

Interstate Interfacility Transport of a Patient with Tabletop Exercise

Exercise Plan

The Exercise Plan (ExPlan) gives elected and appointed officials, observers, media personnel, and players from participating organizations information they need to observe or participate in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, controllers, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the ExPlan. This publication was made possible by Grant Number 1 IDSEP160033-01-00 from ASPR. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the HHS.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Interstate Interfacility Transport of a Patient with Discussion-based Exercise.
Exercise Dates	
Scope	This exercise is a discussion-based exercise planned for at . Exercise play is limited to .
Mission Area(s)	Response and Recovery
Core Capabilities	
Objectives	
Threat or Hazard	Natural Hazard: Disease Outbreak
Scenario	Two patients, a 45 year old male and a 7 year old female, present to a state-designated <i>frontline/assessment (select one)</i> hospital for Ebola and Special Pathogen Patients with complaints of high fever, headache, shortness of breath, and excessive vomiting. Both report a travel history to an area with an active outbreak of . Laboratory tests confirm that both patients have been infected with this pathogen. The decision is made to move both patients to a state-designated Ebola and Special Pathogen Treatment Hospital.
Sponsor	
Participating Organizations	
Point of Contact	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned core capabilities are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
REQUIRED OBJECTIVES:	
Identify opportunities to strengthen the capability for the interfacility transport of special pathogen patients.	Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
Describe how patient and provider safety is maintained throughout the transport operation.	Environmental Response/Health and Safety
Define the Incident Command/Unified Command structure used for managing special pathogen patient transport operations.	Operational Coordination
Assess capabilities for effective communications with all interfacility special pathogen patient transport stakeholders during the entire transport.	Operational Communications
Evaluate the capability of EMS to provide required patient care based on state and local policies and protocols.	Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
Identify the process for selecting personal protection equipment (PPE) for each transport mission with emphasis on ensuring that selection is based on the modes of disease transmission.	Environmental Response/Health and Safety
Evaluate capabilities for medical monitoring of transport crew members post-transport.	Health and Social Services
Assess policies that are in place for the safe management of infectious waste.	Environmental Response/Health and Safety
Evaluate whether appropriate equipment is available to safely transport children of all ages and sizes.	Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
Evaluate the ability to meet the psychosocial needs of children, family members, and transport providers.	Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
Define staffing levels needed to transport children.	Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
OPTIONAL OBJECTIVES: SELECT THOSE THAT ARE BEING INCLUDED IN THE EXERCISE	
Evaluate the capability to manage a patient who decompensates en-route from the sending facility to the receiving facility in light of current laws and	Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
protocols.	
Assess the capability to transport patients with suspect or confirmed special pathogen infection who fall into a special population category, such as pediatric patients, pregnant women, and/or individuals who utilize service animals.	Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
Develop solutions for both anticipated and unanticipated challenges that may be encountered during transport operations (e.g. vehicle breakdown, patient decompensates, personnel providing patient care becomes ill).	Planning
Identify the stakeholders, including the State EMS Office, that are involved in the decision-making process for all aspects of special pathogen patient interfacility transport planning.	Planning
Identify capabilities for just-in-time education and training for operational personnel as a critical component of the transport execution plan.	Planning
Define the public information strategy that will be utilized to manage the media for the duration of special pathogen patient transport operation planning and execution.	Public Information and Warning
Identify the process for the conduct of the transport law enforcement threat assessment to determine the need for a law enforcement escort and the level of support required.	On-scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement
Evaluate the ability to maintain patient privacy and compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations throughout the transport.	Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
Identify any differences between notification and coordination procedures for intrastate and interstate transports.	Planning
Identify policies for family members to accompany a pediatric patient during transport.	Planning

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Facilitators.** Facilitators plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site, and act in the roles of organizations or individuals that are not playing in the

exercise. Facilitators direct the pace of the exercise, provide key data to players, and may prompt or initiate certain player actions to ensure exercise continuity. In addition, they issue exercise material to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and supervise the safety of all exercise participants.

