A FRAMEWORK FOR
MAJOR EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT 4
A GUIDE TO PLANNING AND STAGING EXERCISES
MAY 2011
INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE TO PLANNING AND STAGING EXERCISES


The Framework sets out the arrangements by which the Principal Response Agencies will work together in the management of large-scale incidents.

This Guide to Planning and Staging Exercises is intended to support the Framework and provide guidance on running internal and joint / inter-agency exercise programmes.

This document was originally presented as a working draft and the revised version includes both the feedback received on the original draft as well as additional material from the ‘Planning, Staging and Evaluating Exercises’ training course that was organised by the National Steering Group.

This document, like others in this series, is subject to regular review. It is therefore requested that comments and insights that arise during its use are fed back to the national level. Comments should be addressed to:

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background
Exercises should be seen as an integral part of major emergency management. The aim of planning and staging exercises is to validate plans, systems, procedures and training, to enable practice of lessons identified and capabilities developed and to test and enhance the overall capability of an organisation to respond. Exercise programs, which are required by the Framework to run on a three-year cycle, should synchronise and integrate with training programs to facilitate the validation of the training objectives.

Exercises raise awareness, educate individuals about their roles and the roles of others, and promote co-ordination and cooperation.

Preparation and practice for response and recovery from emergencies or disasters enhances the ability of the Principal Response Agencies (PRAs) to protect people, property, and the environment. Exercises identify areas where the PRAs are proficient and also those areas that need improvement. Lessons identified from exercises can be used to revise operational plans and provide a basis for further training. Well-designed and executed exercises are the most effective means of:

- Testing and validating policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment and inter-agency arrangements;
- Training personnel and clarifying roles and responsibilities;
- Improving inter-agency co-ordination and communications;
- Identifying gaps in resources;
- Improving individual performance;
- Identifying opportunities for improvement;
- Building confidence;
- Gaining public recognition of the major emergency management regime;
- Providing an opportunity for discussion and feedback.

The purpose of a major emergency exercise is to simulate some or all of the elements of a real life emergency. The quality of an exercise does not depend upon size / scale – the crucial aspect of an exercise design is the selection of the exercise objectives. The successful outcome of an exercise will depend on the extent to which the exercise is well organised and run and how the lessons identified are used to improve the emergency management process.

The Framework requirement is that:

| Each principal response agency should have an internal exercise programme on a three-year cycle with clearly defined and progressive objectives in place to validate its preparedness for responding to major emergencies. |
| Each principal response agency should participate in developing and running joint / inter-agency training and exercise programmes with its partner agencies in the Major Emergency Region and a co-ordinated programme which dove-tails with the internal programme referred to above should be prepared and agreed on a three year cycle. |

This purpose of this guide is to provide common guidance for organising and running the exercise programmes required under the Framework.
1.2 Determination of Internal and Joint / Inter-Agency Exercise Programmes

The Framework requires that each principal response agency carry out a risk assessment in accordance with *A Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management*. The guide recommends that the risk assessment process is carried out initially by each principal response agency, before being undertaken and documented by an inter-agency team, working under the aegis of the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management.

![Diagram of the Regional Steering Group]

**Figure 1 – The Regional Steering Group**

It is envisaged that each agency’s risk assessment will determine the internal exercise program of that agency. The Regional Steering Group will be guided in their determination of
the joint / inter-agency exercise programme (based on a three year cycle) by the regional level risk assessment.

It should be the aim of any exercise programme to build capabilities suitable for a wide range of threats and hazards identified in the risk assessment, gradually increasing in difficulty and complexity, while also working within a budget that necessitates prioritisation and choice.

1.3 Single Agency Exercises

It should be an essential part of the training program of the Principal Response Agencies/Principal Emergency Services that exercises are carried out to validate training and to provide practice for those involved. It may be useful to have members of other PRAs/PESs provide input to these exercises to ensure realistic interaction between services, but such involvement does not of itself constitute an inter-agency exercise. Involvement of other agency personnel should be by agreement with the individuals involved and the consent of their organisation’s management. The role of the other agency personnel in the exercise should be made clear to them. Where such single agency exercises are being planned, it is advisable that they follow the format of this Guidance Document.

1.4 Inter-Agency Exercises

The Framework provides that Regional Working Groups will be formed to support the Regional Steering Groups and to undertake the functions assigned at regional level. The development and maintenance of the joint / inter-agency exercise programme, based on a three year cycle, is a very onerous task and will require people from each agency to devote a considerable amount of time and energy to it. To ensure that this work is carried out effectively, an Exercise Sub-Group, with representation from each of the Principal Response Agencies should be established within the Regional Working Group structure. This sub-group should ensure that the joint / inter-agency exercise programme required under the Framework is developed and maintained over the three year rolling cycle, reporting back to the Regional Steering Group, via the Regional Working Group, as required.

1.5 Third Party Exercises

Third party organisations sometimes wish to have the Principal Response Agencies participate in their emergency exercises. Such approaches can present an opportunity for the Principal Response Agencies to benefit, but on other occasions third party participation can impose a burden on the PRAs scarce resources. There will be little potential return to the Principal Response Agencies where the development of the exercise objectives does not include their input, early in the exercise design phase. In particular, exercises which are set up by third parties to test the “turnout” of the Principal Emergency Services, or primarily for their public relations purposes, will contribute little to the development of emergency preparedness within the Principal Response Agencies. While Principal Response Agencies will generally want to assist, exercises with third parties should, in general, be factored in as part of the exercise programme determined by the Regional Steering Group. Contact at the earliest opportunity is essential, and Principal Response Agencies should ensure that they have significant input to determining the exercise objectives, in return for their involvement.
1.6 Reporting to Government

The Government Task Force on Emergency Planning has stressed the importance attached to Departments and public authorities having structured exercise programmes in place. Departments and public authorities are required to submit details of their structured exercise programmes on an annual basis to form part of the Annual Report to Government on Emergency Planning. These programmes are required to be submitted on the following template:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise Type</th>
<th>Proposed Date of Exercise</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Agencies Involved</th>
<th>Numbers Involved (approx)</th>
<th>Purpose of Exercise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 1 – Format of Structured Exercise Programme

Each Regional Steering Group should arrange for the submission to the National Steering Group of a joint / inter-agency structured exercise programme on an annual basis on the above template stemming from the regional exercise programme (based on a three year cycle) identified and agreed by the group. The National Steering Group will report all structured exercise programmes identified in each of the Major Emergency Management Regions to the Government Task Force.

1.7 Budget

The amount of expense incurred in planning, running and reviewing exercises will be dependent on the type, location, timing and duration. The Framework requirement is that:

Each principal response agency should provide a budget for major emergency preparedness, which reflects the expenditure required to meet the costs of implementing the agency’s internal preparedness, as well as the agency’s contribution to the regional level inter-agency preparedness.

