



WRITING A TABLETOP EXERCISE BUILDING BLOCK STYLE

A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO WRITING A TABLETOP EXERCISE



THE PRESENTERS

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THE BUILDING BLOCK APPROACH



HOMELAND SECURITY EXERCISE & EVALUATION PROGRAM

❖ Why do we exercise?

- ❖ Exercises play a vital role in preparedness by enabling whole community stakeholders to:
 - ❖ Test and validate plans and capabilities
 - ❖ Identify capability gaps and areas for improvement
 - ❖ Meet grant or licensing requirements



WHY USE HSEEP



Guiding principles for exercise and evaluation programs



Common approach to design, development, conduct, evaluation and improvement planning



Flexible, scalable, and adaptable



Applicable to all mission areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery



Based on national best practices



Supports the National Preparedness System

TYPES OF EXERCISES

- Discussion Based

- Seminar
- Workshop
- Game
- Tabletop

- Operations Based

- Drill
- Functional
- Full Scale

TABLETOP EXERCISE (TTX)

Generate discussion of various issues related to the scenario

Gain understanding of a concept or plan

Identify strengths and areas for improvement

Players apply their knowledge and skills to a list of problems/issues

Discuss problems as a group

Enhance general awareness and understanding of roles & responsibilities

Validate (TEST) plans and procedures

Recommend revisions to current plans, policies, and procedures

THE HSEEP CYCLE

- The Foundation
- Planning
 - Meetings
 - Team Members
- Exercise Design
 - Purpose
 - Scope
 - Objectives
 - Evaluation Parameters
 - Scenario
 - Documentation



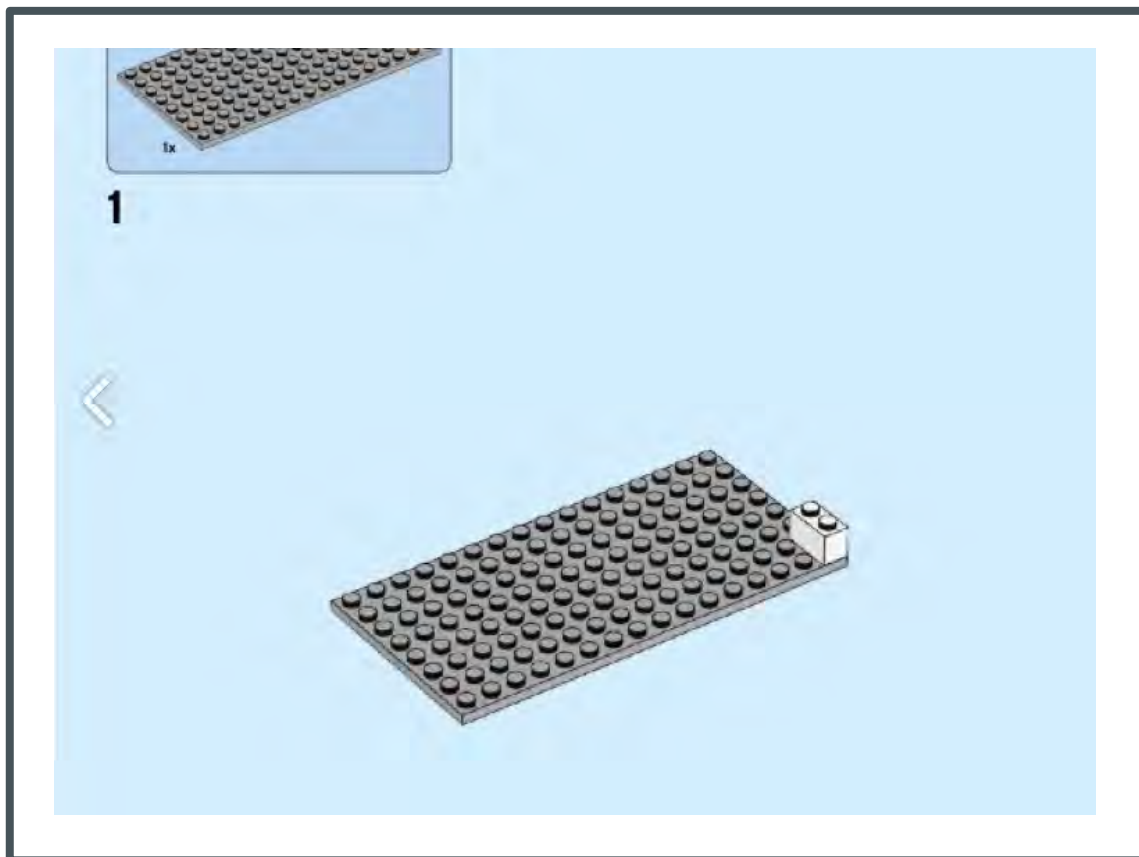
- Exercise Conduct
 - Exercise Play
 - Hotwash/Debrief
- Exercise Evaluation
 - EEG
 - AAR
 - Improvement Plan

