

Exercise and Evaluation Program

Are your emergency preparedness and response plans up-to-date and effective? Do you exercise your plans regularly?

Many organizations have emergency plans, but fail to keep them up-to-date. And, while some employees are trained to those plans, many are not. The best way to train employees, including new hires, and to keep them refreshed is to “exercise” plans with workshops, seminars, and table-top exercises. Planning and exercising are perpetual activities. They never end.

Your organization may need help with the planning process, and you may need help with designing and implementing an exercise program to assure that employees know what to do, where to go, and how to communicate during emergency situations. **IRI** is certified in exercise program management and has helped clients become better prepared to deal with public health crises, product recalls, workplace violence, natural disasters, large scale accidents, and other contingencies requiring effective incident response, personnel management, crisis communications, and action steps aimed at minimizing loss.

IRI: HSEEP certified

Over the last few years, the Department of Homeland Security has developed a framework of exercise types to help standardize and unify the approach to planning and exercising. Just as principles of the incident command system (ICS) have become the standard for incident management, the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is becoming the standard for exercise program management.

Five phases in the exercise cycle

The five phases of the exercise cycle include: Foundation, Design and Development, Conduct, Evaluation, and Improvement planning.

Within the seven types of exercises (e.g. from seminars up through full scale exercises) table-top exercises, for example,



must have concise objectives culminating in an “after-action-report” which yields elements in an “improvement plan.” With those steps, the next round of exercises recasts the recognized deficiencies and weaknesses into new objectives for subsequent exercise cycles. This process never stops especially since managers and employees are constantly evolving: joining the organization, changing positions, and eventually leaving the organization. Typically the group you train today will not be the same group you train next year or in five years. Because employees are constantly changing, training and exercising will never end.

Through exercises, organizations gain objective assessments of their capabilities as well as gaps, deficiencies, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. Even small improvements as the result of systematic exercising can yield significant benefits to the economic health of the organization and the well-being of all stakeholders including employees, customers, and shareholders.

For more information, call 203-966-7005.