



Virginia Department of Corrections

Emergency Management

Operating Procedure 075.6

Critical Incident Management Exercises

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REVIEW

The Content Owner will review this operating procedure annually and re-write it no later than three years after the effective date.

The content owner reviewed this operating procedure in October 2020 and necessary changes have been made.

COMPLIANCE

This operating procedure applies to all units operated by the Virginia Department of Corrections. Practices and procedures must comply with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, ACA standards, PREA standards, and DOC directives and operating procedures.

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PURPOSE

This operating procedure provides for an exercise program to improve the operational readiness of the emergency management system in each facility and office operated by the Department of Corrections.

PROCEDURE

- I. Critical Incident Management Exercise Program
 - A. The DOC critical incident management exercise program is based on the [*Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program \(HSEEP\)*](#).
 - B. The primary purpose of an exercise program is to improve the operational readiness of the emergency management system. When such improvements are viewed as the overall goal, exercises can:
 1. Reveal planning strengths and weaknesses
 2. Identify resource needs
 3. Identify training needs
 4. Improve coordination
 5. Clarify roles and responsibilities
 6. Gain recognition of the emergency management program
 7. Motivate officials to support the emergency management program
 8. Validate plans and systems in “live” situations
 9. Foster cooperation among government agencies and the private sector
 10. Increase awareness of proficiency and needs
 - C. An effective critical incident management exercise program will assess each facility and office’s *Emergency Operations Plan* and *Continuity of Operations Plan* and must be based on local critical incidents that are likely to occur consistent with Operating Procedure 075.1, Attachment 1, *Critical Incident Initial Response Checklists*. (See Operating Procedure 075.1, *Emergency Operations Plan*, and Operating Procedure 075.2, *Continuity of Operations Plan*.)
 - D. Additional information about critical incident management exercises may be found on the *Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program* internet site or by contacting the Emergency Services Unit Administrator at 804-239-9629.
- II. Exercise Management Cycle
 - A. Exercise management consists of the functions required for the DOC to sustain a variety of exercises targeted toward preparedness priorities on an ongoing basis.
 - B. Exercises conducted in accordance with the phases of the exercise cycle lead to tangible preparedness improvements.
 - C. The five phases of the exercise cycle are:
 1. Foundation - The following activities must be accomplished to provide the foundation for an effective exercise:
 - a. Create a base of support (i.e., establish buy-in from the appropriate entities and/or senior officials)
 - b. Develop an exercise management timeline and establish milestones
 - c. Identify an exercise planning team; and schedule planning sessions
 2. Design and Development - Building on the exercise foundation, the design and development process focuses on:

- a. Identifying objectives
 - b. Designing the scenario - Selection of any of the three major hazard categories should be based on the local potential for an occurrence of that hazard.
 - i. Natural hazards such as flood, tornado, wild fire, drought, or winter storm
 - ii. Technological hazards such as utilities failure, hazardous materials spill, or radiological release
 - iii. Security/Terrorism Hazards such as escape, riot, hostage, fire, or staff shortage
 - c. Creating documentation
 - d. Coordinating logistics
 - e. Planning exercise conduct
 - f. Selecting an evaluation and improvement methodology
3. Conduct - After the design and development steps are complete, the exercise takes place. Exercise conduct steps include:
- a. Setup
 - b. Briefings
 - c. Facilitation/control/evaluation
 - d. Wrap-up activities
4. Evaluation - The evaluation phase for all exercises includes:
- a. A formal exercise evaluation
 - b. An integrated analysis
 - c. An After Action Report (AAR)/ Improvement Plan (IP) that identifies strengths and areas for improvement in an entity's preparedness as observed during the exercise. Recommendations related to areas for improvement are identified to help develop corrective actions to be tracked throughout the improvement planning phase.
5. Improvement Planning - During improvement planning, the recommendations identified in the evaluation phase are assigned, with due dates, to responsible parties; tracked to implementation; and then validated during subsequent exercises.

III. Objectives - The objectives of each exercise must be chosen from the following:

- A. Direction and Control (Mandatory for all exercises) - Demonstrate the ability to direct, coordinate, and control critical incident response activities through operation of an Incident Command System (ICS), appropriate *Emergency Operations Plans*, and *Continuity of Operations Plan*.
- B. Accountability of Staff and Offenders (Mandatory for all exercises) - Demonstrate the ability to implement a critical incident count of offenders and account for staff and their locations.
- C. Documentation of a Critical Incident (Mandatory for all exercises) - Demonstrate the ability to document a critical incident and response.
- D. Demonstrate the ability to identify the critical incident and to assess the hazards associated during both the emergency and post-emergency phases.
- E. Demonstrate the ability to implement appropriate measures for containment, recovery, and cleanup of a critical incident.
- F. Demonstrate the ability to notify appropriate personnel and agencies, and to mobilize personnel.
- G. Demonstrate the ability to mobilize and manage resources required for critical incident response.
- H. Demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain communications essential to support response to a critical incident.
- I. Demonstrate the adequacy of facilities, equipment, and other materials to support critical incident

operations.

