IT Interruption

Functional Exercise Plan
November 9, 2021

The Exercise Plan (ExPlan) gives senior leaders, observers, media personnel, and players from participating organizations information they need to observe or participate in the exercise. It includes an exercise overview, objectives and aligned capabilities, roles and responsibilities, logistics, schedule, and communications plan. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, controllers, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the ExPlan.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	2021 Information Technology Interruption Functional Exercise
Exercise Dates	November 9, 2021 at 10:00am
Scope	This is a functional exercise, planned for 2 hours across the Near Southwest Preparedness Alliance region. Exercise play is limited to participating Organizations within the NSPA region.
Focus Area(s)	Mitigation, Response & Recovery
Capabilities	**ASPR:** Healthcare & Medical Response Coordination; Continuity of Healthcare Service Delivery **FEMA:** Cybersecurity, Long-Term Vulnerability Reduction, and Risk & Disaster Resilience Assessment
Objectives	1. Identify potential process disruptions from information systems hazards 2. Evaluate or construct emergency operation plan (EOP) annexes to address short- and long-term information systems 3. Evaluate current continuity of operations (COOP) plan with respect to an information systems interruption
Threat/Hazard	Short to long-term information system interruption to healthcare facilities across the Near Southwest (NSW) Region of Virginia
Scenario	Healthcare facilities located within the NSW Region are encountering disruptions in various information technology systems requiring them to alter normal operations.
Sponsor	Near Southwest Preparedness Alliance (NSPA)
Participating Organizations	This functional exercise is designed for all NSPA members and partners to include participants from hospitals, local emergency management, public health, long-term care, home health, dialysis, hospice, behavioral health, public health, long term care, home health, dialysis, hospice, behavioral health, public safety, OCME, and any other regional stakeholders. See Appendix B for full list of participants
Point of Contact	Robert Hawkins, Executive Director, Near Southwest Preparedness Alliance, 540-562-3482, rhawkins@vaems.org James Finney, Supervisory Protective Security Advisor, Region III, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. 434-942-9269, james.finney@hq.dhs.gov

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exercise Objectives and Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned capabilities are guided by senior leaders and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objective	ASPR (HPP) Capability	FEMA Capability
Objective 1: Identify potential process disruptions from information systems hazards.	• Health Care and Medical Response Coordination • Continuity of Healthcare Service Delivery	• Supply Chain Integrity and Security • Long-Term Vulnerability Reduction • Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment
Objective 2: Evaluate or construct emergency operation plan (EOP) annexes to address short- and long-term information systems interruptions.	• Health Care and Medical Response Coordination • Continuity of Healthcare Service Delivery	• Supply Chain Integrity and Security • Long-Term Vulnerability Reduction • Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment
Objective 3: Evaluate current continuity of operations (COOP) plan with respect to an information systems interruption.	• Health Care and Medical Response Coordination • Continuity of Healthcare Service Delivery	• Supply Chain Integrity and Security • Long-Term Vulnerability Reduction • Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
    - Participating Organizations
- **Controllers.** Controllers plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site, and act in the roles of organizations or individuals that are not playing in

the exercise. Controllers direct the pace of the exercise, provide key data to players, and may prompt or initiate certain player actions to ensure exercise continuity. In addition, they issue exercise material to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and supervise the safety of all exercise participants.

- NSPA Staff

- **Simulators.** Simulators are control staff personnel who deliver scenario messages representing actions, activities, and conversations of an individual, agency, or organization that is not participating in the exercise. They most often operate out of the Simulation Cell (SimCell), but they may occasionally have face-to-face contact with players. Simulators function semi-independently under the supervision of SimCell controllers, enacting roles (e.g., media reporters or next of kin) in accordance with instructions provided in the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL). All simulators are ultimately accountable to the Exercise Director and Senior Controller.

- RHCC Staff

- **Evaluators.** Evaluators evaluate and provide feedback on a designated functional area of the exercise. Evaluators observe and document performance against established capability targets and critical tasks, in accordance with the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

- **Observers.** Observers visit or view selected segments of the exercise. Observers do not play in the exercise, nor do they perform any control or evaluation functions. Observers view the exercise from a designated observation area and must remain within the observation area during the exercise. Very Important Persons (VIPs) are also observers, but they frequently are grouped separately.

- Depending on your Organizations extent of play, if you choose to do so, you can nominate a staff member to evaluate or observe operations throughout the exercise to provide feedback at the end. This person could also serve as a scribe during the exercise.

Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise, and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation.

Assumptions

Assumptions constitute the implied factual foundation for the exercise and, as such, are assumed to be present before the exercise starts. The following assumptions apply to the exercise:

- *This exercise will be conducted in a no-fault environment; we are testing and evaluating plans not people*

- *Participating Organizations and agencies may need to balance exercise play with real-world emergencies, real-world emergencies take priority*

Artificialities

During this exercise, the following artificialities apply:

- *Exercise communication and play is limited to participating organizations.*
- *All players will receive information at the same time.*

POST-EXERCISE ACTIVITIES

Debriefings

Post-exercise debriefings aim to collect sufficient relevant data to support effective evaluation and improvement planning.

Hotwash

At the conclusion of exercise play, a controller or evaluator will lead a Hot Wash to allow players to discuss strengths and areas for improvement, and evaluators to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes. The information gathered during a hotwash contributes to the AAR/IP and any exercise suggestions can improve future exercises.

