



# **Building Real Capabilities via Effective Exercises**

**Part of the Operation THREAT Exercise Series**

**Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee**

**April 21, 2011**

# Why the Presentation?

- “Degraded Play” negatively affects many aspects of operational exercises:
  - Does not portray real-world roles and responsibilities of agencies
  - Lowers ability to effectively evaluate
  - Potentially impacts all players/agencies
  - Undermines exercise objectives
- Improvement Plan action item from the Autumn/Political Storm Exercise Series

# Seminar Purpose

- To maximize the Region's benefit from operation-based exercises
- To provide valuable exercise experience that engages players/agencies
- To help ensure exercise objectives (the reasons for the exercise) are met
- To ensure everyone has the same expectations before and during exercise.

# Why Do We Exercise?

- Exercises provide a means to test preparedness and validate procedures
- Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is designed to encourage a common exercise design process, conduct, and evaluation method across all levels of government and the private sector
- Exercises are designed and evaluated to demonstrate capabilities and test outcomes, as defined by the Target Capability List.

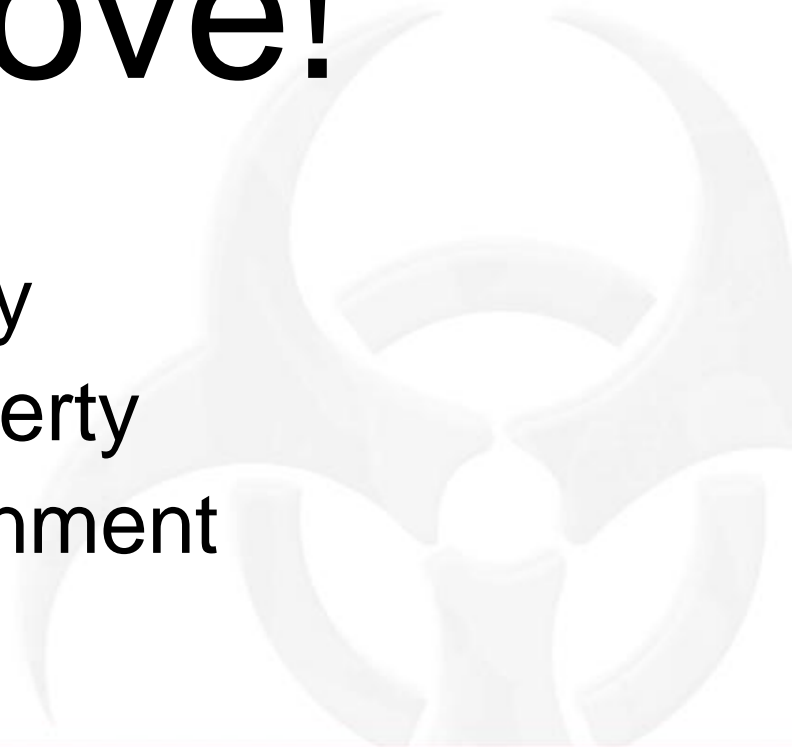
# Really, Why Do We Exercise?

## To Improve!

Life Safety

Protect Property

Protect Environment



# Commitment

- There are six steps to a successful exercise:
  - Exercise designers must design a plausible exercise
  - Exercise Players must play to the “level of effort” intended by the exercise designers
  - Exercise Control Staff must identify and correct exercise uncertainty among Players
  - Exercises must be evaluated
  - Evaluations result in an Improvement Plan
  - Improvement Plan’s actionable items are implemented, trained, revised and re-evaluated

# Exercise Concept and Objectives

- Our agencies have come together to identify the overall concept of the exercise
- Once the concept is identified, then a set of objectives are identified to drive exercise design and areas to be evaluated
- Finally, you create a jurisdiction-specific scenario formulated to meet exercise objectives.



# What is Important?

- As a Player, look at the exercise's design for clues.
- Players should read the Player Handbook or Exercise Plan to determine the exercise focus.
  - These inform the Player what actions will be critical during the exercise.
  - Look at the exercise's objectives.
- Ask questions if you're not clear on your role in exercise play.

