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Principles

1. Drills should ALWAYS be based on your plan

   Without a plan, there is nothing to base the exercise on, determine the need for exercises and drills, or evaluate success! The “Players” need to have information about what is expected of them before any game, drill, or exercise and this will be found in the department’s emergency plan.

2. Drills should be ‘SUCCESS DRIVEN’ . . .

   If your staff and employees can succeed, they’ll be encouraged to take part in drills, follow plan guidelines, further learn their roles and responsibilities, and assist in improving the emergency plan.

3. Drills should follow a logical progression – SIMPLE TO COMPLEX

   Start by showing and telling employees what their roles and responsibilities are (orientation and classroom). Then hold “table top discussions” to ensure that they understand their roles and have a chance to ask questions about procedures and plan objectives. When you are comfortable that your employees know their responsibilities within the plan, move on to more complex functional or full scale exercises and involve other agencies, neighbors, and anyone else who may be impacted by a major emergency involving your work unit.

5. The Exercise Coordinator, assisted by Facilitators, and sets the scene, assures as much ‘realism’ as possible during the exercise and ensures control, evaluation, and simulation activities are carried out in an appropriate and timely manner.

   The Facilitators will assist players in understanding the scenario and the information being provided to make the exercise proceed according to planned objectives. They may answer player questions within the expectations of the exercise as designed. They will provide messages (or injects) as needed to drive the exercise. These may be delivered by notes, power point, radio, phone or other players during the exercise. Facilitators will assist the controller with continuity and flow of the exercise till completion.
Assign an someone to oversee SOLELY THE SAFETY of drills and exercises. Their role: Incident Safety Officer (ISO) is to monitor and assess safety hazards or unsafe acts and situations and develop measures for ensuring the personal safety of all those involved.

This same person can be a good choice for Safety Position during real emergencies.

5. Always assign Evaluators to accurately document actions, concerns, and lessons learned. Their role: Exercise Evaluator (EE) will observe and record activity and conduct against the objectives of the exercise. While they are not to provide input, they may ask questions for clarification of decisions, actions, etc. They will take part in the debriefing to identify key decisions and actions, learnings from the exercise, and recommendations for future exercises and improvements to the emergency plan.

These persons can also be a scribes in real emergencies and ensure that appropriate documentation is completed for fiscal, safety, plan update, legal, and other requirements and concerns.

6. Hold an ‘after-action’ review, Hot Wash, or debriefing AFTER EVERY DRILL, EXERCISE AND EMERGENCY

In this manner you can capture the learnings and experiences that will allow for plan improvements, identify need for more training, and allow executives to ensure that you have the best possible, most effective and efficient plan in place for the benefit of your employees, your department, and your clients or customers!

**What Do You Need to Hold a Drill or Exercise?**

- A Time [convenient as possible so the maximum number can take part]
- A Place [a real setting that allows for your type of exercise]
- A Scenario and Setting [remember, simple to complex]
- Exercise Type [is this an orientation, tabletop discussion, functional, or full-scale exercise]
Materials and Messages/Inputs (players?) [all materials needed to hold the exercise and qualified facilitators, assistants, and exercise director/manager – see below. Don’t forget a scribe or several if needed]

Controller, Facilitators, and Evaluators [controller oversees and manages the exercise; facilitators fill in the blanks and answer questions to keep the exercise moving along; evaluators, of course, evaluate the effectiveness of the exercise and the ‘players’ ability to apply their emergency plan to the scenario presented]

Comfortable learning/break environment [a comfortable place to discuss mistakes/’learnings’, suggestions for improvement, concerns about gaps in the plan related to the scenario presented, etc.]

Who Should I Involve?

Leaders, executives, supervisors, and all employees should know your plan and their responsibilities

Community responders and those responsible for emergency preparedness can assist in developing drills and exercises, as well as provide staffing to perform exercises and evaluate them accurately. These same persons can be a great asset in making plan and training improvements for the future!

When possible, include customers (for example, students at Colorado State University) and others who have a stake in safety and preparedness (e.g. parents of those students, service providers, delivery persons, etc.)

Resources to Help Me?

Your community and county Emergency Manager (look them up in the phone book)
http://safety.colostate.edu

Your institution Safety Coordinator or Emergency Manager
www.ehs.colostate.edu/WEmgResp/Home.aspx

Neighboring buildings, departments, businesses, and individuals
Training and Organizational Development at Colorado State University (see our website)  
http://training.colostate.edu

Police, Fire, Hazardous Materials Experts, and other responders  
http://police.colostate.edu

Your cell phone contacts and emergency contact list/card