

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Three steps must be completed before deciding on the form of an exercise. These are determining the need, analysing the need and writing the outcomes. These preliminaries are critical to shaping the event.

Determining the need

Effective exercises start with identifying a specific need within an agency or the emergency management community. An exercise is likely to be most useful where there is a need to practice an existing skill, to build motivation, or to assess a plan, system or technique. Exercises are rarely used to develop new skills.

Exercise managers must begin with the question “Why might I conduct an exercise?” Answers to this question could include:

- I have a newly formed team who need to learn to work together;
- Our teams have not worked with other services for a long time;
- We have new procedures that need testing;
- We need to evaluate the new equipment that has been delivered;
- We’d like to try out this new technique
- We need to practice an existing skill we haven’t used for a while;
- We need to practice the new call-out procedures;
- I see an opportunity for us to showcase the Service’s capabilities for potential recruits;
- It’s time we (re)assessed how well the coordination arrangements between organisations work;
- Our recent restructure needs to be tested in an operational environment.

Exercise managers should discuss the need with other management staff and stakeholders early in the planning stage to ensure support. These discussions will help clarify the aim and set the scope of the exercise. It is important at this early stage to consider how the exercise will eventually be reviewed, and what measures can be used to see how successful it was. Having clearly established the need for an exercise, the next stage is to analyse that need.

Analysing the need

The objective of analysing the need is to define the aim of the exercise. A clear aim leads to a series of outcomes. The outcomes will suggest the most appropriate style, size and level of complexity for the exercise. During analysis, the manager will also create a time-based plan for the development, conduct and follow-up of the exercise.

Analysis is usually a discussion or series of discussions with interested stakeholders. These discussions will clarify the need for the exercise, what the organisations or individuals involved want to get out of it, how managers and participants will measure success, and the important factors that will influence the planning and conduct of the exercise.

The Aim

The first step of the analysis is to write an aim. The aim is a broad statement of intent. There should only be one aim for an exercise. It provides direction as to what is to be achieved.

The aim should be begin with a verb and be positive, clear, concise and achievable. A good aim can also be measured. Examples of effective aims include:

- a *To assess* the ability of the rescue team to recover casualties from heights;
- b *To display* the team's rescue capability at the annual show;
- c *To test* SOPs with the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) staff;
- d *To review* response and coordination procedures for a HAZMAT incident in the district;
- e *To confirm* the coordination and deployment procedures for a land search operation;
- f *To develop* cooperative arrangements between response and recovery agencies;
- g *To build* networks in the local emergency management community;
- h *To assess* the adequacy of emergency management response arrangements for the Tunnel Complex.

The Factors

Once the aim is determined, the exercise manager examines any factors (things to consider) that affect it. The most common factors that need to be examined are:

- a **Scenario** - The scenario is the 'story' that sets up the exercise. It is interdependent on many of the other factors below.
- b **Timings** - What deadlines need to be met? How much lead-time is needed or available? How much time is needed or available for the conduct of the exercise? During what time of day or night should the exercise occur?
- c **Size** - How complex does the exercise need to be? How many people should be involved in management and conduct? How many agencies need to be involved? How many people need to be involved?
- d **Location (venue)** - Where should the exercise be held? How much space is needed? Who owns or operates the location? Are there alternatives? What is the venue availability? What approvals or permission is needed? How much staging and preparation is required?
- e **Personnel** - Who should be involved? What is their availability? Who are the key personnel for exercise control?
- f **Agencies** - Who are the key agencies that need to be involved? Are there any supporting agencies needed? What are the organisational constraints?
- g **Costs** - What are they? Who pays for what? Consider personnel costs, equipment, catering, accommodation, travel, hire, fuels and other consumables.
- h **Equipment** - Requirements, limitations, availability.
- i **Operational responsibilities of involved agencies** - How will the plan ensure all agencies involved can maintain operational readiness and capacity during the exercise.
- j **Weather conditions** - Plan for contingencies in the event of adverse weather conditions.
- k **Administration** - Consider the need for electronic and paper-based records, administrative staff support, identification and access control, notification of nearby residents and other agencies, correspondence management, insurance issues such as public liability and worker's compensation.
- l **Logistic requirements** - Consider the following; catering, transport, shelter and accommodation, storage, utilities and consumables.

