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## Raising the Bar For Your Emergency Preparedness Program: Creating Basic Drills and Exercises for Your Organization

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## About This Session

- Background
- Overview of exercises
- Step by step building a tabletop exercise
  - Work collaboratively or individually
- Network and learn from other organizations at your table



## Where Do You Want to Be?

- Mitigation organization
- Response organization
- Recovery organization
  
- All of the above?

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## The Emergency Management Process





## Available Resources

- IAAPA
- Small Business Administration
- Federal Emergency Management Administration
- Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
- Ready.Gov (DHS/FEMA)



## What Are You Ready to Deal With?

### Natural Hazards

- Floods
- Hurricanes
- Tornados
- Wildfires
- Earthquakes
- High winds
- Infectious disease

### Man Made Hazards

- Active shooter
- Cyber intrusion
- HAZMAT
- Arson/sabotage
- Brand attack
- Civil unrest



## The Importance of Written Plans

- Helps to build ownership
- Consistency in training and sustainment
- Allows for continuous improvement





## The Plan Writing Dilemma

### “Borrowing” plans

- Not specific to your organization
- Potential legal trouble

### Scratch Building Plans

- Time
- Money
- Prioritization
- Uniqueness



## Consultants

- Yes, they are happy to help!
- Some good, some bad, some ugly
- Careful what you are (not) asking for
- Realities of working with Consultants

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**Plans- will you really use them in  
the incident?**



**Plans- will you really use them in  
the incident?**

**It depends on you and how you  
train your team!**

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## BACKGROUND



## Why Drill? (the bad reasons)

- “Stump the Chump”
- Everyone else does it
- It makes us look good



## Why Drill (the good reasons)

- Improves or maintains team competency
- Highlights areas needing improvement
- Builds relationships with key response partners



## Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

- 7 types of Exercises:
  - Discussion based exercises
    - Seminars
    - Workshops
    - Tabletops
    - Games
  - Operations based exercises
    - Drill
    - Functional
    - Full scale





## Tabletop Exercises

Tabletop exercises (TTX) are discussion-based sessions where team members meet in an informal, classroom setting to discuss their roles during an emergency and their responses to a particular emergency situation.



## Tabletop Exercises

### PROs

- Low cost
- Easy to get teams together
- Minimal time investment
- Can simulate large events where resources are cost-prohibitive
- Can be linked with training sessions
- Typically focuses on plans and procedures

### CONs

- Easy to be untruthful
- Doesn't test functionality (superficial)
- Left alone, can lead organization into false sense of security



## Functional Drills

Functional exercises (FEX) allow personnel to validate plans and readiness by performing their duties in a simulated operational environment. Functional exercises are designed to exercise specific team members, procedures and resources (e.g. communications, warning, notifications and equipment set-up).



## Functional Drills

### PROs

- Moderate cost
- More likely to keep teams honest
- Can simulate small focused emergencies or events
- Can be linked with training sessions
- Typically focuses on “functions,” e.g. communications, equipment use, etc.

### CONs

- Requires more planning effort
- Safety issues need to be carefully addressed
- Augments classroom training
- Without good knowledge base, can undermine efforts



## Full Scale Exercises

A full-scale exercise is as close to the real thing as possible. It is a lengthy exercise which takes place on location using, as much as possible, the equipment and personnel that would be called upon in a real event. Full-scale exercises can be conducted by public agencies or local businesses, or in conjunction with one another.



## Full Scale Exercises

### PROs

- Allows you to see true gaps
- Hard to hide issues
- Can simulate small or large focused emergencies or events
- Can allow your team to shine and build relationships
- Truly helps to determine your organization's readiness state

### CONs

- Can take months to years to plan
- Moderate to high cost
- Can air your organizations dirty laundry in front of everyone else
- Requires extensive planning effort
- Safety issues need to be carefully addressed

