Tabletop Exercise
Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

Agenda

• Introductions
• Exercise Continuum
• COOP Review
• Today’s Tabletop Scenario
• Discussions
• Hot Wash (Debrief)
• Action Planning
• Closure

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Rules of the Road

• Creativity/Group Problem Solving
• Use the knowledge and information available in the room
• Active Thinking
• Active Listening
• Active Participation
• Respect – challenge ideas, not people
• Reality Check – make the exercise real for you.

Introductions
The Exercise Continuum

Briefly:

- Drills
- **Tabletop Exercises**
- Functional Exercises
- Full-Scale Exercises

Tabletop Exercises

- Simulate an emergency situation in an informal, stress-free environment.

- Initiate discussion of emergency guidelines.

- Focus on training and familiarization with roles, guidelines, and responsibilities.
Purpose

• To examine current policies, procedures, resources and actions in the context to a response to a major catastrophic event at a district level.

• To promote greater understanding and ability to apply COOP principles to your setting

• To make improvements as identified as an outcome of the exercise

Objectives

• To evaluate policies and procedures... your COOP plan
• To evaluate command and control including communications procedures
• To identify resources needed vs. available
• To identify training needs
• To identify needed improvements and create an action plan to address those needs
How a Tabletop Works

- A scenario-based discussion is guided by a facilitator.
- Problems talked through without stress.
- Feedback on the proceedings is offered.
- Policies, procedures, plans, and guidelines are discussed and suggested updates made.

Tabletop Success

Participants leave with:

- A positive learning experience
- Organizational learning
- Improvement action planning
- More effective policies, plans, and guidelines
- Improved preparedness
Exercise Guidelines

• This exercise is designed to test the preparedness of a district to respond to a multi-agency, multi-site emergency event.

• Following the exercise, there will be a debriefing time, aka a “Hot Wash”.

• Each participant will be given the opportunity to share his/her views on what worked well and what needs to be addressed in additional planning, training and/or drilling.

Guidelines (Continued)

• LEA policies and existing Continuity Of Operations Plans (COOPs) govern all activities relating to the emergency event.

• The facilitator will serve as the exercise referee and provide any official interpretation of the exercise rules.

• From time to time, there will be injections into the scenario. These are intended to further assess response to the exercise scenario.

   This is designed to be a learning experience for all.
Continuity Of Operations Plans

Review:

COOP Planning Objectives:

• Ensure safety of employees
• Ensure continuous performance of critical functions
• Protect essential equipment, records and other assets
• Reduce disruptions to operations
• Minimize damage and losses
• Achieve an orderly recovery from emergency operations
• Identify relocation sites which ensure operational and managerial requirements

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Continuity Of Operations Plans

Review:

A Well-Designed COOP addresses:

• Essential LEA Functions
• Orders of Succession
• Delegation of Authority
• Continuity Facilities
• Continuity Communications
• Vital Records Management
• Tests, Training, and Exercises
• Devolution of Control and Direction
• Reconstitution

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Situation Demographics

Overview:
For today’s exercise, your Western Washington school district is in King, Pierce or Snohomish County.
It has:
• Number of schools/facilities
• Types of schools/facilities
• Athletic facilities
• Student population
• Employee population

First Responder Resource

Overview
The first responder resources immediately available to your school, include but are not limited to:
• Police
• Fire
• EMS
• OTHER
Scenario Set-up

You are part of the central office administrative team for your school district in the King, Pierce, Snohomish county region.

- The tri-county region has approximately 50 public school districts.
- There are approximately 1,000 public schools.
- They are in urban, suburban, and rural communities.
- They serve over 500,000 students – almost half of the state’s K-12 student population.
- In addition to all of the public school districts, schools and students, there are dozens of private schools, as well.
- You are in earthquake territory.
Scenario
It’s a weekend in early October.

Schools are planning to participate in the Great WA ShakeOut later in the month.

There have been a few minor tremors over the last couple weeks. Nothing serious at all.

Then, late on Sunday afternoon, the Juan de Fuca plate slips and causes a magnitude 8.8 earthquake.

The shaking lasts for several minutes.

Scenario (Continued)

The immediate result:

- Homes, businesses, schools – buildings of all kinds - are damaged or destroyed across the region.
- Most of the region’s infrastructure, including roads and bridges, is damaged or destroyed.
- Your district offices are destroyed.
- All schools are damaged to one degree or another.
- Other district facilities, and much of your district transportation resources, are seriously damaged, others are completely destroyed.
Scenario (Continued)

The immediate result:

- There are multiple injuries and deaths throughout the area. Exact numbers are not yet known.
- You do not know the status of any of your district leadership team or your school staffs.
- The governor and local political leaders declare a state of emergency.
- Your school district will not be able to operate – likely for quite some time.

