

State of Nevada



Exercise Program Guidance

November 27, 2023

Revision 7

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	3
Record of Changes.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program.....	6
Integrated Preparedness Cycle.....	8
Exercise Types.....	10
Exercise Documentation.....	13
Planning and After-Action Conferences.....	14
NIMS, Grant Guidance Requirements, HSEEP.....	16
Substitute Exercise Credit	21
Additional Resources and Information.....	22
Suggested Tracking Process for Improvement Planning.....	22
Training Available.....	23
Special Programs and Assistance Available.....	24
Acronyms.....	26

Introduction

The primary purpose of this document is to promote the importance of establishing and maintaining a progressive, comprehensive exercise program; a program which will ensure that local jurisdictions have realistic, tested, and proven plans with policies and procedures that reflect the specific needs of each community. Principles set forth in this document will encompass the notion that state, local, and tribal governments have direct responsibility to train and exercise their own homeland security professionals.

This document and the guidance it gives is required of the Nevada Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEM) by Nevada Revised Statutes chapter 414.040 4(b-2) “Prepare state and local governmental agencies, private organizations and other persons to be capable of responding appropriately if an emergency or disaster occurs by fostering the adoption of plans for emergency operations, conducting exercises to test those plans....”, and again in chapter 414.060 3(c) “In accordance with the plan and program for the emergency management in this State, procure supplies and equipment, institute planning, training and exercise programs....”

In order for this type of program to be effective, it will require a concentrated effort by state and local personnel to create a *partnership* dedicated to improving the delivery of emergency services through an objectives-driven capabilities-based approach. This will require joint planning, on-going training, and exercising the various functions and capabilities identified through the five mission areas of homeland security: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. Constant focus remains on encouraging more and more governmental agencies, private industry, and the “Whole Community” to hold a pro-active stance that will improve their abilities to respond effectively to and recover efficiently from emergency and disaster situations.

This document has been designed to provide information pertaining to the requirements and documentation of emergency management exercises consistent with law as outlined in the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and the principles contained within the new Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) dated January 2020, the National Incident Management System (NIMS), National Preparedness Goal (NPG), National Preparedness System (NPS), National Exercise Program NEP Baseline Plan (NEP Base Plan), and all current Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Grants Guidance related to exercises.

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) document dated January 2020 provides a set of fundamental principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. Exercises are an important component of preparedness, by providing the whole community with the opportunity to shape planning, assess and validate capabilities, and address areas for improvement. An exercise is an event or activity, delivered through discussion or action, to develop, assess, or validate plans, policies, procedures, and capabilities that jurisdictions/organizations can use to achieve planned objectives. Figure 1 below depicts HSEEP exercise program management as a continuously improving, progressive model.

Adherence to the policy and guidance presented in HSEEP ensures that exercise programs conform to established best practices and helps provide unity and consistency of effort for exercises at all levels of government.

This document will help define the key requirements for an entity to meet DHS grant guidance.



Figure 1

Integrated Preparedness Cycle

The Integrated Preparedness Cycle of planning, organizing/ equipping, training, exercising, and evaluating/improving is a continuous process that ensures the regular examination of ever-changing threats, hazards, and risks, as shown in Figure 2. The Cycle involves the assessment of threats, hazards, and risks; new and updated plans; and improvements implemented from previously identified shortfalls or gaps and the State Threat and Hazards Identification Risk Assessment/Stakeholders Preparedness Review (THIRA/SPR). The preparedness priorities are developed to ensure that the needed preparedness elements are incorporated. This cycle provides a continual and reliable approach to support decision making, resource allocation, and measure progress toward building, sustaining, and delivering capabilities based on a jurisdiction's/organization's threats, hazards, and risks.