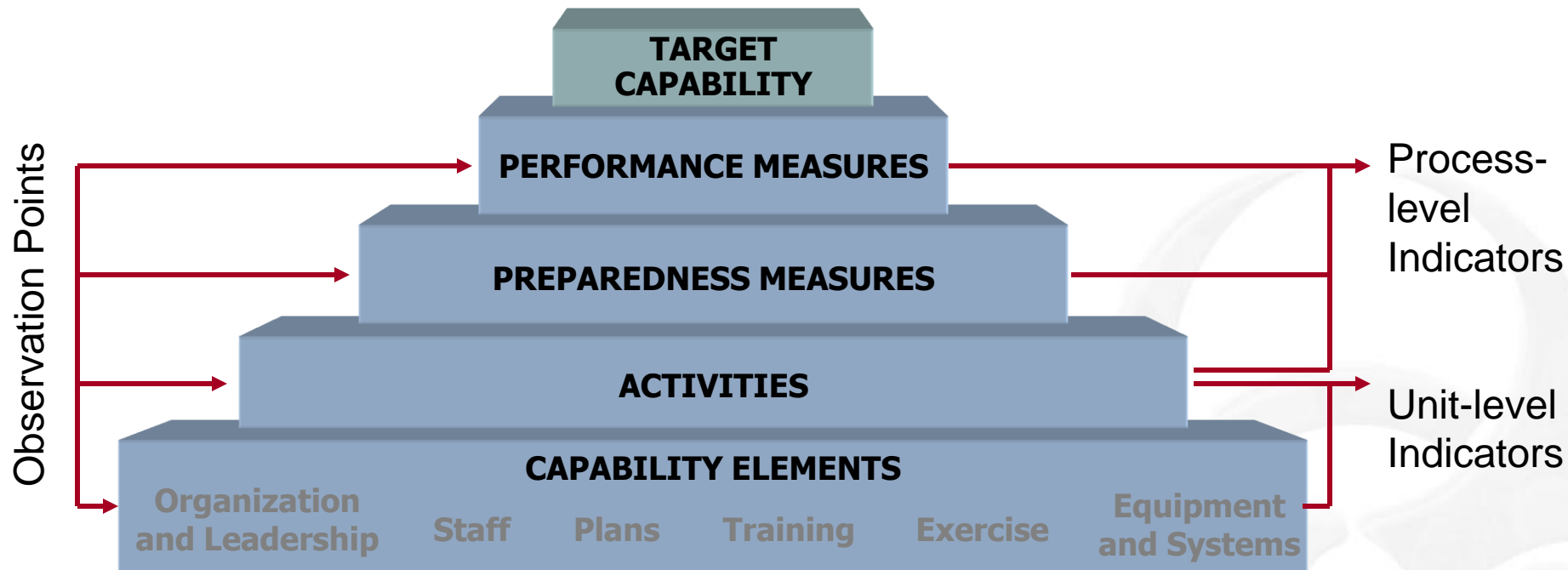


# Target Capabilities

- These groups of activities resulted in 36 Target Capabilities. They cover the spectrum of emergency response (and other mission areas):
  - Communications
  - Mass Care
  - EOC Management
  - On Site Incident Command
  - Public Information and Notification
  - Planning
  - HazMat
  - Etc.



# Known Observation Points



# Measuring Success

- Target Capabilities are crafted into an Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG):
  - Performance Activities/Tasks: Actions demonstrated during exercise play
  - Performance Measures: Quantitative or qualitative levels used to assess achievement of a task
  - They describe how much, how well, or how quickly an action should be performed—and are typically expressed in ways that can be observed.
- Exercises also allow us to compare actions against training, response plans, and “perceived” capabilities

# Expected Action Example

- Players will use the EOC Joint Information Center (JIC) standard operating procedure to establish the JIC by the end of the first Operational Period
  - The Point of Review (PoR) would be:
    - Were existing plans and procedures used by the public information functions to establish a JIC?
    - JIC in place by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Operational Period?
  - If Players do their jobs to the fullest, based on their training and SOPs, they will usually meet the PoR
  - If PoR is not met, it is usually not because of lack of effort, but because no SOP or standard training was available to guide Players.



