

Emergency Preparedness Training and Exercise Guide for Nursing Homes

July 2008



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The federal Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) provides specific standards for emergency preparedness training and exercises that complies with the National Incident Management System. To assist its many health and medical partners to become proficient in the HSEEP standards, the Florida's Department of Health Division of Emergency Operations developed a handbook called the Mechanic's Manual: a Handbook for Becoming HSEEP-Compliant. This manual assists health and medical partners such as nursing homes and hospitals, to become proficient in developing, conducting and evaluating preparedness exercises that meet the HSEEP standards. The Florida Department of Health gave permission to the Florida Health Care Association to use the Mechanic's Manual as a primary source document for this training and exercise guide for nursing homes. Additional materials and resources developed by the Florida Health Care Association under a grant awarded by the John A. Hartford Foundation have also been used extensively in the preparation of this guide.

Readers are strongly encouraged to visit the website of the Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (<https://hseep.dhs.gov/>) for additional education about developing and conducting emergency preparedness exercises.

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The Preparedness System

It is important to recognize preparedness as a system, requiring the continuous integration of plans, training programs, exercises, and evaluations. It is a system that functions like a machine.

Turning the *planning gear* (writing or revising a plan) sets in motion the *training gear* (making sure all staff understands the plan). After training, the *exercise and evaluation gear* kicks in, helping to identify weaknesses in the plan as well as areas where additional training is needed.

If you have a comprehensive emergency plan for your facility, you've put the preparedness machine into motion. The next step is to set the training gear into motion by training your staff on the plan. After training, follow up with exercises to give staff a chance to practice the procedures about which they've been trained and evaluate each exercise to determine needed plan changes or additional training.



The goal of this guide is to help you design and maintain a preparedness system for your facility, keeping the gears turning and the preparedness “machine” running smoothly.

Key Concepts

People generally respond to an emergency in the way that they have been trained. By using an ongoing process of training, exercising, and evaluation, nursing homes have a greater assurance that their staff will know what is expected of them in an emergency situation and act accordingly.

Following are several key concepts essential to developing an emergency preparedness training and exercise program for your facility.

- Make “disaster preparedness” a part of new employee orientation and ensure that all employees receive the training.
- Provide refresher training on disaster preparedness for all staff on a routine basis, recognizing that some will require more frequent training because of their specific roles and responsibilities.
- Exercise all portions of your facility’s emergency management plan, in accordance with the training and exercise schedule described in the plan.
- Use a variety of training and exercise approaches, including discussion-based tabletop exercises and operations-based drills. This guide provides additional information about how and when to use various methods.
- Conduct exercises that include representatives from the fire department, local law enforcement, the local health department, the emergency management office, the Red Cross and your utility provider.
- Exercise all vendor and mutual aid agreements identified in your emergency plan to be sure of their continued viability, particularly evacuation transportation agreements, receiving facility agreements, and energy/generator agreements.
- Evaluate all training and exercise activities and use the information to make improvements to your emergency management plan and training and exercise schedule.
- Develop relationships with your local emergency management office and health department and participate in training and exercise opportunities they might sponsor.

Step by Step Process for Planning an Exercise

Following is a recommended step-by-step process for developing an emergency preparedness exercise plan for your facility. These steps are based on the Florida Department of Health's Mechanic's Manual: Handbook for Becoming HSEEP-Compliant.

Step 1. Synchronize your exercise with your emergency plan and training programs.

Determine the emergency management plan or capability or training competency that you want to exercise and evaluate. Ask these questions:

- Will all of the exercise participants be knowledgeable of the plan? If not, then you must distribute the plan and ensure that it is read and understood before considering the type of exercise you want to conduct. See page 3-4 for exercise descriptions.
- Does the plan or parts of the plan that will be exercised and evaluated require first-time or refresher training? If so, ensure that you conduct training to an established standard of proficiency *before* conducting an exercise. Drills are very useful as intermediate exercises to validate specific training proficiency standards.
- What if there is no existing plan? You can effectively use seminars and workshops to review issues requiring writing of new plans and to determine what needs to be included in the plans they are developing. Types of exercises are discussed in **Step 3**.

Step 2. Determine which topic to use in developing exercise objectives. The topic can be anything from a simple, single-task activity or process involving a few people to a complex, multi-tasked activity involving multiple departments and organizations. Some topics to consider:

- The roles and responsibilities of key staff members during an emergency
- The Incident Command System and how it relate to the nursing home staff
- The physical layout of the facility and the location of the nearest stair exit, alternate stair exit(s) and the direct route to each exit
- The location of fire extinguishers and how to use them (some fire extinguisher companies provide free in-service training during the regular annual equipment servicing)
- The location of emergency equipment such as E-tanks, concentrators, Ambu-bags, suctioning equipment, and other supplies used in a medical emergency
- Emergency telephone numbers and call-down procedures as defined in the facility's emergency management plan
- How to assume control, minimize rumors, and prevent panic
- Managing decedents when routine services are interrupted
- Evacuation priorities, e.g. ambulatory, wheelchair, and bedfast residents
- Procedures for protection of residents during an evacuation
- Response procedure to a missing resident
- Minimizing resident vulnerability to extreme temperature due to power outage when the generator is inoperable or does not maintain air conditioning/heating
- Responding to staff injuries during an emergency event
- Basic First Aid/CPR training
- How to help staff prepare personally for a disaster, with a goal of maintaining a viable workforce for the facility during a disaster (resource: www.redcross.org)