- **Evaluators.** Evaluators evaluate and provide feedback on a designated functional area of the exercise. Evaluators observe and document performance against established capability targets and critical tasks, in accordance with the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).
- **Observers.** Observers visit or view selected segments of the exercise. Observers do not play in the exercise, nor do they perform any control or evaluation functions. Observers view the exercise from a designated observation area and must remain within the observation area during the exercise. Very Important Persons (VIPs) are also observers, but they frequently are grouped separately.
- **Media Personnel.** Some media personnel may be present as observers, pending approval by the sponsor organization and the Exercise Planning Team. *[Delete bullet if not applicable]*
- **Support Staff.** The exercise support staff includes individuals who perform administrative and logistical support tasks during the exercise (e.g., registration, catering).

Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise, and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation. During this exercise, the following apply:

- The exercise scenario is plausible and events occur as they are presented.
- The exercise starts at the point the decision is made to transfer a patient from one facility to another. All hospital-based patient treatment activities and epidemiological/public health activities are beyond the scope of the exercise discussion.
- Assets that are identified as being needed for transport operations will be available.
- Any assumptions made by exercise participants when "making decisions" or formulating courses of action must be clearly identified for the group.
- All players receive information at the same time.
- Exercise communication and coordination is limited to participants physically present at the exercise venue. Participants may reach out to non-present colleagues via e-mail, text message, or phone calls during breaks, but the progression of the exercise will not be delayed pending the response individuals who are not present in the room.
- One of the purposes of the exercise is to increase communication among players and represented organizations. However, players should adhere to the participant

communication strategy outlined for this exercise, even if it differs from how things would occur in a real-world situation.

- Timelines may be expedited to fit the discussion timeline. For example, the ambulance crew will be at the hospital ready to pick the patient up immediately, when in reality it will take a number of hours to assemble this resource.

EXERCISE LOGISTICS

Safety

Exercise participant safety takes priority over exercise events. The following general requirements apply to the exercise:

- A Safety Controller is responsible for participant safety; any safety concerns must be immediately reported to the Safety Controller. The Safety Controller and Exercise Director will determine if a real-world emergency warrants a pause in exercise play and when exercise play can be resumed.
- For an emergency that requires assistance, use the phrase [**“real-world emergency.”**] The following procedures should be used in case of a real emergency during the exercise:
 - Anyone who observes a participant who is seriously ill or injured will immediately notify emergency services and the exercise facilitator or support staff, and, within reason and training, render aid.

Fire Safety

Standard fire and safety regulations relevant to the _____ will be followed during the exercise.

Emergency Medical Services

In the event of a medical emergency, call 9-1-1.

Weapons Policy

All participants will follow the relevant weapons policy for the exercising organization or exercise venue.

Site Access

Security

If entry control is required for the exercise venue, the sponsor organization is responsible for arranging appropriate security measures. To prevent interruption of the exercise, access to exercise location is limited to exercise participants.

Observer Coordination [delete section if not applicable]

Organizations with observers attending the exercise should coordinate with the sponsor organization for access to the exercise location. Observers should be seated in a designated area that is separate from the areas where exercise participants will be seated during the group discussion periods. Exercise participants should be advised of the presence of observers.

POST-EXERCISE AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Debriefings

Post-exercise debriefing aims to collect sufficient relevant data to support effective evaluation and improvement planning.

Hot Wash

At the conclusion of exercise play, controllers facilitate a Hot Wash to allow players to discuss strengths and areas for improvement, and evaluators to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes. All participants may attend; however, observers are not encouraged to attend the meeting. The Hot Wash should not exceed 30 minutes.

Facilitator and Evaluator Debriefing

Facilitators and evaluators attend a facilitated C/E Debriefing immediately following the exercise. During this debriefing, facilitators and evaluators provide an overview of their observed functional areas and discuss strengths and areas for improvement.

Participant Feedback Forms

Participant Feedback Forms provide players with the opportunity to comment candidly on exercise activities and exercise design. Participant Feedback Forms should be collected at the conclusion of the Hot Wash.

Evaluation

Exercise Evaluation Guides

EEGs assist evaluators in collecting relevant exercise observations. EEGs document exercise objectives and aligned core capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks. Each EEG provides evaluators with information on what they should expect to see demonstrated in their functional area. The EEGs, coupled with Participant Feedback Forms and Hot Wash notes, are used to evaluate the exercise and compile the After-Action Report (AAR).

