabilities to formulate exercise objectives.

Note: Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) correspond to capabilities in the Target Capabilities List (TCL). By basing objectives on capabilities, the Exercise Planning Team ensures that objectives are linked to EEGs. In fact, EEGs may be a useful tool in helping the Exercise Planning Team define exercise objectives.

Exercise Objective Criteria

Well-defined objectives provide a framework for scenario development, inform exercise evaluation criteria, synchronize efforts towards common goals, and focus support on exercise priorities.

All objectives should be **Simple**, **Measurable**, **Achievable**, **Realistic**, and **Task-Oriented** (SMART).

- **Simple.** Objectives should be straightforward and easy-to-read.
- **Measurable.** Objectives should be specific and observable.
- **Achievable.** Players must reasonably be able to accomplish all objectives within the constraints of the exercise.
- **Realistic.** Objectives should reflect actual goals of the community in terms of time, resources, and personnel.
- **Task-Oriented.** Objectives should focus on specific operations, not wide-ranging or multi-part missions.

Note: Exercise planners should limit the number of exercise objectives to enable timely execution and to facilitate design of a realistic scenario.

Examples of objectives:

1. **Sample Objective #1:** Demonstrate the capability of the Incident Management Team to provide emergency notifications containing information and instructions to the public.
2. **Sample Objective #2:** Demonstrate the capability of the Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team to promptly implement measures for hazmat containment, recovery, and cleanup.
3. **Sample Objective #3:** Demonstrate the capability of the Emergency Operating Center (EOC) Mental Health Coordinator to deploy crisis intervention personnel to the incident site in response to calls into the EOC.

Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)

After identifying the capabilities and objectives that the exercise will validate, the exercise planning team should select corresponding Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

EEGs are standardized documents designed to provide evaluators with information on what tasks should be accomplished or discussed during an exercise. Each EEG is linked to a target capability from the Target Capabilities List (TCL) and provides standard

activities, tasks, and performance measures to be evaluated. EEGs also include space to record observations and questions to address after the exercise. These questions are the first step in the analysis process and development of the Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).

The EEGs are not meant to act as report cards. Rather, they are intended to guide an evaluator's observations so that the evaluator focuses on capabilities and tasks relevant to exercise objectives.

Each EEG consists of the following components:

1. **The EEG.** The EEG identifies a capability description and outcome, as well as a list of activities, tasks, performance measures, and observation keys. These features present the typical flow of functions within the identified capability. The EEG asks evaluator to record the completion or non-completion of tasks and performance measures. For this reason, evaluators should use this first section of the EEG (along with any supplemental notes) to complete the analysis section of the EEG.
2. **The EEG Analysis Sheets.** The Observations Summary section of the EEG Analysis Sheets asks evaluators to record the general flow of their observations. The Evaluator Observations section of the EEG Analysis Sheets prompts evaluators to list their major observations, including strengths and areas for improvement.

Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) (Continued)

Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) are components of an integrated national preparedness system and process designed to assess a community's preparedness in target capabilities.

EEGs guide evaluators in determining whether tasks are accomplished. The accomplishment of tasks determines whether an activity is achieved. The achievement of one or more activities determines whether a capability exists.

After the exercise, deficiencies in key capabilities are captured in the After Action Reports/Improvement Plans (AAR/IPs). The AAR/IP identifies corrective actions that the jurisdiction will pursue to remedy these deficiencies.

Learn more about each criterion for analysis:

- **Mission.** The four homeland security missions are Prevention, Protection, Response, and Recovery.
- **Capability.** Capabilities are specific functionalities that support the high-level mission. They are identified in the Target Capabilities List (TCL).

- **Activity.** Activities are actions that support a specific capability. They are evaluated by performance measures, which provide quantitative measurements for activities.
- **Task.** Tasks are specific, discrete actions that support a specific activity. All tasks support the Universal Task List (UTL).

Selecting and Customizing Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)

The Exercise Planning Team will select Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) that correspond to key capabilities under evaluation, based on the exercise objectives. The team may choose to exercise all activities and tasks, or just a select number.

Once selected, the team will customize EEG forms to reflect specific metrics that they want players to achieve. EEGs should be customized to add additional, jurisdiction-specific objectives. They should not be customized to delete or replace pre-existing material.