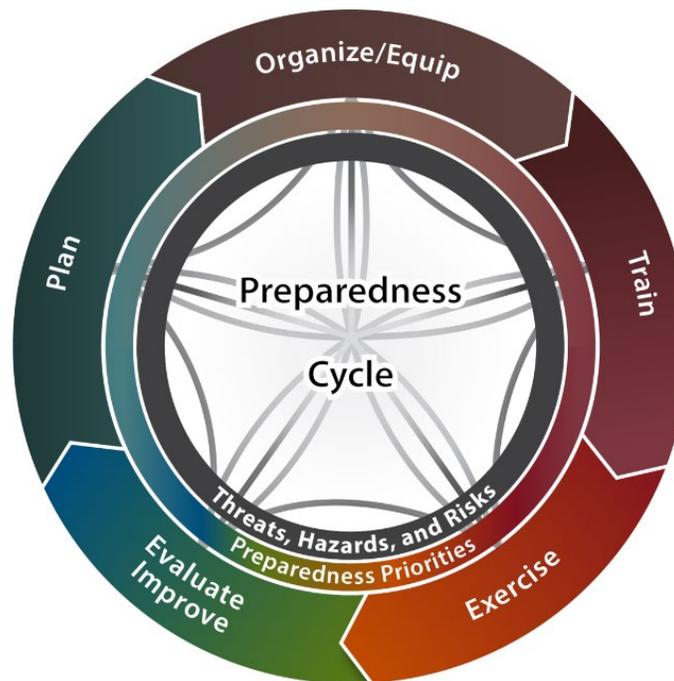


Figure 2

Linking Integrated Preparedness Cycle and HSEEP:

The exercise phase of the Integrated Preparedness Cycle is linked to the program management process and starts the design and development of individual exercises within HSEEP. Multi-year preparedness priorities guide the exercise program to produce quality individual exercises. These individual exercises are used to build, sustain, and deliver capabilities. This is accomplished by performing the following components:

- Engaging senior leaders
- Establishing multi-year preparedness priorities
- Conducting an Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW)
- Developing a multi-year Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP)
- Maintaining program reporting of exercise outcomes; and
- Managing exercise program resources.

Senior Leaders

The early and frequent engagement of senior leaders is the key to the success of any exercise program. Senior leaders provide the overarching guidance and direction for the exercise and evaluation program as well as specific intent for individual exercises. This includes all senior leaders not just elected or appointed officials.

Multi-year Preparedness Priorities

Preparedness priorities should be established by senior leaders and informed by risk and capability assessments, findings, and corrective actions from previous events and external requirements like regulations and grant guidance. Preparedness priorities should be comprehensive to meet whole community needs and drive preparedness activities throughout the Integrated Preparedness Cycle. For exercises, these priorities guide the development of exercise objectives, related training, staffing, resourcing, and other planning activities to ensure individual exercises assess and validate preparedness in an integrated and coordinated way.

Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW):

The Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW) is a meeting that establishes the strategy and structure for an exercise program, in addition to broader preparedness efforts, while setting the foundation for the planning, conduct, and evaluation of individual exercises. This meeting occurs on a periodic basis depending on the needs of the program and any grant or cooperative agreement requirements.

Multi-Year Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP):

The Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) is a document for combining efforts across the elements of the Integrated Preparedness Cycle to make sure that a jurisdiction/organization has the capabilities to handle threats and hazards. Through effective program management, each planning, organizing/equipping, training, exercising, and evaluating/improving activity becomes a supporting component of the larger preparedness priorities. These preparedness priorities help exercise planners design and develop a multi-year exercise program of individual exercises that target resources to where they are most useful. Reference the National Preparedness Goal for information regarding how resources are critical for those responsible in delivering capabilities toward national preparedness. This progressive approach ensures jurisdictions/organizations select the appropriate exercise types.

Quarter 2023							
	Activity						
Jan.	Planning						
	Organization						
	Equipment						
	Training						
	Exercises						
	Notes						
Feb.	Planning						
	Organization						
	Equipment						
	Training						
	Exercises						
	Notes						
Mar.	Planning						
	Organization						
	Equipment						
	Training						
	Exercises						
	Notes						

Example Nevada IPP Multi-Year calendar

Program Reporting:

Program reporting is intended to provide senior leaders with an analysis of issues, trends, and key outcomes from all exercises conducted as part of the exercise program, along with a continuous update on corrective actions. Reporting is a communications tool to inform senior leaders and guides the development of future preparedness activities. Program reporting, similar to the Rolling Summary Report, is not a collection of After-Action Reports, but it does feed into the IPP and is part of a continuous improvement process.