- Localized Fire Response
- Procedures for utility and water shut-offs
- Sudden power outage
- Procedures for switching to and/or troubleshooting the generator
- Sudden water loss or water contamination
- Sudden flooding
- Significant structural damage to a section of the facility
- Violent resident, family member, staff member or other guest/visitor

Step 3. Determine the type of exercise which would be the most appropriate to evaluate the selected topic objectives. Build exercises to correspond with the topic's objectives, plans and/or training programs that are to be evaluated, and the level of the nursing homes' current capabilities.

IMPORTANT: Do not immediately jump into a full scale exercise or even a tabletop exercise unless your plan is mature and your participants have the appropriate level of training.



Discussion-based exercises familiarize participants with current plans, policies, agreements, and procedures. They may also be used as a forum to develop or revise plans, policies, agreements, and procedures. Discussion-based exercises include: seminars, workshops, tabletops, and games. Discussion-based exercises typically require facilitators in lieu of controllers and may also require evaluators.

- Seminar. A seminar is an informal discussion that *orients participants* to new or updated plans, policies, or procedures (e.g., a seminar to review new family notification procedures). It is also a good method for informing and training staff on changes that have been made to the facility's emergency management plan.
- Workshop. A workshop resembles a seminar, but it *builds* specific products, such as a draft plan or policy. Workshops can also be used effectively to bounce canned scenarios off a

new plan to see where it will break (e.g., a workshop to create a new and improved policy for responding to a missing resident event).

- **Tabletop Exercise (TTX).** A tabletop exercise involves key participants discussing simulated scenarios in an informal setting. TTXs can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures (e.g. unplanned power outage). Tabletop exercises provide an excellent opportunity for a nursing home to identify, assess and correct/strengthen their emergency management plan. This guide includes detailed information about developing and conducting a tabletop exercise, including a template for nursing homes.
- **Game.** A game is a simulation of operations that involves two or more teams in a competitive environment, using rules, data, and procedures and scenarios designed to depict an actual situation and test whether training is sufficient (e.g. create a list of tips for how to best notify residents of an emergency event and how to keep them informed of what's going on).

Operations-Based Exercises *validate* plans, policies, agreements and procedures, clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify resource gaps in an operational environment. Types of Operations-based Exercises include drills, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises. Operations-based exercises typically require safety officers, controllers, evaluators, and may also require actors, and simulators. Operations-based exercises require *much* greater logistical support, cost, and planning time than discussion-based exercises. See **Step 6**, Exercise Staffing.

- **Drill.** A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to test a single, specific operation or function within a single entity. In nursing homes, the fire drill is the most common drill conducted, although many other aspects of the emergency preparedness plan can be practiced using a drill. For example, a drill would be an effective way to test the responsiveness of the facility's evacuation transportation provider or the facility's ability to switch to the generator when the person responsible for the generator is not accessible.
- **Functional Exercise (FE).** A functional exercise examines and/or validates the coordination, command, and control between various multi-agency coordination centers (e.g., sister nursing homes, emergency operation center, etc.). A functional exercise does not involve first responders or emergency officials responding to an incident in real time at an actual location with actor-simulated victims. For example, a facility might develop and conduct a functional exercise to test its capacity to evacuate a portion (or all) of its residents.
- **Full-Scale Exercises (FSE).** A full-scale exercise is typically a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, multi-discipline exercise involving functional (e.g., sister nursing homes, emergency operation center, etc.) and first responders or emergency officials (e.g., a medical response team decontaminating actor-simulated victims) in *real* time, *real* place scenarios.

Step 4. Determine exercise cost.

Seminars, workshops, and drills can usually be executed at low cost. They can be and should be developed in-house without relying on contractors.

Tabletop exercises with multiple objectives and scenarios and functional exercises may require contractor support. But, you can avoid major expense by using existing tools to develop the exercise basis. The more work that can be done in-house, the less contractor support will be needed and less cost will be incurred.

Step 5. Set the Exercise Date.

Allow yourself enough time to:

- Identify and organize the planning team
- Reserve a meeting space for the planning team
- Schedule planning meetings
- Identify the type, scope, objectives, and purpose of the exercise
- Assign responsibility to planning team members
- Create supporting handouts as needed
- Take care of administrative tasks, such as creating attendee sign-in sheets, ordering refreshments, etc.
- Notify players (exercise participants)
- Invite observers or external partners

Step 6. Assemble the Exercise Planning Team.

The most important factor for a successful exercise is organizing a skilled and experienced exercise planning team. The exercise planning team oversees, and is responsible for, exercise foundation, design, development, conduct, and evaluation.