THE FOUNDATION

- The basis or groundwork of anything;
- The natural or prepared ground base on which some structure rests.



THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR EXERCISE



What is the overarching goal for the exercise?

- What are your preparedness priorities?
 - Risk assessments
 - Integrated Preparedness Plan
 - Grant requirements
- What plan, skill, policy or procedure do you need to test or develop?
 - Current plan, policy or procedure
 - New plan or plan update
 - Capabilities (FEMA Core Capabilities, HPP, PHEP)

THE PRE-BUILD PLANNING PROCESS

- Exercise Planning Team Positions
 - Exercise Director
 - Facilitator/Controller
- Leadership
- Stakeholders
- Plans
- After Action Reports & Improvement Plans



EXERCISE DESIGN

Purpose

Scope

Objectives

Parameters

Scenario

Documentation

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

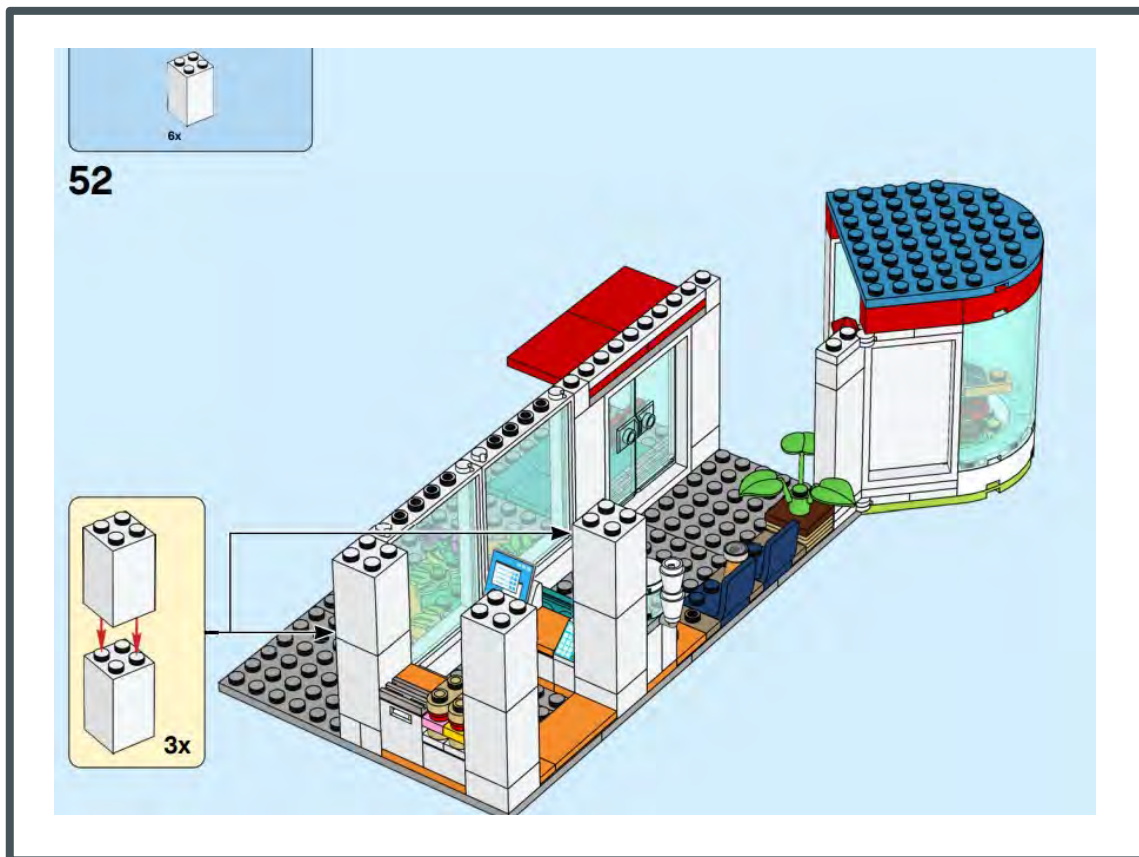
■ Purpose

- Multi-Year Integrated Preparedness Plan
- Existing plans, policies, and procedures
- Threat, hazard, or risk assessments
- Past exercise or real-world AAR/IPs
- Grant requirements

■ Scope

- Exercise Type (Discussion, Functional, Full Scale)
- Participation Level (Facility, County, Region)
- Location
- Duration

THE WALLS - OBJECTIVES SHAPE THE EXERCISE



Limit objectives to most useful, best practices, etc.

Tied to FEMA, PHEP or HPP Capabilities

HVA, THIRA, etc.

What do partners want to test?

New equipment to test

MISSION AREAS AND CORE CAPABILITIES

Prevention	Protection	Mitigation	Response	Recovery
Forensics and Attribution	Access Control and Identity Verification	Community Resilience	Critical Transportation	Economic Recovery
Intelligence and Information Sharing	Cybersecurity	Long-term Vulnerability Reduction	Environmental Response/Health and Safety	Health and Social Services
Interdiction and Disruption	Intelligence and Information Sharing	Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment	Fatality Management Services	Housing