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## TABLETOP PLANNING



## Step One: Determine the Type of Drill

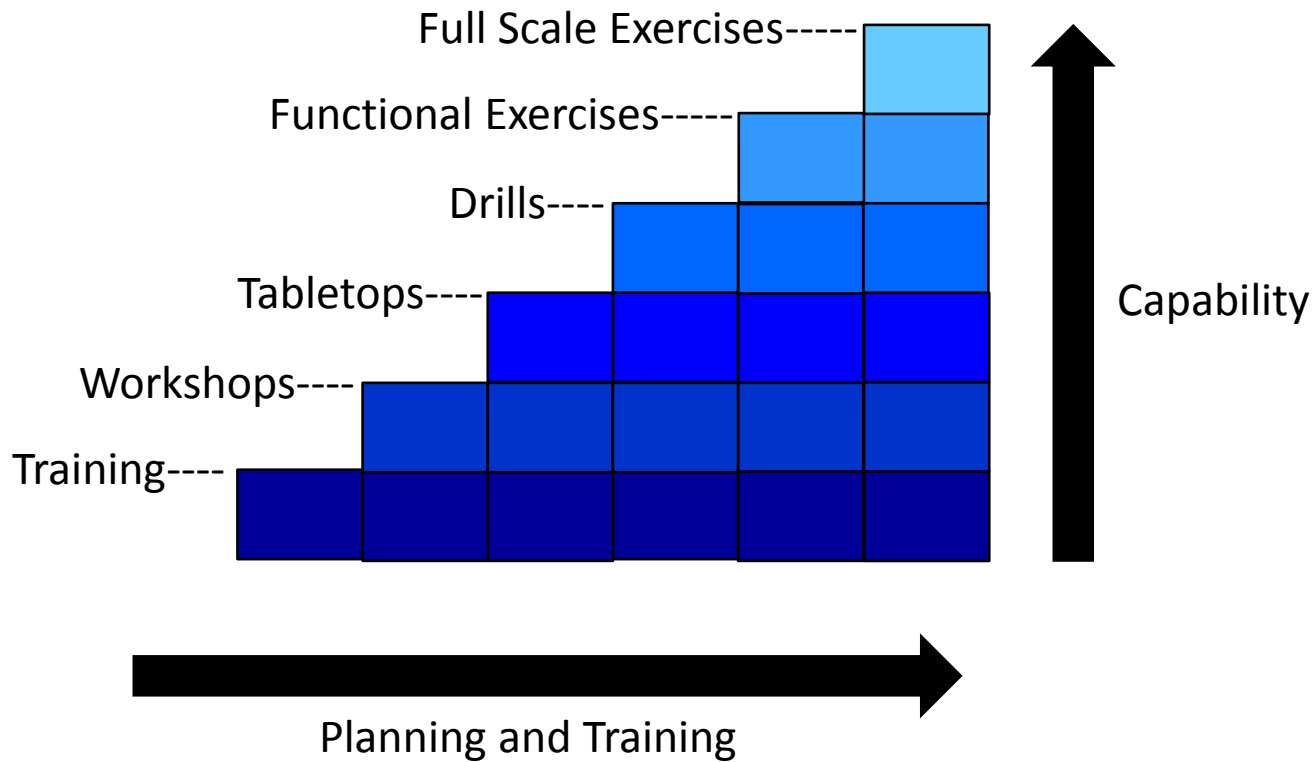
- Training, TTX, Drill, or FEX
- Limiting factors include:
  - Money
  - Time
  - Expertise
  - Culture
  - “operational constraints”



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## Building Block Approach to Emergency and Disaster Response Competency





## Exercise Philosophy

- Stump the Chump?
- Discussion based?
- Time sensitive?
- Building team competency and/or confidence?



## At Your Table:

- Discuss your organization. Share:
  - Size
  - Type of facility
  - Tabletop experience level
- Discuss what factors would make conducting a tabletop exercise at your facility difficult?



## Exercise Essential Components- Core Objectives and Culture Awareness

- What are your organizations critical core objectives / culture that must be observed at all times throughout the exercise planning and execution process?
  - Financial protection?
  - Safety of Team members?
  - Property protection?

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## NIMS Core Objectives

- Life safety
- Incident stabilization
- Property and environmental protection



## At Your Table:

- How does organizational culture need to be a planning consideration? What if it is ignored/not considered?



