

EMPG Grants...Exercise Program Overview FAQ

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) have been compiled based on "EMPG Grants...Exercise Program Overview" conference calls that KDEM hosted in February 2014 with local emergency management partners. Refer to the "Grant Overview Feb 2014" power point for the coordinating slide numbers.

EXERCISES

Q: If the county is doing a plan review of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), do we have to do an Improvement Plan (IP)? The plan revision is technically the Improvement Plan and we are reviewing it, so would a roster that shows the concerned parties were present and discussed the changes/revisions be sufficient?

A: The county should submit documentation showing that the participants identified and implemented improvements from an EOP seminar or workshop. Some counties have submitted Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meeting minutes that describe the discussion of the EOP and what changes are being made, and that has been accepted as one of the two exercises. (Slide 13)

Q: Can we do function-specific exercises (fire department, EMS, law enforcement, etc.), as long as they are testing the county EOP? It will work better for my county to do some smaller-scale exercises and then work up to more players. I will still do the Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (TEPW) at the LEPC meeting, but if I can ask each function what they would like to do I think I will get more buy in.

A: Yes, sometimes breaking down exercises to test specific Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) in the county plan allows you to focus on specific needs of each functional area. Breaking these into smaller portions first can ensure that key players are clear on roles and responsibilities. Eventually these smaller exercises should build up to a larger, more complex exercise to address the challenges of working across functional areas. (Slide 6) The smaller ESF exercises should be part of your county multi-year exercise plan and demonstrate progression toward a multi-disciplinary exercise.

It is really all about matching the exercise program to meet the county's needs and to serve as a springboard for enhancing the overall program.

Q: Did the Incident Management Team (IMT) exercise at Crisis City work for last year (2013) as a full-scale exercise with all appropriate paperwork, or do I need to submit a separate IP tying it to my county EOP?

A: All counties that were represented at the May 2013 full-scale exercise were given credit for participation. The plans for completing the After Action Report (AAR) and IP were not clearly communicated to local stakeholders prior to the exercise, so the exercise requirements were marked as completed for all participating counties through KDEM's AAR.

In the future, think of the annual full-scale exercise (FSE) hosted by KDEM as a regional exercise. KDEM will write one AAR that addresses broader, State-level issues, but it will not

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include individual counties' specific needs. You will need to write an Improvement Plan specific to your jurisdiction and submit it to KDEM for EMPG exercise credit. (Slide 29)

Q: How often is Crisis City is going to hold the full scale exercises? Is it going to be once a year, once every two or three? What was the timeframe?

A: Once a year, as funding allows. The 2014 Crisis City exercise is going to be part of the Vigilant Guard exercise hosted by the National Guard in August.

Q: If more than one county (or border states) exercise together, you just need one AAR sent in covering all jurisdictions and then an IP from each participating jurisdiction. Am I correct?

A: Yes. If there is one AAR for the whole exercise, submit that AAR, as well as an Improvement Plan matrix for each Kansas county detailing corrective actions for each county to track. (Slide 25)

Q: I would like to submit a real incident for an exercise.

A: Real incidents are an opportunity to identify capabilities and conduct an analysis of strengths and areas of improvement. To substitute a real incident for an exercise credit, it must be an extraordinary test of your plans, policies, and procedures, and expand beyond the routine response calls. (Slide 22)

Submit an application (which can be found on the KDEM web site <http://www.kansastag.gov/KDEM.asp?PageID=193>) along with other supporting documentation and an After Action Report / Improvement Plan that is written with involvement of your local response partners. The application package will be reviewed by a 5-person committee of KDEM Preparedness staff, Response Actions staff, and your Regional Coordinator to make a determination if the application is accepted or denied to substitute for exercise credit. You will receive a written response with the committee's decision. (Slide 23)

Examples of supporting documentation include a county declaration of disaster, documentation showing EOC activation, photos, news articles specific to the incident in your county, LEPC meeting minutes showing a review of the response with community partners, hot wash sign-in sheet, etc.

Real incidents cannot be used in two consecutive grant years, unless the second incident is included in a Presidential Disaster Declaration. (Slide 23)

Q: Is a county declaration of disaster required to substitute a real incident for exercise credit?

A: A county declaration of disaster and/or activation of the local EOC are factored into the committee's decision, however the whole application will be considered when making a determination, including the AAR/IP, information provided on the application, as well as other supporting documentation that is submitted.

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Q: If a county was called to aid another county during a real incident, can that count for both counties?