Screening, Search, and Detection	Interdiction and Disruption	Threats and Hazard Identification	Infrastructure Systems	Infrastructure Systems
	Physical Protective Measures		Mass Care Services	Natural and Cultural Resources
	Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities		Mass Search and Rescue Operations	
	Screening, Search, and Detection		On-scene Security and Protection	
	Supply Chain Integrity and Security		Operational Communications	
			Public and Private Services and Resources	
			Public Health and Medical Services	
			Situational Assessment	

All Five Mission Areas

- Planning
- Public Information & Warning
- Operational Coordination

MAKE THEM S.M.A.R.T.



Specific – Who, What, Where, When, Why



Measurable – Numeric or descriptive measures that define quantity, quality, cost, etc.



Achievable – Within the control, influence, and resources of participants



Relevant – Instrumental to the mission of the organization



Time Bound – Specify a reasonable timeframe into all objectives

THE WALLS - OBJECTIVES HELP SHAPE THE EXERCISE

- Tie your objectives to PHEP/HPP Capabilities or to FEMA Core Capabilities

“Demonstrate the ability of County staff to receive, develop, and disseminate a public alert utilizing the county’s notification system regarding a HAZMAT train derailment within 15 minutes of initial notification, in accordance with the Risk Communications Annex in the Emergency Operations Plan.”

Is this objective SMART?

- Specific?
- Measurable?
- Achievable?
- Relevant and realistic?
- Time-bound?

FEMA Core Capability: Public Information and Warning

EVALUATION PARAMETERS

- Develop the evaluation parameters early in the process
 - Guides the development of the scenario
 - Guides the development of discussion questions and timeline
- Align exercise objectives to capabilities
- Identify the linked capability targets and critical tasks

Exercise Objective 1: Evaluate the ability to share medical-health information horizontally within the OA (with pertinent partners) and vertically with the region and State. (SITREP).