## Step Two: Identify Your Team

- The Planning Team
  - Hands on group
  - “you get out of the exercise, what you put into it”
- The Exercise Conduct Team
  - Generally is comprised of subject matter experts
  - Controllers, Evaluators, and Observers
  - Participants



## Who Should be Involved?

### Development Team

- Detail oriented
- Creative/imaginative ability
- Knowledge of plan and/organization
- Organizational skills

### Execution Team

- Detail oriented
- Knowledge of plan and/organization
- Observational skills
- Performance under stress
- Note taking ability



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## Step Three: Select Your Story- Natural vs. Manmade Scenarios

- Which is more important?



## Natural Hazards

- Hurricane
- Tornado
- Snowstorm
- High winds
- Flooding
- Drought
- Wildfire
- Infectious disease
- Tsunami
- Earthquake



## Man-made Hazards

- HAZMAT spills
- Terrorism
- Active shooter
- Cyber-attack/ hacking
- Plane crash
- Attraction incident
- Brand attack
- Civil unrest
- Labor disputes



## At Your Table:

- Collectively, discuss hazards that might affect our industry. What is relevant? Timely? Select one natural or man made hazard to build an exercise around for the remainder of the session.



## Step Four: Identify Constraints

- Constraints are the limiting factors of your efforts. They can be:
  - Time
  - Money
  - personnel



## Exercise Constraints

- Common constraints include
  - Personnel
  - Knowledge
  - Equipment
  - Operational issues



## Exercise Constraints

- Location
- Time (duration)
- Experience Level
- Age of your participants
- Pace of the event
- Budget

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**\*\*\*\*\*DANGER\*\*\*\*\***

- Beware of Exercise Creep!





## Suggested Minimal Time Budget

- 15 min Introduction
- 15 min setup and ground rules
- 1 hour exercise
- 15 min After Action Review (AAR)



## At Your Table:

- Identify the scope of your Tabletop exercise and discuss the pros and cons of setting your exercise scope.
- Also, discuss exercise creep. Where do you see it entering into your planning effort, and from where?



## Step Five: Set Objectives

- Likely THE single most important aspect of planning your exercise.
  - Should be derived from your written plan
  - Provides for a tangible basis of evaluating performance in the exercise
- SMART Objectives



## Exercise Objectives- What the Written Emergency Plan Says

- Team Two Responders are expected to respond within 15 minutes of being notified of an on property emergency event requiring their assistance. To accomplish this, The Fun Center Fire Department will maintain a phone contact list of all responders. Responders are expected to notify the Fun Center Fire Department of planned time off such as vacations, that would affect their ability to respond effectively. In this case, their designated alternate would be notified to take their place when an emergency occurs.



## Exercise Objectives

### Good

- Notify Team Two responders via phone tree call back that an emergency has occurred, requiring their presence at the command post within 15 minutes

### Bad

- Call people we need so we can help.



## Step Six: Make It Real

- Establishing the starting point with a “Ground Truth” statement
- Using “Expected Outcomes” to guide your story and exercise play
- How to drive the exercise with “injects”



## Provide the Participants with Context

- Ground Truth Narrative
  - Background and initial information about the emergency situation.
- Injects
  - Stand alone statements that should provoke thought, discussion, or action on the part of the reader.



## Ground Truth Example

- It is a warm sunny Saturday in our park. Attendance is currently 4,000, with an estimate total for the day of 6,000. At 1300, the operators at the Tilt-a-Whirl attraction call out on the radio that the ride malfunctioned and several guests are injured. For the past several days, you know there have been personnel issues with the operators at that attraction.





## At Your Table:

- Write an overall narrative paragraph (Ground Truth) to give your participants understanding about the situation.



## A Word About Realism...

- Sets the tone
- “perform the way you practice”
- Your goal is to get as close to the real thing as possible (within reason)
- **\*\*\*it all has to make sense to the emergency response world\*\*\***



## How to Incorporate Realism

- Use media reports
- Enlist the help of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Build a plausible story for your scenario
- Obtain scientific or factual reports and studies
- Use objects to represent key items

