Facilitator/Evaluator Handbook

**[Jurisdiction/Organization]**

**[Exercise Title]**

[This sample template is designed to assist the user in developing a tabletop exercise facilitator and evaluator handbook. The template is meant only as a basic guide and may not apply equally to all systems.]

This document serves as the [Insert Exercise Title] Facilitator/Evaluator Handbook. This document is to be used in tandem with the [Insert Exercise Title] Exercise Conduct Brief and Situation Manual.

This document provides guidance to assist the exercise facilitator and evaluators and should not be given to exercise players. It gives the approximate timing of delivery for each slide, limited talking points, supplemental questions or issues to raise during tabletop exercise conduct, and evaluation guidance. It provides limited talking points, as well as questions to be raised during discussion. [Content bracketed and highlighted in yellow represents content that will need to be updated based on the scope of the exercise.]

[As a reminder, any changes made to the Conduct Slide Deck or Situation Manual must also be reflected within this Facilitator Guide.]

# Exercise Overview

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Exercise Name** | [Insert the formal name of exercise, which should match the name in the document header] |
| **Exercise Dates** | [Indicate the start and end dates of the exercise] |
| **Scope** | This exercise is a [exercise type], planned for [exercise duration] at [exercise location]. Exercise play is limited to [exercise parameters]. |
| **Focus Area(s)** | [Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and/or Recovery] |
| **Capabilities** | [List the capabilities being exercised] |
| **Objectives** | [List the objectives being evaluated for the exercise] |
| **Threat/Hazard** | [List the threat or hazard (e.g. natural/hurricane, technological/radiological release)] |
| **Scenario** | [Insert a brief overview of the exercise scenario, including scenario impacts (2-3 sentences) |
| **Sponsors** | [Insert the name of the sponsor organization, as well as any grant programs being utilized, if applicable] |
| **Participating Organizations** | [Insert a brief summary of the total number of participants and participation level (i.e., Federal, State, local, Tribal, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and/or international agencies). Consider including the full list of participating agencies in Appendix B. Delete Appendix B if not required.] |
| **Points of Contact** | [Insert the name, title, agency, address, phone number, and email address of the primary exercise POC (e.g., exercise director or exercise sponsor)] |

# General Information

## Objectives

The following exercise objectives in [Table 1] describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific focus area(s). The objectives and aligned capabilities are guided by senior leaders and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

| **Exercise Objective** | **Core Capability** |
| --- | --- |
| [Insert objectives] | [Insert capability aligned to objective] |
| [Insert objectives] | [Insert capability aligned to objective] |
| [Insert objectives] | [Insert capability aligned to objective] |
| [Insert objectives] | [Insert capability aligned to objective] |
| [Insert objectives] | [Insert capability aligned to objective] |

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Capabilities

# Agenda

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | [Insert Date] |
| Location | [Insert Location] |
| [Time] | Welcome and Introductions |
| [Time] | Module 1: [Title] |
| [Time] | Break |
| [Time] | Module 2: [Title] |
| [Time] | Break |
| [Time] | Module 3: [Title] |
| [Time] | Break |
| [Time] | Hotwash |
| [Time] | Closing Comments |

# Post-exercise Activities

## Hotwash

At the conclusion of exercise play, facilitators will facilitate a Hotwash to allow players to discuss strengths and areas for improvement, and allow evaluators to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes. All participants may attend; however, observers are not encouraged to attend the meeting. The Hotwash should not exceed 30 minutes.

## Participant Feedback Forms

Participant Feedback Forms provide players with the opportunity to comment candidly on exercise activities and exercise design. Participant Feedback Forms should be collected at the conclusion of the Hotwash.

## Facilitator and Evaluator Debriefing

Facilitator(s) and evaluators attend a facilitated facilitator/evaluator debriefing [immediately following exercise activities]. During this debriefing, facilitators and evaluators provide an overview of their observed [functional areas] and discuss strengths and areas for improvement [observed during that day].

# Facilitator Information and Guidance

Facilitators guide exercise play and are responsible for ensuring that participant discussions remain focused on the exercise objectives and making sure all issues are explored as thoroughly as possible within the available time.