Organizational Capability Target	Associated Critical Tasks	Observation Notes and Explanation of Rating	Target Rating
Intelligence and Information Sharing	Hospital A to contact MHOAC within 1 hour of activating their Hospital EOP		
Intelligence and Information Sharing	Hospital A to submit a Sitrep to MHOAC within 2 hours of activating their Hospital EOP		

THE SCENARIO




Plausible, realistic, and challenging



Relevant to participants

THE “BLUEPRINT”: YOUR INSTRUCTION GUIDE

DOCUMENTS		ROLES
Situation Manual (Sit Man)		Exercise Director
Master Sequence of Events List (MSEL)		Facilitator
Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG)		Players
After Action Report (AAR)		Evaluators
Improvement Plan (IP)		Observers

SAMPLE SITUATION MANUAL

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

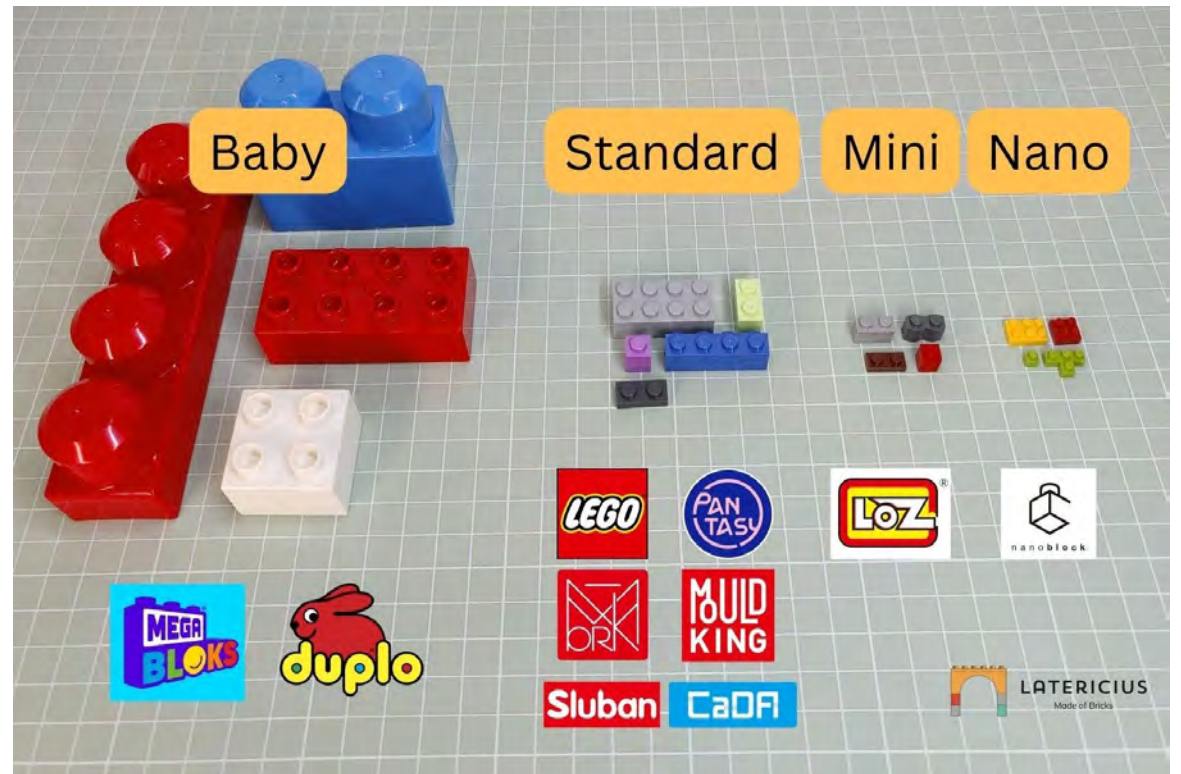
Exercise Name	2019 California Statewide Medical and Health Exercise (TTX)
Exercise Date	October 1 st , 2019
Scope	This is a TTX planned for the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) coordination with the local public health department on October 1 st , 2019, at the Hospital A Conference Center.
Mission Area(s)	Response
FEMA Core Capabilities	Operational Coordination Public Information and Warning Public Health and Medical Services
Grant Capabilities	Emergency Public Information and Warning (PH) Information Sharing (PHEP) Medical Surge (PHEP & HPP) Healthcare and Medical Response Coordination

Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Coordinate with key partners to determine community needs during a medical surge2. Discuss how the HCC will ensure capability to monitor media utilizing the public information and warning system3. Discuss how the HCC will activate and utilize the Emergency Preparedness and Response plan to coordinate with partners and the flow of information.4. Discuss how the HCC will activate and utilize the Emergency Preparedness and Response plan to assess the capacity of the operational area during an event
Threat or Hazard	Emerging Infectious Disease
Scenario	Emerging infectious disease with pediatric medical surge
Sponsor	Emergency Preparedness Healthcare Coalition
Participating Organizations	Office of Emergency Management Local Public Health Healthcare Coalition Members (List all members: California Department of Public Health Local Emergency Services Agency Regional Disaster Medical Health Specialist Program Health and Human Services Agency

NOT A ONE SIZE FITS ALL SITUATION

Scenario will play out differently in different jurisdictions

TTX can be adapted to fit needs of partners



EXERCISE PLAY



- Facilitator
 - Leads a discussion based on the scenario and objectives
 - Presents the scenario and keeps the discussion on track
 - Ensures that all issues are explored
 - Introduces injects
- Players
 - Actively participate in the discussion and work to problem solve
- Observers
- Evaluators
 - Complete the EEG

INJECTS

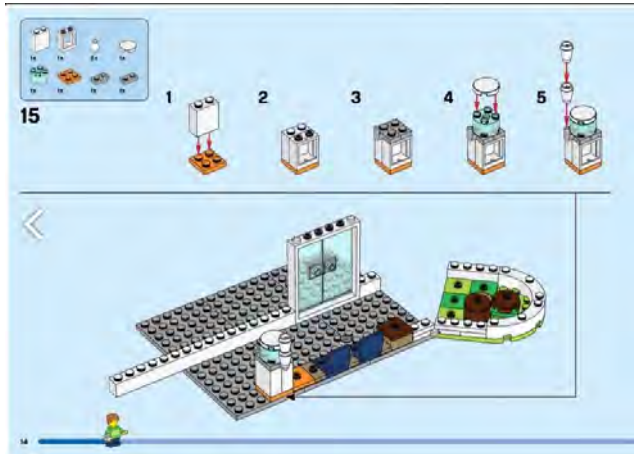
- An event introduced to a player(s) by the control staff, representing non-playing entities, to build the exercise environment based on the scenario and to drive exercise play or discussion.
- An inject changes the conditions of the event by adding additional problems or updating current conditions.
- Example Inject: “At 0800 a broken water pipe is discovered in the Med Surge wing; it becomes unsafe to house patients in the area.”
- Injects should trigger the need for an action (Sit Rep, Resource request...)