Functions of the Planning Team:

- A team leader directs and coordinates all exercise planning activities. He or she assigns exercise activities and responsibilities, provides guidance, establishes timelines, and monitors the development process.
- A subject matter expert (SME) provides technical or functional expertise, e.g., nurse practitioner or facility director, to develop the scenario and potentially serve as evaluators during the conduct of the exercise.
- Someone will be responsible for compiling and developing all exercise documentation. This team member collects and reviews policies, plans, and procedures that will be validated in the exercise.
- A team member will serve a logistical function, providing or arranging for the supplies, materials, facilities, and services that enable the exercise to function smoothly without outside interference or disruption.
- The exercise will require administrative support throughout development. This team member coordinates schedules for the planning team, participating partners and agencies, and registers exercise participants on the day of the exercise.

Step 7. Identify the Exercise Staffing Roles.

Depending on the type of exercise being conducted, identify who is expected to serve in these roles on the day of the exercise:

Safety Officer. During an operations-based drill or functional exercise, he or she looks out for the safety of all exercise participants and must have no other duties. The Safety Officer briefs participants on any safety concerns before the start of the drill or functional exercise.

Facilitators. During a discussion-based exercise, the facilitator is responsible for ensuring that participant discussions remain focused on the exercise objectives and making sure all issues and objectives are explored as thoroughly as possible within the available time.

Evaluators are chosen based on their expertise in the functional areas they are to evaluate. Evaluators have a passive role in the exercise and should only record the actions/decisions of players; they should not interfere with exercise flow. Evaluators often use formal forms to record observations and make notes, which contribute greatly to the exercise After-Action Report. For large and complex operations-based exercises, appoint an experienced Chief Evaluator to lead the evaluation team.

Actors simulate specific roles, such as disaster casualty victims, adding realism to an exercise.

Players are members of the organization(s) being evaluated; they have an active role in responding to an incident by either discussing (in a discussion-based exercise) or performing (in an operations-based exercise) their regular roles and responsibilities.

Observers may request to view all or selected portions of exercise play. Observers may include corporate representatives, sister facility administration, or other invitees. Observers must not participate in exercise play or in exercise evaluation and control functions. However, they may be solicited for comments about their observations.

Step 8. Identify Exercise Partners.

Determine the outside partners and agencies that need to be involved in the exercise. Depending on the objectives and scope of the exercise, here is a list of external partners you may consider when building an exercise team:

- Law Enforcement Representatives
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire and Rescue
- Hospital
- County Emergency Managers
- County Health Departments
- School Districts
- Volunteer and Faith-Based Organizations
- Utility Managers, especially your local electricity provider
- Generator Supplier or Manufacturer
- Transportation Provider
- Sister Facilities
- Management Company

The listing of agencies and organizations above is not meant to be mandatory or exhaustive. Examine the context of the plan you will be exercising. All agencies that have a part in your plan should have a part in exercise planning even if their particular part will not be included this time. If the purpose of the exercise seminar or workshop is to develop a plan, consider all who will be potentially included when the plan is completed. Be inclusive rather than exclusive.

Run the Exercise

This guide provides detailed information for conducting two common exercises utilized in nursing homes: the drill (operations-based) and the tabletop exercise (discussion-based). For additional education and training on designing and conducting the various types of exercises, readers are encouraged to take the free online independent study courses available at the Department of Homeland Security website, <https://hseep.dhs.gov/>.

Collect Performance Data

Evaluation is the cornerstone of exercises; it documents strengths and areas for improvement in an organization's preparedness.

Hot Washes are always held immediately following the end of operations-based exercises. Hot washes may also be held with discussion-based exercises at the discretion of the exercise planning team leader. A hot wash is conducted by a subject matter expert relevant to the particular activity that is being exercised. A hot wash enables evaluators to identify system successes and failures as well as issues, concerns, or proposed improvements and ascertain players' level of satisfaction with the exercise while the events remain fresh in players' minds.

Debriefs are a more formal forum for exercise planners, facilitators, and evaluators to review observations and discuss the exercise. Debriefs may be held following the hot wash or within a few days, following the exercise. The exercise planning team leader facilitates discussion and allows each person an opportunity to provide an overview of the functional area observed. Discussions are recorded, and identified strengths and areas for improvement are analyzed for inclusion in the facility's emergency management plan.

When writing preliminary analyses/summaries of the exercise, evaluators should consider the following questions:

- Were the objectives of the exercise met?
- What were the key decisions associated with each activity?
- Were players knowledgeable of current plans, policies, and procedures? Did plans, policies, and procedures support performance tasks?
- Did the observations suggest that all personnel were adequately trained to complete the activities/tasks needed to demonstrate a capability?
- Did the observations identify any resource shortcomings that could inhibit the ability to execute an activity?
- Did personnel from multiple agencies or jurisdictions work together to perform tasks, activities or capabilities? If so, are there agreements or relationships in place to support the coordination required? Is any cross-training needed to enhance task performances?
- What should be learned from this exercise?
- What strengths were identified for each activity?
- What areas for improvement are recommended for each activity?

Improve the Process

After-Action reports (AAR) are used to provide feedback to participants on their performance during the exercise. An AAR summarizes exercise events and analyzes performance of the topic's objective tasks. The After-Action Report includes an improvement plan outlining corrective actions needed, along with timelines for their implementation and assignment to responsible parties.

