

The Exercise Planners Guide

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Introduction

This publication provides guidance to those who have to design and carry out emergency exercises. Experienced emergency planning officers and safety officers may wish to use it as a check list.

It will be helpful to managers, executives, chief officers and others who decide their organisations overall strategy for contingency planning, including training and exercising, to help prioritise the allocation of resources.

It is based on the guidance for managers Why Exercise your Disaster Response but gives more detail on this essential topic. Acknowledgements are due to all those who contributed to its contents and in particular to staff of the Emergency Planning Division of Derbyshire County Council who prepared the first draft.

The Millennium date change provides us with four triggers which may cause the use of contingency arrangements. They are:

- the failure of life-critical systems,
- the domino effect,
- a disaster caused by Y2K failure in another country,
- and public expectations and reactions.

It is for these reasons that the Home Office encourages all agencies to include such elements into all exercises and to consider alternatives to mutual aid arrangements which may not be available due to pressures on other authorities, organisations and agencies.

Emergency Planning Process

Exercises should be regarded as an integral part of the emergency planning process - not an isolated option. It is important that emergency plans have been prepared and the appropriate staff trained in their roles before an exercise is planned. After any exercise, the plan should be reviewed and amended from lessons learned before the process starts again.



Types of Exercise

The choice of exercise is important : it should provide the most appropriate and cost effective way of achieving its aim and objectives. There are basically four types of exercise, although there are variations on the theme of each:

Seminar - also known as workshops or discussion based exercises;

Table top - also known as floor plan exercises;

Control post - also known as training without troops; and

Live - also known as practical, operational or field exercises.

New plans or players would normally be involved in seminar or table top exercises before a control post or live exercise was planned.

Seminar Exercises

Seminar exercises are generally low cost activities and inform participants about the organisation and procedures which would be invoked to respond to an incident. The emphasis is on problem identification and solution finding rather than decision making. Those involved can be either new to the job or established personnel. This type of event will bring staff together to inform them of current developments and thinking. These events may take place within the framework of a seminar which also includes and/or panel discussions and are primarily designed to focus on one particular aspect of the response.

Table Top Exercises

Table top exercises are a very cost effective and efficient method of testing plans, procedures and people. They are difficult to run with large numbers, but those players who are involved are provided with an excellent opportunity to interact with and understand the roles and responsibilities of the other agencies taking part. They can engage players imaginatively and generate high levels of realism. Participants will get to know realistic key procedures along with the people with whom they may be working in an emergency. Those who have exercised together and know each other will provide a much more effective response than those who come together for the first time when a disaster occurs.

An element of media awareness can be introduced under controlled conditions, such as the preparation of press releases at the tactical level, or the use of trainee journalists, under the direction of their tutor, to play news hungry reporters.

Control Post Exercises

In control post exercises, the team leaders (and communications teams) from each participating organisation are positioned at the control posts they would use during an actual incident or live exercise. This tests communication arrangements and, more importantly, information flows between remotely positioned team leaders from participating organisations. By not involving front line staff, these exercises are cost effective and efficient in testing plans, procedures and key people.

Live Exercises

Live exercises range from a small scale test of one component of the response, like evacuation - ranging from a building or "incident" site to an affected community - through to a full scale test of the whole organisation's response to an incident. Live exercises provide the best means of confirming the satisfactory operation of emergency communications, and the use of 'casualties' can add to the realism. Live exercises provide the only means of testing fully the crucial arrangements for handling the media. A live exercise would not normally be undertaken until you had confidence in those involved.

Finance

The amount of expense incurred in planning, running and reviewing an exercise will be dependent on the type, location, timing and duration. There are several ways to reduce the costs of exercises. For example, messages may be passed through internal telephones or by paper feed instead of by the public telephone system, radio or fax as would happen in a real emergency.

A model manufactured for floor or table top use may mean an initial expense but could be used for different scenarios on a number of occasions and by different organisations.

Some sites, organisations or operators are required by law to hold exercises to test their emergency plans. It may be possible for the emergency services and other service providers to work with the site operator to develop a scenario which would enable a range of plans and organisations to be tested.

