"Exercising" Your Disaster Response Plan

TECHNIQUES FOR TESTING YOUR PLAN & TRAINING STAFF

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Rationale – Testing your plans

"The most important action of any emergency preparedness planning is to carry out testing of your systems. It is in this activity that any gaps in the communication systems, in the supplies, and in the training will become apparent. In our experience, every real incident will have some new characteristic for which one is not prepared, but if your planning and testing has been done, there will be a great number of decisions and activities which will go smoothly and speed up the recovery, so that everyone can get back to their regular activities in the shortest time possible."

Why Exercise?

- Reveal planning weaknesses
- Reveal resource gaps
- Improve coordination
- Clarify roles & responsibilities
- Improve individual performance & confidence
- Build cohesive emergency management team
- Provide input to revise & update plan

Types of Exercises

- > Tabletop Exercise (Discussion)
- > Functional Exercise (Hands-on/Activity)
- > Full-scale Exercise (Simulation)



Purpose of an Exercise

To test procedures - looking for problems & discussing solutions

- Exercises should teach success, not failure
- * Build confidence, not apprehension

Tabletop Exercises



Tabletop Exercises

- Discussion & actions based on described scenario
- Practice coordinated problem solving
- Messages may be given to individual players
- Permits breaks between messages for discussion
- Participants practice a coordinated, effective response
- Provides input to review & update plan

Sample Scenarios

- Torrential rains are expected to hit in 3 hours with widespread flash flooding
- An earthquake hits while the museum is holding an opening
- $\ \, \mbox{$\star$}$ A crazed person is shouting obscenities & begins splashing collections with an unknown liquid
- A basement storing collections is filling with water & electricity is still on

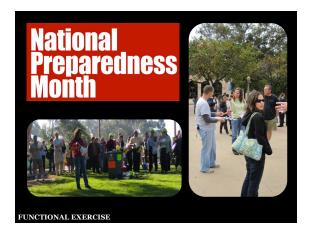






Functional Exercises

- Train staff in prevention & safety
- Assess adequacy of response plans & resources
- Teach collection salvage techniques, fire extinguisher use, evacuation drill, etc.
- Develop understanding of plan & implementation at every level of institution
- Provides input to review & update plan



















Training Activities

- >Include in a regular departmental meeting
- · Where is the closest fire alarm? Fire extinguisher? Exit?
- ▶ Provide opportunities for role playing
- · An incident has happened & you are the spokesperson
- Initiate emergency notification system
- Conduct a phone exercise for response/recovery team
- Get your emergency plan what is the call list date? Can you respond? How long could you stay?
- Develop a fun activity like a scavenger hunt
- Find emergency supplies
- · Locate disaster binder & procedures

Conducting Emergency Exercises

- ✓ WHAT type of exercise do you want to conduct?
- **✓ WHO** should be involved from your organization?
- *∨***WHERE** should the exercise be conducted?
- **✓ WHEN** should the exercise be held?
- **✓ HOW** should you conduct the exercise?
- **✓ WHY** should the exercise be conducted?

Emergency Event Debriefing

Information gathering – Source & cause, chronology, people involved, actions, outcomes, resumption of service

Assessment of response – Communications adequate? Response well organized? Staff resources & supplies adequate? Any confusion during response or problems not adequately dealt with? How to improve response?

The human factor – Anyone injured? Adequate rest & refreshment? Does everyone understand what happened? Anyone frightened or angry, feeling guilty or anxious? Family members supportive?

Keys to a Successful Exercise

- Top level support & involvement
- Good exercise design team & leader
- Positive learning plan & clear objectives
- Realistic scenario
- Thorough preparation & attention to detail

Keys to a Successful Exercise

- Clear intro & instructions at start of exercise
- Chance for participants to comment during critique
- Follow-up on what went well plus actions to improve plans, procedures, facilities, etc.

A follow-up to the course Protecting Your Collections: Writing a Disaster Response Plan

Final words ...

- Conduct training for response to your most likely event
- Extend your training beyond evacuation drills
- Conduct a disaster exercise at least annually
- Use every event as a "test" of your preparedness

Thank You!

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