A: Did the incident provide an extraordinary test of the aid county's plans, policies, and procedures that exceeded their normal, routine response calls? Did the aid county have a disaster declaration based on their support operations? That decision would be handled a case-by-case basis depending on the incident. Each county should follow the application process individually. (Slides 22-23)

Q: Is an exercise planning workshop considered an exercise? If so, will you need the agenda, sign-in sheet, and an Improvement Plan?

A: Refer to slides 10-15 in the presentation. The county must conduct and/or participate in the Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (TEPW) PLUS two more exercises. Slide 12 outlines the documentation to be submitted for the TEPW (calendar, roster, and priority capabilities). Slide 15 identifies the documentation to be submitted for the additional two exercises (AAR and IP).

Q: I was a little confused on the amount of necessary exercises. The discussion talked about three exercises and there was a page on the presentation requiring quarterly exercises?

A: Slide 9 – titled “FEMA guidance to States” – states those requirements are fulfilled by KDEM to participate in one exercise per quarter.

For the locals, the requirement is to submit the *Exercise Participation Reporting Form for Individuals* each quarter but not necessarily conduct an exercise each quarter. The requirement for the locals is to participate/conduct in the TEPW PLUS two exercises, so that would be a total of three exercises annually. (Slide 20)

Q: Do we need any exercises that include a hazmat component? At one time it was a requirement that you had to have a hazmat component or a hazmat exercise as one of your credits, and I didn't know if that was still a requirement.

A: The SARA Title III requirements state that each LEPC must review the comprehensive emergency response plan annually (or more frequently as circumstances change in the community or as any facility may require). SEC. 303 [42 U.S.C. 11003]. The requirements don't specifically state there must be a hazmat exercise, but it does state the LEPC shall develop methods and schedules for exercising the emergency plan. KDEM has always supported the fact that exercises are the best way to review plans and build hazmat components into existing exercises to meet the planning review requirement.

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Q: On Slide 15, it says “both AARs and IPs must identify actions for your county.” And then you said “or emergency management program.” I participated in a health department exercise as an evaluator, but if I understand correctly, that still counts as credit for an exercise because it deals with our county's health department plan, not necessarily the emergency management plan. Am I misinterpreting that, or is that correct?

A: It would count as one of your exercises. Emergency Support Function 8 – Public Health and Medical is part of your county EOP so that would be part of your over-arching emergency management program because that does support your countywide operations.

The role of evaluator is identified on the list of “What does ‘participate’ mean?” (Slide 14) for receiving exercise credit.

Q: I met with our ESF 8 partners for their AAR/IP for a regional public health TTX. Even though I did not attend the TTX, based on my participation with their AAR, can that count for credit?

A: You cannot receive credit for it as EMPG-funded personnel on the *Exercise Participation Reporting Form for Individuals* since you did not participate in the TTX. You must be an active participant (player, facilitator, controller, simulator, evaluator, or planning team) in the exercise in order to receive credit. (Slide 14) If you identified future exercises based on the meeting with ESF 8 partners and you actively participate in those future exercises, those future exercise(s) would count for credit.

We want to encourage emergency management to work with all ESF partners; however we have to be careful that we're not setting a precedent that emergency managers can receive credit for exercises that they did not participate in.

Q: As for the TEPW, we are going to work on a communication exercise and will be starting with simple seminar-style training with the smaller groups/departments to make sure they know how to get from channel to channel and group to group before we do a functional exercise in the late fall. Do we report the small group training for the purposes of your quarterly report that goes to Bret?

A: The “small group trainings” are training, not an exercise, and should be included on your TEPW calendar. For the county requirements, we ask that you conduct and/or participate in at least two exercises at the Tabletop Exercise (TTX), functional, or full-scale level, so the functional exercise in the late fall would count. (Slide 13)

Q: In the Kansas City region, we have regional TEPW that includes both sides of the state line. Can we use that as our TEPW?

A: Yes, if participants from your county and their exercise needs are met in the larger scheme of the regional strategy and calendar and the regional documentation is submitted to KDEM.

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INDIVIDUAL VS. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Q: As an emergency manager for multiple counties, does my participation count three-fold?

A: Yes, if all counties were represented and you complete an Improvement Plan matrix for each county. Think of it as doing a regional or multi-county exercise. You can submit one AAR for the exercise but ensure that each individual county is addressed on an IP. (Slide 25) This would be counted as one exercise for your individual exercise credits.

