

# Drills and Exercises: Guidelines for Schools



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL SAFETY AND PREVENTION  
MAY 2024

# Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>I. Introduction.....</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| Role of Exercises.....   | 1         |
| What is the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)? ..... | 2         |
| <b>II. Exercise Planning Process.....</b>                                    | <b>2</b>  |
| Types of Exercises .....   | 4         |
| Discussion-Based Exercises.....  | 4         |
| Operations-Based Exercises.....  | 6         |
| Exercise Design and Development.....   | 7         |
| Conduct Exercises.....   | 9         |
| Exercise Evaluation.....   | 10        |
| Improvement Planning.....  | 11        |
| <b>III. Special Considerations .....</b>                                     | <b>11</b> |
| Access and Functional Needs.....   | 11        |
| Developmental Appropriateness.....   | 13        |
| Arizona Minimum Requirements for School Emergency Operations Plans .....     | 15        |
| <b>IV. In Conclusion of this Document .....</b>                              | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Attachment A: After Action Report Templates.....</b>                      | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Attachment B: Resource List.....</b>                                      | <b>21</b> |
| <b>Attachment C: Tabletop Exercise Toolkit.....</b>                          | <b>22</b> |
| Short Tabletop Exercises (15-30 Minutes).....                                | 22        |
| Longer Tabletop Exercises (30 Minutes – 2 Hours) .....                       | 23        |



### I. **Introduction**

The *Arizona Drills and Exercises: Guidelines for Schools* document is based upon local, state, tribal, and federal best practices. The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) provides these guidelines as an aide for district and school staff when developing and conducting drills and exercises, in addition to validating information written in a school emergency response plan. Training and exercising in support of the plan ensures that staff, students, faculty, parents, and community representatives understand critical roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Because of an evolution in our collective understanding of national preparedness, this guide is based on the lessons learned from school incidents, terrorist attacks, wildfires, and other experiences. Schools must be prepared to respond and meet the needs of the affected school system, as well as cope with the potential impact on the local community. Therefore, this document provides guidance on the important exercise processes and factors schools must take into account when considering and conducting drills and exercises. *This Guidance builds upon your Emergency Response Plan (ERP), also known as your Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The Arizona Minimum Requirements for Schools Emergency Response Plans and Template may be found on the ADE website at <http://www.azed.gov/prevention-programs/emergency-preparedness/>*

### **Role of Exercises**

An exercise is an instrument to train for, assess, practice, and improve performance in a risk-free environment. A well-designed exercise provides a safe environment to test capabilities, familiarize personnel with roles and responsibilities, and foster meaningful interaction and communication across organizations. Exercises bring together and strengthen the whole community in its efforts to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from all hazards. While they are a core component of the **preparedness** phase, exercises feed into all phases of the emergency management cycle in the following ways:

- They identify vulnerabilities to address in the **prevention** and **mitigation** phases.
- They allow partners to practice a **response**.
- They recognize what resources may be needed for **recovery**.

Regularly scheduled exercises provide several benefits to schools, including the following:

1. Clarify roles and responsibilities.
2. Evaluate plans and procedures.
3. Develop effective agency relationships.
4. Assess resources and capabilities.
5. Identify gaps, needs, and solutions.
6. Promote school and community preparedness.
7. Comply with statutory requirements.

A comprehensive school emergency exercise program contains activities that build:

- From simple to complex;
- From narrow to broad;
- From least expensive to most costly to implement; and
- From theoretical to realistic.

Overall, exercises are cost-effective and useful tools that help the nation practice and refine our collective capacity.

### **What is the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)?**

The HSEEP program is the foundation of our local, state, tribal, and nation's preparedness programs, and schools are encouraged to review HSEEP materials at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov). Schools participating on an exercise development team that is planning a community-wide exercise may experience the process of aligning exercise program priorities, exercise objectives, and core capabilities. HSEEP addresses this process and provides a comprehensive set of guiding principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. The State of Arizona and national community response agencies utilize HSEEP principles in their exercise programs. Priorities, strategy documents, threat and hazard identification/risk assessment, processes, capability assessments, and the results from previous exercises and real-world events depict the principles of HSEEP. To access the School HSEEP Toolkit, please visit <https://training.fema.gov/programs/emischool/el361toolkit/conductingexercisedrills.htm#item2>

Following HSEEP provides schools with the following benefits:

1. Provides a common exercise policy and program guidance throughout the nation.
2. Utilizes lessons learned and best practices from past experiences.
3. Provides standardized components and formats that are customizable.
4. Provides a common operating language.
5. Allows for easy integration into working with other emergency responders.

### **II. Exercise Planning Process**

The exercise process is ongoing and includes design and development, conduct, evaluation and improvement planning. Use of a multi-disciplinary team for exercise planning will produce the best outcomes and ensure both the physical and psychological safety of students and staff. Recommended roles for team membership include:

- Administrator
- School mental health personnel
- School nurse
- Security personnel
- Teachers
- Special education and 504 representative
- Parents
- School Resource Officer
- Facilities/Maintenance Personnel
  - Community representation or coordination as appropriate, i.e., law enforcement, fire, public health, emergency management, subject-matter experts such as utilities, private industry, hospitals, and others.

Exercise program management is the process of overseeing and integrating a variety of exercises over time. Effective exercise program management promotes a multi-year approach:

- Engaging District and School Leadership
- Establishing multi-year exercise program priorities
- Developing a multi-year training and exercise program
- Maintaining a rolling summary of exercise outcomes
- Managing exercise program resources

A common methodology for planning and conducting individual exercises is used by HSEEP as depicted in the graphic pictured right. A graphic and descriptions of each phase are listed in the following pages.