- *This will not be coordinated by NSPA, but we encourage you to do this onsite at your facility and take notes*

After Action Report / Improvement Plan

The AAR/IP is a document that generally includes an exercise overview, analysis of capabilities, and a list of corrective actions. The AAR/IP should include an overview of performance related to each exercise objective and associated capabilities. The ability to communicate exercise evaluation results to stakeholders is crucial to the improvement planning process.

- *After each Exercise you complete, you should conduct an AAR*

- *NSPA will be walking Organizations through how to complete an AAR on **Tuesday, November 16th at 10:00am***

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Exercise Rules

The following general rules govern exercise play:

- Real-world emergency actions take priority over exercise actions.

- Exercise players will comply with real-world emergency procedures, unless otherwise directed by the control staff.

- All communications (including written, radio, telephone, and e-mail) during the exercise will begin and end with the statement *["EXERCISE EXERCISE"]*

- A hotline will be available to all participants to ask questions throughout the Exercise

  - Organizations outside of the NSPA region will utilize this information below to report & share information instead of utilizing VHASS for the day of the exercise

    - **Phone:** 1-415-655-0002 | **Access Code:** 2301 875 1218

Players Instructions

Players should follow certain guidelines before, during, and after the exercise to ensure a safe and effective exercise.

Before the Exercise

- Review appropriate organizational plans, procedures, and exercise support documents including internal Emergency Operation Plans and all documentation that goes along with your electronic information policies, IT interruption procedures/downtime procedures

- This is a great opportunity to practice mobilizing your Incident Command Team or Administrative Staff. Share the exercise date, time and location of where they need to meet at your facility.

- Read this Exercise Plan.

During the Exercise

- All Organizations will be notified at the same time. Please respond to exercise events and information as if the emergency were real, unless otherwise directed by an exercise controller.

- Controllers (NSPA Staff) will give you all of the information that is being asked in the Virginia Healthcare Alerting & Status System (www.VHASS.org). You can obtain other necessary information through the hotline as well as existing emergency information channels.

- Keep in mind, if your facility is interested in exercising more than what is being asked of you, please do so. We are giving you the opportunity to participate as little or as much as you'd like too.

- Any questions that come up during the exercise please utilize the Exercise Hotline Number listed here: 1-415-655-0002 | Access Code: 2301 875 1218

- If you do not understand the scope of the exercise, or if you are uncertain about an organization's participation in an exercise, call the hotline listed above.

- Parts of the scenario may seem implausible. Recognize that the exercise has objectives to satisfy and may require incorporation of unrealistic aspects. Every effort has been made by the exercise's trusted agents to balance realism with safety and to create an effective learning and evaluation environment.

- All exercise communications will begin and end with the statement *["EXERCISE EXERCISE"].* This precaution is taken so that anyone who overhears the conversation will not mistake exercise play for a real-world emergency.

- Maintain any documentation you create throughout the exercise.

After the Exercise

- Participate in the Hotwash at your venue with everyone who participated in the exercise.

- Discuss your findings as well as strengths and weaknesses to your response in the Hotwash.

- Provide any notes or materials generated from the exercise to your controller or evaluator for review and inclusion in the AAR.

APPENDIX A: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

This exercise will utilize multiple forms of communication:

A) Virginia Healthcare Alerting & Status System (VHASS)
   a. All facilities will be asked to report information in VHASS. It is important to make sure your Organization's information is up to date. Exercise alerts will be sent out to all participants utilizing this system. www.vhass.org

B) Regional Healthcare Coordination Center (RHCC)
   a. Whenever a healthcare facility experiences an emergency, they are encouraged to notify the RHCC for awareness or assistance. If your facility would like to practice or exercise this, please dial 1-866-679-7422
      i. Reminder, any communication during this exercise needs to begin with *["EXERCISE EXERCISE"],* this includes internal notifications too.

C) HOTLINE
   a. For questions or reports please utilize this information below:
      i. 1-415-655-0002 | Access Code: 2301 875 1218

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Regional
Near Southwest Preparedness Alliance (NSPA)
Local
Other

FINAL DOCUMENTATION WILL BE PUBLISHED AT THE END OF NOVEMBER & CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.NSPA1.ORG/2021EXERCISESERIES

APPENDIX C: 2021 FALL EXERCISE SERIES SCHEDULE

Event	Date
Part 1: HVA	*September 21, 2021*
Part 2: Tabletop Planning Meeting	*September 28, 2021*
Part 3: Tabletop Exercise (TTX)	*October 12-14, 2021*
Part 4: VHASS Training	*October 19, 2021*
Part 5: Functional Exercise Planning Meeting	*October 26, 2021*
Part 6: Functional Exercise (FE)	*November 9, 2021*
Part 7: After Action Review (AAR)	*November 16, 2021*

All recordings and additional documentation is available at www.nspa1.org/2021exerciseseries

APPENDIX D: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
AAR	After Action Review
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DSF	Disaster Struck Facility
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ExPlan	Exercise Plan
HPP	Hospital Preparedness Program
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
ICS	Incident Command System
LTC-MAP	Long Term Care Mutual Aid Plan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NSPA	Near Southwest Preparedness Alliance
RAF	Resident Accepting Facility
RHCC	Regional Healthcare Coordination Center
SimCell	Simulation Cell
VHASS	Virginia Healthcare Alerting and Status System