MISDIRECTION

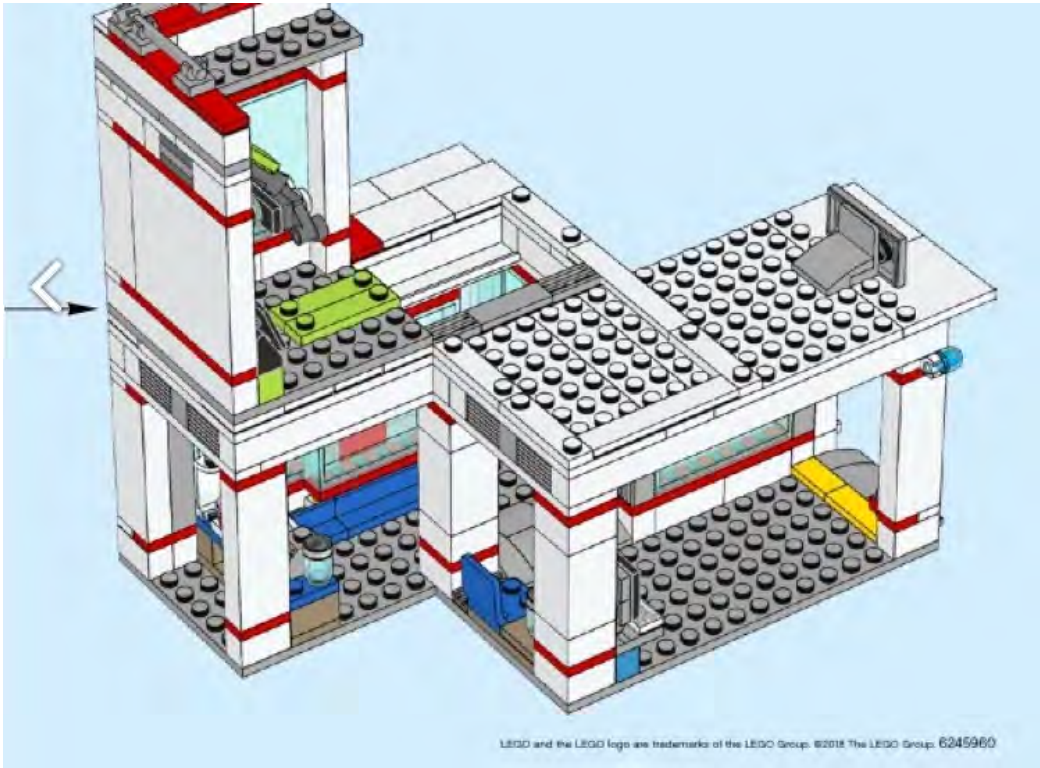
SOMETIMES, AN INJECT IS PLACED AS A "MIS-DIRECT" AND MAY HAVE NO IMPACT TO THE SCENARIO AT ALL



Inject #	Time*	From*	To*	Method	Message/Task*	Expected Action*	Controller Notes/Remarks
Inject #: A numerical ordering of all injects presented.	Time: The time during the exercise at which the inject is supposed to take place and/or be delivered.	From: The sender or source of the inject. Include whether or not delivered by the SimCell or in Exercise Play. Can include specifics on who will deliver this	To: The recipient (person, organization, role) of the inject.	Method: How the inject will be delivered, e.g., verbally, by phone, by an overhead page, through email, etc.	Message/Task: A summary of the event, milestone, or message that is prompted by this inject. OPTIONAL: Include Script: If the Simulation Cell (SimCell) or a Controller is meant to deliver the inject via phone, in person, or through an actor, this column provides a sample script for the Controller/SimCell staff member/actor to use	Expected Action: A list of the expected outcomes based on the prompted inject. Ideally, each responder will have an expected action during the drill.	Controller Notes/Remarks: This optional section leaves space for Controller notes and directions, e.g., evaluation criteria, potential obstacles, or exercise logistics associated with the inject.

MASTER SEQUENCE OF EVENTS LIST

THE NEXT LEVEL – SCENARIO UPDATES (MODULES)



Based on the injects, what is the status of the event?



How has it changed (for better or worse)?



Provide an update to participants

MODULES

Each Module should contain:

- Summary
- Key Issues
- Discussion Questions

Module 1: Initial Response –
Scenario Background

Module 2: Ongoing Response and
Related Impacts

Module 3: Recovery

Module 4: Hot Wash and
Debriefing

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- Consider the exercise objectives and capabilities being tested
- Open-ended questions will encourage discussion, reflection, and deeper analysis
- Questions should lead to resource needs or actions
- Start with basic questions
- Move on to more complex questions that address broader impacts, long term considerations and how different stakeholders are impacted
- Use role-specific questions for all stakeholders involved



What resources would be dispatched to this incident? Does the jurisdiction have the necessary resources?



What information would be important to know to develop a Situation Report? What means of communication can we use to get the necessary information?



What are your major concerns/initial actions?