### Exercise Design and Development

In designing and developing individual exercises, exercise planning team members are identified to schedule planning meetings, identify and develop exercise objectives, design the scenario, create documentation, plan exercise conduct and evaluation, and coordinate logistics. At key points in this process, the exercise planning team engages school leadership to ensure their intent is captured and that they are prepared to support the exercise as necessary.

### Exercise Conduct

After design and development activities are complete, the exercise is ready to occur. Activities essential to conducting individual exercises include preparing for exercise play, managing exercise play, and conducting immediate exercise wrap-up activities.

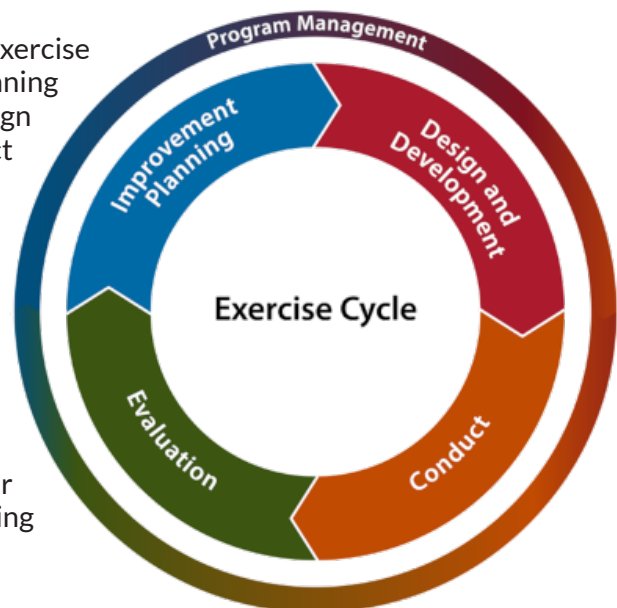
### Exercise Evaluation

Evaluation is the cornerstone of an exercise and must be considered throughout all phases of the exercise planning cycle, beginning when the exercise planning team meets to establish objectives and initiate exercise design. Effective evaluation assesses performance against exercise objectives, and identifies and documents strengths and areas for improvement relative to capabilities.

### Improvement Planning (IP)

During improvement planning, the corrective actions identified during individual exercises are tracked to completion, ensuring that exercises yield tangible preparedness improvements. An effective corrective action program develops IPs that are dynamic documents, which are continually monitored and implemented as part of the larger system of improving preparedness.

**Takeaway: A progressive exercise program is a series of exercises tied to a set of common program priorities. Each exercise builds on previous exercises using more sophisticated simulation techniques or requiring more preparation time, personnel, and planning.**



### **Types of Exercises**

A progressive, multi-year exercise program enables organizations to participate in a series of increasingly complex exercises, with each successive exercise building upon the previous one until mastery is achieved. Regardless of exercise type, each exercise within the progressive series is linked to a set of common program priorities and designed to test associated capabilities.

Further, by defining training requirements in the planning process, organizations can address known shortfalls prior to exercising capabilities. This progressive approach, with exercises that build upon each other and are supported at each step with training resources, will ensure that organizations do not rush into a full-scale exercise too quickly. The different types of exercises that may be included in the multi-year plan are described as:

#### Discussion-Based Exercises

Discussion-based exercises include seminars, workshops, tabletop exercises (TTXs), and games. These types of exercises can be used to familiarize players with, or develop new, plans, policies, agreements, and procedures. Discussion-based exercises focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues. Facilitators and/or presenters usually lead the discussion, keeping participants on track towards meeting exercise objectives.

#### *Seminars*

Seminars are informal discussions that orient participants to, or provide an overview of, authorities, strategies, plans, policies, procedures, protocols, resources, concepts, and ideas.

- As a discussion-based exercise, seminars can be valuable for entities that are developing or making major changes to existing plans or procedures.
- Seminars can be similarly helpful when attempting to assess or gain awareness of the capabilities of interagency or inter-jurisdictional operations.
- Seminars emphasize the emergency management link to school mission, finances, annual progress, and community responsibility.

#### *Workshops*

Although similar to seminars, workshops differ in two important aspects:

- Participant interaction is increased
- Focus is placed on achieving or building a product.

Effective workshops entail the broadest attendance by relevant stakeholders and may produce products such as:

- New standard operating procedures
- Emergency operations plans
- Continuity of operations plans
- Mutual aid agreements.

To be effective, workshops should have clearly defined objectives, products, or goals, and should focus on a specific issue. Workshops typically begin with a presentation followed by facilitated breakout sessions.

### *Tabletop Exercises (TTX)*

A TTX is intended to generate discussion among key personnel of various issues regarding a hypothetical, simulated emergency. TTXs can be used to enhance the following:

- General awareness,
- Validate plans and procedures,
- Rehearse concepts,
- Assess the types of systems needed to guide the prevention of, protection from, mitigation of, response to, and recovery from a defined incident.

Generally, TTXs are aimed at facilitating conceptual understanding, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, and/or achieving changes in perceptions.

During a TTX, players are encouraged to discuss issues in depth, collaboratively examining areas of concern and solving problems. The effectiveness of a TTX is derived from the energetic involvement of participants and their assessment of recommended revisions to current policies, procedures, and plans.