- J. Demonstrate the ability to signal an alert and to provide emergency notifications containing information and instructions to staff.
- K. Demonstrate the ability to coordinate the development and dissemination of clear, accurate, and timely information up the chain of command.
- L. Demonstrate the ability to decide upon and direct the implementation of protective actions for staff and offenders.
- M. Demonstrate the ability to protect critical incident responder health and safety.
- N. Demonstrate the organizational ability and resources necessary to implement site security and to control evacuation traffic flow and access to evacuated and sheltered areas.
- O. Demonstrate the ability to monitor and control decontamination of persons affected through an appropriate combination screening, decontamination, and registration process.
- P. Demonstrate the adequacy of procedures, facilities, equipment, and services for the collective care of staff and offenders.
- Q. Demonstrate the adequacy of personnel, procedures, equipment, and vehicles for transporting contaminated and/or injured individuals, and the adequacy of medical personnel and facilities to support the operation.

IV. Exercise Types:

A. Tabletop Exercises (TTX):

1. Tabletop exercises are designed to assess the adequacy of the *Emergency Operations Plan*, *Continuity of Operations Plan*, policies, procedures, training, resources, and relationships or agreements that guide the prevention or response to critical incidents.
 - a. This assessment is accomplished by a group of officials from various departments/facilities/agencies by talking through how they would respond to a simulated critical incident.
 - b. In a typical tabletop exercise, players are presented with a scenario that provides information that would be available prior to, during, and following an event.
 - c. Players discuss the plans, policies, procedures, resources, and agreements that are in place to respond to the scenario and the problems presented by the facilitator.
 - d. Problems are discussed as a group, and the resolution is generally agreed on and summarized by the leader.
 - e. In more advanced tabletops, players are given prompts that alter the original scenario.
2. A tabletop exercise will test, at a minimum, Direction and Control, Accountability of Staff and Offenders, Documentation of a Critical Incident, and at least two other Objectives.
3. Scenario selection and development should place special emphasis on the Objectives and typical steps or elements that support response and recovery operations.
4. Players in this exercise will be administrative officials, department heads or their representatives, and emergency managers. Other players may be from volunteer agencies, hospitals and nursing homes, media, private industry, National Guard, school systems, public safety instructors, regional hazardous materials teams, etc.
5. Preparation for a TTX will include development of an [Exercise Plan \(EXPLAN\)](#) 075_F9 and a [Control Staff Instruction Manual \(COSIN\)](#) 075_F10.
6. Discussion and discoveries generated during a tabletop exercise should be used to begin planning for the next logical step in the exercise program - the functional exercise.

B. Functional Exercise (FE):

1. The functional exercise is designed to test the *Emergency Operations Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan*, and to train operational and policy level personnel.
 - a. Functional exercise activities are generally restricted to one DOC Unit and may focus on one functional area within that unit. Depending on the extent of exercise activities, it may be necessary to notify outside agencies of the exercise activities.
 - b. The exercise should incorporate a hazard that is a realistic threat to the facility/community and should include the testing of Objectives that were identified as needing improvement based on After Action Reports from a previous exercise.
 - c. This assessment is accomplished by persons from various functional areas carrying out or simulating the actions they would take to respond to a simulated critical incident.
 - d. In a functional exercise, the controller(s) present to players a scenario that provides information that would be available as an event evolves.
 - e. Players simulate the actions they would take using the plans, policies, procedures, resources, and agreements that are in place to respond to the scenario and the problems presented by the controller(s).
 - f. Players should be performing their regular roles and responsibilities based on their position and expertise.
 - g. In more advanced functional exercises, actors may be given assignments that lend realism to or alter the original scenario.
 2. A functional exercise will test, at a minimum, Direction and Control, Accountability of Staff and Offenders, Documentation of a Critical Incident, and at least three other Objectives.
 3. The exercise design team will also include an exercise evaluation team, which will be responsible for developing written evaluation tools, selecting and training evaluators, evaluating the exercise, and preparing a written post-exercise evaluation, which includes corrective action recommendations. Scenario selection and development should emphasize the functions that support recovery operations.
 4. Preparation for a Functional Exercise will include development of an [Exercise Plan \(EXPLAN\)](#) 075_F9 and a [Control Staff Instruction Manual \(COSIN\)](#) 075_F10.
- C. Full-Scale Exercise:
1. Due to the complexity and amount of resources involved, full-scale exercises should be conducted only under the guidance and control of the Emergency Services Unit.
 2. The full-scale exercise is used to test the operational capabilities of the *Emergency Operations Plan* and *Continuity of Operations Plan* over an extended period of time under simulated conditions.
 - a. A full-scale exercise will test multiple functions and provide training for several facilities/departments, including mutual aid agencies.
 - b. This exercise also trains policy level personnel in the use of the Incident Command Post for coordination and control of resources.
 - c. The exercise should incorporate a hazard that is a realistic threat to the facility/community and should include the testing of functions that were identified as needing improvement based on After Action Reports made after a previous exercise or actual occurrence.
 3. A full-scale exercise will include activation of an established command post consistent with the normal operating procedures that the agency(s) utilizes and under the principles of the Incident Command System.
 4. Provisions should be made to test a minimum of the Direction and Control, Accountability of Staff and Offenders, Documentation of a Critical Incident, and at least four other Objectives.
 5. Scenario selection and development should emphasize the functions that support recovery operations.