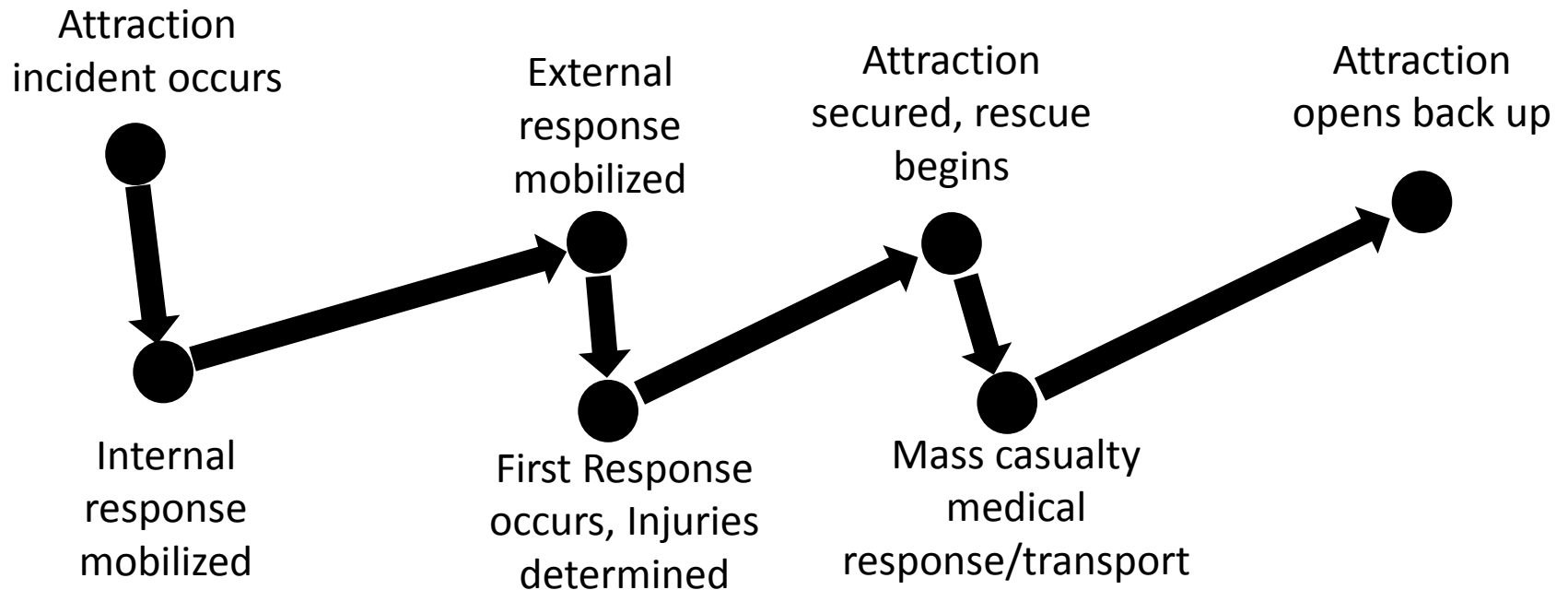


## Understand Expected Outcomes “Breadcrumbs”

- In a perfect response, expected outcomes are key milestones that should occur.
- Expected outcomes can be derived from approved written plans or response agency partners.
- The storyline or injects should nudge the participants along this path.