After-Action Report

The AAR summarizes key information related to evaluation. The AAR primarily focuses on the analysis of core capabilities, including capability performance, strengths, and areas for improvement. AARs also include basic exercise information, including the exercise name, type of exercise, dates, location, participating organizations, mission area(s), specific threat or hazard, a brief scenario description, and the name of the exercise sponsor and POC.

Improvement Planning

Improvement planning is the process by which the observations recorded in the AAR are resolved through development of concrete corrective actions, which are prioritized and tracked as a part of a continuous corrective action program.

After-Action Meeting

The After-Action Meeting (AAM) is a meeting held among decision- and policy-makers from the exercising organizations, as well as the Lead Evaluator and members of the Exercise Planning Team, to debrief the exercise and to review and refine the draft AAR and Improvement Plan (IP). The AAM should be an interactive session, providing attendees the opportunity to discuss and validate the observations and corrective actions in the draft AAR/IP.

Improvement Plan

The IP identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties, and establishes target dates for their completion. It is created by elected and appointed officials from the organizations participating in the exercise, and discussed and validated during the AAM.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Exercise Rules

The following general rules govern exercise play:

- Real-world emergency actions take priority over exercise actions.
- Exercise players will comply with real-world emergency procedures, unless otherwise directed by the Exercise Facilitator.
- No exercise related communications will occur via radios. Communication among participants should be done in-person. During breaks, participants are permitted to use e-mails, texts, and/or phone calls to communicate with entities external to the exercise in order to request information.
- Observers are not permitted to add to participant discussions.

Players Instructions

Players should follow certain guidelines before, during, and after the exercise to ensure a safe and effective exercise.

Before the Exercise

- Review appropriate organizational plans, procedures, and exercise support documents.
- Be at the appropriate site at least 30 minutes before the exercise starts. Wear the appropriate uniform and/or identification item(s).
- Sign in when you arrive.
- If you gain knowledge of the scenario before the exercise, notify a controller so that appropriate actions can be taken to ensure a valid evaluation.

During the Exercise

- Respond to exercise events and information as if the emergency were real, unless otherwise directed by the facilitator.
- Do not engage in personal conversations with the facilitator, evaluators, or observers.
- If you do not understand the scope of the exercise, or if you are uncertain about an organization's participation in an exercise, ask the facilitator for clarification.
- Parts of the scenario may seem implausible. Recognize that the exercise has objectives to satisfy and may require incorporation of unrealistic aspects.
- Maintain a log of your activities or decisions your organization would undertake or make in response to the scenario. Many times, this log may include documentation of activities that were missed by evaluators.

After the Exercise

- Participate in the Hot Wash.
- Complete the Participant Feedback Form. This form allows you to comment candidly on emergency response activities and exercise effectiveness. Provide the completed form to a member of the support staff.
- Provide any notes or materials generated from the exercise to a support staff member for review and inclusion in the AAR.

APPENDIX A: EXERCISE SCHEDULE

[**Note:** Because this information is updated throughout the exercise planning process, appendices may be developed as stand-alone documents rather than part of the ExPlan.]

Time	Personnel	Activity	Location
	Facilitator, evaluators, and exercise staff	Facilitator and Evaluator Briefing	
	Facilitator and exercise staff	Check-in for final instructions and room set up	
	Facilitator and Evaluators	Facilitator and evaluators in starting positions.	
	Participants and observers	Registration	
	All	Facilitator provides player brief	
	All	Exercise starts	
	All	Exercise ends	
Immediately Following the Exercise	All	Hotwash and collect all Participant Feedback Forms	
[Immediately Following the Hotwash]	Facilitator and Evaluators	Facilitator and Evaluator Debriefing	
	Facilitator, evaluators, and exercise planners	After Action Review Meeting	

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations
Local
State
Federal
Private Sector (e.g. EMS Agency, hospitals, Waste Management Agency)

APPENDIX C: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
AAM	After Action Meeting
AAR	After Action Report
C/E	Controller/Evaluator
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EEG	Exercise Evaluation Guide
ExPlan	Exercise Plan
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
IP	Improvement Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
POC	Point of Contact
SME	Subject Matter Expert