This requires a collaborative approach that integrates the capabilities and resources of various Principal Response Agencies, organisations and individuals from both the public and private sectors in order to achieve joint / inter-agency exercise objectives.
2. PLANNING AN EXERCISE

Exercises should be regarded as an integral part of the emergency management process. It is important that emergency plans have been prepared and appropriate staff trained in their roles before an exercise is planned.

The special training required for the Exercise Director to perform this particular role should not be ignored. The overall success and effectiveness of the project will depend very heavily on the abilities of the Director and his team to properly identify the exercise objectives and to run the exercise in such a manner as to achieve these objectives and not to allow the exercise to run beyond them.

In planning an exercise consideration will need to be given to some or all of the following points:

- Aim, which is the purpose, scope or objectives of the exercise
- Background or a basic scenario (consistent with the exercise location)
- Documentation (exercise plan, control plan, evaluation sheets)
- Duration of the exercise
- Date and time of the exercise
- Exercise organisation (e.g., Director, directing staff, Evaluators, participants)
- Roles and responsibilities of the main participants
- Rules of how the exercise should be conducted
- Health & Safety issues (e.g. action in the event of a real emergency, safety officers responsibilities, prohibited activities)
- Logistics (e.g., parking, assembly area, transportation, restrooms, food/water)
- Security and access (e.g., identification / badges)
- Communications (e.g. radio frequencies / channels)
- Schedule of events (e.g. briefings, start and end of exercise)
- Maps and directions
- Media Management
- Evaluation
• Report and Recommendations (it cannot be stressed enough that this is the most important part of the exercise, as without it NO lessons will be learned and the whole process will have largely been wasted)

If an exercise is to run smoothly and achieve its objectives, it will require detailed pre-planning and considerable co-ordination among participating agencies. In the case of large and/or complex exercises, a rehearsal of the set up of the principal participants might be considered. The planning effort required, for even small events, should not be underestimated.
3. TYPES OF EXERCISES

3.1 Introduction

There are different types of exercise, ranging in scale from the basic tabletop to full-scale, on the ground, simulations. The latter should only be undertaken as the culmination of a programme of simpler and more easily organised exercises. The following are three of the most frequently employed exercise methods:

- Workshops
- Tabletop
- Live

There can be an impression that the only exercises of any real benefit are live exercises, as only these can properly simulate the real thing; thereby providing participants with experience of real value. In fact, in some situations the exact opposite will be the case, as the level of organisation required for an expensive field exercise is so high that in many cases comparison with reality may be only passing and the validation, practice and testing only minimal.

The importance of workshops and tabletop exercises cannot be overstated and these can be very beneficial in comparison with the cost and complexity of setting up live field exercises. The strategic decision making and co-ordination required during major incidents does not necessarily need the actions of field personnel for appropriate training and testing of command, co-ordination and management roles.
3.2 Workshops

Workshops can be pitched at different levels depending on needs. They can be used to familiarise new personnel with the procedures of the organisation or they can be designed to engage senior managers in a problem identification exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Characteristics</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low stress event, usually presented as an informal discussion in a group setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Generally no simulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lecture, Discussion, Panel Discussion, Guest Lecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be used for a wide variety of purposes including:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Familiarising (new) personnel with (new) procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collecting or sharing information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training groups in coordinated activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Obtaining consensus (e.g. Mutual Aid Agreements, SOPs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem solving of complex issues in a group setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Team building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motivating/ preparing people for participation in subsequent exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directing Staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Led by a Facilitator, who presents information and guides discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitator should be experienced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Players</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Those who will be required to respond in the event of an emergency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Representatives from various functions/ levels within the PRA/ all PRAs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conference room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Table layout should be designed to promote discussion and eye to eye contact between teams/ groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Audio/ visual presentation equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maximum of 1 to 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Simple to prepare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 weeks preparation is usually sufficient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participants need no previous training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Workshop Characteristics
3.3 Tabletop Exercises

A tabletop exercise is a planned activity in which participants are presented with simulated emergency situations. These exercises use maps, photographs, plans, models or written scenarios to simulate the scene and environs of an emergency. They are a cost-effective and flexible means of testing plans, procedures, and people. Tabletop exercises can be used for a single organisation or with a multi-disciplinary response in mind.

Typically Tabletop exercises involve simulation of a meeting of a PRA Crisis Management Team (single agency) or a meeting of a Local Co-ordination Group (inter-agency).

Multi-disciplinary exercises facilitate inter-agency understanding and allow key personnel from the principle response agencies to meet. The chosen venue for a tabletop exercise should be of sufficient size to accommodate the props (model, maps etc.) and all of the attending personnel. Ancillary rooms should be considered if the exercise objectives involve testing communication with off-site groups.

Tabletop exercise methods can be divided into two categories: basic and advanced.

In a basic tabletop exercise, the scene set by the scenario remains constant. It describes an event or emergency incident and brings discussion/ participants up to the simulated present time. Participants apply their knowledge and skills to a list of problems presented by the Exercise Facilitator, problems are discussed as a group, and resolution is generally agreed on and summarised by the group chairperson.

In an advanced tabletop exercise, play revolves around delivery of pre-scripted messages to players that alter the original scenario as the exercise progresses. The Exercise Facilitator usually introduces problems one at a time in the form of a written message, simulated telephone call, video, e-mail or other means. Participants discuss the issues raised by the problem, using appropriate plans and procedures.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tabletop Exercise Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Begins with the reading of a short narrative, which sets the stage (hypothetical scenario)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Facilitator then stimulates discussion by introducing problem statements of simulated messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion should focus on roles, procedures, coordination, the effects of decisions on other organisations (link to exercise objectives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maps, models, charts, recorded radio/ television footage/ communication means may be used to add realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Much more participant discussion than a Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lend themselves to low-stress discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Familiarising managers and senior officials with potential situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide good environment for problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity for PRAs and other organisations (e.g. Civil Defence, Coroner, AAIU) to become acquainted with one another and their interrelated roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directing Staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Led by Facilitator, who presents scenario information, facilitates discussion, asks questions and guides participants towards sound decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitator should be experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Players</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Objectives of the exercise dictate who should participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can involve many organisations – essentially anyone who can learn from or contribute to the panel discussion items (e.g. IAAU if the selected scenario is an air crash) May also include Observers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conference room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Table layout should be designed to promote discussion and eye to eye contact between teams/ groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation equipment, props, models, communication means, maps etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ancillary rooms should be considered if the exercise objectives involve testing communications with other groups/ organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usually 3 to 4 hours, but can be longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Within reason, discussion times are open ended and participants are encouraged to take their time in arriving at decisions, without time pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Although the Facilitator maintains an awareness of time allocation for each area of discussion, the group does not have to complete every item in order for the exercise to be a success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Typically takes about a month to prepare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usually requires workshop in advance to derive maximum benefit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 – Tabletop Exercise Characteristics
Figure 2 – Sample Tabletop Exercise Layout
3.4 Live Exercises