Q: I just want to clarify the requirements for individual exercise requirements. Slide 10 says two exercises and a quarterly report with individual exercise activity and that says "EMPG funded staff only." In the past, it was required for all staff of the county emergency manager, the alternate emergency manager, and anyone who would fill those positions. Does the minimum of three exercises count the TEPW?

A: For EXERCISES, the EMPG Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) states "In addition, all EMPG program funded personnel shall participate in no fewer than three exercises in a 12-month period." This requirement is reported on the *Exercise Participation Reporting Form for Individuals* submitted quarterly to Bret Rowe. And, yes, the TEPW can count as one of those three exercises.

For TRAINING, the Kansas EMPG grant guidance states that anyone who works for the county emergency management program in a paid status, regardless of county or EMPG funding, must complete the trainings listed in the Grant FOA. (IS 100; IS 200; IS 700; IS 800; and the FEMA Professional Development Series IS 120, IS 230.b; IS 235.b; IS 240.a; IS 241.a; IS 242.a; and IS 244.a). Proof of course completions must be provided to KDEM.

Q: On Slide 20, it's a pictorial representation of our requirements. Is there any difference between the program requirement for the county and the individual requirements? Or are those exactly identical?

A: There is a difference. The explanations of the different requirements have been confusing over the years.

The EMPG FOA states that the program grantee (which is KDEM) must conduct no less than one exercise per quarter and one full-scale exercise in a 12-month period, for a total of five exercises. KDEM is meeting that requirement at the state level.

In KDEM's guidance to the locals (*Kansas EMPG Sub-Grantee Guidance*), we ask that the sub-grantee (which is your county EMPG-funded program) conduct and/or participate in the TEPW PLUS two exercises for a total of three exercises. These exercises are reported to KDEM through AARs and IPs. (Slide 10)

The FOA also states, "In addition, all EMPG program funded personnel must participate in no fewer than three exercises in a 12-month period." If your salary is paid from EMPG of any dollar amount (for KDEM staff and locals), you must participate in no fewer three

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exercises in a 12-month period. Those requirements are reported on *Exercise Participation Reporting Form for Individuals* submitted quarterly to Bret Rowe.

For example, the Sunflower County emergency management program must conduct and/or participate in the TEPW PLUS two more exercises, so that's three exercises total. Then, Jane Doe -- as an EMPG-funded individual employed by Sunflower County -- must participate in three exercises of any type. It would make sense if Jane Doe went to the TEPW and the two exercises hosted by her county emergency management program, but we understand there are many different ways for individuals to meet that requirement. KDEM encourages participation in other emergency management program exercises to gain knowledge and a broader collection of new ideas and best practices.

Many of our local partners who are funded with EMPG are participating in more than three exercises. If there is a situation where we see an individual struggling to meet those requirements, we'll follow up on a case-by-case basis with that individual.

GUIDANCE & REPORTING

Q: Did you get any clarification if we follow the guidelines from previous years in regards to exercises per year, or do the new guidelines replace the old ones?

A: The new guidance will replace previous years' guidance. For the exercises, KDEM does not plan to change the requirements from 2013 to 2014. The guidance from FEMA isn't out yet (as of February 2014), but we do not anticipate major changes.

Q: On the web site that is being set up to upload the exercise documentation (Slide 36), that could be a point of failure if we only have one place we're sending something to. Is there a backup server?

A: The online reporting tool -- to be called the Kansas Exercise Tracking System, or KETS -- will be hosted on a server off of the state's network and backed up weekly by the contractor. The data that you enter manually into the system and the files that you upload will be stored separately in different off-site locations, as well.

Currently, there are too many avenues in which documents are submitted to KDEM and it is creating too many loopholes for materials and data to get lost. KETS will provide visibility to the county, your regional coordinator, and KDEM site administrators of what you have submitted. In addition, when you upload documents into the system, you will get a notification of what you submitted and you will receive a second notification when the materials have been accepted by KDEM.

In addition, it is strongly recommended that you maintain original copies and locally backup copies of all documentation submitted to KDEM in accordance with your local records retention policies.

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Q: In the past, EMPG documentation has had its own schedule for getting it in, but I'm assuming that with these exercise requirements (to submit the *Exercise Participation Reporting Form for Individuals* quarterly) that it's recommended we provide this information quarterly regardless of where we are with the current grant. Is that correct?

