

IS-45 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW

Course Terminology

Action Plan: A plan that identifies courses of action, assigns them to responsible entities (e.g., a program office), and establishes timelines for their completion.

Action Plan Manager/Accountable Tracking Body: An individual or group of people responsible for tracking updates to the action plan, maintaining accountability, and providing updates on progress made on courses of action.

Action Tracking: The primary accountability function of the Continuous Improvement Process. The action plan manager or accountable tracking body communicates regularly with the responsible entities on implementation of courses of action, resource shortfalls, and other potential risks or limiting factors.

After-Action Report (AAR): A Continuous Improvement product that provides retrospective analysis of an incident or exercise, outlining strengths, areas for improvement, potential best practices, and mission critical issues.

Analysis Training: An Improvement Planning Workshop activity that helps participants to continue the necessary analysis with their program office or jurisdiction as they work to complete their courses of action.

Area for Improvement (AFI): Type of observation that explains how outcomes did not meet expectations set out in plans or instances where the program did follow the process or system requirements, but the outcome was inadequate.

Breakout Discussion: An Improvement Planning Workshop activity that focuses discussion on key issues that are important to a specific set of participants.

Capability Assessment: The process of identifying how a community's capabilities have changed over the last year and how those changes affect the community's current capability.

Capability Performance: Measurement of the execution of a core capability during an exercise or incident.

Change Management: The process of preparing, equipping, and supporting individuals to successfully adopt change in order to drive organizational success and outcomes.

Collection Analysis Plan (CAP): A plan that organizes and establishes a clear way forward for data collection efforts. It typically includes a brief description of the incident, purpose, scope, priority focus areas, methodology, roles and responsibilities, schedule, and potential constraints.

Continuous Improvement Process: The process that helps emergency managers discover trends, learn lessons, and implement courses of action. It consists of the Discovery, Validation, Resolution, and Evaluation phases.



Core Capabilities: Distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery as outlined in the National Preparedness Goal.

Course of Action (COA): An action that needs to be taken to maintain a strength, institutionalize a best practice, or address an area for improvement or mission critical issue. Initially developed as an element of an observation, COAs are finalized during an Improvement Planning Workshop and transferred into an action plan for tracking and completion.

Decision Support Products: A Continuous Improvement product that operationalize past lessons learned to support current or future operations.

Demobilize: The orderly, safe, and efficient return of an incident resource to its original location and status.

Desired Outcome: Element of an observation that describes the ideal future state when action is taken on an observation.

Direct Observation: The observation of staff in their work environment to gather information about processes, outcomes, and activities without interfering.

Discovery: Phase of the Continuous Improvement Process that involves planning for collection and collecting data.

Discussion of Evidence: Element of an observation that elaborates on the topic sentence by providing relevant background information and supporting evidence to detail what happened, why it happened, and the impact.

Documentation Review: A comprehensive review of existing documents that serve as the authoritative record of activities.

Evaluation: The phase of the Continuous Improvement Process that involves action tracking and information sharing.

Event Reconstruction: A data analysis technique that consolidates information from multiple sources into a single, fact-based account of what happened during an incident.

Exercise: An event or activity delivered through discussion or action to develop, assess, or validate capabilities to achieve planned objectives.

Exercise Objectives: An item with a distinct outcome that a jurisdiction/organization wishes to achieve during an exercise. An objective should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

Facilitated Group Discussion: An Improvement Planning Workshop activity where participants discuss priorities, possible solutions, and responsibilities for courses of action.

Feedback Form/Survey: A series of questions sent to a pre-defined group of respondents after an incident or exercise to collect information on what happened and why.

Hot Wash: A facilitated group discussion held soon after an incident or exercise to gather initial thoughts on what worked well, what needs improvement, and potential recommendations.

Improvement Planning Workshop (IPW): A workshop that brings together multiple stakeholders to facilitate the development, adoption and, implementation of courses of action. The workshop should include those entities responsible for taking action, such as a program office.