3.4.1 Types of Live Exercises

Live exercises can range from the small scale, where one element of an organisation’s response is tested, to a full scale inter-disciplinary simulation. There are a number of different types of live exercise which are outlined in Table 4 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drill</td>
<td>A supervised activity, normally designed to test a specific operation (e.g. to test mobilisation of a PRA CMT and the establishment of the PRA Crisis Management Team Centre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Exercise</td>
<td>A single or multi-agency activity designed to evaluate multiple functions using simulated response (e.g. practice and evaluate information management system at the Local Co-ordination Centre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Scale Exercise</td>
<td>A multi-agency activity designed to evaluate emergency management systems in a highly stressful environment that simulates actual response conditions. Builds on previous exercises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 – Types of Live Exercises

It is important to realise that the involvement of large numbers of front-line staff is not essential to an effective live exercise. When setting the objectives, it is important to do so in such a way as to minimise the role of front-line staff on the day. The presentation of problems requiring critical thinking, problem solving and effective response can be done by relaying these problems through communications networks, as would happen in reality.

Large scale live field exercise should only come at the end of a training and exercise program during which all aspects have been tried and tested separately and the purpose should then be to ascertain how all such aspects connect together.

Selection of a suitable site is crucial to the success of a live exercise. When choosing a site the exercise objectives, vehicular access and the health and safety of responding personnel are all important considerations. Permission to use the site should be obtained in advance and advice provided to the owner that the site will not be accessible during the exercise.

Conducting a full scale live exercise is the most complex step in the exercise cycle. Live exercises test many facets of the emergency response and should focus on implementing and analysing plans, systems and procedures, developed in earlier discussion-based exercises. A Live exercise should be controlled by the exercise directing staff. Directing staff control the events through a scripted exercise scenario but with built-in flexibility to allow updates to drive activity. It is conducted in a real-time, stressful environment, that, as far as possible closely mirrors a real event.

Responders and resources are mobilised and deployed to the scene where they conduct their actions as if a real incident had occurred (with minor exceptions). The Live exercise should
endeavour to simulate the reality of operations in multiple functional areas by presenting complex and realistic problems requiring critical thinking, rapid problem solving, and effective responses by trained personnel in a highly stressful environment.

Agencies that are not involved in the exercise, but who could be involved in an actual event, could have non-participating Observers present.

The directing staff may also act as Evaluators, observe behaviours and compare them against established plans, policies, procedures, and standard practices (where applicable). They also ensure that all activity is executed within a safe environment and that health and safety requirements are fully met.

### 3.4.2 Drill Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drill Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Involves actual deployment of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Should be as realistic as possible, employing any equipment for the function being drilled (realistic but isolated environment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Used to test/evaluate a specific function. Particularly good for focusing on a potential problem area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Used to provide training with new equipment and new procedures or to practice and maintain current skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some examples include: activation of co-ordination centres; response times of specialist equipment to a chemical incident; establishment of a Casualty Clearing Station; locating and placing road barriers under time constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directing Staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be led by a manager/department head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Directing staff must have a very good understanding of the function being tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Players</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number and type depends on the function being tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be conducted within a facility (e.g., a co-ordination centre) or in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 to 4 hours is usually required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• About 1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participants usually need a short orientation/briefing beforehand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5 – Drill Characteristics*

### 3.4.3 Functional Exercise Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Exercise Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Simulates an incident in the most realistic manner possible, short of moving resources to an actual site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • The participants in the exercise practice responding in a...
realistic way to carefully planned and sequenced messages given to them by “Simulators”.
- Stressful because participants respond in real time.

| Purpose               | To test several functions and agencies without incurring the cost of a full-scale exercise.  
|                       | As a prerequisite to a full-scale exercise. |

| Directing Staff       | Exercise Director, Umpires, Observers, Role Players/Simulators. |

| Players               | Number and type depends on the functions/agencies being tested. |

| Facilities            | Usually conducted in co-ordination centres.  
|                       | Separate areas/rooms required for Simulators / Role Players.  
|                       | Realism achieved by the use of telephones, radios, email, television, maps etc. |

| Duration              | 4 to 6 hours, although it can run for a full day. |

| Preparation           | Plan about 6 moths in advance for several reasons: participants need to be trained, directing staff require training; may require significant allocation of resources and a major commitment of personnel. |

Table 6 – Functional Exercise Characteristics
Figure 3 – Sample Functional Exercise
# 3.4.4 Full Scale Exercises Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Full Scale Exercise Characteristics</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directing Staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Players</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Table 7 – Full Scale Exercise Characteristics** |

## 3.5 Building an Exercise Programme

Each of the three exercise types (Workshop, Tabletop and Live) described above play an important part in the overall exercise program. The following chart lists some of the reasons for conducting each type of activity:
### Reasons to Conduct Exercise Program Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Tabletop Exercise</th>
<th>Live Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No previous exercises</td>
<td>Practice group problem solving</td>
<td>Assess and improve information analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No recent Major Emergencies</td>
<td>Promote familiarity with the Major Emergency Plan</td>
<td>Assess and improve inter-agency co-ordination / cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Plan</td>
<td>Assess plan coverage for a specific risk</td>
<td>Support policy formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Procedures</td>
<td>Assess inter-agency / interdepartmental co-ordination</td>
<td>Test resource and personnel allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Staff, Leadership</td>
<td>Observe information sharing</td>
<td>Assess personnel and equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Facility</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assess Media Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Risk / Threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8 – Reasons to Conduct Exercise Programme Activities**

Each PRA should have an internal exercise programme on a three-year cycle with clearly defined and progressive objectives in place to validate its preparedness for responding to major emergencies.

Each PRA should participate in developing and running joint / inter-agency Training and Exercising programmes with its partner agencies in the MEM region, and a coordinated programme which dovetails with the internal programme should be prepared on a 3 year cycle.

Each Regional Steering Group to arrange for the submission of a joint / inter-agency structured exercise programme on an annual basis, stemming from the regional exercise programme (based on a three year cycle) identified and agreed by the group.

An exercise programme should have an overall goal and defined timeframe in which it is planned that the goal will be achieved. Once the goal is set, the progressive steps to achieving the goal should be identified and documented. A sample approach is outlined below.
Sample Exercise Programme – Overall

Overall Goal

To work towards a full-scale exercise in 2011, testing all important functions in the context of a mass casualty incident (e.g. a rail crash).

Issues

- New plans have been developed based on the MEM Framework 2006.
- The MEM Framework 2006 has introduced new concepts that did not prevail under the 1984 Framework, particularly in the area of information management systems.
- PRA persons designated to fill major emergency management roles in the MEP have little or no knowledge of the MEM Framework and associated Plans.