Managing Exercise Program Resources:

An effective exercise program utilizes the full range of available resources. Exercise program managers should plan an exercise budget, appropriate program staffing, and other needed resources.

Exercise Types

A consistent terminology and methodology for exercises is critical to avoid confusion, and to ensure that entities can exercise together seamlessly. To lay an effective foundation for a successful exercise program, the below descriptions and accompanying tables give the proper terminology and definitions of the exercise types.

There are seven (7) types of exercises defined within HSEEP, each of which is either *discussions-based* or *operations-based*.

Discussions-Based Exercises include seminars, workshops, tabletop exercises (TTXs), and games. These types of exercises familiarize players with or develop new plans, policies, procedures, and agreements. Discussion-based exercises focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues, and facilitators or presenters lead the discussion, keeping participants moving towards meeting the exercise objectives. Types of Discussion-Based Exercises include:

Type	Purpose	Structure	Participant Goals	Conduct Characteristics	Outcomes
Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common framework of understanding • Starting point for developing or changing plans, policies or procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations, SME's, Case studies • Lecture-based • Facilitator, Presenter • Limited feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain awareness or assess capabilities, operations • Set objectives for future capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal time constraints • Effective for small or large groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report that captures discussions, issues and action items • AAR/IP
Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus is on building a product • To focus on specific issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a venue conducive to discussion • Lectures, presentations, panel/case study discussions • Working breakout sessions • Facilitator, Presenter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a product as a group • Obtain consensus • Information sharing, collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant discussion • Relevant Stakeholder participation • Uses clear objective/ goals • Breakout sessions • Small or large groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Ops Plans • Mutual Aid Agreements • SOP's • Continuity Plans • Summary Report • AAR/IP
Tabletop Exercise (TTX)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of issues regarding Exercise scenario • Identify strengths and areas of improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario based • Players use knowledge and skills • Problems worked by group • Plenary or Breakout sessions • Facilitator, Presenter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance awareness, roles and responsibilities • Validate plans and procedures • Discuss concepts or assess systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced Facilitator • In-depth discussions • Problem-solving environment • No -fault environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend revisions to plans, policies, procedures • AAR/IP

State of Nevada Exercise Program Guidance (EPG)

Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulate Operations of player decisions • Critical decision points are major factor in evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team based, using actual or hypothetical situation • Decision-making based on design and objectives • Open, decision-based format can use “what if” questions • Pre-scripted or dynamic decision based on player actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore decision processes and consequences • Conduct analysis of existing plans • Evaluate existing and potential strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No resources used • Uses multiple teams • Uses models and simulations with increasing complexity • Can use pre-scripted activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate plans, policies, procedures or evaluating resources • AAR/IP
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Operations-Based Exercises include drills, functional exercises (FE), and full-scale exercises (FSE). These exercises validate plans, policies, procedures, and agreements; clarify roles and responsibilities; and identify resource gaps. Operations-based exercises include a real-time response such as initiating communications or mobilizing personnel and resources. Types of Operations-Based Exercises include:

Type	Purpose	Structure	Participant Goals	Conduct Characteristics	Outcomes
Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated activity to validate function or capability in an agency/organization • Training on new equipment, validate procedures, maintain skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone or series of drills • Defined plans, procedures, and protocols need to be in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate new procedures, policies, equipment • Practice and maintain skills • Prepare for future exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate feedback • Realistic environment • Narrow focus • Performance in isolation • Results are measured against established standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if plans can be executed as designed • Assess whether more training is required • Reinforce best practices • An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)
Functional (FE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate and evaluate capabilities, multiple functions and/or sub-functions, or interdependent groups of activities • Exercise plans, policies, procedures, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events are projected through a realistic exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity typically at the management level • Controllers typically use a Master 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate and evaluate capabilities • Focused on plans, policies, and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted in a realistic environment • Usually simulated deployment of resources and personnel • Use of Simulation Cell and Master Scenario Events List 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management evaluation of Emergency Operations Center (EOCs), command post, headquarters, and staffs • Performance analysis • Cooperative

State of Nevada Exercise Program Guidance (EPG)