Track the Progress

Once the recommendations, corrective actions, responsibilities, and due dates are clearly identified and agreed upon in the improvement plan section of the After-Action Report, the Nursing Home Administrator ensures that each corrective action is tracked to completion.

Maintaining the discipline to keep the improvement plan activities on track is the most difficult part of the process. Failure to follow improvement plan corrective actions to completion often results in repeated lessons learned, and lack of preparedness improvement.

Resources for Independent Study

Online Study Courses (Free)

For a more in-depth study of designing and conducting emergency preparedness exercises, readers are strongly encouraged to consider taking the free online independent study courses offered by the Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) described in the following paragraphs.

Independent Study. Begin training in basic HSEEP concepts and terminology by reviewing “HSEEP 101” on the HSEEP Internet site at <https://hseep.dhs.gov/>. Then take *IS 120A, An Introduction to Exercises*. This is a self-paced, online course in HSEEP basics. When you complete the course and pass the test, you will receive a certificate of completion. This is a basic prerequisite to additional HSEEP training. You do not have to be an HSEEP-registered user to take online, independent study courses.

Next, take *IS 130, Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning*, for further information and study. This course is also available online at the HSEEP Internet site.

Advanced Exercise Training: Opportunities for [FEMA](https://www.fema.gov/) advanced-level exercise training are described at <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/cec/CECCourses.asp>.

Other Training Resources

Florida Readers: If you are based in Florida, two added training resources are available. The Florida Department of Health sponsors an intense, four-hour workshop based on the use of the HSEEP Mechanics Manual, which has been used extensively in this guide. A workshop prerequisite is the HSEEP Independent Study Course IS 120A, discussed above. The workshop consists of HSEEP content training with participants encouraged to share good and bad lessons learned from past exercises, a live on-line walkthrough of the HSEEP Internet site and Toolkit, and a scenario-based, practical exercise in exercise development. Target audience: planners, trainers, and exercise coordinators at county health departments, EMS, hospitals, health and medical centers, long-term care facilities, and all other ESF 8 public health and medical partners. For more information, contact Jack Pittman, Public Health Preparedness, (850) 244-4444, Ext. 3725.

The Florida Health Care Association has additional training resources to offer through the John A. Hartford Foundation’s grant on Hurricane and Disaster Preparedness for LTC Facilities. For more information, contact April Henkel at ahenkel@fhca.org, or (850)-224-3907.

Other States: For readers in other states, contact your state’s ESF 8 lead agency for information about HSEEP training opportunities. Your ESF 8 lead agency will likely be your state’s department of health. In addition, contact your state’s nursing home or health care association and ask for resources on emergency and preparedness resources for nursing homes.

Exercise Examples: Drills and Tabletop Exercises

The following section provides more detailed guidance for nursing homes on two specific types of exercises:

- **Operations-Based Drills**
- **Discussion-Based Tabletops**

Conducting a Drill

OVERVIEW

This section provides step-by-step guidance for organizing and conducting drills in a nursing home.

The purpose of a drill is to practice the skills that are needed during an emergency situation. The focus of a drill should be the specific non-routine tasks that are critical to the safe management and evacuation of patients and staff in the event of a real emergency. Include facility residents as well as staff in the execution of the drill.

In nursing homes, the fire drill is the most common drill conducted, although many other aspects of the emergency preparedness plan can be practiced using a drill. For example, a drill would be an effective way to test the responsiveness of the facility's evacuation transportation provider or the facility's ability to switch to the generator when the person responsible for the generator is not accessible.

When designing a drill, pick a hazard that is applicable to your geographic area and features of your facility. Not all drills should be announced; a surprise drill helps to reinforce learning. Drills are serious and should not be taken lightly. Regular practice helps instill a sense of calm and preparedness under pressure and staff performs in the way they have practiced.

Designing a Drill, Step-By-Step

- 1) **Plan the drill.** Each drill should be planned by a team consisting of the staff who, during an emergency, will likely assume the roles of the five key positions in the Nursing Home Incident Command System (See *Introduction to the Incident Command System* in the Addenda section of the *FHCA CEMP Software Application for Nursing Homes* or refer to page 9, Resources for Independent Study). The first planning step for the team is to decide on a goal statement for the drill – what skill or procedure needs to be practiced? For example, a goal statement for practicing the safe evacuation of residents on oxygen would be: *Safely evacuate residents on oxygen*. Identify a subject matter expert to serve as the evaluator of the drill, observing the drill as it unfolds, keeping track of the time that elapses between key functions, and making notes. The evaluator only observes; he/she does not participate in the drill. For all drills, it is important to note the time between the discovery of the emergency situation to staff and the beginning of their response. For evacuation drills, it is important to also note the time that elapses from the order to evacuate/relocate a floor to the last arrival at a safe refuge area.
- 2) **Call the drill.** Shortly before the drill is to begin, station designated personnel throughout the floor to observe and record the actions of personnel when the drill begins or the alarm sounds. A designated person should “call the drill” by declaring, “Our drill will now begin.” At this point, the clock begins to tick for recording the time it takes to complete various segments of the drill.
- 3) **State the drill scenario and purpose.** Give the designee a cue card that describes the situation and what the drill will accomplish. Example: Scenario - This is a power failure drill; Purpose – demonstrate the facility's ability to recover/manage AC loss.