A: Yes. We want to get in the habit of locals submitting quarterly reports year round and not waiting until the grant guidance is released. In the past years, we waited until we got the grant from FEMA and then sent out the application packages, the counties submitted applications, and we issued notice to counties to proceed with the project with us. As you well know, that condenses down a year's worth of activities and submissions into three or four months, and that makes it very hard for us and for you also. We're trying to step-by-step get in the cycle of locals submitting your paperwork quarterly, year round.

TRAINING

Q: On the training for discussion-based and operations-based exercise design, do you have to have HSEEP before you can go to either of those?

A: Yes. The course progression is that Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) (Course G-146) is a prerequisite for the Exercise Design for Discussion-Based Exercises (Course KS-132) and the discussion-based class is a prerequisite for Exercise Design for Operations-Based Exercises (Course KS-133). (Slide 45)

HSEEP was updated in April 2013. One of the changes of the HSEEP training course that's coming out through the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) in Emmitsburg is that the states will continue to offer HSEEP in a classroom setting just like we always have, but you will have an opportunity to complete HSEEP virtually using Adobe Connect. If you cannot travel to one of the classroom-based sessions offered in Kansas, you may take it through Adobe Connect with EMI. If you are interested in taking the virtual HSEEP (EMI Course K-146), submit a completed 119-25 form to Erin McGinnis, State Training Officer, at erin.m.mcginnis2.nfg@mail.mil.

Q: Will the exercise design classes ever be available in the western part of the state?

A: There was a KS-132 discussion-based design class scheduled in Thomas County in 2013 but it had to be rescheduled and moved to another location due to low enrollment numbers. There was a KS-132 discussion-based class with full enrollment in Ulysses in 2013. Training locations for 2014 are still being identified. (Slide 45)

Please understand these exercise design courses are skill-based courses that emphasize a hands-on experience. This requires a minimum number of participants to make the class effective. Please help us recruit members of your emergency management program to take these courses as it will enhance your county's capabilities to conduct exercises.

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Q: Are there any local requirements for NIMS CAST right now?

A: The NIMS CAST program itself has gone away. The program that was going to replace it, called PrepCAP, is not going to be brought online. However, as a state level, KDEM is still reporting and it appears that as we go forward, at some point we will be tasked to reach back down into the county level as we have in the past with NIMS CAST. So, we encourage you to continue gathering that information, but we do not have a form or web site to provide.

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Definitions

Definitions from the HSEEP glossary

Types of Exercises	
Seminar	Seminars generally 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 gain awareness of, or assess, the capabilities of interagency or inter-jurisdictional operations.
Workshop	Although similar to seminars, workshops differ in two important aspects: participant interaction is increased, and the focus is placed on achieving or building a product. Effective workshops entail the broadest attendance by relevant stakeholders. Products produced from a workshop can include new standard operating procedures, emergency operations plans, continuity of operations plans, and mutual aid agreements. To be effective, workshops should focus on a specific issue, and the desired objective, product, or goal must be clearly defined.
Tabletop Exercise (TTX)	A TTX is typically held in an informal setting intended to generate discussion of various issues regarding a hypothetical, simulated emergency. TTXs can be used to enhance general awareness, validate plans and procedures, rehearse concepts, and/or 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 attitudes.
Game	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 and are therefore excellent tools to use when validating or reinforcing plans and procedures or evaluating resource requirements.
Drill	A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to validate a specific operation or function in a single agency or organization. Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, develop or validate new policies or procedures, or practice and maintain current skills.
Functional Exercise (FE)	Functional exercises 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 at the management level. An FE is conducted in a realistic, real-time environment; however, movement of personnel and equipment is usually simulated.
Full Scale Exercise (FSE)	FSEs are typically the most complex and resource-intensive type of exercise.