The expense of live exercises may be reduced by limiting the number of players and by scheduling them to fall within working hours to avoid overtime payments. It may also be possible to rearrange training to coincide with the exercise. However, some exercises have to be held outside normal hours for safety or commercial reasons.

For live exercises which involve large numbers, it may be possible to use some players to act as evacuees and hold a rest centre exercise thus providing training for a wider pool of agencies.

Exercise Planning Group

In some areas, a group (i.e. Emergency Planning Liaison Group involving the emergency services, local authorities etc., or a works safety committee) might already exist. Such a group would already have been involved in preparing plans, training and, possibly, arranging other exercises. It would, therefore, be logical to involve its members in planning your exercise.

If no such group exists, it is important to establish one involving representatives of all the principal agencies who have a role in the plan. This group needs to liaise with all participating agencies in the planning stage. It needs to decide, as its first task and with regard to the agreed objectives, whether to test the whole plan or only certain components. All agencies who have a role to play, either in the whole plan or the component(s) to be tested, should be invited to take part in the exercise, including of course the planning stage, and subsequent reviews.

Most exercises are time consuming and cannot be undertaken frequently. Therefore every opportunity should be given to all appropriate agencies to take part when a plan is tested. Managers, executives or chief officers etc. must be kept informed of plans and progress as their support is vital for success. The group needs to allocate sufficient time (which may mean several months prior to the event) to plan the exercise thoroughly.

Ideally, those involved in planning the exercise should not participate directly. They are better used as Umpires or Observers. If possible, and particularly for small organisations, help should be sought from neighbouring areas or organisations with similar operations.

Aim/Objectives

The aim and objectives of the exercise, including clear outcomes, need to be established at the outset and should ideally be the first item on the planning group's agenda. The overall aim of the exercise should be agreed by the senior management of all participating agencies and be based around the question "what are we hoping to achieve by the exercise as a whole?" Objectives should then be set by individual participating agencies as targets within and consistent with the overall aim of the exercise. It is important that each individual agency's

objectives are submitted to the exercise planning group to ensure they do not contradict or compromise those of another agency.

Scenario

The group needs to develop a realistic scenario to ensure that participants will take the exercise seriously. The exercise should also have a realistic timescale.

The scenario should include:

- day, date and time, and
- nature of incident (consistent with exercise location).

Other considerations might be:

- weather conditions including wind speed and direction,
- visibility,
- traffic conditions,
- progression of incident (e.g. different phases), and
- people involved (e.g. young, elderly etc.).

Always remember, however, that planning based on detailed assumptions regarding a likely future scenario may be too inflexible to adapt to the unforeseen. In most exercises the objective will be to test arrangements and procedures which can be brought into play if needed regardless of the cause.

Time-Lapse Exercise

A decision to be made at an early stage is whether the exercise will flow in real time or consist of "snapshots" - i.e. a series of descriptions of how the scenario has progressed over time. For example, participants may spend a relatively short time considering the immediate actions to be taken before moving to a scenario "X hours into the incident" so that recovery issues can feature. Also consider whether exercise time will be stopped at any point during the exercise to allow for review or consideration of variables, e.g. weather, time of day or year.

Controlled or Free Play

In controlled exercises, the scenario and all events or incidents are pre-scripted. The evolution of the exercise is tightly managed. This can be a very thorough way of testing specific aspects but may not evaluate whether a plan is sufficiently flexible to deal with the unexpected.

Free play exercises are much more spontaneous. Once the opening scenario has been established, the participants' actions dictate subsequent events. This requires a large directing staff, a comprehensive scenario and access to much more background information. Although these can be stimulating in terms of realism and having to cope with the unexpected, it is possible that whole areas of a plan which require validation may be bypassed.

It is possible to combine control with free play in order to test both the degree of flexibility of the plan and the validity of any pre-identified aspects.

Exercise Location

Whatever type of exercise is to be held the planning group should visit the location - at a similar time/day as the exercise - to ensure that it is appropriate. They should also seek

written permission from parties which have a claim to an area and inform any potential users that it may be out of bounds on a certain date.