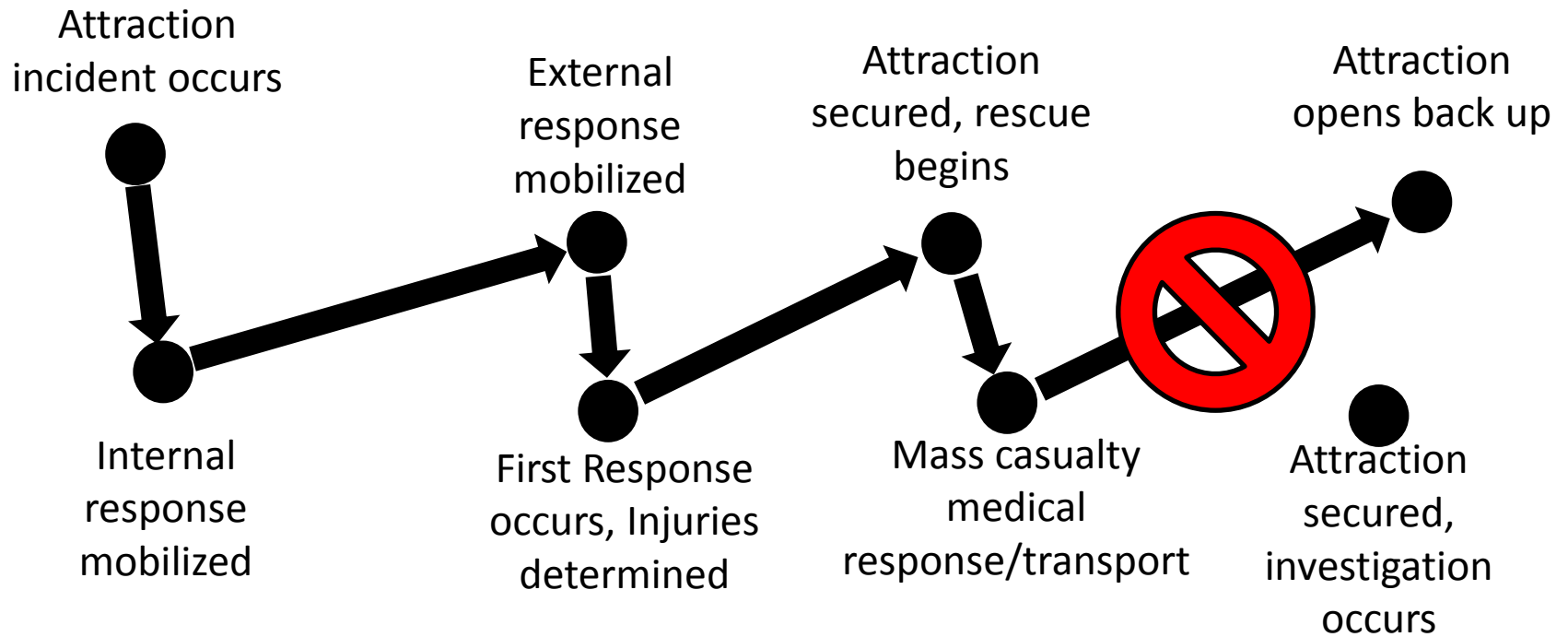


## Breadcrumbs Help to Define the Story and Keep It On Track



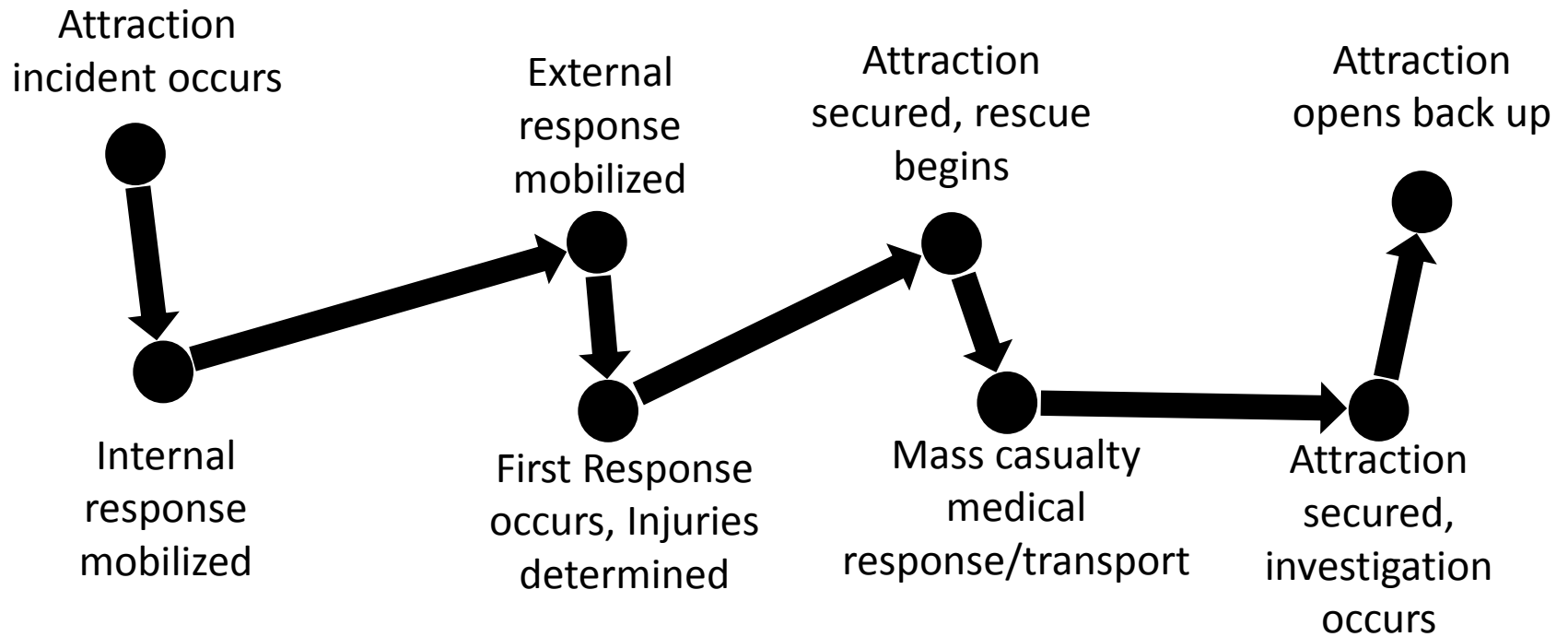


## Breadcrumbs Help to Define the Story and Keep It On Track





## Breadcrumbs Help to Define the Story and Keep It On Track





## Injects

- Help drive the story in the direction you want/need.
- Can be to the entire group, portions of the group, or individuals.





## Inject Example

One of your employees remarks to a manager- “I cant believe Bob did it! He said he was gonna get back at us, but I didn’t think he was serious!”

This information may be relevant to the response or not.



## At Your Table:

- Write five to six progressive injects
  - Based on your injects, write one or two directed questions.
  - Based on your injects, write one or two exploratory “backup” or “if/then” questions.

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## CONDUCTING THE TABLETOP



## Step Six: Executing the Tabletop Exercise

- Briefing
- Kickoff
- Response
- Recovery
- Hotwash
- Next Steps



## Briefing

- Formal or not?
  - What can be expected
    - Time frame
    - Issues
    - Breaks
    - Role of the facilitators
  - Ground Rules
  - Background information or training



## Kickoff

- Reset the room as needed
- Orient the team
  - Supplemental information
  - Ground Truth Narratives



## Response

- Injects are read and team reacts by discussing information at hand.



## At Your Table:

- Based on what you have developed so far, where do you believe you will have to bring the group back to the scenario and why?
- What problems have you seen before in a tabletop exercise and how will you address them?





## Recovery

- At the least, every exercise should have some lead in to “how are we going to recover from this situation and get back to normal?”



## Hotwash

- Quick review of what worked, what didn't
