



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools



Overview of Emergency Management Exercises

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Presentation Goals

- Discuss why schools should conduct emergency management exercises
- Discuss various types of exercises
- Discuss how to build a successful exercise design continuum
- Share best practices in conducting exercises





Exercises In The Four Phases of Emergency Management

Exercises are a core element of the **Preparedness** phase. However, an effective exercise program impacts each phase of the emergency management cycle.

Emergency Exercises:

- Identify vulnerabilities to address in the **Prevention-Mitigation** phase
- Allow partners to practice a **Response**
- Recognize what resources may be needed for **Recovery**





Reasons to Conduct Emergency Exercises

1. Clarify roles and responsibilities
2. Evaluate plans and procedures
3. Develop effective agency relationships
4. Assess resources and capabilities
5. Identify gaps, needs and solutions
6. Promote school and community preparedness
7. Comply with State legislation



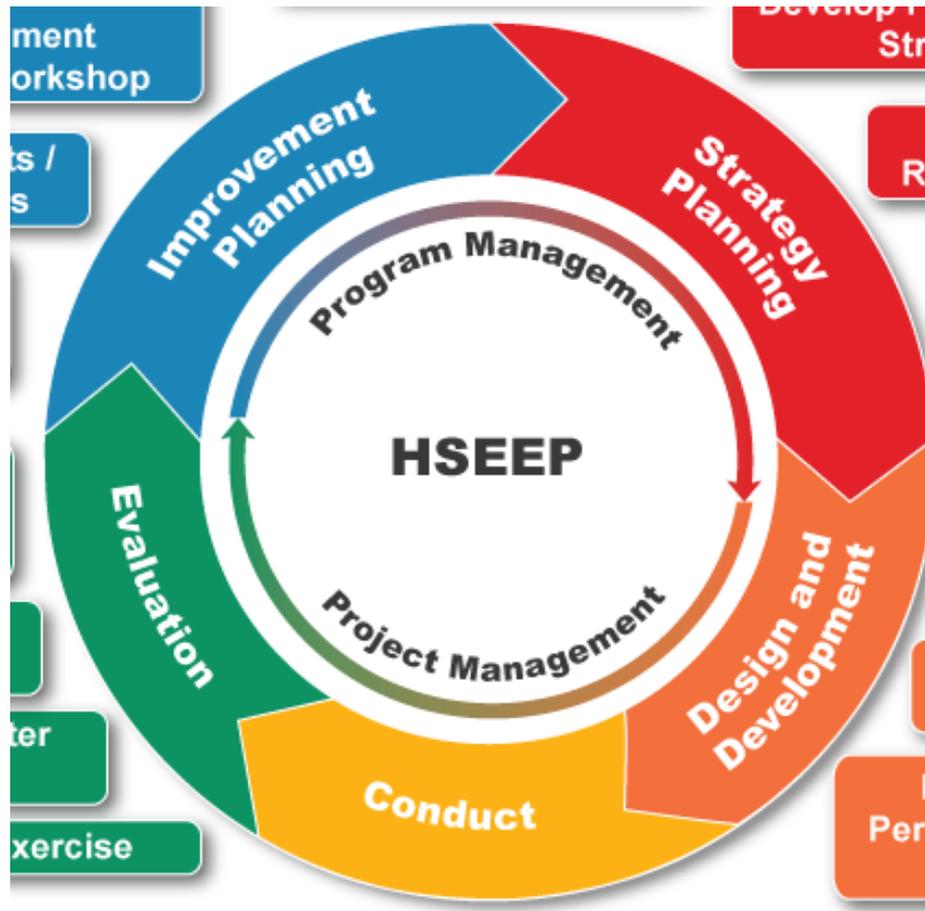


Based on your experience, briefly make the case for why investing time and resources into exercises is valid in a time of ever dwindling budgets.





Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Training and Exercise Strategy





Why Should Schools Follow HSEEP?