Incident: An occurrence, natural or human-caused, that requires a response to protect life or property. Incidents can, for example, include major disasters, emergencies, terrorist attacks, terrorist threats, civil unrest, wildland and urban fires, floods, hazardous materials spills, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tropical storms, tsunamis, war-related disasters, public health and medical emergencies, and other occurrences requiring an emergency response.

Incident Action Plan (IAP): A document outlining the control objectives, operational period objectives, and response strategy defined by incident command during response planning.

Information Management Systems and Source Databases: Systems and databases that collect and organize comprehensive information on costs, staff, resources, and other disaster-related data.

Information Sharing: The process of routinely sharing information on continuous improvement efforts, such as progress on courses of action, to relevant stakeholders and partners.

Interagency Agreement: An agreement between two or more government agencies that defines cooperative work or a transaction of resources between them.

Interview: A meeting with an individual or group to collect perspectives after an incident or exercise on what happened and why.

Mission Critical (MC): Type of observation that explains an item that has significant operational impacts that may lead to mission failure or loss of life or bodily injury. MCs require immediate elevation to senior leadership for consideration.

Observation: The consolidated analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to address an identified strength, area for improvement, potential best practice, or mission critical issue. It should include a topic sentence, discussion of evidence, desired outcome(s), and course(s) of action.

Plan: A document, often developed in advance, that makes it possible to manage the entire life cycle of a potential crisis. Strategic and operational planning establishes priorities, identifies expected levels of performance and capability requirements, provides the standard for assessing capabilities, and helps stakeholders learn their roles.

Policy: Guidelines, standard operating procedures, or principles set in place to achieve a particular objective.

Potential Best Practice (PBP): Type of observation the explain how activities not within policy yielded better results than could have been expected from solutions within policy under the same conditions.

Preparedness: The actions taken to plan, organize, equip, train, and exercise to build and sustain the capabilities necessary to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from those threats that pose the greatest risk to the security of the Nation.

Presentation: An Improvement Planning Workshop activity where participants share important information on observations.

Problem Solving Exercise: An Improvement Planning Workshop activity that helps participants identify courses of action that will address the root cause of the problem and consider other steps to addressing these issues.

Procedure: A series of standard actions or operations that specify what personnel should do in responding to and recovering from an incident.

Qualitative Data: Narrative data that describes or approximates but does not measure attributes, characteristics, or properties of a thing or phenomenon.

Quantitative Data: Data measured using numbers/values and typically structured in nature.

Real-Time Analysis: A data analysis technique that involves conducting analysis during ongoing operations.

Resolution: The phase of the Continuous Improvement Process that involves conducting an Improvement Planning Workshop and developing an action plan.

Risk: The potential for an unwanted outcome resulting from an incident, event, or occurrence, as determined by its likelihood and the associated consequences.

Root Cause Analysis: A data analysis technique that follows a structured process for determining the originating factor(s) that directly led to a specific outcome.

Situational Awareness: The ability to identify, process, and comprehend the critical information about an incident. Situational awareness requires continuous monitoring of relevant sources of information regarding actual incidents and developing hazards.

Sources: A thing or place from which one can obtain information. Common sources of information include documents, interviews, surveys, and hot washes.

Steady-State: The day-to-day operations of an emergency management organization outside of response to and recovery from an incident.

Strength (STR): Type of observation that explains how activities within policy or guidance yielded better results than usual in a particular disaster. Strengths document processes or systems that are working and being implemented as intended.

Synthesis: A data analysis technique that involves compiling and reviewing data from multiple sources to identify common issues.

Topic Sentence: Element of an observation that makes a specific assertion or claim about something that occurred regarding a particular topic and describes the impact.

Trend: A recurring pattern happening over time.



Trend Analysis: (1) A Continuous Improvement product that reviews recurring observations and changes over time; (2) A data analysis technique that identifies recurring strengths or challenges and changes in both over time; (3) An Improvement Planning Workshop activity that illustrates how often a particular observation has been identified in the past.

Validation: The phase of the Continuous Improvement Process that involves data analysis and reporting.