# Exercise Scenario

# Exercise Scenario

- Scenarios are designed to evaluate capabilities, activities, and tasks
- The facts are what they are
- Impossible to design an exercise with all the facts and variables explained
- Best scenario is always a simple call for action that drives Players to implement their response plans
  - 911 call reporting a building collapse, victims, hostage etc.
- Master Scenario Events List often contains “distracter” injects because exercise participant tend to become idle
  - Senior exercise controller will remove some injects if the Players are fully engaged
  - This requires a bit of imagination and proactive posture from Players

# Exercise Scenario (cont.)

- The scenario is a plausible event that gives the exercise a familiar context to conduct evaluation.
- The scenario may unroll in real time or in artificial jumps in time.
- Don't get hung up on the scenario. If something seems artificial, adapt to it, and move forward.
  - Focus on fulfilling your responsibilities
  - Respond to the exercise injects as if you were doing your normal duties
  - Remember Player actions are evaluated in a no fault learning environment—systems are being tested, not individual performance.





# Exercise Play

# Pre-Exercise Player Prep

- Conduct document review of applicable plans
  - Regional Emergency Support Plan (RESP)
  - C-MED Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) Communication Procedures
  - Connecticut's The Forward Movement of Patients (FMOP) Plan
  - ..... and so on
- SITMAN/EXPLAN
- Player Information Card

**These are all generally available pre-exercise.**

# Controller vs. Evaluators

- Exercise Controllers:
  - Ensure play in their area is proceeding in a safe, constructive way
  - Ensure that scenario injects are having their intended effect
  - Interact with the SIMCELL to recommend contingency injects to drive play
  - Communicate with the Exercise Director to keep him/her up to date
  - Answer Player and Evaluator questions

# Controller vs. Evaluators (cont.)

- Evaluators
  - Document actions taken by the Players
  - Determine if Points of Review were met
  - Provide observations of strengths and areas for improvement
  - Do not interfere with Player activities
- Actions should be observed by both Controllers and Evaluators

# Player/Controller Interaction

- Both need to have an understanding on how various Player actions will be demonstrated.
  - For example, an EOC Ops Chief is making notification to various response agencies that "the Emergency Operation Center is now activated."
  - How does the Controller expect this to be demonstrated?
    1. Verbalize this to his/her staff
    2. Above action, plus access a call down list and tell the Controller, "these agencies would be notified now"
    3. Above actions, plus make actual notification (email, phone, whatever) to agencies that are playing (would likely need to call SIMCELL as well)

# Player/Controller Interaction (cont.)

- Primarily a Controller training issue, but Players should be keyed into the fact that they may need to ask their Controller, "How far do I need to go on this?"
  - Very important early in the exercise when actions are happening for the first time
  - Players tend to err on the side of "lower effort"
  - Once this happens a couple times, "pencil whipping" of many injects is likely to follow
  - A good Controller will stop you when enough is demonstrated, so err on the side of more action

# Use the SIMCELL

- The SIMCELL is an extension of the Controllers
- Designed to enhance realism and mimic the real world
- Takes the place of agencies and Players that are not actually participating
- Limits the “real world” to a manageable sphere to reduce variables that can negatively affect the exercise.



# Use the SIMCELL (cont.)

- The SIMCELL injects information into the Player area
- Players respond to the injects and close the loop by replying back to the SIMCELL with their decisions
  - This is called “closing the loop” and allows the SIMCELL to know if the inject was acted upon
  - Controllers in your area are looking for these communications and should help you use the SIMCELL appropriately

# During Exercise Play

- Conduct operations as normally as possible
- Follow safety guidelines
- Adapt your processes as needed to manage this scenario
- Use existing systems and processes, especially those listed in the exercise objectives
- When actual operations are not feasible, verbalize intended action so the Controller and Evaluator can “observe” your actions
  - If needed, ask the Controller the results of your action (i.e., meter reading, resource was deployed, audience was reached, scene was secured, etc.)