Seminar or Table Top

The venue needs to be large enough to accommodate a floor model or table model. Wall space for maps may be required. Ensure that the necessary audio/visual training aids, if required, can be used with ample space and viewing for participants. A lecture theatre or similar tiered venue may be suitable for certain seminar exercises. If the exercise is to be syndicated then additional rooms will be required. Separate space for exercise directors is helpful.

Control Post

The site(s) for these exercises should be self-selecting since organisations should use their designated control centres.

Live

The selection of a suitable site for an exercise is of crucial importance. Obviously, in the case of fixed site exercises, such as a site subject to the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazard Regulations (CIMAH) or an airport, there is little scope for choice. However for generic type major disaster exercises e.g. air or rail crash, selecting a suitable site should be undertaken in the early stages of exercise planning. As the site needs to be acceptable to all participating agencies, several options may need to be explored depending on the scenario. The location must be safe and with a reasonable access for vehicles and personnel. Owners of the site (for example, possibly RailTrack or an airport authority) should be fully aware of and, if possible, participate in the exercise.

Exercise Base

The need for an "exercise base" arises for live exercises, sometimes for control post exercises, and is particularly helpful for large scale exercises. A suitable building, preferably in the ownership of one of the participating agencies, should be selected close to the exercise site. It can then act as an assembly point for "exercise directors", observers etc. where briefing can be given and casualties, if used, can be made up. Ample car parking should be provided.

If the exercise base is further than walking distance from the site then consider providing minibus transport. Bear in mind that live multi-agency exercises attract many vehicles and it would be helpful to ensure that non essential vehicles at the site are kept to a minimum.

Safety

(See also [Briefings](#) chapter)

The safety of personnel during the exercise is of paramount importance. In live exercises, all participants - including exercise directors, umpires, volunteers and observers - should be made aware of any hazards within the area and reminded of safety issues. Exercise participants may not be familiar with the location and control may be needed to ensure that players are kept within the confines of the exercise area.

Before a live exercise, a safety audit should be completed to ensure that structures are safe and no unseen dangers are present on the site (e.g. asbestos in old buildings or transport). A safety officer must attend the exercise to ensure that all participants comply with the safety requirements and do not place themselves, or others, in danger. At complex exercises, or where conditions are particularly hazardous, each participating organisation may need its own safety officer. The exercise can not be seen as a reason not to comply with health and safety requirements.

First aid/ambulance cover should be provided to deal with any health problems or injuries sustained during the exercise. For safety reasons, exercise directors should adopt an agreed procedure for intervention into the exercise, including cessation where necessary. The planning group should devise a codeword for this purpose (see Codewords below) and the means of relaying it to those participants without radio communication.

Ensure personal accident insurance is in place for all participants, including volunteers.

Welfare

Consideration should be given to welfare arrangements during exercises. Welfare needs may vary depending on the type, timing and duration of the exercise. You may need to provide refreshments, changing, washing and toilet facilities before, during or after the event. The use of casualties adds realism to exercises but their welfare needs to be taken into account. Exercise "casualties" should not be placed in unsuitable conditions e.g. cold, wet or hard surfaces without appropriate care. Invariably the length of time envisaged for the activity turns out to be much longer. An area which is warm and dry should be available.

Codewords

Exercises may be given a codename which should then be mandatory as a prefix to all messages - verbal or written - during the exercise. The group must take care that the codeword chosen is phonetically distinct from other key words that are used in communications. Neither should such words be used for other purposes in emergency response operations (e.g. Gold, Silver, Bronze).

The use of Codewords will ensure that everyone involved is aware that they are part of the exercise and not a real incident. Control Rooms / operations centres of all participating organisations must be informed about the codename, prior to the exercise. In addition, a member of the exercise planning group may attend the appropriate locations to ensure that the exercise is not treated as a real incident.

A codeword, which can be used to identify that a real incident has occurred and is not part of the exercise, should be agreed and circulated to all participants prior to the event. This could also be used if there are real casualties during the exercise. Examples of commonly used codewords are "Safeguard" or "No duff".