Note: For discussion-based exercises, the Exercise Planning Team should use the performance measures, activities, and tasks for each capability's EEG as questions to drive the exercise discussion. EEGs can also form the basis for customized discussion-based evaluation forms and Situation Manual (SitMan) content.

Draft Evaluation Documentation

As it defines the plans, documentation, and personnel needed for the evaluation, the Exercise Planning Team should keep a record of these requirements. This record is a preliminary template for the Evaluation Plan (EvalPlan).

The EvalPlan is a document that helps exercise evaluators understand their roles and responsibilities. In this way, it supports them to conduct an effective analysis of the exercise and produce a comprehensive After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).

For discussion-based exercises, a Situation Manual (SitMan) and discussion-based evaluation forms may take the place of a formal EvalPlan. In operations-based exercises, the EvalPlan is typically part of the Controller/Evaluator Handbook (C/E Handbook).

Definitions:

- **SitMan.** The SitMan is a handbook provided to all participants in discussion-based exercises, particularly tabletop exercises. It provides background information on the exercise scope, schedule, and objectives. The SitMan also presents the scenario narrative that will drive participant discussions during the exercise.
- **C/E Handbook.** The C/E Handbook is an exercise overview and instructional manual for controllers and evaluators. It contains detailed information about the scenario and describes controllers' and evaluators' roles and responsibilities.

Because the C/E Handbook contains information on the scenario and exercise administration, it should be distributed only to those individuals specifically designated as controllers or evaluators.

Recruit, Assign, and Train Evaluators

Once evaluation documents have been drafted, the Lead Evaluator oversees the recruitment, assignment, and training of evaluators.

Evaluators should be non-playing individuals who represent non-participating organizations. (Individuals who represent participating organizations may have biases in favor of their agency.)

The capabilities and objectives tested in the exercise play a critical role in determining how many evaluators must be recruited, their required subject matter expertise, how they will be assigned, and what kind of training they should receive.

Recruiting Evaluators

Evaluators should be recruited for their expertise in a functional area relevant to the exercise. Examples of functional areas include command and control, fire, or law enforcement.

Evaluators should also be recruited for their ability to carry out evaluation responsibilities. Their main responsibilities will include:

- Observing and recording the discussions or actions of players during an exercise.
- Assessing exercise activities against exercise objectives.
- Participating in data analysis and the drafting of the After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).

Note: When developing plans for recruiting evaluators, jurisdictions should consider long-term strategies for developing and maintaining a cadre of trained evaluators.

Recruiting Evaluators (Continued)

To fulfill these responsibilities, evaluators should be:

- Experts in the activities they evaluate.
- Familiar with the jurisdiction's plans, policies, procedures, and agreements.
- Familiar with the evaluation system.
- Not burdened with exercise responsibilities other than evaluation.

Note: It is helpful to pair a new evaluator with a more experienced evaluator during his or her first exercise evaluation. The experienced evaluator can mentor the new evaluator,

improving the quality of the evaluation and increasing the jurisdiction's pool of experienced evaluators.

It is important to recruit evaluators who are able to commit sufficient time to the exercise evaluation.

Learn more about evaluator time commitments:

- The time commitment for evaluating discussion-based exercises is generally no longer than two days, including observation and analysis. The time commitment for evaluating operations-based exercises is typically three to five days. This includes approximately one day before the exercise for pre-exercise training; at least one full day for the exercise; and one full day for post-exercise data analysis.

Assigning Evaluators

Evaluator assignments should be decided upon, recorded, and communicated to evaluators prior to the exercise.

During operations-based exercises, evaluators should be assigned to different exercise play areas on the basis of their subject-matter expertise.

- **Example:** In an exercise using a chemical scenario, evaluators with hazardous materials expertise should be assigned to locations where they can observe decontamination and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

In operations-based exercises, a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) provides a timeline and location for all expected exercise events. The Lead Evaluator can refer to the MSEL to help determine the times at which specific evaluators should be at certain locations.

Note: Evaluators typically do not require copies of the MSEL. In fact, distributing copies may be disadvantageous: if exercise play does not unfold as planned, the MSEL may create confusion and biases on the part of evaluators. A better practice is to provide each evaluator with a schedule of the events occurring in his or her location.