- Provides a common exercise policy and program guidance throughout the nation
- Utilizes lessons learned and best practices from past experiences
- Provides standardized components and formats that are customizable
- Provides a common operating language
- Allows for easy integration into working with other emergency responders

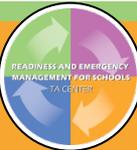




HSEEP's Building Block Approach

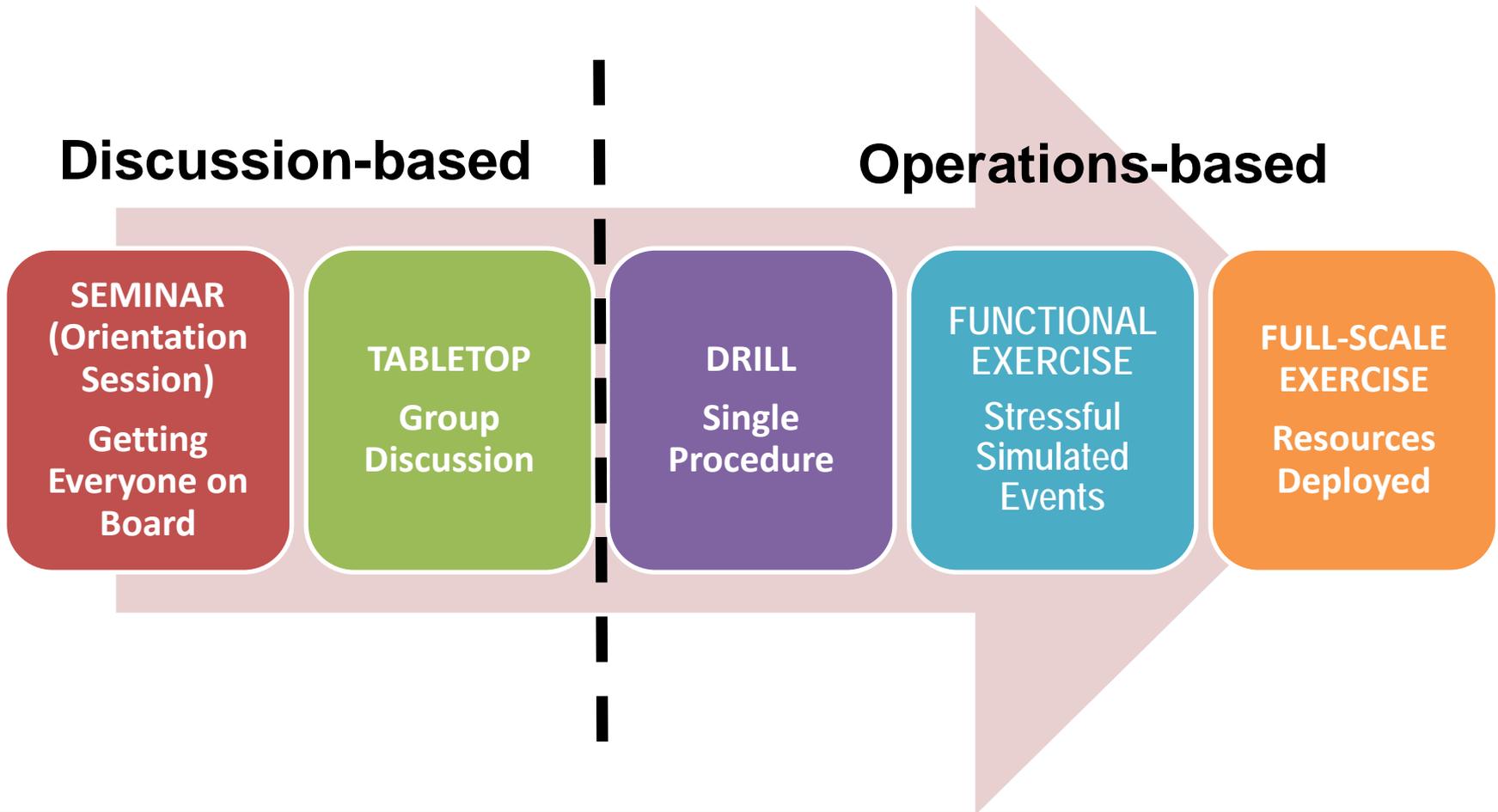
A comprehensive school emergency exercise program contains activities that build:

- From simple to complex;
- From narrow to broad;
- From least expensive to most costly to implement; and
- From theoretical to realistic.





HSEEP: Typical Exercise Flow





Discussion-Based Exercises

“**Discussion-based exercises** familiarize players with current plans, policies, agreements and procedures, or may be used to develop new plans, policies, agreements, and procedures.”

Discussion-based exercises can include:

- Seminars (orientation sessions)
- Workshops
- Tabletop Exercises
- Games





Seminars (Orientation Sessions)

“Seminars are informal discussions, unconstrained by real-time events and led by a presenter.”

- Introduce something new or existing (e.g., policies and plans, emergency operations center)
- Emphasize emergency management link to school mission, finances, annual progress, and community responsibility

What are the advantages of conducting seminars?