6. Mobilization of operational personnel in the field, as well as movement of personnel, resources, and equipment, is an integral part of the full-scale exercise.
 - a. Every effort should be made during planning to create an environment for field personnel that, as nearly as possible, recreates an actual incident.
 - b. The use of moulage, artificial smoke, actual transport vehicles, etc., is encouraged.
 - c. The use of emergency vehicle lights and sirens during the response to an exercise is discouraged for the safety of the responders and the citizens.
7. Players in a full-scale exercise should not be members of the exercise design team.
 - a. The exercise design team may function as controllers, evaluators, and simulators.
 - b. Provisions will be made for a Safety Officer(s) at each exercise who will oversee the entire exercise and who will have complete authority to terminate the exercise if an unsafe condition or actual emergency arises.
 - c. The exercise design team will also include an exercise evaluation team, which will be responsible for developing written evaluation tools, selecting and training evaluators, evaluating the exercise, and preparing a written *After Action Report*, which includes corrective action recommendations.
8. Preparation for a Full-Scale Exercise will include development of an [Exercise Plan \(EXPLAN\) 075_F9](#) and a [Control Staff Instruction Manual \(COSIN\) 075_F10](#).

V. Minimum Exercise Requirements for DOC facilities/offices:

- A. Health care personnel are included in facility emergency drills, as applicable. (5-ACI-6B-07; 4-4388)
- B. Units are encouraged to plan exercises so that they cover more than one requirement when practical.
- C. Facilities that house offenders:
 1. Once each quarter, each facility will test the callback system for the Level II Special Response Team, Canine Handlers (assigned to the facility), Critical Incident Negotiation Team Regional Coordinator, and at least 25% of remaining staff.
 2. Once each calendar quarter: (on each shift)
 - a. Activate the Incident Command System
 - b. Conduct an evacuation drill; within a calendar quarter, evacuation drills must occur at least once on each shift and cover all areas of the facility/office including administrative areas. Evacuation of offenders is not required in areas and conditions that pose a risk to security. (5-ACI-3B-11; 4-4221; 4-ACRS-1C-09)
 - c. Account for all staff, offenders, and their locations.
 3. Once per calendar year conduct an exercise involving an external agency
 4. Once per calendar year conduct a tabletop exercise activating all Incident Command System General Staff level positions (Operations Section Chief, Planning/Intelligence Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief).
- D. Academy for Staff Development will hold four emergency evacuation drills per year.
- E. Probation and Parole District Offices and Administrative Offices should hold one emergency evacuation drill plus one other exercise per year.

VI. Pre-Exercise

- A. At least 30 days prior to the exercise, the Unit Head will submit a copy (electronic preferred) of the [Exercise Plan \(EXPLAN\) 075_F9](#) to any outside agency expected to actively participate in the exercise, the appropriate Regional Administrator, and the Emergency Services Unit Administrator.
 1. The Unit Head must also submit a copy of the [Control Staff Instruction Manual \(COSIN\) 075_F10](#) with the *Exercise Plan (EXPLAN)* to the Emergency Services Unit Administrator at least 30 days

prior to the exercise.