A key Facilitator role is to encourage all participants to contribute to the discussion, and to remind them that they are discussing hypothetical situations in a no-fault environment. Facilitators also build and maintain an environment where all the participants feel comfortable speaking honestly and where differences of opinion are respected. Facilitators should ensure that everyone feels included in the conversation and has an opportunity to participate. **Facilitators should not lecture or dominate the discussion, but rather keep conversations moving.** Additionally, Facilitators may want to use an issues list or “parking lot” to document valid points that are raised by participants during the exercise but that risk taking the conversation off topic; these items can be assigned for later discussion to the appropriate persons.

**AN EFFECTIVE FACILITATOR**

* Keeps discussions on track and drives play to meet exercise objectives.
* Controls group dynamics and manages strong personalities.
* Speaks competently and confidently without dominating the conversation.
* Has subject-matter expertise or experience.
* Has an awareness of local plans and procedures.
* Captures key findings and discussion points

## Administrative Considerations

Facilitators should discourage side conversations, ensure cellular phones are turned off or made silent, and control group dynamics. Table arrangements for the exercise should try to maximize the interaction between the Facilitator and participants. During the exercise, Facilitators need to constantly be aware of time constraints, notifying participants about progress and moving the discussion toward completion of exercise objectives when time is running short.

# Welcome and Introductions [Time]

| Slide | Time | Topic/Issue | Facilitator Notes/Questions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[1]** | **[Insert time]** | **Call to Order/Title Slide/Welcome** | *When participants are ready:*   * Call room and participants to order * Introduce topic of exercise: [Insert Topic or First Phase] * Introduce self and note [organization] support * Provide brief opening remarks and role during exercise |
| **[2]** | **[Insert time]** | **Welcome and Introductions** | * Introduce [insert senior ranking participant] in exercise and call upon him/her to offer opening remarks * Introduce [insert senior ranking participant] in exercise and call upon him/her to offer opening remarks |
| **[3]** | **[Insert time]** | **Administrative Remarks** | * Provide safety and administrative remarks for participants |
| **[4]** | **[Insert time]** | **Exercise Schedule** | * Provide overview of each item in the exercise schedule |

# Exercise Overview [Time]

| Slide | Time | Topic/Issue | Facilitator Notes/Questions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[5]** | **[Insert time]** | **Exercise Overview** | *Briefly review the exercise purpose with participants:*   * Examine[insert capabilities] between [organizations] in the [City, State] in response to [description of incident]. * The exercise will address the following focus area(s): [Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, Recovery] |
| **[6]** | **[Insert time]** | **Exercise Structure** | *Briefly review the exercise scope with participants:*   * An [insert duration] [insert exercise] will be conducted incorporating a scenario with [#] modules to examine the operational response of [insert organizations] to [insert threat/hazard description] * Each Module will consist of two main activities: a scenario overview and facilitated discussions * The scenario overview will include a detailed description of the current scenario * The following activity will include facilitated discussions amongst all players regarding a set of specific discussion questions |
| **[7]** | **[Insert time]** | **Exercise Objectives** | * **[Insert Objective Name]**: [Insert objective description]   + **Aligned Capabilities:** [Insert aligned capability] * **[Insert Objective Name]**: [Insert objective description]   + **Aligned Capabilities:** [Insert aligned capability] * **[Insert Objective Name]**: [Insert objective description]   + **Aligned Capabilities:** [Insert aligned capability] * **[Insert Objective Name]**: [Insert objective description]   + **Aligned Capabilities:** [Insert aligned capability(s)] |
| **[8]** | **[Insert time]** | **Exercise Guidelines** | *Briefly review the exercise guidelines with participants:*   * This is an open **no-fault environment** - varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected * Base your responses on **existing plans**, policies, procedures, capabilities, and resources * Please assume the exercise **scenario is plausible**, and events occur as they are presented * Decisions are **not precedent setting**; consider different approaches and suggest improvements * There is **no “hidden agenda”** nor are there any trick questions * Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve [focus area] efforts; problem-solving efforts should be the focus. |