For discussion-based exercises, the assignment of evaluators depends on the number of players, organization of the players and discussion, and the exercise objectives.

Training Evaluators

Evaluator training should occur at least one day prior to the exercise. It should address the following:

- All aspects of the exercise, including exercise goals and objectives.
- Exercise players (group composition and experience).

- Evaluator roles, responsibilities, and assignments.
- How to analyze data.

Evaluator training should also include guidance on observing the exercise discussion or operations, what to look for, what to record, and how to use the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

For operations-based exercises, evaluators should be trained according to best practices for observing exercises and recording data. These best practices are described in Lesson 4.

Training Evaluators (Continued)

During or prior to the evaluator training, evaluators should be provided with copies of the following materials:

1. Exercise documents.
 - a. For discussion-based exercises, this means the Situation Manual (SitMan).
 - b. For operations-based exercises, this means the Exercise Plan (ExPlan) and the Controller/Evaluator Handbook (C/E Handbook).
2. Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) and other evaluation tools and guides.
3. The exercise agenda and schedule.
4. Evaluator assignments.
5. Appropriate jurisdictional plans, policies, procedures, and agreements.

Note: An ExPlan is a general information document that provides a synopsis of the operations-based exercise. In addition to addressing exercise objectives and scope, the ExPlan assigns activities and responsibilities for successful exercise execution.

The ExPlan is intended for use by exercise players and observers. For this reason, it does not contain detailed scenario information. Players and observers should review all elements of the ExPlan prior to exercise participation.

Finalize an Evaluation Plan

Once evaluation planning is complete, the Lead Evaluator finalizes the Evaluation Plan (EvalPlan). In less complex discussion-based exercises, the EvalPlan may be communicated orally among evaluators prior to the exercise. For complex exercises, the EvalPlan should be documented and distributed to evaluators.

Whether formally documented or not, the EvalPlan should contain the following components:

- **Exercise-Specific Information.** The EvalPlan should include exercise-specific information such as the exercise scenario, schedule of events, and evaluation schedule.

- **Evaluator Team Organization, Assignments, and Location.** The EvalPlan should include a list of evaluator locations, a map of the exercise site(s), and an evaluation team organizational chart.
- **Evaluator Instructions.** The EvalPlan should include step-by-step instruction for evaluators. These instructions should include what evaluators should do before they arrive (e.g., review exercise materials and wear clothing appropriate to their assignment), as well as how to proceed upon arrival, during the exercise, and following its conclusion.
- **Evaluation Tools.** The EvalPlan should include evaluation tools such as exercise-specific Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs), the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL), and blank paper or timeline forms.

Conduct A Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Briefing

Before an exercise begins, the Lead Evaluator should meet with the controllers and/or evaluators to verify roles, responsibilities, and assignments. During this Controller/Evaluator (C/E) briefing, the Lead Evaluator should also provide any significant updates to assignments, the scenario, plans, or procedures.

The C/E briefing is the time for evaluators to ask questions and to ensure that they completely understand their roles and responsibilities.

For operations-based exercises, the C/E briefing often includes a tour of the exercise site so that evaluators know where to position themselves to observe exercise play.

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, you learned:

The key pre-exercise responsibilities of the Exercise Planning Team are as follows:

- Appointing a Lead Evaluator.
- Developing evaluation requirements.
- Drafting evaluation documentation.
- Recruiting, assigning, and training evaluators.
- Finalizing an Evaluation Plan.
- Conducting a Controller/Evaluator (C/E) briefing.

The Exercise Planning Team develops evaluation requirements for the exercise based on the specific priority capabilities that the jurisdiction seeks to test.

Key evaluation documentation includes the Evaluation Plan (EvalPlan), Situation Manual (SitMan), and Controller/Evaluator Handbook (C/E Handbook).

The capabilities and objectives tested in the exercise play a critical role in determining how many evaluators must be recruited, their required subject matter expertise, how they will be assigned, and what kind of training they should receive.

The finalized EvalPlan includes exercise specific information; evaluator team organization, assignments, and location; evaluator instructions; and evaluation tools. Before an exercise begins, the Lead Evaluator should meet with the controllers and/or evaluators; this Controller/Evaluator (C/E) Briefing is a time to provide updates to assignments, the scenario, plans, or procedures.