What resources would be needed from outside the jurisdiction? How would we order and obtain these resources?

EXAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

HOTWASH - DEBRIEF



Identify strength(s) witnessed during the exercise



Identify area(s) for improvement



Participant Feedback Form

EVALUATE THE FINAL PRODUCT



Exercise
Evaluation Guide



After Action
Report

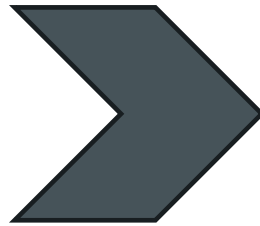


Improvement
Plan



AFTER ACTION REVIEW/REPORT

- Exercise Evaluation Guide(s)
- Participant Feedback Forms
- Notes from Hotwash/Debriefing



- Develop observations for the AAR/IP categorized as “Strengths” or “Areas of Improvement”
- Observation Statement
 - A clear and direct statement
 - Identify the issue
 - Determine the root cause
 - State the impact or result

AFTER ACTION REPORT

- For each objective
 - List the strengths in an observation statement
 - List the areas for improvement in an observation statement
 - Follow with an analysis and recommendations
 - Reference any plans, policies, procedures linked to the issue

Objective 6

Assess healthcare surge capacity of operational area for an MCI.

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Clear direction by exercise director and healthcare facility's IC staff.

Strength 2: Surge capacity and ability of healthcare partners to assist with patients' surge, sheltering, and transportation.

Strength 3: Behavioral Health was able to identify staff and begin activation efficiently.

Strength 4: HHSA Care and Shelter management was able to identify a shelter location and begin activation efficiently.

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Assess healthcare surge capacity of operational area for an MCI.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 6.1: Staff training in ICS and HICS.

Reference: County EOP and Hospital A EOP

Analysis: Healthcare facilities should continue to train, educate staff, and test through drills and exercises. This is especially critical when there is staff turnover. The hospital would benefit from continued HICS training, drilling and exercising with additional staff participation.

Area for Improvement 6.2: EOP and Healthcare Surge Plans need review and update.

Reference: Public Health & Medical EOP; Hospital EOP; County Healthcare Surge Plan, and Hospital Healthcare Surge Plan

Analysis: The hospital medical surge plan and EOP, as well as the Operational Area Public Health & Medical EOP and Healthcare Surge Plans have been identified as in need of review and update. Updates to partners, staff, and corrective actions from activations need to be incorporated into the plans.

Area for Improvement 6.3: Designate a core team of responders for Behavioral Health for long-term response.

Analysis: County Behavioral Health has the ability to respond immediately and activate an initial team; however, staffing for an extended incident would be difficult. Identification and development of an extended incident staffing model would be beneficial to incorporate into plans.

Area for Improvement 6.4: Behavioral Health does not have clearly defined response

IMPROVEMENT PLAN



- Turn areas for improvement into concrete, measurable actions that strengthen capabilities
 - Prioritize corrective actions
 - Provide input on strategy development and program priorities
 - Suggest a review or new development of plans, policies, and procedures
 - Identify and obtain needed training, equipment, and other resources

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for <Blank> County as a result of 2017 Statewide Medical-Health Functional Exercise conducted on November 16, 2017.

Objective 2 Medical and Health partners complete a Situation Report and submit to the MHOAC Program within 2 hours of request.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Core Capability: Operational Coordination	2.1 SitRep were not submitted within the two-hour timeframe.	Retest the SitRep submission with all partners.	Exercise	HHSA-PH	EP Coordinator	01/01/2018	10/31/2018
	2.2 SitRep submission should be primarily electronically to MHOAC email; if faxing, use a cover sheet.	Create a SitRep-only fax cover sheet.	Planning	HHSA-PH	EP Coordinator	01/01/2018	02/01/2018

¹ Capability Elements are Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Break into groups.



Complete the exercise
planning forms on your
table.



Pick a spokesperson and
be prepared to report out.