TTXs can range from basic to complex as depicted below:

In a basic tabletop exercise such as a Facilitated Discussion,

- The scenario is presented and remains constant—it describes an emergency and brings discussion participants up to the simulated present time.
- Players apply their knowledge and skills to a list of problems presented by the facilitator;
- Problems are discussed as a group; and resolution is reached and documented for later analysis.

In an advanced TTX, play advances as players receive pre-scripted messages that alter the original scenario.

- A facilitator usually introduces problems one at a time in the form of a written message, simulated telephone call, videotape, or other means.
- Players discuss the issues raised by each problem, referencing established authorities, plans, and procedures for guidance.
- Player decisions are incorporated as the scenario continues to unfold.

During a TTX, all participants should be encouraged to contribute to the discussion and be reminded that they are making decisions in a no-fault environment. Effective TTX facilitation is critical to keeping participants focused on exercise objectives and associated capability targets.

### *Games*

A game is a simulation of operations that often involves two or more teams, usually in a competitive environment, using rules, data, and procedures designed to depict an actual or hypothetical situation. Games explore the consequences of player decisions and actions. They are useful tools for validating plans and procedures or evaluating resource requirements.

During game play, decision-making may be either slow and deliberate or rapid and more stressful, depending on the exercise design and objectives. The open, decision-based format of a game can incorporate “what if” questions that expand exercise benefits. Depending on the game’s design, the consequences of player actions can be either pre-scripted or decided dynamically. Identifying critical decision-making points is a major factor in the success of evaluating a game.

### Operations-Based Exercises

Operations-based exercises include drills, functional exercises (FEs), and full-scale exercises (FSEs). These exercises may be used to validate plans, policies, agreements, and procedures; clarify roles and responsibilities; and identify resource gaps. Operations-based exercises are characterized by actual reaction to an exercise scenario, such as initiating communications or mobilizing personnel and resources.

### *Drills*

A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to validate a single function or capability in a single agency or organization.

- Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, validate procedures, or practice and measure skills against established standards.
- Drills provide immediate feedback in a realistic environment, while isolated from other response actions.
- Drills may be appropriate for establishing a community-designated disaster receiving center or shelter.
- Drills can also be used to determine if plans can be executed as designed, to assess whether more training is required, or to reinforce best practices.
- A drill is useful as a stand-alone tool, but a series of drills can be used to prepare several organizations to collaborate in an FSE.
- For every drill, clearly defined plans, procedures, and protocols need to be in place. Personnel need to be familiar with those plans and trained in the processes and procedures to be drilled.

### *Functional Exercises (FE)*

FEs are designed to validate and evaluate capabilities, multiple functions and/or sub-functions, or interdependent groups of functions.

- FEs are typically focused on exercising plans, policies, procedures, and staff members involved in management, direction, command, and control functions.
- In FEs, events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity typically at the management level.
- An FE is conducted in a realistic, real-time environment; however, movement of personnel and equipment is usually simulated.
- FE controllers typically use a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) to ensure participant activity remains within predefined boundaries and ensure exercise objectives are accomplished.
- Consider injecting scenario elements to simulate real events.
- Performance analysis and cooperative relationships are part of the exercise, but it is less expensive than FSE due to simulated movement of personnel and equipment.



### *Full-Scale Exercises (FSE)*

FSEs are typically the most complex and resource-intensive type of exercise. They involve multiple agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions and validate many facets of preparedness. FSEs often include many players operating under cooperative systems such as the Incident Command System (ICS) or Unified Command.

- In an FSE, events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity at the operational level.
- FSEs are usually conducted in a real-time, stressful environment that is intended to mirror a real incident. Personnel and resources may be mobilized and deployed to the scene, where actions are performed as if a real incident had occurred.
- The FSE simulates reality by presenting complex and realistic problems that require critical thinking, rapid problem solving, and effective responses by trained personnel.
- The level of support needed to conduct an FSE is greater than that needed for other types of exercises. The exercise site for an FSE is usually large, and site logistics require close monitoring.
- Safety issues, particularly regarding the use of victims, props, and special effects, must be monitored. Throughout the duration of the exercise, many activities occur simultaneously.

### **Exercise Design and Development**

In the design and development phase, the lead exercise planner uses the intent and guidance of their leadership and the exercise program priorities developed in program management to plan individual exercises. Exercise planning teams apply this guidance to shape the key concepts and planning considerations for an individual exercise or series of exercises. The eight key steps of exercise design and development include:

- Setting the exercise foundation by reviewing leadership's guidance, the program management plan and other factors;
- Selecting participants for an exercise planning team and developing an exercise planning timeline with milestones;
- Developing exercise-specific objectives and identifying the school's capabilities
- Identifying evaluation requirements;
- Developing the exercise scenario;
- Creating documentation;
- Coordinating logistics;
- Planning for exercise control and evaluation

Exercise planners are encouraged to seek additional information on HSEEP doctrine to meet their specific needs and broaden their experience in exercise program development and management. To locate the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Course offerings, contact your local emergency management office, or the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA), Emergency Management Training Office at 602-464-6225 or 1-800- 411-2336. DEMA may offer courses on School Preparedness, Emergency Management, Incident Command/NIMS, Homeland Security, All Hazards Planning, and Hazardous Materials.

