

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan



Section 1-Exercises

January 2019

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Section 1 – 2 Exercises

I. PURPOSE

Exercises assess and validate the speed, effectiveness and efficiency of capabilities, and test the adequacy of policies, plans, procedures, and protocols in a risk-free environment. Aside from actual events, they provide the best means of evaluating target capabilities. This exercise annex provides the foundation for the philosophy and methodology that Horry County will utilize in its exercise program.

II. MISSION

It is the mission of Horry County Emergency Management to lead the county’s all-hazards comprehensive emergency management program through: collaborative planning; educating its citizens, businesses and visitors; and coordinating response operations and recovery initiatives.

III. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTION

A. Situation

1. The Horry County Emergency Management Department has an established exercise program that regularly tests the skills, abilities, and experience of emergency personnel as well as the plans, policies, procedures, equipment, and facilities of the overall Emergency Management Program.
2. The Horry County Exercise Program is modeled after and adheres to the best practices and principles outlined in the federal Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).
3. Agency specific exercises such as some seminars, workshops, and drills that are not directly affiliated with the Emergency Management Program occur throughout Horry County on a regular basis and are not considered a part of the exercise program.
4. Internal and external mandates and requirements (such as exercises required for specific grant funding) may influence some of the exercises being conducted.
5. Horry County in a collaborative effort with local, state, regional, and federal partners has established and annually updates a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan (MYTEP).
6. Horry County will utilize the MYTEP as a guideline for prioritizing and scheduling exercises.
7. Horry County utilizes and incorporates HSEEP principles and templates in creating the MYTEP.

B. Assumptions

1. Responders will continue to conduct or participate in job or organization specific exercises in accordance with their organization’s SOPs. These exercises will not formally be scheduled through the MYTEP.

2. Assistance in the form of grants, service offerings, and direct assistance for exercises will continue to be available from the regional, state, and federal level.
3. Information received by the needs assessment and exercise/real incident corrective action plans will provide an accurate means of prioritizing the exercises needed to build the local capabilities of Horry County.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

Under the direction of the appropriate elected officials or their designees, Horry County Emergency Management will coordinate emergency preparedness activities in accordance with the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to assure the inclusion of exercises for all planning, support, and response agencies. Departments, authorities, agencies, and all private response organizations bear the responsibility of ensuring their personnel contribute and participate in the Horry County Exercise Program.

B. Exercise Needs Assessment

1. Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW)

- a. Horry County will conduct a needs assessment and TEPW annually. FEMA states the following regarding a TEPW:

“An annual TEPW provides the opportunity to review the jurisdiction or agency homeland security strategy and develop or update its Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. There is a focus on coordination of all training and exercise activities occurring throughout the jurisdiction or agency, including activities sponsored by Federal agencies, States, local governments, and tribal governments. Jurisdictions or agencies must ensure that their training and exercise schedules are coordinated to prevent duplication of efforts, ensure resources are not overextended during training or exercises, and maximize the efficacy of training and exercise appropriations. Moreover, schedule collaboration can present opportunities for jurisdictions and agencies to fulfill multiple grant requirements with a single exercise or training course.”
(FEMA HSEEP Volume I)

- b. Prior to the annual TEPW, Horry County Emergency Management will conduct a needs assessment via online survey which is distributed to representatives from partnering agencies
- c. The needs assessment will address all personnel with responsibilities in the Emergency Management Department, including but not limited to:
 1. Emergency management/emergency response staff
 2. Emergency Support Function (ESF) lead agencies
 3. Key public officials
 4. State and Federal partner agencies

5. Local private and non-governmental agencies that are key stakeholders in the Emergency Management Program

d. Horry County Emergency Management will compile results from the needs assessment along with:

1. Current internal and external exercise requirements.
2. Deficiencies identified in the corrective action process during exercises and real incidents
3. Exercise priorities contained in the State and Federal homeland security strategy and State of South Carolina Multi-year Training and Exercise Plan

e. All compiled results will be categorized within target capabilities and exercise initiatives will be voted on and prioritized at the annual TEPW.

2. Internal and External Training Requirements and Mandates

a. Federal Requirements

1. HSEEP methodology and tools will be utilized in formal exercise design for Horry County. FEMA HSEEP Volume I explains the purpose of HSEEP is to:

“Provide common exercise policy and program guidance that constitutes a national standard for exercises. HSEEP includes consistent terminology that can be used by all exercise planners, regardless of the nature and composition of their sponsoring agency or organization.”
(FEMA HSEEP Volume I)

2. Exercises for the jurisdiction will be established and coordinated through the TEPW, utilizing the HSEEP Planning Cycle.

b. State Requirements

1. The State of Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) requires local emergency management programs to conduct exercises as a requirement for receiving Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) funding. The guidelines set forth by SCEMD are as follows:
 - a) Each EMPG jurisdiction will document an annual exercise on the Statement of Work (SOW) and submit an After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) to the SCEMD Exercise Officer.
 - b) SCEMD requires one (1) exercise be conducted each federal fiscal year. This exercise requirement can be a Tabletop exercise, Functional exercise or Full Scale exercise. This exercise requirement MUST be at least equivalent to a Tabletop exercise and SCEMD strongly recommends conducting a Functional or Full Scale exercise annually.
 - c) All AARs submitted to SCEMD must utilize the AAR formatting template provided by HSEEP.
2. The State of South Carolina will maintain a database of AARs and corrective actions for all jurisdictions receiving EMPG funding.