2. The Emergency Services Unit Administrator must approve the EXPLAN and COSIN before the Exercise can be conducted.

B. The [*Exercise Plan \(EXPLAN\)*](#) 075_F9 should include:

1. Type of Exercise
2. Date, time, and location
3. Scope of Exercise
4. The Objectives to be tested and the Critical Tasks for each Objective
 - a. Tabletop Exercises will need to test Direction and Control, Accountability of Staff and Offenders, Documentation of a Critical Incident, and at least two other Objectives
 - b. Functional Exercises will need to test Direction and Control, Accountability of Staff and Offenders, Documentation of a Critical Incident, and at least three other Objectives
 - c. Full-Scale Exercises will need to test Direction and Control, Accountability of Staff and Offenders, Documentation of a Critical Incident, and at least four other Objectives.
5. Agencies expected to participate
6. Hazards focus
7. Exercise goals and objectives
8. For Full-Scale Exercises - Any significant simulations that will be used i.e., transport vehicles, smoke grenades, moulage, etc.

VII. During Exercise

A. Tabletop Exercise

1. Based on the *Master Sequence of Events List* in the COSIN, the Facilitator(s) will provide prompts to the players to develop the scenario and guide the exercise to provide opportunity for completion of the exercise objectives.
2. The players will discuss each prompt and determine actions needed in response to each prompt.
3. The Evaluators will monitor the players' discussions and actions to determine the degree to which each critical task is accomplished.

B. Functional Exercise

1. Based on the *Master Sequence of Events List* in the COSIN, the Facilitator(s) will provide prompts to the players to develop the scenario and guide the exercise to provide opportunity for completion of the exercise objectives. Facilitator(s) may be required in more than one location to direct different parts of the exercise.
2. The players will assume roles based on the Incident Command System and act in those roles to direct actions to be taken in response to each prompt. Appropriate persons should carry out those actions as directed. Some actions may be simulated due to cost, safety, or security concerns.
3. The Evaluators will monitor the players' actions to determine the degree to which each critical task is accomplished. Evaluators may be required in more than one location to evaluate different parts of the exercise.

C. Full-Scale Exercise

1. Based on the *Master Sequence of Events List* in the COSIN, the Facilitator(s) will provide prompts to the players to develop the scenario and guide the exercise to provide opportunity for completion of the exercise objectives. Facilitator(s) may be required in more than one location to direct different parts of the exercise.

2. The players will assume roles based on the Incident Command System and act in those roles to direct actions to be taken in response to each prompt. Appropriate persons should carry out those actions as directed. Some actions may be simulated due to cost, safety, or security concerns.
3. Full-Scale exercises will require activation of a Command Post and the activation of a field component to include movement of personnel, equipment, and resources to simulate closely an actual event.
4. The Evaluators will monitor the players' actions to determine the degree to which each critical task is accomplished. Evaluators will be required in more than one location to evaluate different parts of the exercise.

VIII. Post-Exercise: After Action Report/Improvement Plan - All Exercises

- A. Immediately at the conclusion of the exercise, a debriefing session should be held to solicit input from all persons involved in the exercise.
 1. Each Participant with a major role in the exercise should complete a *Participant Critique* before participation in a "Hot Wash" debriefing. (See [Control Staff Instruction Manual \(COSIN\) 075_F10.](#))
 2. Each assigned Evaluator should complete an *Evaluation of Exercise Objectives*. The *Evaluation of Exercise Objectives* should include each Exercise Objective and at least three Critical Tasks to measure each objective. (See [Control Staff Instruction Manual \(COSIN\) 075_F10.](#))
- B. The Exercise Design team or designee will use information from logs constructed during the exercise, evaluation data collected during the exercise, and minutes from the debriefing session to generate the [After Action Report/Improvement Plan - Exercise](#) 075_F11.
- C. The Unit Head will submit an electronic copy of the *After Action Report/Improvement Plan* to the appropriate Regional Administrator and the Emergency Services Unit Administrator within 30 days after the exercise. The *After Action Report/Improvement Plan* should include:
 1. Type of Exercise
 2. Date, time and location
 3. Scope of Exercise
 4. Agencies participating
 5. Hazards focus
 6. Exercise goals and objectives
 7. Summary Exercise Evaluations
 8. Conclusions/Lessons learned
 9. Improvement Plan
- D. The Facility Unit Head will prioritize and initiate efforts to acquire equipment, supplies, or other resource needs identified on the *After Action Report/Improvement Plan*.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THIS OPERATING PROCEDURE

Actor or Simulator - Personnel responsible for simulating a specific role in an exercise

After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) - The main product of the evaluation and improvement planning process, the AAR/IP has two components: an After Action Report (AAR) that captures observations of an exercise and makes recommendations for post-exercise improvements and an Improvement Plan (IP) that identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties, and establishes targets for their completion.