**Exercise Objectives** -- Based on direction from school or district leadership, the exercise planning team selects one or more exercise program priorities on which to focus an individual exercise. These priorities drive the development of exercise objectives, which are distinct outcomes that an organization wishes to achieve during an exercise. Exercise objectives should incorporate school or district leadership intent and guidance, and exercise school's plans and procedures, operating environment, and desired outcomes. Generally, planners should select a reasonable number of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) exercise objectives to facilitate effective scenario design, exercise conduct, and evaluation. Guidelines for developing SMART objectives:

| SMART Guidelines for Exercise Objectives |   |
|--|---|
| Specific                                 | Objectives should address the five Ws – who, what, when, where, and why. The objective specifies what needs to be done with a timeline for completion.        |
| Measurable                               | Objectives should include numeric or descriptive measures that define quantity, quality, cost, etc. Their focus should be on observable actions and outcomes. |
| Achievable                               | Objectives should be within the control, influence, and resources of exercise play and participant actions.   |
| Relevant                                 | Objectives should be instrumental to the mission of the organization and link to its goals or strategic intent.   |
| Time-bound                               | A specified and reasonable timeframe should be incorporated into all objectives.  |

**Determining Exercise Scope** -- Enables planners to “right-size” an exercise to meet the objectives while staying within the resource and personnel constraints of the exercising organizations. Key elements in defining exercise scope include exercise type, participation level, exercise duration, exercise location, and exercise parameters. Defining exercise scope is determining what exercise type to conduct. The exercise type is selected based on the purpose of the exercise. If the intent is to review and discuss a new policy, plan, or set of procedures, a discussion-based exercise may be appropriate. If the intent is to assess the responders’ knowledge of a plan, policy, or set of procedures, an operations-based exercise may be appropriate.

**Exercise Scenario** – A scenario is an outline or model of the simulated sequence of events for the exercise and can be written as a narrative or depicted by an event timeline. The exercise planners should select and develop scenarios that enable an exercise to assess objectives and the district, schools and local resource capabilities. All scenarios should be realistic, plausible, and challenging, but keeping in mind the overall safety of the participants; however, designers must ensure the scenario is not so complicated that it overwhelms players. A scenario consists of three basic elements:

- The general context or comprehensive story;
- The required conditions that will allow players to demonstrate proficiency and competency in conducting critical tasks, demonstrating core capabilities, and meeting objectives; and
- The technical details necessary to accurately depict scenario conditions and events.

The planning team ensures that the design effort is not characterized by a fixation on scenario development; rather, the scenario facilitates assessment of exercise objectives and school and local resource capabilities. It may be at this time that the planning team and school leadership carefully assess the appropriateness of an announced versus unannounced drill/exercise, and weigh the appropriateness based upon whether the scenario and objectives of the unannounced drill/exercise have been properly trained and previously exercised. When utilizing the previous participants of the drill/exercise, an unannounced drill/exercise may likely be used as a tool to resolve gaps from a previous exercise.

**Threat or Hazard** - The first step in designing a scenario is determining the type of threat or hazard on which the exercise will focus. Each type of emergency has its own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to evaluating different aspects of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. The exercise planning team should choose a threat or hazard that best assesses the objectives and capabilities on which the exercise will focus. The identification of this threat or hazard scenario should also be based on the organization's threat/hazard identification and risk assessment.

**Safety/Security** - Because of the sensitive nature of many exercises, it may be important for the exercise site to be secure. Consider asking local law enforcement to provide site security where appropriate. Exercises often also involve sensitive or confidential information or procedures. For all exercises involving sensitive or confidential information, exercise planners should identify and adhere to appropriate security standards to ensure that this information is not compromised. Such measures can include conducting registration prior to a discussion-based exercise, ensuring that uninvited or unregistered individuals do not participate, or having law enforcement or security guards monitor and control access to a play site for the duration of the exercise.

**Public Announcement** - Public announcements should be made prior to any exercise involving public space or space that will be viewable by the public. This precaution helps avoid confusion on the part of the public. It will also help the public avoid congestion near the exercise site by providing suggestions for alternate routes. Announcements can be made through local media, through mass mailings or pamphlets, and/or on signs near the exercise site.

### Media Tips:

- The agency or organization sponsoring the exercise should decide whether to invite media representatives to the exercise.
- If invited, media representatives should have an opportunity prior to the exercise to conduct interviews with key planners and participants.
- At discussion-based exercises, media representatives should not be present during the discussion of any potentially sensitive information, and filming exercise conduct should be avoided so as not to inhibit or hinder discussion or the flow of play.
- During operations-based exercises, media representatives may be allowed to film certain activities but should be cautioned not to interfere with exercise play or film any sensitive operations. Typically, a public information officer or designee should always escort media representatives.

### Conduct Exercises

Before exercise play begins, the lead evaluator should meet with all evaluators to verify roles, responsibilities, and assignments, and to provide any significant updates (e.g., last-minute changes to the scenario, new assignments). The Evaluator Briefing provides an opportunity for evaluators to ask questions and to ensure complete understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Depending on the exercise organization, it may be necessary to conduct briefings at more than one exercise site.

**Discussion-Based Exercises** - After the opening remarks, the presentation moves into a brief introductory and explanatory phase led by a facilitator. During this phase, attendees will be introduced to any other facilitators, controllers (games only), or evaluators; given background on the exercise process; and advised about their individual roles and responsibilities.