# Assumptions and Artificialities

- Remember assumptions and artificialities will always impact exercise play.
  - No hidden agendas
  - Play as realistically as possible
  - Simulate agencies and events
    - Use the SIMCELL as the real world
    - No outside calls or inquiries to real world individuals
  - Be realistic with amount of resources available and committed
  - Don't use artificialities as an excuse to deviate from required processes, it skews improvement planning

# Player Do's and Don'ts

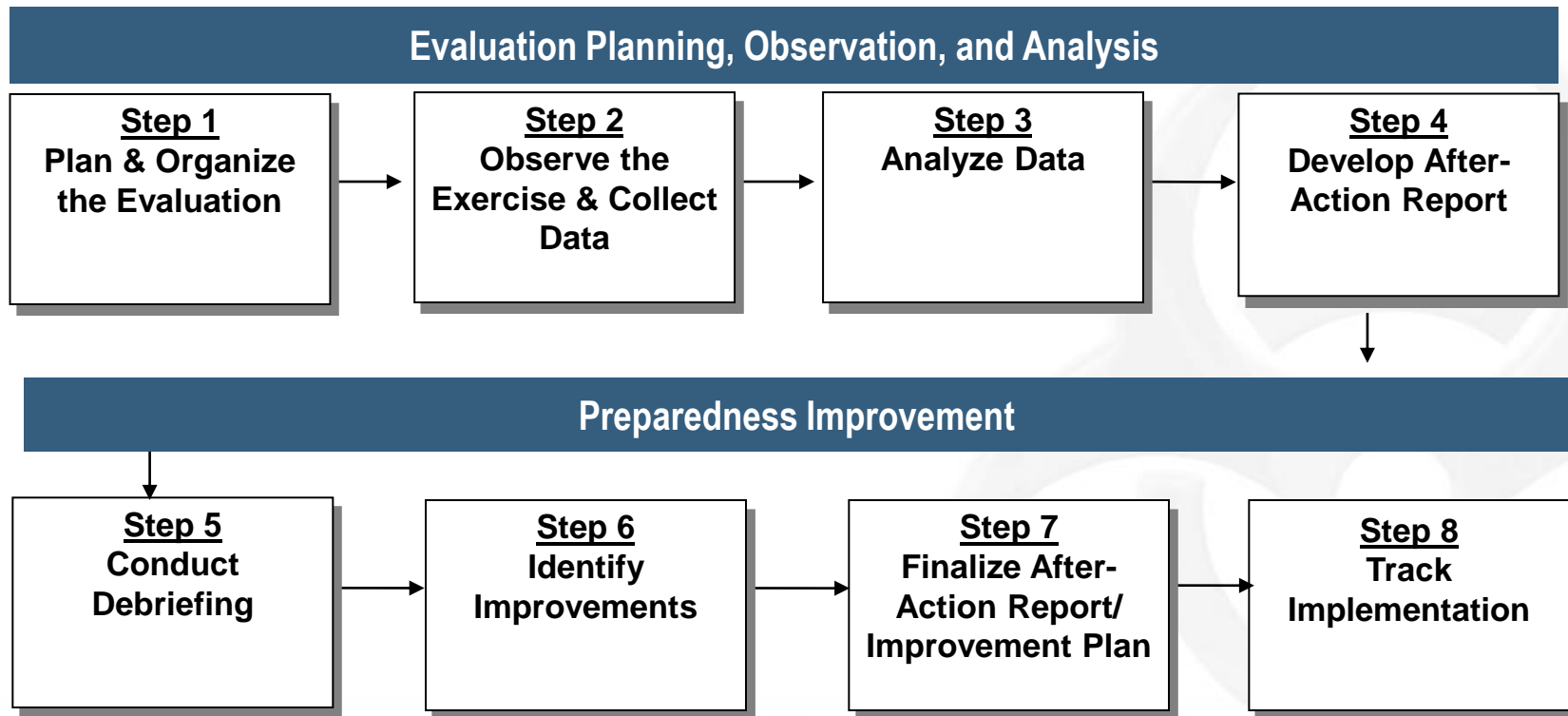
- DO:
  - Review available materials beforehand
  - Lean on your Controller for guidance
  - Respond to injects as if they are real events
  - Use the SIMCELL
  - Let your Controller know when you're doing something that is otherwise "unobservable"
- Don't:
  - Get hung up on an artificiality
  - Assume an action does not need to be done
  - Talk to Evaluators or hold personal conversations

# After the Exercise

- Provide copies of all logs, notes, and other documentation to your Controller
- Attend the Hotwash directly after the exercise
- Complete the Participant Feedback Form and turn in

# Capabilities Improvement

- **HSEEP evaluation methodology is designed to create a realistic, real-time environment where the movement of people and equipment is conducted, and actions or time is measured in evaluation of exercise objectives**





Questions