# There is much more to the process than just “conducting an exercise.” There are five major accomplishments with numerous tasks that are specific for each that must be achieved when “conducting” an exercise. While experienced exercise personnel may incorporate and blend some of the accomplishments and their related task requirements, all must be achieved to ensure the most benefit is gained from each exercise and related activity. The five major accomplishments are:

# Establish the Foundation for the Exercise

# Design and Development of the Exercise

1. Conduct the Exercise
2. Evaluation of Performance during the Exercise
3. Improvement Planning

With each of theses accomplishments, there are key tasks that must be completed to ensure an effective exercise activity.

**Accomplishment 1 - Establish the Foundation:** The individual tasks required when working to establish a foundation for the exercise are:

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| ADH | Contractor |  |
|  |  | ***Review the Current Emergency Operating Plan:* The review of the EOP should include careful attention to** |
|  |  | What hazards exist within the community?  What is the community’s vulnerability to these hazards?  What responses are planned?  Which annexes and procedures would be used?  What personnel are required?  What resources will be required? |
|  |  | ***Conduct an Exercise Needs Assessment:* To determine what response capabilities need to be included in an exercise. The lead exercise designer, or exercise director should consider:** |
|  |  | When was the last exercise conducted and at what level?  When was the last actual response requiring a major commitment of resources?  What were identified as areas needing improvement from the last exercise and/or the last actual response?  Are there new personnel in some organizational entities?  Are there updated annexes or procedures?  Are there new resources not yet used in an exercise or actual response? |
|  |  | ***Assess the Organizational Capability to Conduct an Exercise:* Does the organization have personnel, that are available to assist with an exercise, that have experience in exercising** |
|  |  | What is the organization’s management attitude towards exercising?  What are the attitudes of the managers of the sub-components of the organization towards exercising?  Within the organization, what is the level of experience available to assist in the design and development, conduct, evaluation and follow up of an exercise?  What personnel with the necessary experience will be available to assist in the process?  What skills do the personnel available to assist with the process bring with them?  How much preparation time will be allocated for the design and development of an exercise?  What facilities are available for use in the conduct of a given exercise?  What communications systems and facilities are used during actual operations?  Which of these will be available for the conduct of an exercise? |
|  |  | ***Define the Exercise Scope:* Based on the plan review and other considerations, such as any exercise mandates existing within the community, determine the following:** |
|  |  | Identify the mission to provide the focus to the exercise  Identify the capabilities related to the mission that will be examined during the exercise.  What agencies, departments and other entities from within the organization should participate in the exercise?  What entities from outside of the organization should participate in the exercise?  At what level, given the type of exercise, should each of the participating entities participate?  What personnel from each of the identified entities should be involved:  In the design and development of the exercise as members of the Exercise Design Team,  As control/simulation personnel during the exercise,  As players in the exercise,  As exercise evaluators,  The follow up activities that may include:  Documenting exercise activities,  Identification of corrective actions for identified problem,  Assigning responsibility for implementation of corrective actions,  Creation of the After Action Report (AAR) and Improvement Plan,  Tracking implementation of the corrective actions |
|  |  | ***Select the Exercise Type and Hazard:*** |
|  |  | What level of exercise is most appropriate for the organization and should be conducted?  What scenario/hazard is most appropriate for the community and should be used for the exercise? |
|  |  | ***Address Costs and Liabilities:* The analysis of costs and liabilities should include giving careful attention to:** |
|  |  | Where will the exercise be conducted? Are there costs associated with this location?  Who is responsible for providing the materials required? (i.e. consumable EOC supplies, if FSE, mulage makeup/prosthetics, etc.)  Will the exercise involve overtime costs?  Will the exercise require feeding the participants, refreshments?  What equipment and/or fuel costs may be incurred?  If the exercise is being conducted to satisfy a mandate, is the funding available for the exercise?  Who will pay for any medical costs?  What is the weather forecast or trend for the projected date of the exercise?  What provisions are required to respond to real-world incidents during the exercise? |
|  |  | ***Develop a Statement of Purpose for the Exercise:* Define the purpose for conducting the exercise. Clearly state what will be tested and the benefits to be gained from the exercise.** |
|  |  | ***Obtain Executive Authorization:* If possible – or necessary, a letter of directive indicating support from the head of the overall organization may be desired or required to recruit the necessary participation in the exercise for the organizational sub-components and entities from outside the organization** |
|  |  | ***Announce the Exercise:* Get the exercise on all organizational and other calendars and let the entities that are projected to participate know as much as possible about what is desired/required of them for the exercise.** |
|  |  | **Provide ADEM & ADH an Exercise Notification Form at 60 days *prior* for Drills, Tabletops, and Functional exercises. Full-Scale exercise should be submitted 120 days prior. (ADEM’s exercise email address goes here)** |