	<p>and staffs involved in management, direction, command, and control functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply established plans, policies, and procedures under crisis conditions 	<p>Scenario Events List (MSEL) to ensure participant activity remains within predefined boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluators observe behaviors and compare them against established plans, policies, procedures, and standard practices (if applicable) 		<p>(MSEL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulators can inject scenario elements • Include controller and evaluators 	<p>relationships are strengthened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)
<p>Full-Scale Exercise (FSE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often includes many players operating under cooperative systems such as the Incident Command System (ICS) Unified Command • Focus on implementing and analyzing the plans, policies, and procedures that may have been developed in discussion-based exercises and honed during previous, smaller exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity at the operational level • Involves multiple agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions • Use of a MSEL drives player actions • SimCell controllers inject scenario elements • The level of support needed may be greater than that needed for other types of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate roles and responsibilities as addressed in plans and procedures • Coordinate between multiple agencies, organizations and jurisdictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid problem solving; critical thinking • Mobilization of personnel and resources • Exercise site is usually large with many activities occurring simultaneously • Site logistics require close monitoring • Safety issues, particularly regarding the use of props and special effects, must be monitored • Demonstrate roles and responsibilities as addressed in plans and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate plans, policies, and procedures • Evaluate resource requirements • An After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)

		exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted in a realistic environment to mirror a real incident by presenting complex problems 		procedures	
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Exercise Documentation

Exercise documentation provides the framework for exercise conduct and evaluation. The documentation helps the planning team apply the HSEEP Cycle. The most commonly used exercise design and development documents for Discussion-Based and Operations-Based exercises are listed below and more information can be found at: <https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/hseep-resources>

- A **Situation Manual (SitMan)**, A document that provides background information and serves as the primary reference material for exercise participants (core document for discussion-based exercises).
- The **Exercise Plan (ExPlan)**, A document that provides general information to exercise participants, including exercise objectives and scope, not including the scenario information.
- The **Controller and Evaluator (C/E) Handbook**, A document that provides specific exercise information and guidance for controllers and evaluators, may be a standalone document or supplement to the Exercise Plan, and adjusted accordingly.
- The **Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)**, A document or system that is a chronological timeline of expected actions and scripted events to be injected into exercise play by controllers to generate or prompt player activity. It ensures necessary events happen so that all objectives are met. Larger, more complex exercises may also use a procedural flow, which differs from the MSEL in that it contains only expected player actions or events. The MSEL links simulation to action, enhances the exercise experience for players, and reflects an incident or activity meant to prompt players to action.
- A **Player Handout**, A document that supplements the Exercise Plan and provides players with a quick-reference guide; sometimes referred to as “a pocket-size trifold or bifold.”
- **Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs)**, A document that captures information specifically related to the evaluation requirements developed by the exercise planning team. The EEG provides evaluators with a standardized tool to guide data collection and capture performance results. Since each jurisdiction/organization has unique targets and critical tasks, EEGs are developed specific to their plans, policies, procedures, and protocols.

- An **After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)**, The AAR/IP is a document that generally includes an exercise overview, analysis of capabilities, and a list of corrective actions. The length, format, and development timeframe of the AAR/IP depend on the exercise type and scope. The AAR/IP should include an overview of performance related to each exercise objective and associated capabilities.
- **NOTE:** *Seminars and Workshop may use a summary form of AAR/IP.* The summary form still needs to list the core capabilities addressed, purpose for the Seminar or Workshop, participating organizations, issues discussed and recommendations.

Planning and After-Action Meetings

The types of planning activities most useful in exercise design and development are listed below. The primary planning activities include establishing an exercise timeline and assembling the exercise planning team. The exercise planning team members decide the type and number of additional planning meetings necessary.