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	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 or Unified Command.
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Exercise Participants	
Player	Players have an active role in preventing, responding to, or recovering from the risks and hazards presented in the scenario, by either discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities. Players initiate actions that will respond to and/or mitigate the simulated emergency.
Facilitator	During a discussion-based exercise, the facilitator(s) is responsible for keeping participant discussions on track with exercise objectives and ensuring all issues and objectives are explored as thoroughly as possible within time constraints. If an exercise uses breakout groups, more than one facilitator may be needed.
Controller	In operations-based and some complex discussion-based exercises, controllers plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise incident site, and possibly take the roles of individuals and agencies not actually participating in the exercise. Controllers direct the pace of exercise play, provide key data to players, and may prompt or initiate certain player actions and injects to the players as described in the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) to ensure exercise continuity. Controllers issue exercise materials to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and supervise the safety of all exercise participants. Controllers are the only participants who should provide information or direction to players. All controllers should be accountable to one senior controller.
Simulator	Simulators are control staff personnel who role play as nonparticipating organizations or individuals. They most often operate out of the SimCell, but they may occasionally have face-to-face contact with players. Simulators function semi-independently under the supervision of SimCell controllers, enacting roles in accordance with instructions provided in the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL). All simulators are ultimately accountable to the Exercise Director and senior controller.
Evaluator	Evaluators, selected from participating agencies, are chosen based on their expertise in the functional areas they will observe. Evaluators use Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) to measure and assess performance, capture unresolved issues, and analyze exercise results. Evaluators passively assess and document players' performance against established emergency plans and exercise evaluation criteria, in accordance with HSEEP standards and without interfering with exercise flow.
Exercise Planning Team	The exercise planning team is responsible for the successful execution of all aspects of an individual exercise. The planning team determines exercise objectives and core capabilities, creates a realistic scenario to achieve the exercise objectives, and develops documents to guide exercise conduct and evaluation. The planning team's organization and management principles should include clearly defined roles and responsibilities and a manageable span of control.

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Exercise Documentation	
After Action Report (AAR)	The AAR summarizes key exercise-related evaluation information, including the exercise overview and analysis of objectives and core capabilities. The AAR is usually developed in conjunction with an IP. The lead evaluator and exercise planning team draft the AAR and submit it to meeting participants before the After Action Meeting (AAM).
Corrective Action	Corrective actions are the concrete, actionable steps outlined in an IP that are intended to resolve preparedness gaps and shortcomings experienced in exercises or real-world events.
Improvement Plan (IP)	The IP identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties, and establishes target dates for their completion. The IP is developed in conjunction with the After-Action Report.

Other Exercise Terms	
Exercise	An exercise is an instrument to train for, assess, practice, and improve performance in prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery capabilities in a risk-free environment. Exercises can be used for testing and validating policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment, and interagency agreements; clarifying and training personnel in roles and responsibilities; improving interagency coordination and communications; improving individual performance; identifying gaps in resources; and identifying opportunities for improvement.
Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG)	EEGs provide a template for observing and collecting exercise data in relation to objectives and associated core capabilities. EEGs typically identify targets and critical tasks for exercise objectives and core capabilities and enable evaluators to capture structured and unstructured data regarding exercise performance. Evaluators should develop and customize EEGs to meet the unique objectives of their exercise and to reflect jurisdiction-specific capability targets.
Exercise Program Management	Exercise program management is the process of overseeing a variety of individual exercises and supporting activities sustained over time. An effective exercise program helps whole community stakeholders maximize efficiency, resources, time, and funding by ensuring that individual exercises are part of a coordinated, integrated approach to building, sustaining, and delivering core capabilities.
Exercise Program Manager	The exercise program manager develops a self-sustaining exercise program through program budget management oversight, exercise conduct, and improvement tracking monitoring and reporting.
Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)	HSEEP is a program that provides a 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.
Root Cause Analysis	When evaluating exercises, root-cause analysis involves not merely identifying what issues emerged, but rather discovering the root causes of those issues. Root-cause analysis enables exercise stakeholders to target how best to address areas for improvement and close capability gaps.

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Master Scenario Events List (MSEL)	The MSEL is a chronological timeline of expected actions and scripted events to be injected into exercise play by controllers to generate or prompt player activity. It ensures necessary events happen so that all objectives are met. Larger, more complex exercises may also use a procedural flow, which differs from the MSEL in that it contains only expected player actions or events. The MSEL links simulation to action, enhances exercise experience for players, and reflects an incident or activity meant to prompt players to action.
Training and Exercise Plan (TEP)	The TEP is the foundation document guiding a successful exercise program. The TEP articulates overall exercise program priorities and outlines a schedule of training and exercise activities designed to meet those priorities.
Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW)	A TEPW is usually conducted to create a Multi-year TEP. At a TEPW, stakeholders work together in a collaborative workshop environment to identify and set exercise program priorities based on core capabilities. Based on these program priorities, TEPW stakeholders develop a multi-year schedule of specific training and exercises.
Whole Community	A focus on enabling the participation in national preparedness activities of a wider range of stakeholders from the Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial government, the private and nonprofit sectors (including nongovernmental organizations), and the general public in order to foster better coordination and working relationships. Used interchangeably with "all-of-Nation."