“**Workshops** focus on building a product and include increased participant interaction.”

- Must be highly focused on a specific issue and the desired outcome must be clearly defined
- May be used to produce new plans, procedures, multi-year training and exercise schedules
- Typically begin with a presentation followed by facilitated breakout sessions





Advantages of Seminar & Workshops

- Provide a low-stress environment
- Effective for both small and large groups
- Utilize a no-fault forum
- Encourage participant interaction
- No actual time constraints
- Support a variety of instructional techniques
- Create an end product





Tabletop Exercises

“Tabletop exercises involve key personnel discussing hypothetical scenarios in an informal setting.”

- Used to assess plans, procedures, or systems
- Facilitate an understanding of concepts
- Identify strengths and shortfalls
- Achieve changes in approach to a particular situation

What are some of the advantages of conducting a tabletop exercise?





Operations-Based Exercises

“Operations-based exercises are characterized by: actual reaction to a simulated scenario; response to emergency conditions; mobilization of apparatus, resources, and/or networks; and commitment of personnel, usually over an extended period of time.”

Types of operations-based exercises include:

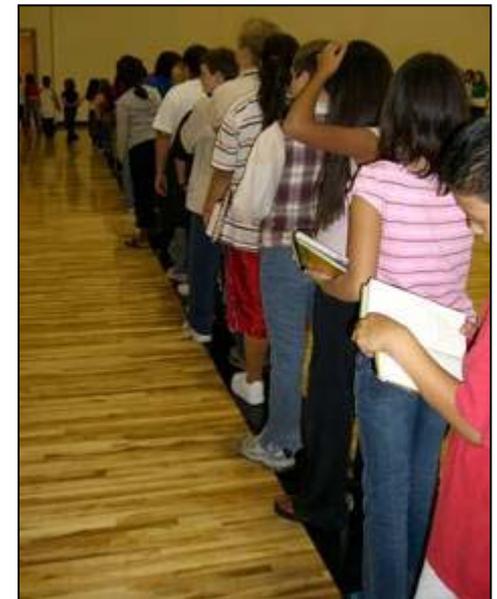
- Drill
- Functional Exercise
- Full-Scale Exercise





“A **drill** is a coordinated, supervised exercise activity, normally used to test a **single** specific operation or function.”

- Schools commonly conduct fire evacuation drills, but a comprehensive approach to emergency management also requires practicing many other procedures (e.g., control of infectious disease, shelter-in-place, etc.) under a variety of conditions.





Advantages of Drills

- Narrow in focus, measured against established standards
- Immediate feedback
- Realistic environment
- Performance in isolation
- Prepare players for exercises that are larger in scope
- Improve performance of the function drilled





Functional Exercises

“A **functional exercise** is designed to validate and evaluate individual capabilities, multiple functions, activities within a function, or interdependent groups of functions.”

- Focused on exercising plans and procedures and staff involved in incident command functions.
- Driven by an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity.
- Conducted in a realistic, real-time environment without movement of personnel and equipment.





Advantages of Functional Exercises

- Conducted in realistic, real-time environment
- Performance analysis part of the exercise
- Adequacy, appropriation, and acquisition of resources are measured
- Cooperative relationships are examined
- Less expensive than a full-scale exercise (no movement of personnel or equipment)





Full-Scale Exercises

“A **full-scale exercise** is the most complex type of exercise. [They] are multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, multi-organizational exercises that validate many facets of preparedness.”

- Focus on implementing and analyzing plans, policies, procedures, and cooperative agreements
- Conducted in real-time, creating a stressful, time-constrained environment that closely mirrors real events





Advantages of Full-Scale Exercises

- Simulate a real event as closely as possible—the ultimate test of functions
- Evaluate the operational capability of emergency management systems in a highly stressful environment that simulates actual response conditions
- Activate the Incident Command System (ICS)/Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Coordinate the actions of several entities
- Test several emergency functions
- Excellent learning exercise
- Utilize same personnel "roles" as functional exercise—but now includes "victims"





After Action Report (AAR) Process

- Common to tabletop exercises and all operational-based exercises
- Utilizes the following elements:
 - Player hot wash
 - Participant feedback forms
 - Controller/Evaluator/Facilitator debrief
 - Completed Exercise Evaluation Guides





After Action Report (AAR) / Improvement Plan (IP)