- 4) **Conduct the drill.** After the situation is announced, emergency procedures should begin immediately. Be certain to note the timing of specific portions of the drill as accurate assessment of time passage may help to evaluate problems.
- 5) **Conclude the drill and document participants and activities.** Immediately following the drill, ensure that all staff has signed the documentation required for training records. Be sure to identify the names of absent staff and schedule a make-up drill date for their participation.
- 6) **Evaluate the Drill and Identify Action Needed.** Immediately following the drill, the planning team leader or designated evaluator conducts a hot wash of the drill, providing an opportunity for participants to discuss the results of the drill and identify concerns and issues to be addressed in the After-Action Report (improvement plan section). The discussion centers around what went right, what did not go so well and a discussion of the root cause of an identified issue needing improvement.
- 7) **After the Drill - Next Steps.** The planning team leader ensures that an After-Action Report is written for the drill, which includes an improvement plan and recommendations for future training and exercises. The nursing home administrator will ensure that each corrective action is tracked to completion.

Conducting a Tabletop Exercise

OVERVIEW

This section discusses steps for developing and conducting a tabletop exercise for your facility. Included are basic steps to developing a tabletop exercise and a sample scenario/injects and corresponding exercise goals and objectives. Facilities are strongly encouraged to visit the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation (HSEEP) website -- <https://hseep.dhs.gov/> -- and click on "About HSEEP" for a quick overview of exercise and evaluation concepts and terminology. Then, take the free online Independent Study Course, IS 120A, An Introduction to Exercises, also on the HSEEP website (<https://hseep.dhs.gov/>).

Important note: Remember that the first gear to turn in the preparedness machine is the development of a comprehensive emergency management plan, followed by training on the plan. A tabletop exercise is *only* recommended for facilities that have developed a plan and have trained staff on its components. If you have an emergency plan but your staff has not been trained on it, start with a seminar or workshop (see page 3-4 of this guide) and add the exercise component as a follow-up to it.

A tabletop exercise or simply a "tabletop," is a staged event where management and/or staff meet in an open forum to discuss actions for response to a specific emergency scenario. The informal format facilitates participation and is structured to explore emergency procedures, recovery plan details, standard operating procedures and personnel resources to recover critical functions.

A tabletop exercise simulates a disaster without interrupting normal facility operations. At the beginning of the exercise, a scenario is presented to participants by a facilitator, who guides participants in a verbal "walk through" of their facility's emergency plan. The length of a tabletop exercise is typically one to three hours.

While only one of many ways to exercise a facility's emergency plan, a tabletop has a number of advantages. The tabletop can have a broad or narrow focus, is economical and flexible, and most importantly, it presents a very real scenario in a non-threatening format. Tabletop exercises are used to:

- determine if participants can realistically "talk through" their critical functions during an emergency;
- help participants become more aware of possible weaknesses and gaps in the plan;
- thoroughly acquaint participants with the contents of their facility's plan.

A tabletop is flexible because the scenario can be structured to exercise particular sections of a facility's emergency plan or the entire plan. If a facility has multiple departments or locations, the disaster scenario can target specific departmental functions or locations. The purpose is to allow for the discovery of weaknesses during a non-threatening exercise rather than during a real disaster.

Key Roles in a Tabletop Exercise:

- The **Exercise Facilitator** presents the scenario, facilitates group problem solving, controls the pace and flow of the exercise and stimulates discussion using injects (problem statements) that occur on a timeline appropriate to the exercise scenario.
- **Exercise Players** (participants) are facility staff and invitees who address the goals and objectives of the exercise and participate in the facilitated discussion.
- The **Exercise Evaluator** does not participate in the exercise, but takes notes during the exercise, making observations about what happens during the exercise specifically related to the group's ability to achieve the stated objectives. The evaluator may also note "Action Items" that should be considered to address weaknesses/gaps revealed during the exercise.
- **An Exercise Observer** is an optional role. Some exercise planners may appoint observers, perhaps from other disciplines or external partners, to observe the exercise and provide feedback.

Designing A Tabletop Exercise: Step-By-Step

Follow the steps below and the sample Tabletop Exercise Planning Worksheet on the following pages to design your own tabletop exercise.

Step 1: Assess your facility's needs. Has your facility had to activate its plan? If so, use that experience to help identify areas of need. What are the training needs of new staff? Review the training logs for your facility – where are the gaps? For each need, identify the corresponding section(s) of your facility's Emergency Plan to which it is related.

Step 2: Prioritize the needs and determine the scope of the exercise. Based on your assessment (step 1), prioritize the training needs and determine what should be exercised first. Will it be a focused exercise (a power outage) or will it involve external partners? For example, a test of the viability of your transportation contracts might include external partners. Does the function being tested involve multiple departments?

