

Summary: Overview

This lesson provides a brief summary of the Exercise Evaluation Overview course contents. After reviewing the summary information, you will receive instructions for taking the course post-test.

This lesson should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Remember, you must complete the post-test to receive credit for this course.

Exercise Evaluation Overview: Summary

Communities can maximize the value of preparedness exercises by evaluating them in a systematic way. The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) provides a national standard for systematic evaluation. It includes eight steps:

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.

Planning and Organizing the Evaluation: Summary

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

1. Appointing a Lead Evaluator.
2. Developing evaluation requirements.
3. Drafting evaluation documentation.
4. Recruiting, assigning, and training evaluators.
5. Finalizing an Evaluation Plan.
6. 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).

Observing the Exercise and Collecting Data: Summary

In an exercise evaluation, evaluators collect data for the three levels of performance analysis:

1. Capability-level performance.
2. Activity-level performance.
3. Task-level performance.

Key pitfalls that evaluators should avoid include:

- Observer drift.
- Errors of leniency.
- Errors of central tendency.
- The halo effect.
- The hypercritical effect.
- Contamination.
- Evaluator bias.

Many of these pitfalls can be mitigated by effective pre-exercise training.

The purpose of the hotwash is to collect player feedback and address key topics, cross-disciplinary issues, or conflicting recommendations that were identified in earlier discussions.

While collecting data in a discussion-based exercise, evaluators should pay special attention to:

- Issues identified by players.
- How players make decisions.
- Player roles and responsibilities.
- Player coordination and cooperation.
- Recommendations from the group.

While collecting data in an operations-based exercise, evaluators should pay special attention to what, who, where, when, why, and how actions and decisions took place.

Immediately after the exercise, evaluators should create preliminary analyses of their findings.

Analyzing Data: Summary

The primary goal of data analysis is to evaluate the ability of exercised functions to perform target capabilities.

The four steps of data analysis are:

1. Identifying issues.
2. Determining root causes.
3. Developing recommendations for improvement.
4. Capturing lessons learned.

Evaluators should develop recommendations for improvements wherever they identify that plans, training, or equipment need work. These recommendations form the basis of corrective actions.

The After Action Report and After Action Conference: Summary

The purpose of an After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) is to record what occurred during the exercise, provide feedback on the achievement of capability outcomes and associated activities, define corrective actions, and establish consensus and buy-in on next steps.

When complete, the draft AAR/IP is presented in the After Action Conference, a forum that allows evaluators to share key findings for feedback and validation.

The purpose of the IP is to convert AAR recommendations into specific, measurable corrective actions. By tracking progress of these corrective actions, participating organizations and agencies contribute to a Corrective Action Program (CAP).

The Corrective Action Program: Summary

Participants in the After Action Conference generate corrective actions. Corrective actions must include attainable benchmarks that will allow the jurisdiction to measure progress towards their implementation.

The corrective actions captured in the AAR/IP should be tracked and continually reported on. This process is referred to as a Corrective Action Program (CAP). To track the implementation of corrective actions, each participating jurisdiction should assign points of contact (POC).

Once participating jurisdictions have implemented corrective actions, a new cycle of exercise activities can begin.