C. Exercise Program Management

1. Exercise Focus

- a. The focus of the Horry County Exercise Program is to provide a self-sustaining system for regularly testing the skills, abilities, and experience of emergency personnel as well as the plans, policies, procedures, equipment, and facilities of the jurisdiction.
- b. The Exercise Program utilizes a capabilities-based approach to exercise program management, foundation, design, development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. Capabilities-based planning is defined by HSEEP as:

“planning, under uncertainty, to build capabilities suitable for a wide range of threats and hazards while working within an economic framework that necessitates prioritization and choice. Capabilities based planning addresses uncertainty by analyzing a wide range of realistic scenarios to identify required capabilities, and is the basis for guidance such as the National Preparedness Goal, Target Capabilities List (TCL), and Universal Task List (UTL). Capabilities-based planning should be incorporated throughout the cycle of preparedness, to include plans, training, equipment, as well as exercises.” (FEMA HSEEP Volume I)

- c. Horry County will utilize the HSEEP preparedness cycle for exercise program and project management.
- d. The exercise program will utilize a range of plausible scenarios based on the hazards identified by Horry County (*see Horry County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan*). While the exercise program will be tailored to the jurisdiction’s identified hazards, the approach will be capabilities-based as opposed to hazard-based.

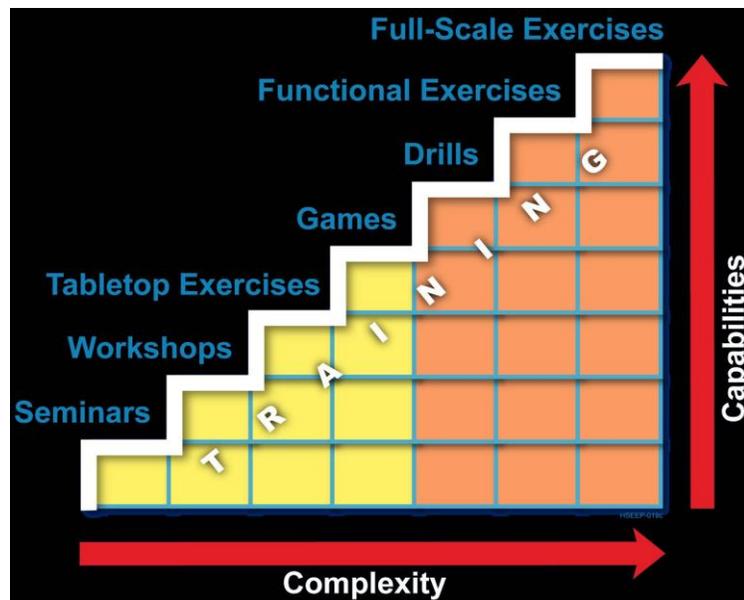


2. Exercise Project Management

The Horry County Exercise Program is designed to support capabilities-based planning through a cyclical process of planning, training, exercising, and improvement planning.

a. Strategic Planning:

- 1) The strategic objectives for the Horry County Exercise program are established through a gap analysis/needs assessment prior to the annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW).
- 2) All data derived from this needs assessment is compiled and categorized within target capabilities and exercise initiatives which are voted on and prioritized at the annual TEPW.
- 3) Annually, the TEPW will result in an update of the Horry County MYTEP.
- 4) The MYTEP outlines the prioritized exercise objectives and capabilities and establishes the multi-year training and exercise schedule.
- 5) Horry County utilizes a building-block approach to exercise scheduling and program management:
 - a) As planning and training increase in complexity, Horry County will also increase their capability to perform critical tasks. The greatest benefit can be achieved through a building-block approach that exposes agencies and exercise participants to gradually increasing levels of complexity, as illustrated by the following example:
 - b) The choice of exercises to be scheduled and implemented will focus on the end result of increasing capabilities and building upon lessons learned from



previous exercises.

b. Exercise Design and Development

- 1) Horry County will utilize a systematic exercise design process which may include the following steps:
 - a) Consult Needs Assessment – Exercises will be based upon identified target capabilities identified in the MYTEP. These capabilities reflect needs or shortfalls identified by Horry County.
 - b) Define Scope – The Scope for the exercise will be established. The scope will be based on a range of factors including agency participation, available time, financial constraints, and complexity required for achieving the desired outcome.
 - c) Define Purpose – The purpose for the exercise will be established. This purpose should address specific needs or shortfalls in capabilities as identified within the MYTEP as well as lessons learned from previous exercises.
 - d) Create Objectives – Exercise objectives serve as the cornerstone of exercise design and development and should provide the foundation of the entire exercise. Objectives should be clear, concise, and focused on participant performance. Objectives should contain:
 - An action stated in observable terms
 - Conditions under which the action will be performed
 - Standards of performance
 - e) Establish a Narrative or Scenario - The narrative (scenario) is the key element in the exercise that drives the participant actions. It is important for the scenario to facilitate the accomplishment of the design objectives and provide a realistic framework for the players to make decisions.
 - f) Create Major/Minor Events - Major and minor events will be created in order to drive play and lead the participants to make decisions based on the plans, policies, and procedures that Horry County Currently has in place. These events may be integrated into a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL).