Step 3: Write a goal (purpose statement) for the exercise. What are you trying to improve/establish? A tabletop exercise can include more than one goal, but keep the one to three hours timeframe in mind when planning goals and objectives for a single exercise. Also, always tie the goal/purpose to the facility's written emergency plan. See the following pages for sample goals and objectives.

Step 4: Write specific objectives for the goal. What are the ideal outcomes for the exercise and how will you know if you have achieved them? For example, if the exercise purpose is to test the access staff have to the emergency contact list, objectives would be both the access that staff had to the list (could they locate it?) and the accuracy of the list (did it contain up-to-date information?). See the following pages for sample goals and objectives.

Step 5: Select or create an emergency scenario. Every tabletop exercise revolves around a specific emergency scenario – wildfires in the area, hurricane warning/watch, nearby chemical spill. Planners can use the sample hurricane scenario provided in this Guide or create a unique scenario appropriate for their facility. Write specific "injects" (problem

statements) to go along with the scenario to be introduced by the facilitator at specific times to direct the discussion. See the following pages for a sample scenario and injects.

Step 6: Identify exercise participants. The scope of your exercise will contribute to the selection of participants. Which facility staff should participate? Should external partners be included, such as the local emergency management office, county health department, law enforcement, fire department, or others? If so, will they be players (participants) or observers? Also, remember to appoint an evaluator to observe and provide written comments (see Evaluator role, described above).

Step 7: Determine date/time/place. A tabletop exercise generally takes 1 to 4 hours to conduct, but can be longer. It should be conducted at a location conducive to the exercise goals and objectives.

Step 8: Invite players (participants) and any external partners if appropriate. Be sure to give plenty of advance notice so that participants can make arrangements in their work schedules to attend.

Step 9: Prepare materials. Provide a *Situation Manual* to each participant at the beginning of the tabletop exercise. A Situation Manual is the participant handbook for discussion-based exercises. It provides background information on the scope, schedule, and objectives for the exercise. It also presents the scenario narrative for participant discussions during the exercise. The Situation Manual gives players in discussion-based exercises the background information about the exercise they will need to fully participate, as well as the scenario narrative which they will be discussing. The exercise facilitator will also need the injects (problem statements) to direct and stimulate discussion. The evaluator will need a copy of the Situation Manual and a form for record their observations and notes. See the following pages for examples.

Step 10: Conduct the exercise. Convene the tabletop exercise, giving each player a Situation Manual. The facilitator presents the first scenario and continues to facilitate the exercise using the injects prepared by the planning team. The appointed evaluator observes and takes notes. At the designated time, the facilitator concludes the exercise.

Step 11: Evaluate the exercise. Immediately following the tabletop, the planning team leader may choose to conduct a hot wash of the exercise, providing an opportunity for all participants to discuss the exercise and identify concerns and issues to be addressed in the After-Action Report. The hot wash process answers these questions:

- What went well?
- What didn't go so well, and what might be the root causes of any concerns?
- What were the surprises, if any?
- Were the exercise goals and objectives met? If not, why not?
- Are there action items for follow-up in an improvement plan?

Tabletop Exercise Planning Worksheet and Examples

A two-page Tabletop Planning Worksheet and directions for its use follow, along with a sample of a Florida-based hurricane scenario, injects and related exercise goals and objectives.

Tabletop Exercise Planning Worksheet

(Page 1 of 2)

Tabletop Exercise Title: _____	
Emergency Plan Section Being Exercised: _____	
Exercise Goal & Objectives	Evaluator Notes
	<i>Completed by the Evaluator and Observers, if any.</i>
Action Items for Follow-Up	
<i>Completed by the Evaluator and Observers, if any.</i>	

SCENARIO INJECTS

Problem Statements

(Page 2 of 2)

Inject/Message (list in chronological order)	Exercise Goal & Objective#	Time Issued
		Leave blank for evaluator's use

DIRECTIONS

Tabletop Exercise Planning Worksheet

<p>Tabletop Exercise Title: <i>Type the name you will use to refer to this exercise</i></p> <p>Emergency Plan Section Being Exercised: <i>State the specific section of your emergency plan related to the exercise goals/objectives</i></p>	
Exercise Goal & Objectives	Evaluator Notes
<p>Goal 1: <i>Write a concise goal that describes what you want to achieve by exercising this section of your Emergency Management Plan. Each goal must have separate measurable objective(s).</i></p> <p>Objectives for Goal #1: <i>Write at least one objective for the goal to measure its achievement. Multiple objectives are often helpful.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Leave this column blank.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The exercise evaluator will use this space to record his/her observations about the exercise and comments about the achievement of the stated goals and objectives.</i></p>
Action Items for Follow-Up	
<p><i>Leave this section blank.</i></p> <p><i>This section is used by the evaluator to describe actions that need to be taken to correct areas identified as needing improvement during the exercise. This section may also be completed by observers, the facility's risk manager or others. It might also be completed post-exercise, after reviewing the evaluator and/or observers notes and discussing the exercise experience with others whose input might be needed to write the improvement plan section of the exercise's After-Action Report.</i></p>	

DIRECTIONS

SCENARIO INJECTS

Problem Statements

Injects are used to help direct the discussion about the scenario presented for the exercise.