Functions to be Tested

- Notification, activation and modus operandi of the On Site Coordination Group, the Local Co-ordination Group and the PRA Crisis Management Teams in their respective centres.
- Information management between all centres.
- Ability to obtain and deploy resources (locally and regionally) to handle a mass casualty incident.

Timeframe

- The exercise programme extends over a 3-year period.
- Detailed, sequential exercise activities required and planned to meet the stated overall goal over the 3-year period are provided hereunder.

Table 9 – Sample Exercise Programme – Overall

Sample Exercise Programme – Details

Q1 2009

Exercise Type

Workshop.

Proposed Date of Exercise

12 Jan 2009

Location

Local Co-ordination Centre.

Agencies Involved

LA, AGS and HSE personnel designated to fill the PRA roles at the Local Co-ordination Centre.

Numbers Involved

40

Purpose of Exercise

To familiarise participants with the MEM Framework 2006 and the Information Management System. To familiarise participants with the MEPs of all PRAs. To familiarise participants with plans and procedures for dealing with mass casualty incidents.

Q2 2009

Exercise Type

Etc

Table 10 – Sample Exercise Programme – Details
4. EXERCISE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Exercise project management involves five stages, which are collectively known as the exercise cycle. The five stages of the exercise cycle are as follows:

1. Foundation
2. Design & Development
3. Conduct
4. Evaluation
5. Improvement Planning

Figure 4 – The Exercise Cycle

5. FOUNDATION

5.1 Introduction

The following activities must be accomplished to provide the foundation for an effective exercise:

- Assess capability to conduct an exercise
- Gather necessary support for participation
- Define the exercise scope
- Develop a project timeline – establish milestones
- Establish an exercise planning group
- Develop an exercise workplan and checklists

The support required to conduct any inter-agency exercise should be established by the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management, stemming from the three year exercise cycle. The type, scope and aims of the exercise should be consistent with the regions overall strategy to build capabilities suitable for a wide range of threats and hazards identified in the regional risk assessment. When it has been agreed to conduct an exercise, the Regional Steering Group should ensure the following:

- Establish an exercise planning group
- Determine the timeframe for the exercise
5.2 Exercise Planning Group

An exercise planning group should be established by the Regional Steering Group for each exercise. It is important that each participating agency nominate members onto this group. All agencies which have a role to play in the exercise should be invited to take part. The exercise planning group is responsible for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating all aspects of an exercise. The planning group determines exercise design objectives, tailors the scenario to local needs, and develops documentation used in exercise evaluation, control, and simulation. Planning group members may also assist with developing and distributing pre-exercise materials, conducting exercise briefings and training sessions. Due to this high level of involvement, planning group members are ideal selections for directing staff and Evaluator positions during the exercise itself.

The exercise planning group should be chaired by an Exercise Director who is nominated by the Regional Steering Group. The Exercise Director will be in overall charge of the planning, exercising debriefing and reporting processes. On the day of the exercise, the role of the Director is to ensure that the exercise runs smoothly, as planned; to ensure that the engagement of all participants is facilitated and encouraged; to control the exercise tempo; and to ensure continuity from one phase to the next, including early termination for safety or other reasons, where appropriate. At Workshops and Tabletop Exercises the Director acts as Facilitator. This is a key appointment, requiring a person of appropriate seniority, who has the experience and ability to deliver on the key tasks involved.

5.3 Exercise Planning Timelines

The exercise planning group should establish a timeline for the planning process. This timeline should identify key planning meetings, critical responsibilities and activities. The timeline identified should be consistent with the overall timeframe stipulated by the Regional Steering Group. It is recognised that timelines will vary based on exercise scope and complexity. The planning process may be aided by the development of an exercise work plan.

See Exercise Master Task List and Timelines (Appendix 5)
6. DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Building on the exercise foundation, the design and development process focuses on:

- Identifying objectives
- Developing the scenario - major and minor events
- Creating documentation
- Coordinating third party involvement

The extent of work and time required will depend on the complexity of the exercise planned.

6.1 Exercise Objectives

The first step of an exercise involves deciding its aims along with setting clear objectives and outcomes. Early agreement on these issues will ensure that the appropriate type of exercise is selected and suitable monitoring methods can be devised. For initial exercises, it is recommended that objectives be kept simple, clear and limited.

Exercises can occur within individual organisations or on an inter-agency basis. When joint exercises are planned, the senior management of all participating agencies should agree the overall aim of the exercise. The specific objectives for each agency can be set individually but should be submitted centrally to ensure that they do not conflict with those of another service. Broad participation from all stakeholders is important for ensuring that training and exercises meet a wide range of preparedness needs.

A good or well stated objective:

- Will be clear, concise and focus on the participants performance of tasks
- Will describe actions that can be observed
- Will state the conditions under which the actions are to be performed by the participants
- Will state to what standard or level the actions will be performed

Objectives should be SMART

- Stated clearly
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Tack Oriented

6.2 Exercise Scenario

A suitable scenario should be developed, based on the agreed aims, objectives and outcomes. Scenarios are used to enliven or focus an exercise. The scenario should not take over the exercise, it is just a means to an end. The scenario selected should compliment the main aim of the exercise. Unlikely or unusual hypothetical incidents should be avoided. Scenarios which fit with local geography and which could reasonably happen add a degree of realism which, in turn, should add to the interest in, and credibility of, the exercise.

A scenario provides the backdrop and storyline that drives an exercise. The first step in designing the scenario is determining the type of threat / hazard involved. Each type of
hazard presents its own strengths and weaknesses for evaluating different aspects of prevention, response, and recovery, and is applicable to different exercise objectives.

The next step is to determine the venue (facility or site) that the scenario will affect. A balance has to be achieved between exercising in the area that the problem is likely to affect and letting day-to-day commercial activity carry on as normal. Exercises outside of normal working hours have a number of advantages that need to be considered.

See Developing the Scenario Narrative (Appendix 4)

See also Master Events List (Appendix 6)

6.3 Exercise Timing

A decision that has to be made at an early stage is whether the exercise is to run in real time or whether the scenario will unfold in a series of vignettes corresponding to stages along a timeline. A further consideration is whether the exercise time will be stopped at any point during the exercise, to allow for review or consideration of variables, e.g. weather, time of day or year.

6.4 Exercise Location

Whatever type of exercise is to be held the planning group should visit the location – at a similar time / day as the exercise – to ensure that it is appropriate. Written permission should be sought where necessary and any potential users notified that it may be out-of-bounds on the date of the exercise.
7. CONDUCT

After design and development steps are complete, the exercise takes place. Exercise conduct steps include set-up, briefings, facilitation / directing / evaluation and wrap-up activities.