D. Corrective Actions/Improvement Planning

1. Exercise Evaluation / Improvement Planning Process

Although the evaluation phase comes towards the end of the exercise cycle, the process and thinking regarding evaluation are present all the way through.

- a. Horry County will, when possible, utilize Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Processes outlined by HSEEP which may include the following.

- 1) Plan and Organize the Evaluation - Planning the evaluation is part of the exercise design and objectives development process. The exercise planning team will determine what information needs to be collected, who collects it, and how it will be collected. Additionally, this will involve the development and preparation of the forms that evaluators will utilize to capture information during exercise observation and data analysis.
- 2) Observe the Exercise and Collect Data – Evaluators assigned to the exercise will collect data, record observations during the exercise, and collect additional data from records and logs, as well as attend the Hot Wash.
- 3) Analyze Data – Evaluators will utilize the data collected to identify discrepancies between what happened and what was supposed to happen and develop recommendations for improvement to address those gaps. This analysis will be based on the plans, policies, and procedures that are currently in place for the agencies and capabilities being exercised.
- 4) Develop the Draft After-Action Report (AAR) – The AAR is a record of what happened during the exercise. It is used to implement changes and improve jurisdictional capabilities. The AAR provides feedback to participating jurisdictions on their performance during an exercise. It should summarize lessons learned, discuss what happened, analyze the performance of activities, and recommend improvements based on that analysis. The HSEEP AAR template will be utilized when possible or feasible in order to facilitate a standardized format throughout the Emergency Management Program
- 5) Conduct After-Action Conference – The After-Action Conference provides the exercise agencies with an opportunity to comment on the draft AAR and develop a draft Improvement Plan (IP) to address any areas for corrective actions identified.
- 6) Identify Corrective Actions – Corrective actions will be established to address deficiencies revealed during the exercise or real-world event. These corrective actions will be used to revise relevant plans, policies, and procedures for the Emergency Management Program.
- 7) Finalize AAR/IP – The IP will be finalized and included as a part of the finalized AAR. This AAR will be disseminated within the Emergency Management Department to key stakeholders, participating agencies, and selected partners. Delivery of the AAR may be physically printed or delivered digitally at the discretion of the Exercise Director or primary organization having responsibility of the exercise.
- 8) Track Implementation – The finalized AAR/IP will designate a responsible organization, agency, or individual that is assigned specific responsibility for identified corrective actions and for reporting the status of corrective actions.
 - a) All exercises established at the annual TEPW and listed in the MYTEP for which the Horry County Emergency Management Program has been assigned specific responsibility will track corrective actions and improvement plans and provide status reports as specified.
 - b) Agency specific exercises such as some seminars, workshops, and drills that are not directly affiliated with the Emergency Management Program are not considered a part of the exercise program and are not required to utilize the HSEEP format for corrective action/improvement planning.

- c) Horry County Emergency Management will have overall responsibility on behalf of the jurisdiction in tracking the overall progress of corrective actions.
 - b. Real-world events that result in disaster declarations, instigate at minimum EOC level 2 activations, span multiple operational periods, or are of a complex nature will utilize this evaluation process and result in an after-action report in conjunction with corrective actions that will be used to revise relevant plans, policies, and procedures.
 - c. Formal evaluation/corrective action procedures may not be utilized for exercises that are of a limited scope or complexity as well as some discussion based exercises. The determination of whether an exercise meets these criteria will be at the discretion of the Exercise Planning Team and the agency with primary responsibility for the exercise being conducted.
2. Comprehensive, Multi-Discipline, Self-Sustaining Exercise Program

It is the goal of the Horry County Emergency Management Department to build and maintain a comprehensive, multi-discipline, self-sustaining exercise program.

- a. It is the intent of the Horry County Exercise Program to include all disciplines within the jurisdiction. This will provide all departments and agencies with continuing opportunities to participate in drills and exercises that will realistically prepare, train and exercise in a manner consistent with our intended response to emergencies.
- b. The Horry County Exercise Program will be cyclic in nature and be built upon exercises that continually refine and revise the plans, policies, and procedures employed by the jurisdiction.
- c. Exercises will offer a variety of hazard scenarios and complexities in order to ensure that completed corrective actions and revisions have been correctly implemented, achieved the desired intent and increased the overall capabilities of the jurisdiction.

V. ANNEX MAINTENANCE

Horry County Emergency Management has the responsibility of coordinating, developing and maintaining the Exercise Annex and is the designated Lead Agency. The Exercise Annex will be updated in conjunction with the EOP as stated in Section VII, Plan Development and Maintenance.