Some common terminology :

- Exercise [Codename] - Startex start of exercise

- Exercise [Codename] - Hold suspend exercise for a period.
- Exercise [Codename] - Resume start again after a hold.
- Exercise [Codename] - Safeguard real incident/message outside of exercise
- Exercise [Codename] - Abort early termination
- Exercise [Codename] - Endex end of exercise

Public Information

The exercise planning group should agree whether there should be any prior publicity. It may be advisable to issue prior public information to members of the public in the vicinity of the exercise to prevent any undue alarm, particularly for exercises at hazardous sites. However, this may attract a crowd of uninvited spectators. "Exercise in progress" signs may be strategically positioned. This can detract from the realism but reassures the public or uninvolved agencies, particularly in sensitive areas. The planning group should take account of a likely crowd and ensure public safety by deploying additional staff.

If public information is issued, the participants may also find out about the exercise and this could affect realism. The group may consider issuing information by letter, to the public on the day of the exercise. Details for the media could be embargoed until the day of the exercise.

Exercise Controller

Definition: An Exercise Controller needs to be appointed who has overall oversight and the authority to alter the planned programme, including early termination for safety reasons (e.g. adverse weather) or because the aim cannot be met due to outside influence (e.g. a major incident requiring real action by participants).

Exercise Directors

Definition: Exercise Directors play a role in both table top and control post or live exercises. They have access to the whole exercise programme and ensure that it proceeds according to plan.

In table top or control post exercises they often feed information to players to enable them to make management decisions in response. This can be done verbally or by written message and is known as a "paper feed" exercise. Sometimes this can be timed in advance with information fed to the players at pre-set intervals regardless of the previous responses. However, flexibility will allow the directors to use their own judgement and experience in timing the inputs. In control post or live exercises, the director's role should be less prescriptive. The directors should act as a team in constant communication and facilitate rather than orchestrate the exercise.

Intervention should be minimal and a last resort. The players need time to correct problems. Nevertheless, Exercise Directors should be clear whether those taking part in the exercise usually work together or are coming together for the first time; is the object to build a team or to exercise an existing one in an unfamiliar role? This will help Directors decide, for example, how much advice to give and whether to be in the same location as exercise players.

Exercise directors should intervene when there is confusion about the scenario or an organisational problem out of the control of the players. They should also intervene if failure to do so will compromise the exercise objectives or when one person's action/ inaction is jeopardising the opportunities afforded by the exercise.

Umpires

Definition: Umpires watch and listen to the exercise with the particular brief of measuring whether activities are happening in the right place, at the right time and involving the right

people. Their role differs from Exercise Directors in that Umpires have no responsibility for the mechanics of the exercise. They need to be very clearly briefed on what they should look for in order to assess whether or not the objectives are being met. Their role in subsequent debriefing is crucial.

Observers

Definition: An observer is someone who has no role to play in the exercise but is witnessing events either to assess the preparations of the organisation or individuals within it, or to learn lessons. A central pool of "Observer" tabards (vests which identify roles) should be obtained, but each agency will be responsible for inviting their own observers within a maximum which the exercise planning group may wish to impose.

Too many observers can, if not carefully managed, cause confusion. They should have a real interest in the exercise. An advantageous "viewing area" may be helpful rather than carte blanche access to wander the site. This will also assist in ensuring their safety. A quality briefing for them is essential prior to and during the exercise. Wherever possible, a member of the directing staff should be available to explain events and procedures as the exercise unfolds.

Observers may not be invited or able to attend the debriefing after the exercise, but their views should always be sought. An "Exercise Evaluation Form", sent with the invitation, would go some way to achieving feedback. Alternatively, written comments could be forwarded to the exercise planning group for consideration at the debriefing.

Identification

To avoid confusion, non-participating personnel such as the exercise controller, exercise directors, observers etc. should be clearly identifiable from exercise participants. In a control post or live exercise, this may take the form of reflective tabards marked clearly - front and back - with "observer" or "exercise controller/director", reflective/luminous armbands or reflective jackets. Access to certain areas of the exercise may be restricted by pre-arrangement to identified personnel. Care needs to be taken not to create confusion between participants and observers and white, non-reflective tabards have been introduced for observers in some areas to minimise the risk of confusion.