7.1 Exercise Control Centre

The requirement for an exercise control centre should be considered by the exercise planning group. The need for such a control centre arises mainly for Live Exercises. It should be, where possible, a suitable building close to the exercise site, which can then be used as an assembly point for the Exercise Director, directing staff, Observers etc.. It may also be used for briefings and as a location where casualties, if casualties are being used, can be prepared. Car-parking facilities need to be considered. If the exercise control centre is further than walking distance from the site, then the provision of transport should also be considered.

7.2 Health & Safety

The safety of personnel during the exercise is of paramount importance. In Live Exercises, all participants – including directing staff, Umpires, volunteers and Observers – should be made aware of any hazards within the area and reminded of safety issues. Exercise participants may not be familiar with the location and control may be needed to ensure that they are kept within the confines of the exercise area.

A Safety Officer should be appointed and a risk assessment carried out for every Live Exercise to ensure that structures are safe and no unseen dangers are present on the site. All participating agency may need its own Safety Officer. The exercise cannot be seen as a reason not to comply with health and safety requirements. The Safety Officer should be easily identifiable and have the authority to intervene, as s/he feels necessary, to ensure the health and safety of all personnel.

First Aid / Ambulance cover should be provided to deal with any health problems or injuries sustained during the exercise. For safety reasons, directing staff should adopt an agreed procedure for intervention into the exercise, including cessation where necessary. The exercise planning group should devise a codeword for this purpose and the means of relaying it to those participants without radio communication.
7.3 Welfare

Consideration should be given to welfare arrangements during exercises. Welfare needs will vary depending on the type, timing and duration of the exercise. The provision of refreshments as well as changing, washing and toilet facilities before, during and after the event will also need to be considered. The use of casualties adds realism to exercises but their welfare needs have to be taken into account. Exercise casualties should not be placed in or near unsuitable conditions, e.g. cold, wet or hard surfaces, without appropriate care. In many cases the length of time required for an activity can turn out to be much longer than envisaged. An area which is warm and dry should be available for exercise casualties.

7.4 Identification

Exercise participants should wear that identification that would be normal in a real emergency. To avoid confusion, all those who are not actively participating in the exercise scenario, e.g. the Exercise Director, directing staff, Umpires, Observers, should be easily distinguishable. Tabards with clear markings are usually the best option for a Live Exercise. It is important, in all types of exercises, to be able to identify which agency each person represents by uniform or badge.

7.5 Public Information

The exercise planning group should agree whether there should be any prior publicity. It may be advisable to issue prior public information to members of the public in the vicinity of the exercise to prevent any undue alarm, particularly for exercises at hazardous sites. All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the public does not perceive a Live Exercise as a real event.

7.6 Briefing

A full briefing should be provided in advance for all exercise participants. Each agency should take responsibility for the briefing of their staff. The extent of the briefing will vary in accordance with the exercise type.

An exercise should be given a codename, which will then be mandatory as a prefix to all messages – verbal or written – during the exercise. The use of code names will ensure that everyone involved is aware that they are part of the exercise and not a real incident. Control rooms / operation centres of all the participating organisations must be informed about the codename, prior to the exercise.

A codeword, which can be used to identify that a real incident has occurred and is not part of the exercise, should be agreed and circulated to all participants prior to the event.
7.7 Media

Dealing with the media is a significant aspect of any major emergency and, as such, every opportunity should be taken to practice the media plan. Exercise press conferences can be used to test media skills and information management. Provision should always be made at the planning stage of any large exercises for the “unplanned” arrival of the “real” media to cover the exercise.

7.8 Debriefing

Debriefing is a crucial stage of any exercise and properly conducted provides a forum to evaluate efficiency, learn from the experience gained and inform the emergency management process.

Debriefings should take place both at an individual service level and at the inter-agency level. The Exercise Director and directing staff should ensure that the necessary debriefs take place. All participant organisations, including the voluntary sector and any private sector involvement, should be represented at the inter-agency debriefings.

An inter-agency ‘Hot-Debrief” immediately after the exercise is a good way of capturing participant’s instant reactions. A ‘Cold-Debrief” follows some time after the event, when participants have had time to have their own agency debrief and to reflect on their experiences. Each agency should submit a written report to the inter-agency Cold Debrief, as a result of their agency debrief, to form an appendix to the final report.

Confessional style debriefs should be seriously considered. This would involve confidential meetings between the Exercise Director (who must write the Exercise Report) and key participants of the exercise. The outcome of these debriefs should be by agreement of the two parties. While it is not the intention of the debriefing process to embarrass an individual or organisation, short-comings, if any, must be realised by them if improvements are to be made.

In-depth discussion in the planning group is essential, prior to the drafting of the Exercise Report, and this group should agree on the final document.
8. EVALUATION

Just as important as designing the exercise, evaluating the results will determine if the objectives were met.

- Are there improvements needed in plans, systems and procedures?
- Do the major emergency management arrangements work as planned?
- Are there training needs that needs to be addressed?

Evaluation is the cornerstone of exercises. Exercises can potentially be both expensive and disruptive, so there is a need to ensure that maximum benefit is obtained for the effort involved. The quality of evaluation and identification of learning points is crucial. Lessons identified at one exercise should produce benefits for all stakeholders on a wider scale.

![Figure 5 – The Exercise Impact Cycle](image)

As an exercise is underway, a process should be in place to observe the exercise and this should be followed by a constructive critique of the events as they occurred. The participants must have the opportunity to comment on the exercise from their point of view. The results should be collated in the Exercise Report and communicated to all concerned through the Regional Steering Group. The Regional Steering Group should forward a copy to the National Steering Group.

See Exercise Evaluation Sheet – Umpire (Appendix 7)

See also Exercise Evaluation Sheet – Participant Feedback (Appendix 8)
9. IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Evaluation and improvement planning are fundamentally linked. Improvement planning is a process by which concrete improvement actions that address issues observed during an exercise are developed, assigned, implemented and tracked.

It is critically important that the Exercise Planning Group (through the Regional Steering Group) ensures that all learning points / action items are agreed by each of the participating Principal Response Agencies. The action items identified should be documented in the final report and a time frame agreed for implementation. This process should be monitored by each of the Principal Response Agencies and results validated during subsequent exercises.

*It is through this cycle of continuous improvement that exercises prepare Principal Response Agencies for all hazards. Without effective evaluation and improvement planning, these benefits can not be realised.*

The following questions provide a guide for developing actions items:

- What changes need to be made to plans and procedures to improve performance?
- What changes need to be made to each principal response agency’s organisational structures in order to improve performance?
- What changes need to be made to leadership, co-ordination and management processes in order to improve performance?
- What training is needed in order to improve performance?
- What changes to (or additional) equipment is needed in order to improve performance?
- What lessons can be learned that will direct how to approach a similar problem in the future?

