

Welcome School Safety Exercise Designer!

Planning and conducting an exercise is an important step in preparing your school for any eventuality.

The *School Emergency Operations Plan Exercise Toolkit* has been developed in a cooperative effort by a subcommittee of the Emergency Planning & Response Working Group established by the Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC) to provide schools and school districts the ability to heighten awareness of the importance of emergency preparedness for any type of disaster or emergency schools may experience.

When starting in this new role as an exercise designer, it's easy to be intimidated by the challenges in front of you, but every citizen has a role to play in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Being prepared means having a solid plan and access to resources necessary to execute a plan for yourself and your school. It is also about peace of mind.

This toolkit should be used to test your own school or school district's Emergency Operations Plan as it is written. It is suggested that when starting an exercise program, you start with internal staff to test plans and procedures before conducting larger and more complex exercises with outside agencies.

There are a number of different ways to test an emergency operations plan. This toolkit will help you to establish an all-hazards approach that should enable you to plan for almost any event that would lead you to lockdown, lockout (secure the building), shelter-in-place (including weather emergencies) or evacuate your facility. A sample exercise and associated documentation using a scenario has been created for you, and additional scenarios have been provided as a resource. The sample scenario used in this toolkit could easily be changed to involve a different scenario leading to the same actions. Additionally, there are multiple types of exercises that fit into the categories of discussion based exercises (tabletop) and operations-based exercises (drill or full scale).

Discussion-Based Exercises

According to the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), discussion-based exercises are normally used as a starting point in the building-block approach of escalating exercise scope and complexity.

These types of exercises typically highlight existing plans, policies, interagency/interjurisdictional agreements, and procedures. Discussion-based exercises are:

- Valuable tools for familiarizing agencies and personnel with current or expected capabilities of an entity.
- Typically focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues.
- A great way to introduce your emergency response team to the new plan is through an informal, discussion based exercise.

Facilitators and/or controllers usually lead the discussion, keep participants on track toward

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meeting exercise objectives and foster valuable dialogue. Discussion-based exercises include seminars, workshops, tabletops, and games.

This toolkit is specifically designed to aid you in the development of a discussion-based tabletop exercise. Effective tabletop exercises:

- Involve key personnel discussing hypothetical scenarios in an informal setting. This type of exercise can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures or to assess the systems needed to guide the prevention of, response to, and recovery from a defined incident.
- Typically are aimed at facilitating understanding of concepts, identifying strengths and shortfalls, and achieving changes in the approach to a particular situation. Participants are encouraged to discuss issues in depth and develop decisions through slow-paced problem solving, rather than the rapid, spontaneous decision making that occurs under actual or simulated emergency conditions.
- Are derived from the energetic involvement of participants and their assessment of recommended revisions to current policies, procedures, and plans.

The Next Step

Once you have successfully completed your discussion-based exercises, it is a good idea to proceed to Operations-Based Exercises. Operations-based exercises represent the next level of the exercise cycle that:

- Are used to validate the plans, policies, agreements, and procedures solidified in discussion-based exercises.
- Include drills, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises.
- Can clarify roles and responsibilities, identify gaps in resources needed to implement plans and procedures, and improve individual and team performance.
- Are characterized by actual reaction to simulated intelligence; response to emergency conditions; mobilization of apparatus, resources, and/or networks; and commitment of personnel.

In order to make a difference and your preparedness successful, findings from any exercise should be used to edit and improve your plan.

A great deal of flexibility has been built into this toolkit to allow you to expand or contract your exercise type, size and scope based on your personnel, training and emergency operations plan. We encourage you to utilize this toolkit as it best fits *your* needs as a school or school district.

Sincerely,

**Emergency Planning & Response Working Group
Colorado School Safety Resource Center
Department of Public Safety**



School EOP Exercise Toolkit Template

Purpose of the Exercise Design Toolkit Template: To provide schools, emergency managers or other emergency preparedness/response agencies with a toolkit (including guidance and a template) to assist in conducting exercises for schools that have drafted/implemented an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Conducting exercises to test school emergency plans is also a requirement of the Colorado Safe Schools Act CRS 22-32-104.1 Section (4).

This toolkit should:

- Provide guidance to schools and school districts regarding the development of emergency exercises
- Assist schools on coordination with outside response agencies and integration in ICS
- Assist schools in testing communication and coordination among staff
- Assist schools in the evaluation of their Emergency Operations/School Safety, Readiness and Incident Management Plan & components
 - Incident Command Structure
 - Lockdown
 - Lockout (securing building)
 - Evacuation
 - Shelter In Place Procedures
 - Reunification of students with guardians

Target Participants for Exercise: Schools and school districts that have created an Emergency Operations/School Safety, Readiness and Incident Management Plan. This may include school administrative and faculty representatives, students, emergency services personnel, emergency managers and members of the community.

Common procedures to be covered during an exercise:

- Lockdown
- Lockout (securing building)
- Evacuation
- Shelter In Place Procedures
- Reunification of students with guardians
- Staff and student tracking
- Public Information and communication w/ student families/guardians
- Media communication
- NIMS/ICS Interface/Coordination with First Responders
- Contingency Planning

Notebook Table of Contents:

1. **10 Steps to A Successful Exercise** (powerpoint & pdf)
2. **Exercise Creation Worksheet** (word doc & pdf)
3. **Sample Scenarios for Each Emergency Action** (word doc & pdf)
4. **Exercise Plan (ExPlan) Template** (word doc & pdf)
5. **Exercise Agenda Template** (word doc & pdf)
6. **Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) Template** (word doc & pdf)
7. **Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG) Template** (word doc & pdf)
8. **Tabletop Exercise Powerpoint Slides** (sample exercise powerpoint & pdf)
9. **After Action Report Template w/ Improvement Plan Matrix Template** (word doc & pdf)
10. **Participant Feedback Form Template** (word doc & pdf)
11. **Additional Resources**
 - a. **Response: Emergency Actions for K-12 Schools** (March, 2011)
 - b. **Student Reunification Form Sample**