- The AAR/IP summarizes the findings and analyzes player performance against plans/procedures during the exercise
- The IP is a table that provides for corrective actions for any identified areas of improvement
- Presented at the After Action Conference where the IP table is completed and accepted
- Adaptable format provided by HSEEP website





Building a Successful Exercise Program

1. Based on the **needs assessment**, select one of your school's main vulnerabilities
2. With response agencies, **set a date** six to eight months in advance for a full-scale exercise based on that vulnerability
3. Designate a **design team leader** and **exercise design team**—or ensure there is a central school liaison who is part of the *external agency* design team
4. From that date of the full scale exercise, count backwards 5 to 7 months and schedule the first **seminar**





Building a Successful Exercise Program (Cont'd)

6. Determine which procedures will be utilized in the full-scale exercise, then schedule a series of **tabletops exercises** that separately address each one
7. After several such tabletop exercises, schedule two to three **drills**
8. Hold a **functional exercise**
9. Execute the **full-scale exercise**
10. Hold **after-action** reviews throughout
11. Implement the **evaluation** results throughout





Exercise Considerations

- Coordinate with school and local public safety; have them observe or participate
- Follow your district or school procedures
- Make the exercises realistic, but do so safely
- Test warning and notification procedures
- Block normal evacuation routes to force staff to make critical decisions
- Plan for students, staff, and visitors with special needs
- Test accountability procedures (use the visitor log or other systems)
- Consider student release procedures during certain drills
- Debrief the same day with your teachers and staff





Best Practices in Conducting Exercises

- Communicate information in advance to stakeholders
- Practice a variety of:
 - Different scenarios based upon risks
 - Different response procedures
- Test the capacity of all participating agencies—not just schools
- Evaluate and document lessons learned
- Implement exercise outcome recommendations





Best Practices in Conducting Exercises (Cont'd.)

- Implement the Incident Command System (ICS) within exercises to:
 - Be compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
 - Better integrate with local response agencies
- The goals of an exercise are NOT achieved UNTIL the recommendations from the after-action review are implemented





Common Exercise Mistakes

- Scenarios are not unique or tailored to the local area
- Scenarios are too complex to manage successfully
- Inadequate time allocated for exercise play
- No accurate critique of the exercise afterwards
- Safety issues are not addressed properly
- Exercise is planned and initiated too quickly
- Some critical agencies are not included
- After—action items are not implemented





Support Resources

- Local Emergency Management Agency (LEMA)
- Local Public Safety Agencies
- School District Personnel
- School Resource Officer
- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- State and Local Homeland Security Agencies
- Victim Services
- Faith-Based Organizations





Support Resources (Cont'd.)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program

- An evaluation program is a requirement to receive Department of Homeland Security funding.
- More information, tool kit and templates available at <https://hseep.dhs.gov>

NOTE: The HSEEP site is a secure site—a password request may be sent to support@hseep.net to access some resources.





Additional Resources

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Exercise Development and Design Courses Online Training

- IS120a – An Introduction to Exercises
- IS130 – Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning
- IS139 – Exercise Design
- <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/>

Georgia Emergency Management Agency's (GEMA) "Education for Disaster" DVD

- <http://www.gema.state.ga.us>
- Email GEMA-SchoolSafety@gema.ga.gov





Additional Resources (Cont'd.)

REMS Technical Assistance Center publications:

- Emergency Exercises: An Effective Way to Validate School Safety Plans
http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/Emergency_NewsletterV2I3.pdf
- Planning and Conducting a Functional Exercise
http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/HH_EmergencyExerciseMarch20th.pdf





Interactive Activity





School Safety and Physical Design Risk Matrix Example

Probability	High			Hurricane Tornado
	Medium		Flood	Violence
	Low			Hazmat Spill
		Low	Medium	High
Severity				





Interactive Activity

1. Identify one high-priority vulnerability.
2. Select a future date for a full-scale exercise.
3. Briefly describe the scenario.
4. List the partners that should participate in the exercise.
5. Identify the key functions that your exercise will test.
6. Develop a schedule of tabletops/drills/functional exercises that address each of the functions identified in Step 5.





Summary

- Why schools should conduct emergency exercises
- The types of emergency exercises
- How to build a successful exercise design continuum
- Best practices in conducting exercises





Presentation Credits

Thank you to the following persons for their role as lead authors of this presentation:

- **Steve Harris**, Director, Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness, University of Georgia (Athens); and
- **Matt Taylor**, Associate Director, Montana Safe Schools Center at The University of Montana (Missoula).

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