Controller - Personnel who manage and direct the pace of exercise play, issue exercise materials to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and monitor the safety of all exercise participants; controllers are the

only participants who should provide information or direction to players.

Control Staff - The Exercise Design Team and other personnel designated as controllers and facilitators during the Exercise

Control Staff Instruction Manual (COSIN) - The document developed by the Exercise Design Team based on the Exercise Plan to provide the detailed sequence and timing of Exercise events beginning with any pre-exercise briefing and continuing through the Exercise and “Hot Wash” critique session; the COSIN should include necessary forms for Participant Critique and Evaluation of Exercise Objectives.

Debrief - A forum for planners, facilitators, controllers, and evaluators to review and provide feedback after the exercise is held; it should be a facilitated discussion that allows each person an opportunity to provide an overview of the functional area they observed and document strengths and areas for improvement.

Evaluation of Exercise Objectives - A document included in the Control Staff Instruction Manual (COSIN) to be completed by each evaluator that lists each objective and provides for the evaluator to record observations of each critical task

Evaluator - A member of the Control Staff or other person designated to monitor the exercise and determine whether the Exercise Objectives were met

Exercise Design Team - Personnel designated to develop the Exercise Plan, Control Staff Instruction Manual, control the operation of the exercise, and compile the After Action Report/Improvement Plan

Exercise Plan (EXPLAN) - The document developed by the Exercise Design Team to describe the type and scope of the exercise, the exercise objectives, and general exercise scenario

Facilitator - During an exercise, the facilitator is responsible for keeping participant activities on track with the exercise design objectives and making sure all issues and objectives are explored as thoroughly as possible within time constraints

Full-Scale Exercise (FSE) - An activity involving actual deployment of resources in a coordinated response as if a real incident had occurred; a FSE tests many components of one or more capabilities within emergency response and recovery, and is typically used to assess plans, procedures, and coordinated response under crisis conditions. Characteristics of an FSE include mobilized units, personnel, and equipment; a stressful, realistic environment; and scripted exercise scenarios.

Functional Exercise (FE) - An activity designed to evaluate capabilities and multiple functions using a simulated response; a FE is typically used to evaluate the management of Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), command posts, and headquarters; and assess the adequacy of response plans and resources. Characteristics of an FE include simulated deployment of resources and personnel, rapid problem solving, and a highly stressful environment.

Hot Wash - A debriefing session held immediately at the conclusion of a critical incident or exercise to capture the observations and reactions of participants

Objectives - Those critical incident management functions that the exercise is designed to evaluate; objectives should be simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and task-oriented (SMART). Planners should limit the number of exercise objectives to enable timely execution and to facilitate design of a realistic scenario. Each objective should be split into at least three critical tasks that must be accomplished for the objective to be achieved.

Participant Critique - A document included in the Control Staff Instruction Manual (COSIN) to be completed immediately at the conclusion of the exercise by each participant with a major role in the exercise; the Participant Critique should be designed to assist the “Hot Wash” process by recording the participant’s observations and reactions to the exercise.

Participants - All personnel involved in the exercise to include Actor or Simulator, Controller, Control Staff, Evaluator, Exercise Design Team, Facilitator, Observers, and Players

Players - Persons who have an active role in preventing, responding to, or recovering from the risks and hazards presented in the exercise scenario, by either discussing (in a discussion-based exercise) or performing (in an operations-based exercise) their regular roles and responsibilities; players initiate actions that will respond to and/or mitigate the simulated emergency.

Prompt - A pre-scripted scenario event provided by an exercise controller to drive exercise play towards the achievement of objectives; prompts may alter the context of the scenario by bringing in new factors not originally considered or it may guide the exercise toward achieving the objective by providing information not necessary to the original scenario.

Scenario - Provides the backdrop and storyline that drive an exercise

Scope - An indicator of the level of participation in exercise play, regardless of participant size; scope levels include: local, multi-local, regional (within a State), State, multi-State, Federal, national, international, and private sector.

Tabletop Exercise (TTX) - An exercise intended to stimulate discussion of issues regarding a hypothetical situation; TTX can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures or to assess types of systems needed to guide the prevention of, response to, or recovery from a defined incident.

REFERENCES

Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program

Operating Procedure 075.1, *Emergency Operations Plan*

Operating Procedure 075.2, *Continuity of Operations Plan*

ATTACHMENTS

None

FORM CITATIONS

[Exercise Plan \(EXPLAN\) 075_F9](#)

[Control Staff Instruction Manual \(COSIN\) 075_F10](#)

[After Action Report/Improvement Plan - Exercise 075_F11](#)