YOUR TURN TO BUILD



GROUPS

Public Health

Emergency Managers

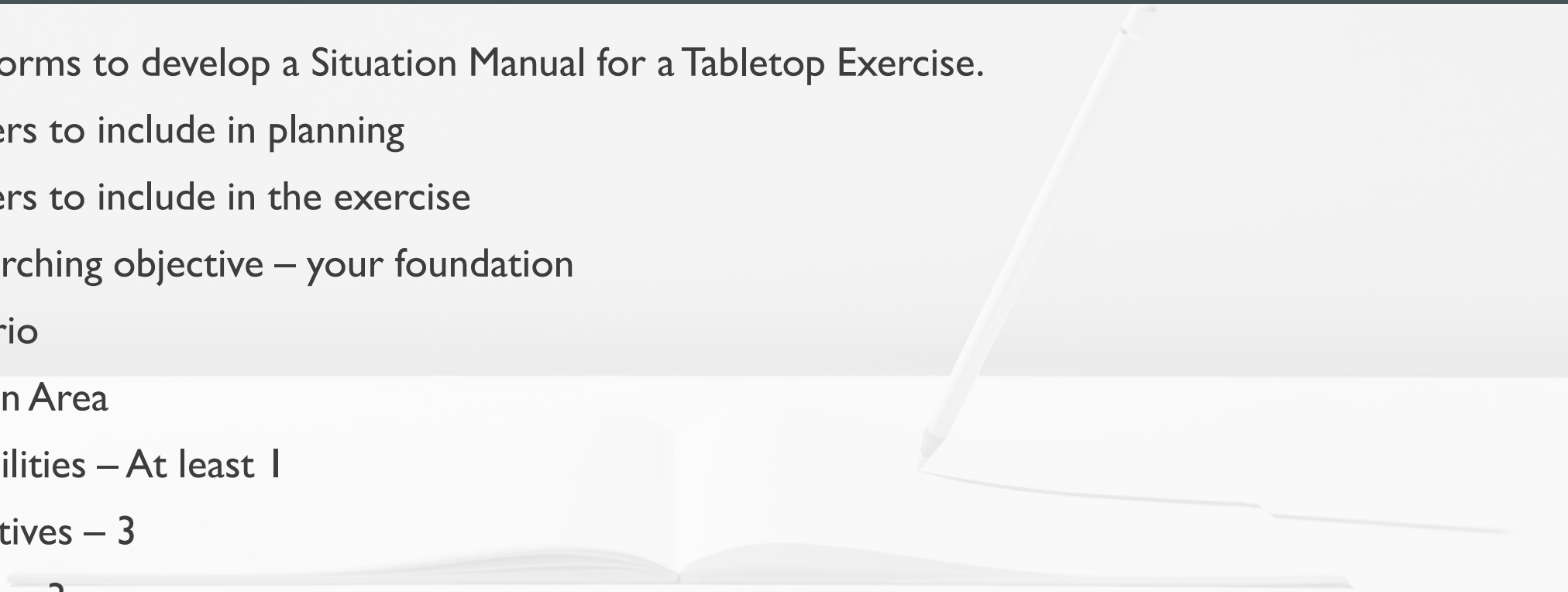
First Responders
(EMS, Fire, Law
Enforcement)

Healthcare
Coalition/Healthcare
Facilities

Public Works

Region or State

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use the forms to develop a Situation Manual for a Tabletop Exercise.
 - Partners to include in planning
 - Partners to include in the exercise
 - Overarching objective – your foundation
 - Scenario
 - Mission Area
 - Capabilities – At least 1
 - Objectives – 3
 - Injects – 3
 - Discussion questions to facilitate participant discussion
 - Scenario update - 1
- 

REPORT OUT



Who wants to share their SitMan?



What were some challenges you encountered?



“A-ha!” Moments?



Homeland Security Exercise and
Evaluation Program (HSEEP), January
2020



California Department of Public Health,
Emergency Preparedness Office,
Exercise Document Library

REFERENCES

THANK YOU

- Jennifer James, RDMHS
- Mary Thomas, RDMHS
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California Regions