It is important in all types of exercise to be able to identify which agency each person represents by uniform or badge.

Communications

Communications - both equipment and process - will invariably play a key role in the success of exercises. An agreed channel of communication needs to be set up between directing staff so that they can be kept aware of any developments or changes. In respect of control post or live exercises the agreed communications used by directing staff must be separate to those being used by players.

An element of the exercise may be to test interagency communications. Messages should be prefixed with an agreed codeword so that everyone involved is aware that they relate to the exercise and not to a real incident. All control rooms need to be aware in advance of the agreed codewords.

To ensure that the communications equipment will work in the exercise environment, a test should be carried out beforehand. All cellular telephones to be used in an emergency response should be registered under ACCOLC. Communications need to be in place in the event of the exercise having to be stopped due to a real incident occurring.

Logging and Recording

An important means of communication, particularly after a real incident, will be contemporaneous records and logs. These can be particularly important at subsequent public enquiries. In exercise, those taking part should understand the importance of keeping an accurate log of actions and decisions. Exercise planners should not assume that players will bring their organisations' logging practices to the event - even where they exist.

Media Participation

Dealing with the media is a major part of responding to any incident and therefore should be practised as often as possible. The exercise planners could deploy student journalists, the Central Office of Information or reporters from local papers to test the different agencies' response to the media. For major exercises, a representative from the national media should be invited to attend. Exercise press conferences and interviews can be used to test the knowledge of the combined response.

Media Coverage

The media might arrive, unplanned, to cover the exercise and arrangements must be in place for this possibility. Public relations staff should be allocated to keep the media informed during the exercise. Designate a good viewing point and useful locations for photo-opportunities.

Briefings

The type of briefings depend on the exercise's aim. As a general principle it is advisable that each agency's representative on the exercise planning group takes responsibility for briefing his/her staff who are involved in the exercise. Further briefing may be required on arrival at the place of deployment. Particular attention needs to be paid to volunteers.

The briefing should give information as outlined in Annex A. (This Annex is based on legal advice given to Derbyshire County Council following court rulings. Organisations should check their actions with their own legal advisers.)

Further briefing will be required for additional exercise directors and observers. It is advantageous to give these briefings at the exercise base before it begins.

Pre-Exercise Final Arrangements

These are the responsibilities of the members of the exercise planning group so that all possible measures have been taken to ensure that the exercise itself is not compromised by poor planning and organisation. The following are examples of the arrangements which need to be in place.

Live Exercises

- Participants should be briefed prior to the exercise.
- The scene is set with casualties made up and in place.
- Observers briefed, in position and suitably identifiable (tabards).
- Exercise directors briefed, in position and suitably identifiable (tabards).
- First aid support (if necessary) in place and clearly identifiable.
- External groups are briefed and in place.
- Welfare arrangements (refreshments, temporary toilets etc.) in place.
- Media arrangements made.
- Communication checks complete.
- The participation of the focus for the exercise - e.g. a ship - has been guaranteed or an alternative scenario has been prepared to discount its absence.

It should be remembered, particularly in live exercises, that although the exercise on site has been completed other elements may need to continue for some time, e.g. control rooms, casualty bureau, media etc.

Control Post Exercises

- Participants should be briefed prior to the exercise.
- Observers briefed, in position and suitably identifiable (tabards).
- Exercise directors briefed, in position and suitably identifiable (tabards).
- External groups are briefed and in place.
- Media arrangements made.
- Communication checks completed.

Table Top/Seminar Exercises

- Participants should be briefed prior to the exercise.
- Observers briefed, in position and suitably identifiable (tabards).
- Exercise directors briefed, in position and suitably identifiable (tabards).
- Room(s) layout and environment checked. Visual aids in place.
- All necessary equipment (e.g. paper, pens, flip charts etc.) available.
- Communications checks complete (if necessary).
- Welfare arrangements (refreshments, toilets) etc. in place.