Type	Meeting Focus	Discussion Points	Exercise Tools	Outcomes
Concept & Objective Meeting (C&O)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal beginning of the planning process • Priorities and objectives are determined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope • Aligned Capabilities • Location, Date, Duration • Planning Team makeup • Assumptions and Artificialities • Security • Resources, Logistics • Timeline, Milestones • Concerns, Sensitivities, Local Issues • Guidance and Intent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting agenda and briefing • Background and rationale for exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise Concept • Timeline (group consensus) • Extent of Participation • Identifying Planning Team • Timelines, Milestones and meeting dates
Initial Planning Meeting (IPM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal start to development phase • Refining scope and objectives for exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined Objectives and Capabilities • Evaluation requirements • Relevant plans, policies and procedures to evaluate • Scenario creation • Modeling and Simulations • Extent of Play • Duration of Exercise • Planners' roles and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting agenda • Overview of exercise and meeting discussion points • THIRA assessment • Room layout (Discussion) • Venue layout (Operations) • Proposed Timelines, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined Objectives and Capabilities • Initial Capability Targets and Critical Tasks • Scenario Variables • List of participating organizations • Develop Exercise Documents • Identify SME's

State of Nevada Exercise Program Guidance (EPG)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns, Sensitivities, Local Issues Date, Time, Location for next meeting 	Milestones	
Midterm Planning Meeting (MPM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued development phase Scenario development Exercise product development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft exercise documentation Scenario timeline building Development of MSEL (if no MSEL meeting planned) Venue artificialities and/or limitations Agreement of final logistical items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Briefing overview of exercise discussion points IPM minutes Draft scenario timeline Draft exercise documentation Other selected documentation for planning guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review exercise documentation Draft Facilitator Guide or C/E Handbook, and EEG's Well-developed scenario with injects Agreement on exercise site Logistics planning requirements Date, Time, Location for MSEL (if done) and FPM
Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing timeline and developing injects Identify activities that must occur in exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tasks, conditions, standards to meet objectives Key events, critical tasks Event originator, target player, expected actions, timeframes Contingency injects to prompt player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Previous meeting minutes Draft exercise documentation Applicable plans, policies, procedures Agreed-upon MSEL template 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event injects and delivery timeline created Assignment of responsibility for conducting events Revisions of draft scenario- based documents Timeline for completion
Final Planning Meeting (FPM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all elements of exercise are ready for conduct. Receive final drafts of exercise materials prior to meeting No changes to scope, design, or supporting documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive final review Approve all remaining draft documents, presentation materials Resolve any open planning issues Identify last minute concerns Review all exercise logistical activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Meeting minutes from IPM, MPM, MSEL for review All draft exercise documents and documentation Previously finalized documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final approval of exercise documents/materials Identified issues resolved Approve exercise processes and procedures Assignments, facilities, equipment, schedules and logistics are confirmed ready

NIMS and Grant Guidance Requirements/HSEEP

NIMS Compliance

- Jurisdictions receiving Grant Funds must work toward insuring that all county plans, policies, procedures and emergency response personnel are compliant with National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- Exercises conducted using Emergency Management Program Grants (EMPG) funding **must** be NIMS compliant. This includes the following:
 - Developing/enhancing systems to monitor exercise program
 - Conducting all-hazards exercises, based on the likely hazards/risks as identified in a vulnerability assessment and/or THIRA
 - Conducting exercises which include the testing of the Incident Command System structure
 - Any future NIMS mandated exercise requirements

Grant Guidance Requirements

Entities that receive and utilize DHS/FEMA Grant funds (e.g., EMPG) are required to test periodically HSEEP Core Capabilities in exercises in accordance with new HSEEP 2020 Policy. The specific year Grant Guidance will inform them of these requirements, and NDEM Grant Managers can assist jurisdictions in understanding these requirements. Specific requirements can be seen wherever the bolded word **must** appears in the discussion below.

In general, the below represents what Grant Guidance requires:

- All entities receiving Grant Funds **must** take part in or conduct an IPPW that establishes the strategy and structure for a training and exercise program, in addition to broader preparedness efforts, while setting the foundation for the planning, conduct, and evaluation of individual exercises each calendar year that is used to developed a multi-year IPP. The IPPW should include:
 - The entities' training and exercise priorities, a jurisdiction's gap analysis, and the state strategy
 - The Core Capabilities that the entity will train for and exercise against.
 - An Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW) which:

- Reflects the training activities which will take place prior to an exercise, allowing exercises to serve as a true validation of previous training.
 - Reflects all exercises in which the entity participates
 - Employs a progressive and whole community approach for training and exercise activities.
- All entities receiving Grant Funds **must** publish the new Multi-Year Integrated Preparedness Plan and *should* be part of the state's IPP. Integrating with NDEM IPP counts as publishing. DEM publishes the coordinated IPP in its WebEOC calendar, which is a living document.
 - EMPG Grantees (e.g., NDEM) **must** take part in four exercises within a 12-month period, one of which must be a full-scale exercise.
 - Individuals whose salaries are funded in whole or in part by EMPG funds **must** participate in a minimum of three exercises per year. Participating as either a Planner or as Exercise Staff (e.g. Controller, Evaluator, or within a Simulation Cell) counts toward this requirement and needs to be documented in the AAR/IP and/or sign-in sheets.
 - DEM's Grants Compliance Officer is responsible to ensure Grants compliance by jurisdictions.

NOTE: Entities are encouraged to take part in the annual State IPPW and Preparedness Summit, which counts toward two exercises for each individual attending both.

HSEEP

The HSEEP program guidance document provides a proven and comprehensive set of exercise planning procedures for which it is *recommended* that entities using DHS/FEMA Grant funds follow. These recommendations can be seen wherever the italicized word *should* appears in the discussion below.

- The type of exercise selected by the entity *should* be consistent with the entity's IPP.
- Exercise specific objectives *should* be based on Core Capabilities and their associated critical tasks, which are contained within formal plans, policies, and procedures and should be addressed in EEGs.
- In addition, the exercise specific objectives chosen for an exercise,

as much as possible, *should* be linked to a jurisdiction's priorities developed from following the Strategic Planning Process and results of the IPPW

- The scenarios used in exercises *should* be tailored toward validating the Core Capabilities and exercise specific objectives *should* be based on the entity's hazard/risk vulnerability assessment and/or the Threat/Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (THIRA).
- Exercise planners *should* develop the following documents to support exercise planning, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning:
 - For Discussion-based Exercises:
 - Situation Manual (SITMAN)
 - Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEG)
 - For Operations-based Exercises:
 - Exercise Plan (EXPLAN)
 - Player Handout
 - Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)
 - Controller/Evaluator Handbook (C/E Handbook)
 - Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEG)
- Exercise planners **must** develop and turn in an After-Action Report/Improvement Plan to DEM Grants Program Officer and/or Exercise Officer in an electronic format.

Sample templates and formats for all documents are available at <https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/guest/welcome>

- AAP/IPs created for exercises *should* use the templates provided within HSEEP as guides.
- Following each exercise, a draft AAR/IP *should* be developed based on information gathered through use of EEGs, participant feedback (written and gathered through an after action Hot Wash), and evaluator notes.
- Following every exercise, an After-Action Meeting (AAM) *should* be conducted, in which:
 - Key personnel and the exercise planning team are presented with findings and recommendations from the draft AAR/IP.

State of Nevada Exercise Program Guidance (EPG)

- Corrective actions addressing a draft AAR/IP's recommendations are developed and assigned to responsible parties with due dates for completion.
- A final AAR/IP with recommendations and corrective actions derived from discussion at the AAM **must** be completed within a reasonable time after the completion of each exercise. 30-90 Days is reasonable in almost all cases depending on exercise complexity.
- Dissemination of the Final AAR/IP *should* be made to all participating agencies. Submission of a copy of the Final AAR/IP **must** be made to the DEM Grants Program Officer and/or State Exercise Officer in electronic format (Microsoft Word or PDF file) for review and inclusion into the HSEEP database hseep@fema.dhs.gov, the state's EMPG Grants program database, and FEMA R-IX Grants program manager.
- corrective actions derived from an *AAM* are associated with the recommendations and should be linked to a capability element as defined in the Core Capabilities.
- Corrective actions included in the improvement plan *should* be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) and written as actionable steps intended to resolve capability gaps and shortcomings identified in exercises
- Corrective actions included in the plan *should* designate a projected start date and completion date.
- Corrective actions included in the improvement plan *should* be assigned to an organization and a point of contact (POC) within that organization for tracking of improvement.
- Corrective actions *should* be continually monitored and reviewed as part of an organizational Improvement Planning Program. An individual (usually identified in the improvement plan) needs to be designated as each organization's POC who is responsible for managing and reporting the corrective actions resulting from exercises, policy discussions, and real-world events are resolved. Monitoring should take place often, but especially during the Strategic Planning Process.
- Entities **must** have a process for tracking of corrective actions from exercises and real-world events in place and report progress on quarterly reports. A suggested process of tracking such corrective actions is discussed elsewhere in this document.
- Entities *should* consider the revision of current plans, policies, and procedures based on information contained in the AAR/IP to reflect