**Operations-based exercises** - The exercise planning team leader is responsible for both commencing exercise play by announcing the Start, and announcing End at the conclusion of the scenario, after a certain period of time has passed, or when all exercise objectives have been met. Prior to Start, rules for exercise play should be disseminated to all participants to establish the parameters that they must follow during the exercise. The rules help players understand their roles in the exercise environment, describe appropriate behavior, establish guidelines for physical contact, and aim to prevent physical harm to individuals or damage to property. Written rules should be reviewed and approved by appropriate authorities.

Participant Roles and Responsibilities associated with exercise conduct and the applicable exercise types should include Exercise Director, Evaluator, Facilitator, Safety Controller, and Player. For a more extensive listing of Roles, Responsibilities and Exercise Type, refer the HSEEP document pages 4.3 - 4.6.

### Exercise Evaluation

**Debriefs** - Immediately following the exercise, a short debriefing should be conducted with exercise planning team members to ascertain their level of satisfaction with the exercise, discuss any issues or concerns, and propose improvements. Planners should collect exercise attendance lists, provide copies to the exercise planning team leader, collect Participant Feedback Forms, and develop debriefing notes.

**Hot Wash** - A Hot Wash provides an opportunity for exercise participants to discuss exercise strengths and areas for improvement immediately following the conduct of an exercise. An experienced facilitator who can ensure that the discussion remains brief and constructive should lead the Hot Wash. The information gathered during a Hot Wash is used during the AAR/IP process, and exercise suggestions can be used to improve future exercises. Hot Washes also provide opportunities to distribute Participant Feedback Forms, which, when completed by players, can be used to help generate the AAR/IP.

**After Action Report (AAR)** - The AAR is the document that summarizes key information related to evaluation. The length, format, and development timeframe of the AAR depend on the exercise type and scope. These parameters should be determined by the exercise planning team leadership as they develop the evaluation requirements in the design and development process. The focus of the AAR is the analysis of capabilities. Generally, AARs also include basic exercise information, such as the exercise name, type of exercise, dates, location, participating organizations, mission area(s), specific threat or hazard, a brief scenario description, and the name of the exercise sponsor and point of contact.

The AAR should include an overview of performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capabilities, while highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. Exercise Evaluators should retain their notes and records of the exercise to support the development of the AAR. As necessary, the lead evaluator may assign evaluators to collect supplemental data during or immediately after the exercise. Such data is critical to fill in gaps identified during exercise evaluation. For example, useful sources of supplemental evaluation data might include records produced by automated systems or communication networks, and written records.

*AAR Templates can be found in Attachment A of this guidance.*

### Improvement Planning

Exercises afford organizations the opportunity to evaluate capabilities and assess progress in meeting objectives. After the evaluation phase concludes, organizations should reach consensus on identified strengths and areas for improvement and develop a set of improvements that directly addresses gaps. This information is then recorded in the AAR/IP and resolved through the implementation of concrete corrective actions, which are prioritized and tracked as part of a corrective action program. This process constitutes the improvement planning phase and the final step in conducting an exercise.

Improvement planning ultimately supports program management. By continually examining the implementation of corrective actions, organizations can identify capability gaps, as well as determine which corrective actions require validation through exercises. In this way, improvement-planning activities can help shape an organization's exercise program priorities and support continuous improvement in the building and sustaining of capabilities. Incorporate and implement improvements in future exercises by retesting your gaps and lessons learned.

An advanced step in the IP process includes a **Rolling Summary of Outcomes**. The rolling summary report is not a collection of AARs, but rather an analysis of trends across exercises. To help ensure that exercise program priorities are adequately addressed, exercise program managers should periodically develop and distribute a rolling summary of exercise outcomes, or rolling summary report. A rolling summary report provides stakeholders with an analysis of issues, trends, and key outcomes from all drills and exercises conducted as part of the exercise program.

### III. **Special Considerations**

#### Access and Functional Needs

Attention to developmental appropriateness and the mental health realities of students and staff deserve strong consideration when developing training and exercises for the school emergency response plan. This is of particular importance when addressing topics that can generate strong emotional responses, such as in an active assailant exercise. Use of a multi-disciplinary team for development of a school exercise plan will produce the best outcomes and ensure both the physical and psychological safety of students and staff.

The recommended roles to be included in a multi-disciplinary planning team can be found in Section II of this guidance. The *Arizona Minimum Requirements for School Emergency Response Plans*, as well as Arizona Revised Statute 15-341(A), prescribe that school plans account for students and staff with access and functional needs as well as limited English proficiency. When developing and exercising a school plan, considerations for those with access and functional needs, as well as individuals with limited English proficiency, include the following:

- Individuals with limited English proficiency may require the implementation of alternative methods for communicating information and instructions.
- Individuals with sensory disabilities may experience a heightened distress reaction and/or have a delayed response to instruction.
- Individuals with cognitive disabilities may have difficulty understanding a situation and/or instructions.
- Individuals with disabilities may have limited mobility. Alternative and accessible evacuation routes must be identified and communicated to emergency responders.
- Individuals with hearing disabilities may not be able to communicate verbally, to read lips, or to hear fire alarms or other emergency signals.