# Module 1: [Title] and [Time]

| Slide | Time | Topic/Issue | Facilitator Notes/Questions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[9]** | **[Insert time]** | **Module 1: [Title Slide]** | * Briefly introduce title slide for Module 1 ([Insert theme title]) |
| **[10]** | **[Insert time]** | **Module 1: [Key Issues]** | [Week day, Month Day, Year]   * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events]   [Weekday, Month Day, Year]   * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events] |
| **[11]** | **[Insert time]** | **Module 1: Discussion Questions** | **[Insert Exercise Objective Name]**   * [Insert discussion question] * [Insert discussion question] * [Insert discussion question]   *Notes:* *[Insert relevant notes, such as follow-up questions and/or background information]* |

# Module 2: [Title] and [Time]

| Slide | Time | Topic/Issue | Facilitator Notes/Questions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[12]** | **[Insert time]** | **Module 2: [Title Slide]** | * Briefly introduce title slide for Module 2 ([Insert theme title]) |
| **[13]** | **[Insert time]** | **Module 2: [Key Issues]** | [Weekday, Month Day, Year]   * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events]   [Weekday, Month Day, Year]   * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events] |
| **[14]** | **[Insert time]** | **Module 2: Discussion Questions** | **[Insert Exercise Objective Name]**   * [Insert discussion question] * [Insert discussion question] * [Insert discussion question]   *Notes:* *[Insert relevant notes, such as follow-up questions and/or background information]* |

# Module 3: [Title] and [Time]

| Slide | Time | Topic/Issue | Facilitator Notes/Questions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[15]** | **[Insert time]** | **Module 3: [Title Slide]** | * Briefly introduce title slide for Module 3 ([Insert theme title]) |
| **[16]** | **[Insert time]** | **Module 3: [Key Issues]** | [Weekday, Month Day, Year]   * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events]   [Weekday, Month Day, Year]   * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events] * [Insert scenario events] |
| **[17]** | **[Insert time]** | **Module 3: Discussion Questions** | **[Insert Exercise Objective Name]**   * [Insert discussion question] * [Insert discussion question] * [Insert discussion question]   *Notes:* *[Insert relevant notes, such as follow-up questions and/or background information]* |

# Hotwash [Time]

| Slide | Time | Topic/Issue | Facilitator Notes/Questions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[18]** | **[Insert**  **time]** | **Hot Wash** | The facilitator should hand out a participant feedback form to capture the responses in writing and aggregate them in the After-Action Report.  *Provide a brief overview of the purpose of the Hot Wash:*   * The purpose of the Hot Wash is to debrief the exercise and provide participants with the opportunity to discuss their general observations   + Are there any other issues you would like to discuss that were not raised?   + What strengths did you observe in relation to meeting exercise objectives?   + What areas should be examined further or need additional work (areas for improvement)?   + Was the exercise beneficial? Did it help prepare you for follow-on testing?   + What did you gain from the exercise?   + How can we improve future exercises and tests? |

# Closing Remarks [Time]

| Slide | Time | Topic/Issue | Facilitator Notes/Questions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[19]** | **[Insert time]** | **Closing Remarks** | * Call upon [insert senior ranking participant] in exercise to provide closing remarks * Call upon [insert senior ranking participant] in exercise to provide closing remarks |

# EndEx [Time]

| Slide | Time | Topic/Issue | Facilitator Notes/Questions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[20]** | **[Insert time]** | **EndEx** | * Adjourn |

# Evaluator Information and Guidance

## Exercise Evaluation Overview

Exercise evaluation assesses an organization’s capabilities to accomplish a mission, function, or objective. Evaluation provides an opportunity to assess performance of critical tasks to capability target levels.

### *Evaluation Basics*

Effective evaluation is based on the following techniques:

* Use the EEGs to confirm that evaluation objectives are met.
* Take detailed notes concerning significant aspects of the discussion
* When more than one evaluator is assigned to an area, divide responsibilities to ensure detailed evaluation of player activities.
* Stay in proximity to player decision makers.