###### Accomplishment 2 – Exercise Design & Development

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| ADH | Contractor | ***Identify the Exercise Participants and Players:*** |
|  |  | Conduct the Concept and Objectives Meeting:  The C&O meeting is typically attended by representatives of the sponsoring agency, the Planning Team Leader and Senior Officials. It should assist planners identify the overall exercise goal, develop rough drafts of exercise objectives, and identify planning team members. Discussion points for the C&O meeting are:  Exercise purpose,  Proposed scenario,  Exercise location, date and duration,  Assumptions and artificialities,  Security and logistics  Lock-in who from which of the entities will be exercise players.  Identify who will participate in the exercise as a part of the exercise design and development team.  Identify who from each participating entity will serve as a part of the exercise control/simulation team.  Identify anticipated evaluation requirements for the exercise.  Draft the Exercise Plan |
|  |  | ***Initial Planning Conference (IPC)*** |
| *Design and Develop the Exercise:*  Identify overall exercise concept, goals and scope to include:  **Identify specific participating entities and their exercise goals and objectives.**  Establish timeline for exercise design & development date(s) for the conduct of the exercise, and suspense date(s) for completion of the assessment and publishing of the After Action Report (AAR).  Mid-Planning Conference: .  Final-Planning Conference: .  Exercise Conduct .  After Action Conference date .  Identify desired suspense date for publication of the Improvement Plan (IP). \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  Update Exercise Plan  The C&O meeting has successfully been conducted as a part of the IPC. |
|  |  | ***Mid-Planning Conference (MPC)*** |
| Review of process and progress to date.  Identify specific objective-driven exercise events.  Identification of anticipated player actions/performance criteria required for successful demonstration of capability.  Initial draft, organization and review of the Master Scenario Event List (MSEL).  Preliminary examination of logistics issues for the exercise.  Identify requirements for the After Action Review process & create agenda  Update Exercise Plan |
|  |  | ***Master Scenario Events List Conference*** |
| A forum for reviewing the scenario timeline.  Can be held in conjunction with the MPC  Discussion points include review of the event flow and exercise timeline |
|  |  | ***Final Planning Conference (FPC)*** |
| Review of process and progress to date.  Finalize MSEL  Finalize player rosters  Finalize formats and materials for the Player Orientation  Finalize all logistics requirements |
|  |  | ***Reminder to participants of recommended items to bring or have available for use during workshops, seminars, tabletops, and functional exercises:***  ***Emergency Operation Plan and Annexes.***  ***Standard Operation Procedures and/or checklist.***  ***Quick Reference guides such as; Chemical/Biological handbooks, Hazardous material guides, etc. Written, maintained or utilized by the agency/department.*** |
|  |  | ***Develop the Exercise Control/Simulation System/Control Plan:*** |
| Identify Control Cell locations  Identify Control Cell personnel & staffing schedules  Identify communications methods, equipment and protocols to be used  Determine emergency shutdown procedures for the exercise  Identify and create Control Cell documentation requirements & procedures  Develop format for injects and tracking their outcomes/results  Define “rules of engagement” for exercise control personnel interaction with evaluation and player personnel  Finalize the Exercise Control Plan (CONPLAN)  Identify training requirements for exercise control/simulation personnel  Schedule and conduct training for exercise control /simulation personnel |
|  |  | ***Develop the Exercise Evaluation Methodology/Evaluation Plan:***   * + Identify evaluator locations   + Determine number and type of evaluators required   + Identify desired exercise evaluation format   + Identify evaluation related logistics requirements   + Identify documentation requirements and formats for the After Action   + Review (presentation of findings to players and management) and the   + After Action Report (published documentation of the exercise results)   + Develop exercise evaluation plan   + Identify training requirements for evaluation personnel   + Schedule and conduct evaluator training |
|  |  | ***Develop the After Action Review, Report and Improvement Planning Process****:*   * + Determine format for tracking implementation of corrective actions   + Identification of “Primary” and “Support” entities required for effective implementation of the recommended corrective actions   + Determine personnel from the identified primary and support entities to work on implementation of the recommended corrective actions   + Identify the required steps or tasks to be accomplished leading to implementation of the identified corrective actions   + Establish a timeline for completion of each identified step or task required to achieve implementation of the identified corrective actions   + Identify a projected completion date for full implementation of the identified corrective actions |