- Not an in depth review or solution finding event
- Must stay positive
- Depending upon participants, may not be effective

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## THE AFTER ACTION REVIEW



## Step 7: The AAR Is Why We Do All This

- Identifies plan/performance shortcomings
- Helps to clearly identify what works and what doesn't
- Can involve a written correction plan with dates, accountabilities, and identified courses of action



## Conducting the AAR Meeting

- Do what it takes to get an open, honest assessment:
  - Departmental / organizational dirty laundry
  - Glass houses
  - Comments without retribution
- Be familiar with the exercise artificiality factor



## The AAR Agenda

- Welcome
- Ground Rules
- Exercise Review
- Comments / Discussion
- Process for Reporting and Improvement



## Typical AAR “Buckets”

- “What we did well”
- “What we didn’t do well”
- “What we need to improve”



## Typical AAR “Buckets”

- Training
- Tools
- Communications
- Policies
- Procedures





## At Your Table:

- Discuss the previous AAR agenda. Would it work at your organization? What would you change? What “buckets” would you use?

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## DRILL AND EXERCISE PITFALLS

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## Exercise Creep



## Unmet Expectations

- Silent Representatives
- Action Items not delivered (or delivered late)
- Lack of understanding of “The Plan”



## Trying to Do Too Much

- Leads to confusion and frustration
- Can be embarrassing
- Credibility
- Confidence
- Quality vs. quantity



## Additional Resources

- Crisis Communication Plan- IAAPA Communications Branch
- <https://www.hhs.gov/HSEEP>
- <http://www.Ready.gov/business>
- <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/workplace>

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## Thank you!