- Individuals with visual impairments may not be able to read signs or traverse unfamiliar or altered terrain.
- Individuals with anxiety disorders may need support in keeping calm or need a separate location away from others.
- Individuals with sensory disorders may have an adverse response to alarms or flashing lights.
- Debris may obstruct the evacuation of individuals with visual or mobility impairments. Sufficient staff is assigned to assist these individuals during a crisis or alternative shelter locations must be identified.
- Students or staff that require medicines, power supplies, or medical devices that may not be available in emergency shelters have alternative arrangements to access these necessities. These items may be included in a “Go Kit”. If your campus chooses to utilize Go Kits, ensure you train and exercise evacuating with them.
- Consult with your local first responders to determine if critical supplies (e.g., medication) leaving the classroom post-incident must leave the building in a clear bag. Consider methods of maintaining privacy of personally identifiable information (PII) if clear bags are utilized.
- Some students will need one-on-one support. Train backup staff (e.g., administrative personnel) to assist these students and other students who may need assistance in a drill or emergency.
- Ensure communication devices and assistive technology always remain with the student as this is their voice. Alternative arrangements must be made to ensure communications during a crisis for students or staff who are non-English speakers or are visually or hearing impaired. Staff members who have non-English speaking students on their roster have emergency communication picture cards.
- Conduct regular assessments of your community’s accessibility needs to determine whether all students with mobility impairments or complex medical needs will be in classrooms on all floors or strategically placed on the first floor. Plan for staffing and resource needs based on where students will be located.
- During an emergency, elevators may be unavailable to transport wheelchairs/mobility devices. Work with your jurisdictional first responders to determine what courses of action should be taken to ensure the safety of students and staff with mobility impairments. Actions may include alternate evacuation routes, training on and utilization of evacuation equipment (e.g., evacuation chair lift or med sled), or alternate areas of refuge on upper floors that are designated by your jurisdictional fire department.

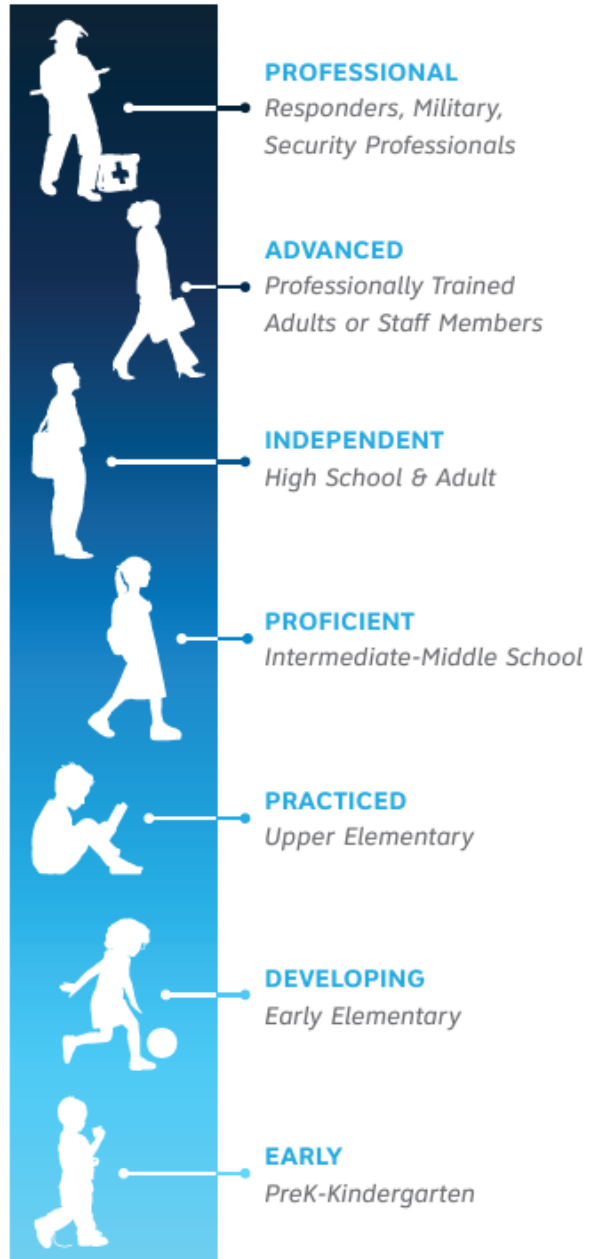
### Developmental Appropriateness

When developing your annual training and exercise schedule, you must account for the ages and needs of your audience. Elementary and middle school students, as well as students with access and functional needs, may need different or modified drills and exercises compared to older students and staff.

- **Whole campus drill participation:** A proactive emergency preparedness program ensures that all members of the campus community participate in drilling requirements. This not only promotes skill-building, but it also reinforces that staff must understand and adapt to the needs and reactions of their pupils and colleagues in an emergency.
- **Different Reactions to Drills:** Some students and staff members may have adverse reactions to drills and exercises, but proactively planning for the community's needs and/or responses can reduce or mitigate negative experiences. Individuals have different life experiences that may impact their approach to emergency response; therefore, consider utilizing a progression of exercises approach to gradually introduce the importance of emergency preparedness drills and associated response actions.
- **Progression of exercises:** Students and staff can develop the skills necessary for emergency response through many forms of training. Consider incorporating stories, table-top activities, and walkthroughs to introduce students to the skills they will practice in drills.
- **Developmental Levels of Safety Awareness:** The following levels from Safe and Sound Schools are designed to assist school communities in determining the awareness levels and capabilities of students and staff. It is imperative that school communities consider the individual psychological backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and special educational needs of students when determining awareness levels and considering appropriate education and training. It is essential to include parents in consideration of their child's developmental level, education, and training readiness.