###### Accomplishment 3 – Conduct the Exercise

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| ADH | Contractor | *Player Orientation*: An orientation to the exercise should be conducted for all the players involved in the exercise. The Players are those persons that will staff the operations centers that are active in the exercise and will be responding to the scenario. |
|  |  | Welcome and introduction  Overview of the purpose, goals and objectives for the exercise  Definition of player roles  Presentation of exercise logistics to include:  Player locations  Player resource requirements  Transportation requirements, if any  Exercise times  Map of exercise locations  Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Explanation of participant “Rules of Engagement” for interaction with control and evaluation personnel  Information from the exercise narrative – setting the stage.  Identification of emergency call-off procedures |
|  |  | *Administration of the Exercise:*   * + Ensure that all exercise staff (controllers/simulators, evaluators, safety officers, etc.) are in place and executing their assigned responsibilities   + Track the exercise flow – inject/message timing, player responses, etc.   + Periodic checks with exercise staff to identify areas not being addressed   + Periodic checks for effectiveness of meeting the requirements of the objectives   + Continual monitoring of participant safety |

# Accomplishment 4 – Evaluation

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| ADH | Contractor | ***Observe the exercise and collect data:*** |
|  |  | Evaluators observe exercise player actions and decisions  Evaluators document/record observed behaviors |
|  |  | *Conduct exercise participant debriefing(s) / critique(s):*  Collect exercise participants observations immediately following the conclusion of the exercise |
|  |  | *Organize and analyze all collected data:*   * + Divide collected data into desired objective functions and capabilities tested   + Compare data and results of the exercise to the requirements of the plan   + Draft initial listing of desired improvements   + Develop a draft After Action Report |
|  |  | *Conduct an After Action Conference:* This conference is a meeting with the leadership of the entities that participated in the exercise to present the findings of the evaluation. During this conference participants will:   * + Review the findings impacting their specific entity   + Submit comments based on the findings (agree/disagree)   + Review draft of identified required improvements   + Finalize the improvements to be implemented   + Assignment of primary responsibility for the identified improvements to appropriate participating entities |

# Accomplish 5 – Improvement Planning

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| ADH | Contractor | ***Finalize and refine improvements to be implemented:*** |
|  |  | * + Agency, departmental and organizational management finalize/detail improvements to be implemented   + Individuals within the responsible entity identified to serve as lead for implementation of the identified improvement are identified   + Identify other organizational entities that are required as support for the implementation of the improvements   + Identify specific tasks that must be accomplished for implementation of the improvements   + Establish overall timeline for implementation. |
|  |  | *Finalize the After Action Report to include the Improvement Plan and Distribute* |
|  |  | **Provide the ADEM & ADH a copy of all After Action Report(s) and Improvement Plan(s) NLT 90 days following completion of each exercise. This can be accomplished by submitting the electronic version(s) to:** [**???????????????????????????????**](mailto:preparednessexercise@dshs.state.tx.us) |
|  |  | *Monitor and track implementation of improvements:* |

**A COMPREHENSIVE EXERCISE PROGRAM**

A Comprehensive Exercise Program has the overall goal of examining and addressing all exercise needs existing within a community. These may be the needs of local, state, or federal government grant programs as well as regulatory or certification requirements. The program should insure that any and all businesses, industries and organizations within the community that are involved with the overall emergency management/homeland security management and response system of the jurisdiction or organization. This may include, but not necessarily be limited to:

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| * Volunteer organizations * Churches * Private suppliers of resources * Mutual Aid/MOU partners * State resources * Private response companies for clean-up/recovery operations | * Federal personnel and assets * Schools & universities * Medical facilities * Private transportation companies * Transportation Systems (bus & rail) * Etc. |