- m **Statutory considerations** - Legal requirements, plans, and agreements.

Examples

Managers should use the factors to plan the size, structure and format of the exercise. For example, take the aim “*Test SOPs with the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) staff*”. The following factors have an effect on this aim:

- a **Scenario** – The scenario needs to provide a variety of EOC tasks and operational problems of varying complexity to ensure effective testing. The selected scenario is that a flood has occurred in the local area and the EOC has been activated to support the response.
- b **Timings** - To achieve the aim, this exercise must test change of shift procedures. The exercise duration must therefore be sufficient to allow at least two shifts to be involved. In this case it will run for six hours using two three-hour shifts.
- c **Size** – The exercise needs sufficient participants to fully staff at least two shifts (in this case, four per shift), plus directing staff. This is a small exercise, involving only a few people within one agency. One person could manage and direct this exercise, perhaps with one or two other directing staff.
- d **Location** - limited to the EOC facility.
- e **Personnel** – designated shift leaders will be made available as directing staff, three personnel to act as field teams to feed information to feed information to the exercise players.
- f **Agencies** – only one agency is being exercised, although communications with other agencies might be required during the exercise, so they need to be advised.
- g **Costs** – there will be minimal cost involved beyond the costs of personnel (overtime or downtime as relevant) and catering for participants. Costs will be borne by the agency’s operations department.
- h **Equipment** – Normal EOC equipment, plus three field radios to simulate field teams.
- i **Operational responsibilities of involved agencies** – other agencies need to be advised to expect exercise communications traffic, routine work needs to continue and the EOC must be able to function for a real emergency if required.
- j **Weather conditions** – no impact on this exercise.
- k **Administration** – an exercise file will be raised and notifications to other agencies made.
- l **Logistic requirements** – catering is needed for participants and a small staging area needed for the oncoming shift.
- m **Statutory considerations** – no impact for this aim.

The process is the same for a bigger exercise. For example, a major exercise whose aim is to “*Test response plans and capabilities at a major airport emergency*” might have the following factors:

- a **Scenario** – The scenario needs to involve airport response agencies and support agencies to test control and coordination of response teams and to test application of the Airport Emergency Plan. Actual deployment of responders will be required to practice on-ground techniques. The selected scenario is that a refuelling tanker has collided with a laden passenger aircraft at the airport.

- b **Timings** – The exercise will happen in daylight to facilitate video recording. It will happen during the week to minimise staff costs and take no more than 2 hours for actual conduct.
- c **Size** – This is a major exercise, requiring control staff from the response and support agencies, responders, simulated casualties and a large directing staff. An exercise management team will be needed.
- d **Location** – The exercise will take place at the airport, in or near normal refuelling areas for realism. The exact location will be determined by operational limitations.
- e **Personnel** – Identified exercise management staff are needed from the agencies involved; on-shift personnel will be made available for the exercise.
- f **Agencies** – All agencies identified in the “Airport Emergency Plan” should be involved.
- g **Costs** – Significant staff costs are likely (overtime or downtime as relevant). Logistic costs, particularly catering for participants will be high. Staff and catering costs will be borne by individual agencies, with agreed logistic costs borne by the Airport.
- h **Equipment** – Normal emergency response equipment, one refuelling tanker and an aircraft, plus casualty simulation equipment, video recording equipment and staff
- i **Operational responsibilities of involved agencies** – The exercise will take resources off-line for a period. Agencies will need to have contingencies in place and must be able to function for a real emergency if required.
- j **Weather conditions** – The exercise will continue, regardless of weather.
- k **Administration** – an exercise management team will be established to manage the exercise. The Airport will provide secretarial support. Participating agencies will maintain their own administration.
- l **Logistic requirements** – catering is needed for participants and a small staging area is required. Spaces for immediate debriefings of responders and other participants are needed.

Statutory considerations – Responders must comply with the Roads and Traffic Act, State Displan and Airport Emergency Plan. Normal SOPs and legislative requirements apply throughout the exercise.