### *Evaluator Training*

Evaluators are required to attend at least one session of evaluator training. This training provides comprehensive information on evaluators’ specific roles and responsibilities during the exercise as well as best practices for exceptional data collection in support of exercise evaluation. Evaluators will learn what to expect from exercise conduct, how to navigate the EEGs, and how to submit their completed evaluation materials.

Evaluators are also encouraged to complete the Emergency Management Institute’s (EMI’s) recently-updated exercise evaluation training course, [IS-130.a - How to be an Exercise Evaluator](https://training.fema.gov/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-130.a). Anyone who has not previously evaluated an exercise should complete this short online course in addition to the evaluator training.

## Evaluation Structure

During conduct, evaluators will observe, and document exercise play at various exercise locations. Evaluators should be located so they can observe player actions and hear conversations without interfering with those activities. In certain conditions, more than one evaluator may be needed in a particular setting or area. As shown inFigure [#], the evaluation team will have members in the [Master Control Cell (MCC) or Simulation Cell (SIMCELL)] to coordinate and communicate with evaluators through [the Venue Control Cells (VCCs)]. Evaluation staffing within the various exercise locations will differ depending on site requirements. Evaluation will be coordinated through the MCC.] For specific evaluator assignments, see [Appendix C]. For exercise site maps highlighting key locations, see [Appendix E]

Figure [X]: Evaluation Structure

## Evaluation Tools

### *Evaluator Package*

The evaluator package contains this C/E Handbook, EEGs, and other items as necessary. Evaluators should bring the package to the exercise. They may reorganize the material so information that is critical to their specific assignment is readily accessible. Evaluators may bring additional professional materials specific to their assigned activities.

*Participant Feedback Forms*

Participant Feedback Forms provide players and exercise staff, including evaluators, the opportunity to comment on exercise activities and exercise design on a non-attributable form. [Feedback forms will be available at the beginning of the exercise to allow players to capture information throughout their individual play.] Evaluators should collect completed forms, in coordination with site controllers, at the conclusion of exercise play at their respective evaluation sites.

### *Raw Notes*

Evaluators should also keep separate [hard copy/electronic files] of raw notes taken during exercise conduct. These notes should inform their completion of the EEGs but will also serve as an overall record of evaluation observations from the exercise. Evaluators should submit all notes and EEGs to the Lead Evaluator at the conclusion of the exercise.

### *Debriefings & Hotwashes*

At the conclusion of exercise play, controllers or evaluators at most sites will facilitate a debriefing or hotwash to allow players to discuss strengths and areas for improvement and allow evaluators to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes. Evaluators should actively participate in these hotwashes to validate their initial observations and gather new information. If controllers do not conduct a hotwash, evaluators should attempt to resolve any outstanding questions with exercise players before leaving the site. Evaluators should include details from these hotwashes and other follow up discussions in their EEGs and raw notes.

### *Daily Evaluator Coordination Calls (delete if not applicable)*

[Insert]

### *Exercise Evaluation Guides*

EEGs are structured to capture information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the Exercise Planning Team. Evaluators should complete these guides as fully as possible, with clear assessments of how players completed the critical tasks. These critical tasks reflect the policies and procedures outlined in the following plans:

* [List the plan, policies, and procedures being evaluated during the exercise]

Each evaluator is provided with an EEG [for each capability that he/she is assigned to evaluate]. Evaluators should complete all assigned EEGs and submit to the Lead Evaluator at the conclusion of the exercise. The Lead Evaluator and Senior Controller compile all evaluator submissions into the first working draft of the AAR.

### *Using Exercise Evaluation Guides*

The EEGs are structured to capture information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the Exercise Planning Team. The following evaluation requirements are documented in each EEG:

* **Capabilities:** The distinct critical elements necessary to achieve a specific focus area (e.g., prevention). To assess both capacity and gaps, each capability includes capability targets.
* **Capability target(s):** The performance thresholds for each capability; they state the exact *amount* of capability that players aim to achieve. Capability targets are typically written as quantitative or qualitative statements.
* **Critical tasks:** The distinct elements required to perform a capability; they describe *how* the capability target will be met. Critical tasks generally include the activities, resources, and responsibilities required to fulfill capability targets. Capability targets and critical tasks are based on operational plans, policies, and procedures to be exercised and tested during the exercise.
* **Performance ratings:** The summary description of performance against target levels. Performance ratings include both Target Ratings, describing how exercise participants performed relative to each capability target, and Capability Ratings, describing overall performance relative to entire the capability.