See Improvement Plan – Sample Section (Appendix 10)
10. KEY ROLES

10.1 Exercise Director

The Exercise Director is the person in overall charge of planning, exercising, debriefing and producing the final report. On the day of the exercise, the role of the Director is to ensure that the exercise runs smoothly, as planned; to ensure that the engagement of all participants are facilitated and encouraged; to control the exercise tempo; and to ensure continuity from one phase to the next, including early termination for safety or other reasons, where appropriate. At Workshops and Tabletop Exercises the Director acts as Facilitator.

10.2 Directing Staff

Directing staff play a role in both tabletop and Live Exercises. They have access to the whole exercise programme and ensure that it proceeds according to plan. Intervention should be minimal and as last resort. However, intervention should occur when there is confusion about the scenario, a problem is out of the control of the participants or failure to do so compromises the exercise objectives.

10.3 Observers

An Observer is someone who has no role to play in the exercise but is witnessing the events to learn lessons. Each agency will be responsible for inviting its own Observers. However, it is essential to strictly limit the numbers of Observers from each agency. The establishment and control of viewing areas is a must. This will also assist in ensuring their safety. A quality briefing for Observers is essential prior to and during the exercise. Directing staff should be available to explain events and procedures as the exercise unfolds. Observers may be invited to the debriefing, but their views should always be sought preferably in writing. This may be achieved through the use of exercise evaluation forms or requesting that written comments be forwarded to the planning group.

10.4 Umpires

Umpires watch and listen to the exercise with the particular brief of measuring whether activities are happening in the right place, at the right time and involving the right people. An Umpire should preferably be assigned to each of the key players in the exercise and should be chosen from members of the Director’s staff or the planning group, who are thoroughly familiar with the scenario. They should be given authority to change actions, if the exercise is seriously straying away from the objectives, but must inform the Director of any such changes. Umpires should be thoroughly briefed before the exercise and be tasked with making observations on whether the exercise objectives are met. Their role in subsequent debriefings is crucial.
11. EXERCISE DOCUMENTATION

11.1 Introduction

The list below briefly describes typical exercise documentation requirements:

a. A **Situation Statement** is a guide to the exercise. It need not be more than a few pages. It provides background information on the exercise scope, schedule, and objectives. It also presents the scenario narrative that will drive participant discussions during the exercise.

b. An **Exercise Plan**, typically used for tabletop and live exercises, provides an exercise synopsis and is distributed prior to the start of the exercise. In addition to addressing exercise objectives and scope, the plan assigns tasks and responsibilities for a successful outcome. The plan should not contain detailed scenario information and is generally intended for exercise participants and Observers.

The Exercise Plan should provide the following:
- Purpose of the exercise
- General objectives
- Overall exercise strategy
- Exercise Planning Group structure
- Agencies involved - tasks and responsibilities
- Safety and security (in general terms)
- Exercise type and basic information
- Basic administrative and/or logistical support

c. The **Exercise Control Plan**, contains more detailed information about the exercise scenario and describes the directing staff roles and responsibilities. As the directing staff notes contain information on the scenario and exercise administration, it should only be distributed to those individuals specifically designated as directing staff and Evaluators.

The Exercise Control Plan should provide the following:
- General objectives
- Concept of play (exercise scope, scenario narrative, location of players)
- Specific functional objectives
- Procedures, responsibilities, assignments and support
- Exercise planning group structure
- Exercise timelines (including pre- and post-exercise activities)
- Emergency call-off procedures, safety and security
- Artificialities, assumptions and simulations
- Master scenario of events list for the exercise
- Communications capabilities, structure and procedures
- Checklists or any other job aids needed (including maps, reference, etc.)

d. **Evaluation Sheets** should be developed for use by the directing staff and Evaluators to evaluate the exercise and to produce the final exercise report. The main points which any exercise report should focus on is whether the main aim of exercise was achieved and what are the recommendations.
11.2 Final Exercise Report

An exercise report should be compiled in all cases as soon as is practical after the debrief. The Exercise Director should ensure that the final report is completed promptly, as it is the principal means of ensuring that lessons identified can be used to provide feedback to participating. The report should contain the aims, objectives and planned outcomes of the exercise, along with an outline of the scenario and the planning process. The report should also contain an evaluation section in which the positive and negative observations are recorded and recommendations made. Improvements required should also be agreed and documented in order to assist in converting lessons identified from the exercise into concrete, measurable steps that result in improved response capabilities. This report should be used as a basis for the revision of plans / procedures and determining training needs.

In the case of inter-agency exercises, the completed report should be submitted to the relevant Regional Steering Group for distribution to all participating agencies and organisations and for submission to the National Steering Group.

In the case of single agency exercises, the completed report should be submitted to local or national agency management, as appropriate, for the distribution to all participating elements of the agency.

See Exercise Report (Appendix 9)

11.3 Improvement Plan

Based on the Exercise Report, the Regional Steering Group or Individual Agencies may prepare an Improvement Plan to address issues raised by the exercise. This plan sets out the actions to be taken, the expected completion dates and the person(s) (or agencies) responsible for delivery.

See Improvement Plan – Sample Section (Appendix 10)
Appendices

Appendix 1: Inter-Agency Exercise – Checklist
Appendix 2: Deciding what to Exercise – Checklist
Appendix 3: Foundation Phase – Checklist
Appendix 4: Developing the Scenario Narrative
Appendix 5: Exercise Master Task List and Timelines
Appendix 6: Template for Master Scenario Events List
Appendix 7: Exercise Evaluation Sheet – Umpire
Appendix 8: Exercise Evaluation Sheet – Participant Feedback
Appendix 9: Exercise Report
Appendix 10: Improvement Plan – Sample Section
Appendix 11: Compliance Actions
Appendix 1: Inter-Agency Exercise – Checklist

1. Assemble an Inter-agency Exercise Planning Team and agree the objectives, scenario, extent and aim of the exercise.

2. Develop the key actions and timetable of events, including set-up, briefings, facilitation, directing, evaluation and wrap-up activities.

3. Determine and confirm availability / participation of other relevant agencies, such as the media / voluntary emergency services / private sector.

4. List facilities required for the exercise and confirm their availability, e.g. transport, buildings, equipment.

5. Ensure that all means of communications to be used during the exercise have been tested at some stage prior to the exercise.

6. Ensure that exercise participants are clearly identifiable and all those who are not actively participating in the exercise scenario, e.g. the Exercise Director, directing staff, Umpires, etc., are easily distinguishable.

7. Ensure that directing staff are properly briefed and, where appropriate, have good independent communications with the Exercise Control Centre.

8. Establish a detailed time table for the exercise and ensure adherence.

9. If the exercise links a number of activities or functions which are dependent on each other, confirm that each has been individually tested beforehand.