Inject/Message	Exercise Goal & Objective#	Time Issued
<p>In chronological order, write the injects (messages) that should be given to participants necessary to meet the goals and objectives for the exercise. The inject(s) may be presented verbally, or in other ways to simulate how it might be received during an actual event (e.g., telephone, TV).</p> <p>You may want to create several injects to ensure that all objectives can be met by the exercise.</p> <p>Remember to list the injects in the order that you intend for them to be presented by the facilitator during the exercise.</p>	<p>Write the objective # that correlates to the message you have written.</p>	<p>Leave this column blank.</p> <p>The evaluator will use this column during the exercise to record the time when each inject is presented to the participants.</p>

SAMPLE

SCENARIO & INJECTS

Scenario: Thursday 11:00 am

The National Hurricane Center has issued an advisory stating that Hurricane Chuck has intensified into a Category 1 hurricane with winds of 90 MPH. Chuck is beginning to turn more easterly. As Chuck moves into warm Gulf waters, it is expected to continue to intensify and could become a major hurricane (Category 3 or greater) within 24-72 hours. The west coast of Florida should begin to closely monitor this storm.

The County has been placed under a Hurricane Watch for possible impact of Hurricane Chuck. Local governments along the west coast of Florida are urging residents and businesses to make preparations for possible storm impact.

<p>INJECT #1 <u>Time: 2:00 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Identify by name and title, the person in charge during the emergency and one alternate, should that person be unable to serve in that capacity.</i></p>
<p>INJECT #2 <u>Time: 2:05 pm</u></p>	<p><i>A representative from the Attorney General’s Office has arrived at the facility and asked how many staff have trained/exercised the hurricane portion of the facility disaster plan this year. What documentation do you have to verify your response?</i></p>
<p>INJECT #3 <u>Time: 2:10 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Are there any other threats from this event that could impact the facility, beyond wind?</i></p>
<p>INJECT #4 <u>Time: 2:15 pm</u></p>	<p><i>The County has requested the facility make 2 spaces available for special needs evacuees.</i></p>
<p>INJECT #5 <u>Time: 2:20 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Evacuation agreement facility has called to tell you they are activating the agreement and will be arriving at your facility in 12 hours with 110 residents.</i></p>

As of Friday, 4:00 pm:

The NHC’s latest advisory states that Hurricane Chuck has intensified into a Cat. 3 hurricane with winds of 120 mph. Chuck is expected to become a Cat. 4 prior to landfall somewhere in the Tampa Bay area. Prepare for the possibility of hurricane force winds for 8-12 hrs. throughout the area. Finalize all preparations; weather is now beginning to significantly deteriorate. Public shelter space is available but filling quickly. Fire & police crews will not be available until winds are below 40 mph. Search and rescue operations will begin when winds are below 40 mph. Only use 911 for an emergency.

Questions & Information: _____ (local county EOC phone #)

Recorded Information: _____ (local EOC # if available)

Internet: _____ (local EOC website, if available)

<p>INJECT #1 <u>Time: 2:35 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Is it necessary to call the licensing agency? The nursing home association? Why? What info should they have?</i></p>
<p>INJECT #2 <u>Time: 2:40 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Is the facility vulnerable to storm surge? How would you know?</i></p>
<p>INJECT #3 <u>Time: 2:45 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Commercial power out and the facility emergency generator failed to start. What do you do?</i></p>
<p>INJECT #4 <u>Time: 2:50 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Has anyone beyond the Maintenance Director and his/her staff been trained to restart and troubleshoot generator problems?</i></p>
<p>INJECT #5 <u>Time: 2:55 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Identify legal concerns when host sheltering during a hurricane.</i></p>

As of Saturday, 2:00 am:

Winds are down below 40 mph. The County has sustained major damage. Search & rescue operations are underway along with emergency road clearance operations. Power lines are down. Power outages are widespread with as much as 80% of the County without power. Be aware of hazardous materials and stray animals. Remain in your shelter and off roadways until daybreak and then, only go out if absolutely necessary. Food, water and ice distribution stations are being setup and should be operational later today. 911 is operational; however only call if it is a dire emergency.

Questions & Information: _____ (local county EOC phone #)
 Recorded Information: _____ (local EOC # if available)
 Internet: _____ (local EOC website, if available)

<p>INJECT #1 <u>Time: 3:05 pm</u></p>	<p><i>A resident died of natural causes during the hurricane. The family and their attorney want to know why you didn't evacuate Grandma.</i></p>
<p>INJECT #2 <u>Time: 3:10 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Describe procedures for providing support to staff and their family members after a disaster.</i></p>
<p>INJECT #3 <u>Time: 3:15 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Sheltering facility has been notified that it will take 45 days to repair their facility. How long can you legally provide them space?</i></p>
<p>INJECT #4 <u>Time: 3:20 pm</u></p>	<p><i>A group of residents want you to notify their families that they are ok. How would you do this?</i></p>
<p>INJECT #5 <u>Time: 3:25 pm</u></p>	<p><i>Your drinking water supply is low and a boiling water order for your area has been issued. What will you do?</i></p>

SAMPLE

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Exercise Scenario: Thursday 11:00 am:

The National Hurricane Center has issued an advisory stating that Hurricane Chuck has intensified into a Category 1 hurricane with winds of 90 MPH. Chuck is beginning to turn more easterly. As Chuck moves into warm Gulf waters, it is expected to continue to intensify and could become a major hurricane (Category 3 or greater) within 24-72 hours. The west coast of Florida should begin to closely monitor this storm.