State of Nevada Exercise Program Guidance (EPG)

necessary changes and improve performance. Following the development of an AAR/IP, jurisdictions can utilize a Workshop exercise designed to create, modify, and/or update plans by including as participants stakeholders and NDEM State Planners for assistance. Assistance for scheduling and developing such a Workshop could be requested from NDEM anytime but should be scheduled at each annual IPPW.

Substitute Exercise Credit for a Real-World Event

It is understood that the occurrence of an actual emergency or disaster can create difficulties that will affect a jurisdiction's exercise program, capability, and schedule. Therefore, jurisdictions experiencing an actual, substantial response to an emergency or disaster may be eligible to receive substitute credit to satisfy exercise requirements.

To be considered for substitute exercise credit, the documentation of the event does not have to utilize the exact AAR/IP template, but should mirror the intent of the after action review and improvement planning process of HSEEP Policy, to include:

- a summary or general description of the event(s) that took place
- the participating organizations in the event
- What it was about this incident that proved a heightened or exceptional test of the local plan and related resources (*please include any successes, accomplishments, lessons learned, and Core Capabilities tested by the incident*).
- Recommendations for improvement of performance (suggested use of an improvement planning matrix similar to the AAR/IP template)

All submissions should include documentation to the best extent possible – pictures, newspaper articles, etc. The decision to accept or reject the actual incident for substitute exercise credit rests with the Chief, Nevada Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

FEMA Region IX Grants lists these two requirements to meet in order for them to give exercise credit for real-world event:

1. The real-world event must impact the ability of the jurisdiction/entity to conduct the scheduled exercise due to timing of the real-world event, number of whole community partners impacted by the real-world event, capabilities tested by the real-world event nearly mirror those to be tested by the scheduled exercise.
2. Though a local or State Declaration will suffice to add strength to request, the complexity and/or size of necessary response and/or recovery to the real-world event adds necessary strength to request.

Additional Resources and Information

HSEEP Resources

- <https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/guest/welcome> provides HSEEP Policy and Guidance along with many templates and helps assisting users to h plan for, evaluate, conduct, and track corrective actions from exercises. This site is also home to FEMA's Prep Toolkit that each emergency manager and training/exercise positions throughout the state should register with to access all the HSEEP and exercise helps.

Register at: <https://sso.preptoolkit.fema.gov/register>

After Action Report / Improvement Plan

- The goal of the DHS exercise evaluation and improvement process is to validate strengths and identify improvement opportunities for the participating organization(s). This is accomplished by observing the exercise based on pre-determined evaluation data to be collected, analyzing the data to compare performance against expected outcomes, and determining what changes need to be made to any procedures, plans, staffing, equipment, communications, organizations, and interagency coordination efforts.

Suggested Tracking Process for Improvement Planning

Tracking Corrective Actions

Having a process to track corrective actions contained in AAR/IP's is a requirement for all HSEEP users. Agencies and jurisdictions **must** have a process to track corrective actions to completion. The below process, used by NDEM is a useful and acceptable process and meets all requirements set by HSEEP.

- Collect all improvement plan matrices from exercises your agency/jurisdiction has taken part in over several years.
- Identify all particular improvements assigned specifically to your agency/jurisdiction to track to completion.

NOTE: Responsibility in tracking corrective actions belongs to the agency or jurisdiction as noted in the AAR/IP.