10. Ensure that all participants have been briefed.

11. Ensure that all participants are aware of the procedures to be followed if a real emergency occurs during the exercise.

12. Ensure that Observers (including the media, if the media is to be present) are clearly identified and properly marshalled. Arrange for them to be kept informed of the progress of the exercise. Ensure their safety.

13. For longer exercises, arrange for appropriate catering and toilet facilities.

14. Warn the local media, emergency services control centres and any neighbours who might be worried or affected by the exercise.

15. Ensure that senior management, directing staff, Umpires and key players are aware of the time and location for the “hot” debrief and circulate a timetable for a full debrief.

16. Ensure that the final report is completed promptly, so as to ensure that lessons identified can be used to provide feedback to participating organisations.
Appendix 2: Deciding what to Exercise – Checklist

Refer to the Risk Assessment (agency or Regional) for selection of a relevant hazard which will inform the scenario. When selecting a scenario, consider its effects on:

- The community
- Transportation infrastructure
- Businesses
- Mass evacuations of centres of population
- Overwhelmed hospital and/or mortuary services
- Communications systems (landline, mobile, radio, e-mail etc)
- Gas/Water supply
- Power supplies

What agencies should be involved and what type of exercise

- Has any agency changed or updated its plans?
- Is there a change of policy/ procedure affecting one or all PRA’s?
- Who needs to take part to make it realistic and practical?
- Which will be the lead agency?
- What are the regulatory requirements?
- What resources are available for exercise preparation?

Consider exercising the following functions

- Notification (of PRA’s)
- Escalation of response from normal to major emergency
- Activation of the plan
- Warning and informing the public
- Communications
- Co-ordination and control
- Health and safety
- Transportation
- Resource management
- Continuity of normal services
- Personnel rostering and welfare

Consider previous exercises at the same level

- What was the scenario on that occasion?
- What were the recommendations and have they been implemented?
- Who took part, in what roles?
- Which was the lead agency on that occasion?
Appendix 3: Foundation Phase – Checklist

In order to plan and conduct a joint / inter-agency exercise the following must be established or be in place:

- The buy in and commitment of all agencies involved
- A clear understanding of the scope of the exercise
- An exercise time-line, with clear deadlines and milestones
- An exercise budget
- An exercise planning group. (This should be established by the RSG. Each PRA must be represented, as well as any other agencies that have a role to play. This group is responsible for the design, development, conduct and evaluation of the exercise.)
- An Exercise Director to chair the planning group. (This is a key appointment, requiring a person of appropriate seniority and experience who will take overall charge of the planning, exercising, debriefing and reporting processes).

The exercise planning group prepares the exercise timeline, clearly outlining the milestone dates in the planning process. This will also require them to set out a programme for meetings, and to allocate individual roles to group members at an early stage.

Always ask the following questions:
- Does this exercise represent a progression in terms of its complexity?
- Does it build on previous experiences?
- Does it exercise organisations and individuals in the roles for which they are trained?
- Where does this exercise fit in the incremental progression of the three year rolling exercise programme?

The following is a useful guideline in the foundation phase:
- Refer to the written MEP’s and the Framework – what does it say about the responsibilities of the PRA’s, the structures and arrangements for MEM – and prepare to practice these.
- What are the most likely emergencies to occur, based on the risk assessment for the Region/ Locality?
- What resources are available to conduct an exercise: personnel, locations, props, materiel, time, finance.
- What is the scope of the exercise; set limits to what the exercise is trying to achieve. Avoid the danger of trying to overachieve in a single exercise, or set too wide a scope for the resources available.
- Determine the most suitable type of exercise, based on the scope and resources available
- Develop and document the overall aim and the learning to be achieved from the exercise.
- Inform the relevant participants in a timely manner – get buy in and attendance from the top.
- Ensure the availability of top management during the exercise timeframe.
Appendix 4: Developing the Scenario Narrative

Use the following as a guide and prompt list in developing a scenario:

- The narrative should be short; no more than 5-7 paragraphs
- It should be:
  - Specific, but not overly detailed
  - Stated in present tense
  - Written in unambiguous language – plain English
  - Outline events to date in chronological order
  - Finish with the current known situation (the Recognised Current Situation)

For sudden emergencies (bomb blast, chemical explosion or spill) the narrative should be shorter than for events that have a slower build up, with some forewarning, e.g. a flood, ice and snow, etc.

Consider the following when writing the narrative

- What has happened?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen/is it happening?
- Who has been informed?
- Who is telling you?
- What has been/is being done about it?
- What is the extent of fatalities/injuries/physical damage?
- What are the relevant weather conditions?
- What do we expect to happen next?
- What other factors will influence the response?

Use the answers to construct sentences which will make up your scenario narrative.
## Appendix 5: Exercise Master Task List and Timelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise Planning Tasks</th>
<th>Responsible Person</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Remarks / Progress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Foundation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess needs, agree exercise type and appoint Exercise Director</td>
<td>RSG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Exercise Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify Exercise Planning Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schedule Initial Planning Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>II. Design &amp; Development</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A. Planning Conferences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Initial Planning Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare and send Invitations and Read-Ahead Packets</td>
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<td>Develop Agenda, Presentation, and Sign-In Sheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine exercise Scope (See Section B: Scope)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine exercise Scenario (See Section C: Scenario)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine date for next Planning Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assign responsibilities and due dates for tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and distribute conference minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begin development of exercise Documentation (See Section D: Documentation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Final Planning Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare and send Invitations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Agenda, Briefing, and Sign-In Sheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review all exercise materials, documents, and tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assign responsibilities and due dates for tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and distribute conference minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. Scope</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify Exercise Objectives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify Exercise Participants</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C. Scenario</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify Threat/Hazard from risk assessment process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify Exercise Venue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise Planning Tasks</td>
<td>Responsible Person</td>
<td>Date Due</td>
<td>Date Completed</td>
<td>Remarks / Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D. Documentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Situation Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Exercise Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Exercise Control Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Exercise Evaluation Sheets (Umpires and Players)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>E. Exercise Site Areas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Designate Media/Observer Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designate Registration Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designate Parking Area</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F. Media-Public Information</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Media Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Media Release/Public Information Handout</td>
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<td><strong>G. Logistics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange for use of exercise venue (reserve rooms/ use of facility)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange for participant parking at venue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange for audio/visual equipment (e.g., microphones, screens, projectors)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange for exercise supplies (e.g., pens, markers, flipcharts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Mailing Lists (players, facilitators, exercise planning team)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop ID Badges, and Sign-in Sheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange for restrooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide food and refreshments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange for videotaping of exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>H. Exercise Staffing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine exercise staff requirements (Directing Staff, Umpires, Simulators, Observers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Select and train exercise staff</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>III. Conduct</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A. Briefings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brief Exercise Players</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. Documentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribute Exercise Documentation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise Planning Tasks</td>
<td>Responsible Person</td>
<td>Date Due</td>
<td>Date Completed</td>
<td>Remarks / Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribute Umpire Evaluation Sheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribute Player Evaluation Sheets</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. Exercise Control</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Setup exercise site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct facilitation of the exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct a hot post-exercise debriefing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IV. Evaluation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A. After Action Review</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct Debriefing with Directing Staff, Umpires, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Debriefing Minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Draft AAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send Draft AAR to Exercise Planning Team for review</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>V. Improvement Planning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A. After Action Conference</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Schedule Conference</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare and send Invitations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct After Action Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finalise Exercise Report</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Improvement Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit Exercise Report to RSG</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. Improvement Planning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Share lessons identified, best practices, and successes identified in Exercise Report/Improvement Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement Exercise Report/Improvement Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Track Exercise Report/Improvement Plan implementation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 6: Master Scenario Events List