Questions

What are your main priorities?

- Do you activate components of your Emergency Operations/Safety Plan?
- **Do you activate your district COOP?**
- *How* do you activate your COOP plan?
- What essential district functions need to be addressed?
- Which are impacted by the current events?
- What is the message to the school district community?
Inject #1
(Sunday into Monday)

- There have been several powerful after-shocks.
- The earthquake generated a tsunami which inundated communities along the coast. Those who are able are trying to make their way inland.
- Travel is treacherous, at best.
- Phone and cell service are all but non-existent.

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Inject #1 - Continued

Within 1~2 days of the initial quake, the county EMD and several city governments request the district assist with emergency response as described in the local emergency operations plan. They are asking for the following:

- Shelters at less badly damaged schools;
- Use of schools for food and supplies collection, storage, and dissemination;
- Assistance with overall damage assessment and debris removal;
- Use of all functioning buses for transportation to/from shelters; and
- Use of district warehouse facilities for distribution of incoming medical supplies.

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Inject #1 –Continued

As a result,

The school board wants to know
• who agreed to using schools as shelters,
• the extent of damage to all the schools, and
• when the district and schools will reopen.

In addition,

School staff who are able to do so are calling
• reporting on their status, and
• wanting to know if/when they should return to school.

In the meantime,

No one has been able to make contact with the superintendent or the CIO.

Questions

• What are your priorities?
• How does your COOP address this disaster for the district?
• Based on your COOP, who has lead responsibility in this situation?
• Who has the authority to close the schools?
• How do you respond to the request to use schools as shelters? And to Board questions about this?
• What partners are involved with this situation?
• What messages are being sent to parents, and staff. How?
Inject #2
(By the end of the week)

You get preliminary damage assessments of school buildings.
These initial reports indicate that

- you *might* be able to reopen *some* buildings within two-three weeks, while
- others will take a month or longer.
- Some, however, will have to be completely rebuilt.
- You can expect to receive more specific information within another week.

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Inject #2  (Continued)

In addition:

- As initially reported, the school district’s administrative center is totally destroyed.
- Normal operations will not be available for at least six months if not longer.
- Your district IT resources and data center had all been housed at the admin. center.
- The bus barn collapsed and at least half of your bus fleet has been destroyed.
- The teacher’s union has inquired about uninterrupted pay and benefits.

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Inject #2  (Continued)

In human terms:

• Many staff members - central office and school-based - have had homes destroyed and/or were severely injured. Several lost family members.

• You have heard of at least 12 fatalities, including the superintendent, 2 principals, 5 teachers and 4 support staff.

• The total number of casualties is still unknown. The CIO is still unaccounted for.

• Most shelter operations are expected to continue for at least three - four weeks.

  Smaller aftershocks continue.
  However, they are becoming fewer and farther apart.

Questions

• What are your immediate priorities?
• Based on your COOP, who has lead responsibility in this situation?
• What type of plans or procedures does your COOP call for?
• Are all essential district functions addressed?
• How does the need for to use school buildings as shelters impact your ability to return to more normal functioning?
Questions

- Who has the authority to reopen the schools?
- How will you address the need for additional instructional space?
- Where is your back-up administrative center?
- How do you track financial expenditures related to the emergency?
- How and where is your data stored? Can/will it be retrieved?

Inject #3
(March)

It’s March – nearly 6 months after the initial events. You are in long term response and recovery mode.

- After a rugged winter, area roads are still in rough shape.
- Your district family is recovering from many fatalities to staff, students and others across the broader school community.
- As a result of the devastation, many students and families are now homeless.
- As a result of coastal tsunamis, there are also many new families living within your district boundaries.
- You lost several weeks of instructional time over the fall and into the winter.
- The district is looking for ways to fund reconstruction, rebuilding, and replacement of destroyed assets.
- Your IT staff is struggling to rebuild all of the lost data and its infrastructure.
Questions

• How are you doing?
• How will you approach all of these – and other – issues?
• What other issues are there at this point?
• How long do you think it will take to fully recover?
• How can you better plan for major disasters in the future?
• Did you also implement components of your LEA Emergency Operations/Safety plan?
• Did your schools?
• What will you do next?

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Hot Wash

• Did your Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) work? How well?
• Did you have all the elements of a well designed COOP in place?
• What actions will you take toward improvement?
• Did your Devolution Plan work?
  Did your Communications Plan work?
Hot Wash

• What can be done to improve overall planning and preparedness?
• What external agencies would the district need to work with in this scenario?
• Are all necessary agreements in place to facilitate cooperation among agencies?

After Action Plan

Lessons Learned:
For an improved district COOP, consider what you will:
  • Keep Doing?
  • Stop Doing?
  • Do Differently?
  • Start Doing?
Conclusion

• What is your biggest take away today?

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