- Create a table or spreadsheet that contains a minimum of columns and column titles that cover the following: Name of exercise, Date of exercise, Corrective action description, Responsible agency/jurisdiction and POC, (suggested) completion date from AAR/IP, and status. Below is an example:

State of Nevada Exercise Program Guidance (EPG)

Exercise	Date	Corrective Action	Responsibility	Completion Date	Status
County HazMat FSE	June 2021	Develop Pre-scripted Public Information messages regarding shelter and evacuation	County PIO	Jan. 1, 2022	County PIO waiting for approval of pre-scripted messages.
Bombs are Us	September 2021	Hold ICS 300 and ICS 400 training for all Incident Command personnel	County Training Officer	June 1, 2022	IC personnel are scheduled to attend training at NDEM in April 2022.

- Set up a *recurring schedule* to check on status of these corrective actions. E.g., NDEM checks the status on the 1st of every other month and makes appropriate changes.
- Updating the tracking of corrective actions should follow one of three possible outcomes:
 1. *Completion*. When the corrective action is completed, remove from the current table and/or spreadsheet and add to a “Completed Corrective Actions” table and/or spreadsheet. Eventually such a list will outnumber the current list and be evidence of improvements made.
 2. *Completion Date Change*. If more time is needed to complete the corrective action, change the completion date to a more realistic goal.
 3. *No Longer Applicable*. If changes within the emergency management program make a particular corrective action no longer necessary or possible, remove from the current corrective action table and/or spreadsheet and add to the “Completed Corrective Actions” noting it is no longer applicable.

Training and Assistance available from NDEM

The below training is available for individuals and jurisdictions and can be requested through the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) or from the State Exercise Officer:

- Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) course from NDEM or the web cast course from the Emergency Management Institute (EMI)

State of Nevada Exercise Program Guidance (EPG)

- Specialized and/or Just-in-Time training for exercise planning teams and emergency management personnel to include:
 - Controller/Evaluator/Simulation Cell training
 - AAR/IP writing
 - Exercise Program Management
 - Technical training and/or periodic reviews
- Evaluations of jurisdiction and/or agency plans, policies, and capabilities (e.g., Emergency Operations Plan – EOP; current policies vs. changing Grant requirements/HSEEP policy; etc.

Special Programs Available

FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate (NPD) and Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) Technical Assistance (TA) program assists states, tribes and local jurisdictions to build and sustain specific emergency management program capabilities by providing services and analytical capacities drawn from within FEMA, from other Federal Departments and Agencies and from other subject matter experts. Within a requesting jurisdiction, TA provides the relevant practitioners and their leadership with specialized, practical tools and information in order for the jurisdiction to create more resilient, more comprehensive and better coordinated plans and planning. TA differs from training in that TA presumes participants already possess sufficient topical knowledge to consider and discuss new, practical aspects of the TA subject and are able on their own authority to subsequently adjust their emergency management plans and programs.

FEMA NPD provides Preparedness TA activities in support of the four homeland security mission areas of prevention, protection, response and recovery. FEMA GPD provides Program Management TA that directly supports effective and efficient grant program management. TA is provided free-of charge and is available to all qualified Department of Homeland Security (DHS) FEMA preparedness grantees and subgrantees.

Acronyms

AAM	After-Action Meeting
AAR/IP	After-Action Review/Improvement Plan
C&O	Concepts and Objectives
C/E	Controller/Evaluator
DEM	Division of Emergency Management
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EEG	Exercise Evaluation Guide
EMI	Emergency Management Institute
EMPG	Emergency Management Program Grants
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EPG	Exercise Program Guide
EXPLAN	Exercise Plan
FE	Functional Exercise
FPM	Final Planning Meeting
FSE	Full-Scale Exercise
GPD	Grants Program Directorate
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program
ICS	Incident Command System
IPM	Initial Planning Meeting
IPP	Integrated Preparedness Plan
IPPW	Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop
MPM	Mid-term Planning Meeting
MSEL	Master Scenario Exercise List
NEP	National Exercise Program
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NPD	National Preparedness Directorate
NPG	National Preparedness Goal
NRS	Nevada Revised Statute
POC	Point Of Contact
SITMAN	Situation Manual
SME	Subject Matter Expert

State of Nevada Exercise Program Guidance (EPG)

SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TA	Technical Assistance
THIRA/SPR	Threat Hazard Identification Risk Assessment/Stakeholder Preparedness Review
TTX	Table-Top Exercise