### MASTER SCENARIO EVENTS LIST (Summary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event #</th>
<th>Objective #</th>
<th>Event Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Responsible Directing Staff</th>
<th>Recipient Player(s)</th>
<th>Expected Player Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STARTEX</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>999 / 112 control room</td>
<td>Mobilisation Procedure for LA MEP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Fire Officer (Authorised Officer) activates mobilisation arrangements for LA MEP.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>999 / 112 control room</td>
<td>Mobilisation Procedure for LA MEP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# MASTER SCENARIO EVENTS LIST (Expanded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event #</th>
<th>01</th>
<th>Event Time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Via:</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Objective #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Delivers?</td>
<td>Directing Staff Name</td>
<td>Recipient Player(s):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Event Description:** Senior Fire Officer at the scene of the incident decides to declare a major emergency. As an Authorised Officer, s/he calls the Control Room to initiate the LA Mobilisation Procedure.

**Inject (Message):**

This is …………..(name, rank and service)…………….

A ……..(type of incident)……… has occurred at …………………………… (location)…..
..................................................................................................................... ………

As an authorised officer I declare that a major emergency exists.
Please activate the mobilisation arrangements in the…………(agency)………… Major Emergency Plan.

METHANE Message.

**Expected Action(s):**

- Control Room takes emergency details using METHANE.
- Control Room notifies designated personnel and other PRAs in accordance with mobilisation procedure.
- The LA CMT activates to Crisis Management Team Centre.
- The Local Co-ordination Centre is activated.
Appendix 7: Exercise Evaluation Sheet – Umpire

Objective: 1
Mobilisation Procedure

Objective:
Demonstrate the capability of control room personnel to initiate LA Mobilisation Procedure, to include use of METHANE.

Procedures:
Were the documented procedures followed?
Were the procedures adequate?

Competency:
Did control room personnel demonstrate a good knowledge of the procedures, including METHANE?

Resources:
Were Mobilisation Procedure and METHANE (written documents) readily available?
Were contact details available and up to date?
Were means of communications operational?

Any Other Comments:

Umpire: ____________________________   Date: ____________________________
Location: ___________________________
Appendix 8: Exercise Evaluation Sheet – Participant Feedback

Exercise Name: Exercise Date:
Participant Name: Title:
Agency:

Role:  Player ☐ Observer ☐ Umpire ☐ Directing Staff ☐

PART I: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

1. Based on the exercise today and the tasks identified, list the top 3 areas that need improvement.

2. Is there anything you saw in the exercise that the umpire(s) might not have been able to experience, observe, and record?

3. Identify the corrective actions that should be taken to address the issues identified in 1. above. For each corrective action, indicate if it is a high, medium, or low priority.

4. Describe the corrective actions that relate to your area of responsibility. Who should be assigned responsibility for each corrective action?

5. List the applicable equipment, training, policies, plans, and procedures that should be reviewed, revised, or developed. Indicate the priority level for each.
PART II – EXERCISE DESIGN AND CONDUCT: ASSESSMENT

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided below, with 1 indicating **strong disagreement** with the statement and 5 indicating **strong agreement**.

**Table C.1: Participant Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Factor</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The exercise was well structured and organized.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. The exercise scenario was plausible and realistic.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. The Director/directing staff were knowledgeable about the area of play and kept the exercise on target.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. The exercise documentation provided to assist in preparing for and participating in the exercise was useful.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. This exercise allowed my agency to practice and improve priority capabilities.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g. After this exercise, I believe my agency is better prepared to deal successfully with the scenario that was exercised.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PART III – PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.
Appendix 9: Exercise Report

An Exercise Report should be compiled after all exercises, as soon as practical after the exercise debrief. The purpose of this report is to ensure that lessons identified can be disseminated to both participating and non-participating organisations as quickly as possible.

Structure of Report

The after exercise report should be structured as follows:

1. Introduction
   This section should outline the background to the exercise, including the aims and objectives
2. The Planning Process
   A summary of the planning process, including the main participants
3. The Scenario
   An overview of the exercise scenario
4. The Event
   A brief overview of the events of the day(s), including details such as the organisations which took part, numbers of participants, etc.
5. Evaluation
   A brief evaluation of the positive and negative aspects of the exercise
6. Recommendations
   This is the most important part of the report, where lessons identified from the exercises are converted into recommendations for concrete, measurable steps that will result in improved response capabilities

Circulation of Report

Once completed by the Exercise Directing Team, the report should be signed and forwarded to the Regional Steering Group, via the Regional Working Group, for circulation to all PRA’s in the region and for onward transmission to the National Steering Group. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, an exercise report should reach the National Steering Group within three months of the completion of the exercise.

Note: The report should be brief and the inclusion of long descriptive passages should be avoided. Recommendations in the report should include a time-frame, where such is considered appropriate. The authors should bear in mind that the report will be circulated to other areas, unless this is specifically excluded.
## Appendix 10: Improvement Plan – Sample Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective #</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Corrective Action Description</th>
<th>Primary Responsible PRA</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The call out list of contact details was not up to date.</td>
<td>Put arrangements in place to ensure that all contact lists are kept up to date.</td>
<td>Update current list. Document procedure for updating and distribution of contact details. Train personnel responsible for updating lists Monitor implementation of procedure.</td>
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</table>
Appendix 11: Compliance Actions

The following are the principal Compliance Actions for this Guidance Document:

At Agency Level:
- Prepare a rolling three year programme of exercises based on the Agency Risk assessment
- Conduct agency exercises each year
- Prepare a report for each exercise as per Appendix 9

Forward a copy of each exercise report to local or national agency management as appropriate.

At Regional Level:
- Establish an Exercise Sub Group of the Regional Working Group
- Prepare a rolling three year programme of exercises based on the Regional Risk assessment
- Forward copy of this programme to the National Steering Group
- Conduct inter-agency exercises each year
- Prepare a report for each exercise as per Appendix 9
- Forward a copy of each exercise report to the National Steering Group