For each EEG, evaluators provide a target rating, observation notes and an explanation of the target rating, and a final capability rating. In order to efficiently complete these sections of the EEG, evaluators should focus their observations on the capability targets and critical tasks listed in the EEG.

### *Recording Events*

Although numerous events may occur simultaneously, evaluators do not need to record every single action. Knowing which events are important eliminates superfluous information and provides the type of data most useful for evaluation. Individuals preparing the AAR will analyze the results provided by all evaluators to develop an accurate representation of exercise plans and capabilities. Their analysis will focus on the timing of key events, decisions made, and actions taken. Observation notes should include *if* and *how* quantitative or qualitative targets were met. For example, a capability target might state, “*Within 4 hours of the incident….”* Notes on that target should include the actual time required for exercise players to complete the critical tasks. Additionally, observations should include:

* How the target was or was not met;
* Timeliness of actions;
* Pertinent decisions made and information gathered to make decisions;
* Requests made and how requests were handled;
* Resources utilized;
* Plans, policies, procedures, or legislative authorities used or implemented;
* Communication among players and organizations;
* Key decisions made and the times these decisions are made;
* Deviations from plans and implementation procedures;
* Equipment issues in relation to player efforts; and,
* Any other factors contributed to the results.

Evaluators should also note if an obvious cause or underlying reason resulted in players not meeting a capability target or critical task. However, the evaluators should not include recommendations in the EEGs.

Based on their observations, evaluators assign a target rating for each capability target listed on the EEG*.* Evaluators then consider all target ratings for the core capability and assign an overall capability rating. The rating scale includes four ratings:

* **Performed without Challenge (P):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.
* **Performed with Some Challenges (S):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.
* **Performed with Major Challenges (M):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.
* **Unable to be Performed (U):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).*Placement and Monitoring*

## Evaluator Roles and Responsibilities

### *General*

* Avoid personal conversations with players.
* Do not give information to players about event progress or other participants’ methods of problem resolution. Players are expected to obtain information through their own resources.

### *Before the Exercise*

* Review appropriate plans, procedures, and protocols.
* Attend required evaluator training and other briefings.
* Review appropriate exercise materials, including the exercise schedule and evaluator instructions.
* Review the EEGs and other supporting materials for your area of responsibility to ensure that you have a thorough understanding of the capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks you are assigned to evaluate.
* Report to the exercise check-in location at the time designated in the exercise schedule and meet with the exercise staff.
* Obtain or locate necessary communications equipment and test it to ensure that you can communicate with other evaluators and the Exercise Director.

### *During the Exercise*

* Wear evaluator identification items (e.g., badge).
* Stay in proximity to player decision-makers.
* Use EEGs to document performance relative to exercise objectives, capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks.
* Focus on critical tasks, as specified in the EEGs.
* Your primary duty is to document performance of capabilities. After the exercise, that information will be used to determine whether the exercise capability targets were effectively met and to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

### *After the Exercise*

* Participate in the Hotwash and take notes on findings identified by players. Before the Hotwash, do not discuss specific issues or problems with participants. After the Hotwash, summarize your notes and prepare for the Controller and Evaluator Debriefing. Have your summary ready for the Lead Evaluator.
* Complete and submit all EEGs and other documentation to the Lead Evaluator at the end of the exercise

The evaluation team will deliver an initial draft of the After-Action Report (AAR) for review by [Date]. To meet this deadline, the evaluation team requests that evaluators provide their completed EEGs and notes to the AAR team by [date]. All evaluation data should be emailed to [POC]. To the extent possible, all notes and EEG submissions should be typed and electronically submitted. This rapid data collection will allow the evaluation team to begin drafting the AAR immediately following conduct and deliver a final draft into concurrence in a timely manner.