- o Early Awareness:
  - Demonstrates a general understanding of danger.
  - Heavily or completely reliant upon adult direction and management during an emergency.
  - Capable of practicing basic safety options such as, “Get Out” (Evacuate) and “Hide Out” (stay out of sight, lights off, remain quiet).
  - Capable of understanding the concept of “Keep Out” (where an adult will lock and barricade classroom entries to “keep out” danger).
- o Developing Awareness:
  - Demonstrates the characteristics of Early Awareness.
  - Capable of providing basic assistance in an emergency (turning off classroom lights, retrieving the first aid kit, or closing blinds at the command of an adult).
- o Practiced Awareness:
  - Demonstrates the characteristics of Developing Awareness.
  - Capable of assisting an adult in emergency actions such as closing a door, moving furniture, helping to barricade an entry, or calling 911 at the command of an adult.
- o Proficient Awareness:
  - Demonstrates the characteristics of Practiced Awareness.
  - Capable of performing practiced actions independently in an emergency without adult command or direction.
- o Independent Awareness:
  - Demonstrates the characteristics of Proficient Awareness.
  - Demonstrates automaticity of response in a variety of safety situations.
  - Demonstrates the ability to independently apply and adapt safety skills and knowledge in a variety of situations.
- o Advanced Awareness:
  - Demonstrates the characteristics of independent awareness.
  - Capable of leading others in an emergency.
  - Capable of decision-making when confronted by an emergency.





### Arizona Minimum Requirements for School Emergency Operations Plans

District schools must have emergency response plans that meet minimum requirements, as per Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-341 (A) (32). References to training and exercises are stated throughout the *Arizona Minimum Requirements for Schools Emergency Response Plans*, therefore review of the entire document is necessary. The minimum requirements include:

- Conduct an annual review and evaluation of the emergency response plan and attachments; update as needed when lessons learned were identified after an emergency response, training, or exercising event.
- Collaborate with local emergency management, fire, law enforcement, and public health agencies when addressing hazard, threat, or risk assessments, plan development or revisions, training, and exercise.
- Conduct annual training of all staff on warning/response signals, evacuation routes, assembly areas, emergency procedures, and chain of command (ICS).
- Meet training requirements for staff with assigned responsibilities within the Incident Command System (IS100.c for Command Staff).
- Annually practice each of the listed emergency response drills with students and staff:
  1. Lockdown -- 3 drills per year, one of which shall occur when students are outside the classroom.
    - a. A lockdown is executed to secure buildings, facilities, and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around, such as an intruder on campus. The primary objective of a lockdown is to quickly ensure all faculty, staff, students, and visitors are secured in rooms away from immediate danger. A modified version of the lockdown is utilized by many schools when a threat exists in the community without likelihood of targeting the campus. When a modified lockdown is appropriate, outside activities are curtailed, doors are locked, and visitors closely monitored but all other activities continue as normal.
  2. Shelter-in-place -- 1 drill per school year.
    - a. Shelter-in-place is utilized when conditions require that you seek immediate protection in your school or other location because of a disaster, such as severe weather or a nearby chemical spill.
  3. Evacuation – follow evacuation drill requirements provided by the fire marshal for your jurisdiction.
    - a. Evacuation is the organized, phased, and supervised withdrawal, dispersal, or removal of students, personnel, and visitors from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas. Most commonly used as practice for a fire within a campus building, evacuation may also be appropriate for campus threats such as a potentially credible bomb threat.

Checklists for executing the basic steps for each of these response functions can be found in Section IV of the *Arizona Emergency Response Plan Template* at: <http://www.azed.gov/prevention-programs/emergency-preparedness/>

#### IV. **In Conclusion of this Document**

Drills and exercises are a key component of national preparedness—they provide schools, districts, and stakeholders from across the whole community with the opportunity to shape planning, assess and validate capabilities, and address areas for improvement. These priorities guide the overall direction of a progressive exercise program, where individual exercises are anchored to a common set of priorities or objectives and build toward an increasing level of complexity over time. Through improvement planning, schools take the corrective actions needed to improve plans, build and sustain capabilities, and maintain readiness. For more information on the development and sustainability of an exercise program, contact your local emergency management office, or the Arizona Department of Education, School Safety and Social Wellness Office.

**Attachment A: Sample After Action Report Template**

**AFTER ACTION REPORT TEMPLATE  
SAMPLE FROM ARIZONA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Name/Title of individual completing report: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Drill/Exercise       Incident

**Drill/Exercise (Select one of the following):**

- Fire
- Lockdown (INTERNAL threat)
- Lockdown (EXTERNAL threat)
- Evacuation
- Other (please specify):

**Drill/Exercise Type (Select one of the following):**

- Tabletop Exercise (TTX)
- Functional Exercise
- Full-scale Exercise
- Other (please specify):

**Incident Response (Select one of the following):**

- Fire
- Lockdown (INTERNAL threat)
- Lockdown (EXTERNAL threat)
- Evacuation
- Other (please specify):

**Description of Incident:**

---

---

---

**Participation (Provide a list of individuals or agencies participating in the event):**

---

---

---

**Timeline of Events:**

---

---

---

**Lessons Learned (Provide an overview of lessons learned related to staff, students, training coordination, impact to school operations, etc.):**

---

---

---

**Successes (Provide special recognition to individual and school staff efforts, tasks accomplished, etc.):**

---

---

---

**Recommendations (Provide any recommendations for improvements or changes to the emergency plan and procedures and how they will be addressed):**

---

---

---

**Additional Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**FEMA SAMPLE - AFTER-ACTION REPORT TEMPLATE**

**Conducting and Designing Tabletops – Multi-hazard Emergency Planning for Schools  
After-Action Report Template**

**AFTER-ACTION REPORT TEMPLATE**

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Provide a brief overview of the exercise that was conducted, why the exercise was conducted, the exercise objectives, the purpose of the after-action report, major strengths identified during the exercise, and main areas of improvement. (Complete the Executive Summary after you develop the report.)