The County has been placed under a Hurricane Watch for possible impact of Hurricane Chuck. Local governments along the west coast of Florida are urging residents and businesses to make preparations for possible storm impact.

Exercise Goal #1 *(Related Section of the Plan: Administration)*

Provide support to the community during a hurricane threat.

- *Objective 1a- Support the County's Special Needs Program*
- *Objective 1b- Identify space in the facility for Special Needs Evacuees*

Exercise Goal #2 *(Related Section of the Plan: Situation / Hazard Analysis)*

Facility staff can identify all hazards associated with an event using the situation / hazard vulnerability analysis.

- *Objective 2a- Staff have reviewed and know the location of the facility situation / hazard vulnerability analysis*

Exercise Goal #3 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

The Nursing Home Incident Command Structure (NHICS) is used in the facility during emergencies.

- *Objective 3a- At a minimum, an Incident Commander is identified for every emergency event.*

Exercise Goal #4 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Ensure all written agreements are current and can be fulfilled during a disaster.

- *Objective 4a- Facility can shelter evacuees as stated in all sheltering agreements.*

Exercise Goal #5- *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Ensure all training is accurately documented.

- *Objective 5a- The hurricane preparations section of the plan is exercised annually.*

As of Friday 4:00 pm:

The NHC's latest advisory states that Hurricane Chuck has intensified into a Cat. 3 hurricane with winds of 120 mph. Chuck is expected to become a Cat. 4 prior to landfall somewhere in the Tampa Bay area. Prepare for the possibility of hurricane force winds for 8-12 hrs. throughout the area. Finalize all preparations; weather is now beginning to significantly deteriorate. Public shelter space is available but filling quickly. Fire & police crews will not be available until winds are below 40 mph. Search and rescue operations will begin when winds are below 40 mph. Only use 911 for an emergency.

Exercise Goal #1 *(Related Section of the Plan: Administration)*

Facility administration understands legal liabilities during a disaster.

- *Objective 1a- Facility Administration understand legal liabilities during a hurricane.*

Exercise Goal #2 *(Related Section of the Plan: Situation/Hazard Analysis)*

Facility staff understands natural hazard vulnerabilities during a disaster.

- *Objective 2a- Facility staff knows where to find natural hazard vulnerability information.*

Exercise Goal #3 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Facility staff understands responsibilities related to host sheltering.

- *Objective 3a- Staff know procedures for exceeding license capacity.*
- *Objective 3b- Staff know how to contact the licensure agency and state nursing home association.*

Exercise Goal #4 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Facility staff can provide electrical life support without emergency power.

- *Objective 4a- Staff can quickly identify alternate ways to provide resident life support without electricity.*

Exercise Goal #5 *(Related Section of the Plan: Training/Exercises/Agreements)*

Staff has the ability to restart and troubleshoot generator problems.

- *Objective 5a- Beyond maintenance staff, facility has identified others that are trained to restart/troubleshoot the generator.*

As of Saturday 2:00 am:

Winds are down below 40 mph. The County has sustained major damage. Search & rescue operations are underway along with emergency road clearance operations. Power lines are down. Power outages are widespread with as much as 80% of the County without power. Be aware of hazardous materials and stray animals. Remain in your shelter and off roadways until daybreak and then, only go out if absolutely necessary. Food, water and ice distribution stations are being setup and should be operational later today. 911 is operational; however only call if it is a dire emergency.

Exercise Goal #1 *(Related Section of the Plan: Administration/Introduction)*

Understand limitations when facility is exceeding license capacity.

- *Objective 1a- Facility must know how long the regulatory agency will permit them to exceed their license capacity.*
- *Objective 1b- Facility understands procedures to receive the regulatory agency's approval for long- term sheltering of evacuees.*

Exercise Goal #2 *(Related Section of the Plan: Situation/Hazard Analysis)*

Facility administration understands hazards & vulnerabilities as they relate to the decision to shelter in place or evacuate during a disaster.

- *Objective 2a- Facility can defend their decision to shelter in place or evacuate during a hurricane.*

Exercise Goal #3 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

The facility has the ability to communicate when cellular and landline telephone systems are inoperable.

- *Objective 3a- Facility can communicate with resident families when telephone systems are down.*

Exercise Goal #4 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Provide staff support after any disaster.

- *Objective 4a- Facility can support staff family members after a hurricane threat.*
- *Objective 4b- Facility can pay staff after a disaster.*

Exercise Goal #5 *(Related Section of the Plan: Concept of Operations)*

Facility can activate emergency agreements after a disaster.

- *Objective 5a- Facility can communicate with emergency supply vendors when telephone systems are down.*