NB: It should be agreed how the exercise will start and by whom. Agreement also needs to be reached on how the exercise will progress to different phases, if relevant. The method of ending the exercise should also be agreed.

Debriefing

A review of the responses to an exercise by the emergency services and agencies giving assistance is essential. This provides an opportunity to evaluate efficiency, to learn from experience gained and also offers a source of information to assist in future planning, training and exercising.

This process can be best achieved by a series of debriefings at all levels within all agencies involved and concluding with a multi-agency debrief. Hot de-briefs (those which take place immediately after the event) can be a useful way of capturing instant reaction which may not be revealed by the cold de-brief (that which takes place after an interval). All actions identified by the debrief should be taken forward by a nominated person/agency and given a timescale.

Organisations may wish to consider appointing a neutral debrief co-ordinator. It is important that a non-threatening atmosphere is created so that people are not afraid of being honest about their experiences and problems.

Single Service Debriefing

The methods of debriefing personnel involved in a major incident may vary within each individual service. It will, however, be beneficial to debriefing if consideration is given to the following:

- Debrief as soon after the exercise as is practicable.
- Everyone involved, including personnel remote from the area of operations (e.g. control room staff) should be afforded the opportunity to contribute to debriefing at some stage.
- The need for additional debriefing sessions for personnel involved in specific or specialist operations.

NB: Recordings made at the exercise, particularly video recordings/photographs, along with written reports will assist in debriefings.

Multi-Agency Debriefing

The debriefing process should culminate in a multi-agency forum which includes not only the emergency services but also any other agency which may have assisted in the overall response. It is important that each service is represented by personnel actually involved in operations, as it will be necessary to give first hand accounts of events.

Depending on the scale and nature of the exercise it may be advantageous to hold joint debriefings for specific levels of command, e.g. Incident Control Team (Tactical level) and/or for personnel deployed on tasks requiring multi-agency involvement. Such meetings should, of course, be a pre-cursor to the final multi-agency debriefing and should add to its content.

NB: Facts emerging from the debriefings should be documented and problems identified. Lessons learnt should be shared with all who may be required to respond to major incidents even if they did not participate. Training needs - individual, organisational and multi-agency - should be identified.

The Emergency Planning College is always interested to receive exercise reports, details of experiences and lessons drawn from exercises. These help the College to forward the sharing of lessons and consider relevant issues for further training.

Exercise Report

A major multi-agency exercise can be both costly and time consuming to arrange and undertake. It is particularly useful, therefore, to produce an exercise report after the debrief. This should be well presented and brief so that the busiest manager has no excuse not to read it. The report should cover the aim, objectives, scenario, the planning process and both positive and negative observations from the exercise concluding in recommendations for the future. It is also important that the recommendations are acted upon and a follow up report prepared no later than 6 months after the publication of the Exercise Report noting what action has been taken and what is planned.

Most organisations involved in emergency preparedness will benefit from other people's experiences of exercise

- IF the report is open and honest, and
- the needs of commercial / service sensitivity are genuinely respected.