**EXERCISE DETAILS**

**Exercise Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Exercise:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Scenario Type:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Participants:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Players:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facilitators:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observers:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluators:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise Objectives:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths (List the major strengths of the school emergency operations plan, processes, and policies that were identified during the exercise):**

---

---

---

**Areas of Improvement (List the areas for improvement in the school emergency operations plan, processes, and policies that were identified during the exercise):**

---

---

---

**Recommendations and Corrective Actions:**

For each area of improvement, list recommendations for improvements. Include updates and changes to the school emergency operations plan, policies, and procedures, as well as training opportunities and follow-up exercises.

---

---

---

**Strengths:**

List the major strengths of the school emergency operations plan, processes, and policies that were identified during the exercise.

- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

List the areas for improvement in the school emergency operations plan, processes, and policies that were identified during the exercise.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:**

For each area of improvement, list recommendations for improvements. Include updates and changes to the school emergency operations plan, policies, and procedures, as well as training opportunities and follow-on exercises.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## **Attachment B: Resource List**

[Best Practice Considerations for Schools in Active Shooter and Other Armed Assailant Drills: National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association of School Resource Officers](#) - Attention to developmental appropriateness and the mental health of students and staff are critical considerations when exercising a school emergency response plan, particularly when planning for an active shooter exercise. This document provides information on developmental levels of safety awareness, knowledge, understanding, and capabilities for students and staff, as well as basic information on ensuring that mental health needs are addressed through utilization of a multi-disciplinary planning team.

[National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](#) - As schools plan for and execute preparedness, response and recovery activities of their plan, concepts and principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a standardized approach for *incident management*, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity. The integration of NIMS into school emergency management training programs and exercises will allow schools and response agencies to collectively operate using the Incident Command System (ICS).

[Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program \(HSEEP\)](#) - The HSEEP program is the foundation of our local, state, tribal, and nation's preparedness programs, and schools are encouraged to review HSEEP materials at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov). Schools participating on an exercise development team that is planning a community-wide exercise may experience the process of aligning exercise program priorities, exercise objectives, and core capabilities. HSEEP addresses this process and provides a comprehensive set of guiding principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. The State of Arizona and national community response agencies utilize HSEEP principles in their exercise programs. Priorities, strategy documents, threat and hazard identification/risk assessment, processes, capability assessments, and the results from previous exercises and real-world events depict the principles of HSEEP. To access the School HSEEP Toolkit, please visit <https://training.fema.gov/programs/emischool/el361toolkit/conductingexercisedrills.htm#item2>.

[IS-120.C: An Introduction to Exercises](#). This free training from FEMA's Emergency Management Institute introduces the basics of emergency management exercises, ranging from discussion-based exercises to operations-based exercises. The training introduces students to the concepts of managing, designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating an exercise program and developing an improvement plan.

[IS-130.A: How to Be An Exercise Evaluator](#). This free FEMA training builds on IS-120.C and introduces participants to the basics of emergency management exercise evaluation and improvement planning, which are based on concepts identified in the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program. The course describes concepts such as how to analyze exercise data and identify the steps to create an after-action report.

[IS-362.A: Multi-hazard Emergency Planning for Schools](#). This free FEMA training provide students with an understanding of the importance of schools having an EOP and basic information on how an EOP is developed, exercised, and maintained.

[Especially Safe – Teaching and Training Guide](#): This document from Safe and Sound Schools provides an inclusive approach to safety preparedness in education settings.

**Attachment C: Tabletop Exercise Toolkit**

**Short Tabletop Exercises (15-30 Minutes)**

**On Campus Incidents/Responses:**

Active Assailant

After School Building Usage – Power Outage (DAFN)

Animal Attack

Bomb Threat – After Hours

Chemistry Lab Fire

Civil Unrest

Climate Survey

Cybersecurity Breach

Evacuation

Fight Rumors

Gas Leak

Hazing

Hit List on Flash Drive

Lockdown (Off Campus Robbery)

Missing Student (DAFN)

Off Campus Hostage Situation – Campus Response

On Campus Fighting/Drinking – After Hours

Parent Tip

Power Outage

School Bus Crash

Sexually Explicit Picture of Student Circulating

Violent Parent on Campus

**Off Campus Incidents/Responses:**

Away Game Bus Accident

Bus Route Issues

Car Accident (Student/Teacher Involved)

Car Accident Near School Property



**Social Media/Online Threats:**

Cyberbullying

Staff Misconduct

Staff Misconduct – Tipline

Suspicious Persons on Campus

Swatting

TikTok Challenge

**Health:**

Fall on Stairs (DAFN)

Heart Attack – Teacher

Missing Student

Multi-person illness

Student Choking

Suicide Attempt

TikTok Challenge (Student Death)

**Longer Tabletop Exercises (30 Minutes – 2 Hours):**

Active Shooter – Middle School

Bullying Escalation

Cybersecurity Breach

Domestic Violence Threat

Flood

High School Dating Violence

Infectious Disease (Influenza)

Lockdown – correctional facility escape

Power Outage

Sextortion

Student threat (DAFN)

Truck Crash – HAZMAT

Violent Parent

Winter Storm