



Tabletop Exercise Situation Manual

{Insert Exercise Name}
{Insert Exercise Location}
{Insert Exercise Date}

This Situation Manual (SitMan) provides exercise participants with all the necessary tools for their roles in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, facilitators, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the SitMan.



EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	[Enter the official exercise title, matching the document header]
Exercise Date(s)	[Specify the commencement and conclusion date(s) of the exercise]
Scope	This exercise is designated as a tabletop exercise, taking place between [exercise duration] at [exercise location]. Exercise play is limited to [exercise parameters].
Mission Area(s)	[List all applicable] (Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and/or Recovery)
Core Capabilities	[List all applicable] (Community Preparedness, Community Recovery, Emergency Operation Coordination, Emergency Public Information and Warning, Facility Management, Information Sharing, Mass Care, Medical Countermeasure Dispensing and Administration, Medical Material Management and Distribution, Medical Surge, Nonpharmaceutical Interventions, Public Health Laboratory Testing, Public Health Surveillance and Epidemiological Investigation, Responder Safety and Health, Volunteer Management)
Objective	[List the objective(s)]
Critical Areas of EM	[List all applicable] (Communications, Staff Responsibilities, Utilities Management, Patient Clinical & Support Services, Resources & Supplies, Safety & Security)
Threat or Hazards	[List the specific threat(s) or hazard(s) associated with the exercise scenario (e.g., natural/earthquake, active shooter, etc.)]
Scenario	[Insert a brief overview of the exercise scenario, including scenario impacts]
Relevant Plans/Policies	[Insert relevant plans and policies]
Sponsor	[Insert the name of the sponsor organization, as well as any grant programs being utilized, if applicable]
Participating Departments	[Name of departments taking part of the exercise]
Participating Organizations	[Name(s) of participating organizations]
Point of Contact	[Name, Title] [Organization] [Agency address] [Phone number] [Email address]

GENERAL INFORMATION

EXERCISE OBJECTIVES AND CORE CAPABILITIES

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 outlines the core capabilities for the exercise. The objectives are linked to the [Public Health Emergency Preparedness \(PHEP\) Capabilities](#) published by the Centers for Disaster Control and Prevention (CDC), which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) National Preparedness System mission area\(s\)](#).

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities



EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	CORE CAPABILITY

CRITICAL AREAS OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

To effectively correspond with The Joint Commission's framework, Table 2 outlines the [critical areas of emergency management](#) and their direct correlation with the exercise objectives. This comprehensive approach ensures a targeted training strategy, directly addressing safety concerns for both patients and staff during emergency response scenarios.

Table 2. Exercise Critical Areas of Emergency Management

EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	CRITICAL AREA

PARTICIPANT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

Facilitators: Facilitators provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required. Key Exercise Planning Team members also may assist with facilitation as subject matter experts (SMEs) during the exercise.

Evaluators: Evaluators are assigned to observe and document certain objectives during the exercise. Their primary role is to document player discussions, including how and if those discussions conform to plans, polices, and procedures.

Players: Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.

Observers: Observers do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development of player responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.

NAME	ROLE
	Facilitator
	Evaluator
	Scribe
	Observer

EXERCISE GUIDELINES

- This exercise will be held in an open, low-stress, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.

- Participants are expected to respond to the scenario using their knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., participants may use only existing assets) and insights derived from their training.
- Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your organization's final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.
- Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus.

EXERCISE ASSUMPTIONS AND ARTIFICIALITIES

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation. During this exercise, the following apply:

- The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.
- The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.
- All players receive information at the same time.

EXERCISE STRUCTURE

This exercise will be a multimedia, facilitated exercise. Players will participate in the following modules:

- [Module 1: Incident](#)
- [Module 2: Response](#)
- [Module 3: Recovery](#)

Each module begins with a multimedia update that summarizes key events occurring within that period. After the updates, participants review the situation and engage in group discussion of appropriate prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery issues.

EXERCISE EVALUATION

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the exercise objectives and aligned capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks, which are documented in Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs). Evaluators have EEGs for each of their assigned areas. Additionally, players will be asked to complete participant feedback forms. These documents, coupled with facilitator observations and notes, will be used to evaluate the exercise, and compile the After-Action Report (AAR).



APPENDIX A: TIMELINES

EXERCISE SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
MM/DD	H:MM	Initial Planning Meeting	
MM/DD	H:MM	Mid Planning Meeting	
MM/DD	H:MM	Final Planning Meeting	
MM/DD	H:MM	Facilitator & Evaluator Briefing	
MM/DD	H:MM	Tabletop Exercise	
MM/DD	H:MM	Debrief	

EXERCISE AGENDA

START TIME	END TIME	ACTIVITY
H:MM	H:MM	Registration
H:MM	H:MM	Welcome & Participant Briefing
H:MM	H:MM	Module One: Incident
H:MM	H:MM	Break
H:MM	H:MM	Module Two: Response
H:MM	H:MM	Break
H:MM	H:MM	Module Three: Recovery
H:MM	H:MM	Hotwash

**All times are approximate*

APPENDIX B: MODULES

MODULE 1: INCIDENT

Scenario

[Month Day, Year] / [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

Inject #1 – [Title]

[Inject Description]



Discussion Questions:

[Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Inject #2 – [Title]

[Inject Description]

Discussion Questions:

[Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Inject #3 – [Title]

[Inject Description]

Discussion Questions:

[Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Key Issues

- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module]

MODULE 2: RESPONSE**Scenario**

[Month Day, Year] / [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

Inject #1 – [Title]

[Inject Description]

Discussion Questions:

[Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Inject #2 – [Title]

[Inject Description]

Discussion Questions:

[Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Inject #3 – [Title]

[Inject Description]

Discussion Questions:

[Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Key Issues

- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module]

MODULE 3: RECOVERY**Scenario**

[Month Day, Year] / [Time]

[Provide scenario event details, including any relevant locations and persons/groups involved in the scenario.]

Inject #1 – [Title]

[Inject Description]

Discussion Questions:

[Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Inject #2 – [Title]

[Inject Description]

Discussion Questions:

[Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Inject #3 – [Title]

[Inject Description]

Discussion Questions:

[Questions should be structured to help Evaluators collect data on the capability targets and critical tasks.]

Key Issues

- [Summarize the key scenario events provided in this module]



APPENDIX C: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
AAR	After Action Report
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
EEGs	Exercise Evaluation Guide
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HICS	Hospital Incident Command System
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
IP	Improvement Plan
PHEP	Public Health Emergency Preparedness
SimCell	Simulation Cell
SitMan	Situation Manual
SME	Subject-Matter Expert
TJC	The Joint Commission
TTX	Tabletop Exercise