Exercise Checklist

1. Agree the scenario, extent and aim of the exercise with senior management.
2. Assemble a multi-disciplinary exercise planning team and agree the objectives for each area to be exercised.
3. Sketch out and then develop the main events of the exercise and associated timetables.
4. Determine and confirm the availability of the outside agencies to be involved, such as the media or voluntary agencies.
5. List the facilities required for the exercise and confirm their availability e.g. transport, buildings and equipment
6. Ensure that all communications to be used during the exercise have been tested at some stage prior to the exercise. If a control post or live exercise, test radios, mobile phones etc. in the locations in which they will be used as near to the date of the exercise as possible. Check that cellular phones are registered under ACCOLC.
7. Check that umpires for each stage of the exercise are clearly identified and properly briefed.
8. Ensure that directing staff are clearly identified and properly briefed, and have good independent communications with 'exercise control' throughout the exercise.
9. If the exercise links a number of activities or functions which are dependent on each other, confirm that each has been individually tested beforehand.
10. Ensure that all participants have been briefed.
11. Ensure that all players are aware of the procedures to be followed if a real emergency occurs during the exercise.
12. If spectators are to be invited, including the media, ensure that they are clearly identified and properly marshalled, and arrange for them to be kept informed of the progress of the exercise. Ensure their safety.
13. For the longer exercise, arrange catering and toilet facilities.
14. Ensure that where appropriate outside agencies are indemnified in the event of exercise accident.
15. Warn the local media, emergency services switchboards/controls and any neighbours who might be worried or affected by the exercise. Position "Exercise in Progress" signs if appropriate.
16. Ensure that senior management, directing staff, umpires and key players are aware of the time and location for the 'hot' debrief, and circulate a timetable for a full debrief.
17. Agree and prepare a detailed set of recommendations, each one accompanied by an action addressee and timescale.
18. Prepare a clear and concise summary report of the exercise to distribute to all organisations and groups which took part, together with major recommendations.
19. Discuss with senior management the outcome of the exercise and agree the future exercise programme.
20. Thank all personnel and outside agencies which took part.

Annex A - Guidelines for briefing those taking part in exercise

These Guidelines should form a basis around which a pre-exercise briefing can be developed. Individual agencies should adapt this for their own use including additional points relevant only to their organisation and personnel.

It is essential that all persons who will or could take part in an exercise, are fully briefed. Failure to do so could lead to the possibility of litigation should someone who has taken part in the exercise suffer physical or mental injury, citing poor advanced preparation by the organisers as a contributory factor. The briefing must be reasonably near in time to the exercise (i.e. not more than one month beforehand). The degree to which participants are briefed will vary according to the type of exercise being held and it is unlikely that the same depth of briefing will be required for a table top exercise as for a live exercise.

Essential Briefing Points

A verbal and written list of all participants in the exercise should be presented at the beginning of the briefing. The main briefing will wish to include the following items:

The exercise will take place between the following dates _____ and/or the following times _____/_____. The approximate duration of the exercise is _____.

The exercise code name is e.g. "Exercise Red Card". The exercise code name should be used as a prefix on all written, radio and telephone messages relating to the exercise.

This is/is not a multi-agency exercise. The other agencies involved are

The exercise scenario will/will not involve the following:

1. - A CIMAH/contingency plan site
2. - Simulated casualties
3. - Hazardous substances
4. - Simulated hazardous substances
5. - Fire
6. - Simulated fire/ smoke
7. - Smoke
8. - Effects toxic / harmless

A safety officer will be present, identified by _____

Exercise directors will be present, identified by _____

Exercise observers will/will not be present identified by _____

Any concerns regarding personal health and safety or the health and safety of others during the exercise should be drawn to the attention of the safety officer or an exercise director immediately. An assessment will be made as to whether the exercise can continue.

If a genuine injury is sustained (as opposed to a simulated injury) use and repeat the code word "_____." to attract attention - under no circumstances should these words be used by role playing casualties.

Notification of exercise suspension/abandonment / completion will be given by

(e.g. code words or audible signals.)

(¹) A health and safety risk assessment has been undertaken and your attention is drawn to the following (if applicable): Protective clothing/equipment required, over and above standard issue Areas of the site which are prohibited Physical hazards on site _____(sharp points, trip hazards etc.)

All participants in the briefing now have the opportunity to raise questions relevant to health and safety.

Any participants who wish to raise concerns about their personal health and safety or to pose questions relevant to health and safety after this briefing but before the exercise should see _____ or their line manager.

Will all participants ensure that they have signed the briefing attendance sheet which will be kept on record.

(¹) A "health and safety risk assessment" of the planned exercise is essential good practice. The method to undertake this should be an early consideration of the Exercise Planning Group. Each participating organisation must assess whether there is a the need for an individual assessment or whether one agency (e.g. the Fire Service along with the site owners) should undertake the risk assessment and share information with other participating agencies.

These guidelines for pre-exercise briefings are based on those produced by the Derbyshire Emergency Planning Liaison Group.