

Incident After-Action Review Process

After-Action Review - a professional review of an incident or event focused on performance that facilitates continuous improvement in the quest to achieve excellence.

An After-Action Review

- is a process to review what happened and when it happened (not the who)
- outlines why it happened
- identifies strengths and challenges to performance
- allows agencies and individuals involved to provide candid insight into the incident
- allows for gathering details critical to enhanced performance
- provides a basis for learning from our successes and failures
- compares actual outcomes to intended outcomes

An After-Action Review is **NOT**

- designed for fault finding
- a substitute for critical incident stress debriefing or management
- a lecture or debate

AAR Ground Rules

- Candor and openness are encouraged
- All perspectives are heard, all participants treated with mutual professional respect
- Keep the facts in mind at all times

AAR Outcomes

- An agreed upon timeline of the key events
- A list of all involved agencies and/or “stakeholders” and their role(s) in the incident/event
- Identification of the strengths and challenges exhibited during the incident
- Identification of things needing to be changed

Pre-planning for the AAR

- Identify **POCs**
- Establish location, time and support for the AAR
- Invite appropriate stakeholders

Conducting the AAR

1. Establish time line, agencies involved and their roles and responsibilities.
2. What goals were established and how successfully were they achieved?
3. Identify key roles for this type response. Were all roles/responsibilities filled based on currently accepted standards? Were any agency or department roles unfilled?
4. What processes are typically used for this type of response? Where they used appropriately? What processes should have been used but were not? (**RESP**, ICS, Unified Command, regional/local dispatch, notification process, etc.) Were gaps in the knowledge, skills and abilities to do the process noticed?
5. Did any established policies, processes or procedures inhibit an effective response?
6. How was incident related information communicated? Did the responders have all the information available that was needed for an effective/efficient response?
7. What process was used for inter-agency coordination/communication? Was it effective?

Summary

1. What went well?
2. What didn't go well?
3. What would you do differently (and why/how) if you had to do it all over again?
4. Does anyone have any additional items they want to discuss? Any other issues identified for further discussion?

Wrap Up: **AAR Sponsor** should provide notes on the AAR within 72 hours to **the participants, and other appropriately interested parties.**