

Twisted Sister

After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

March 13, 2018

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine to include the National Preparedness Goal and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Twisted Sister
Exercise Dates	March 1, 2018
Scope	This exercise is a tabletop, planned for four hours at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments' offices. Exercise play is limited to discussion amongst participants.
Mission Area(s)	Response and Recovery
Core Capabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Emergency public information and warning2. Economic and community recovery3. Demobilize economic and community recovery4. Volunteer management
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Issue public information, alerts, warnings, and notifications2. Direct economic and community recovery operations3. Complete appropriate economic and community recovery documentation4. Organize, assemble, and dispatch volunteers
Threat or Hazard	Tornado
Scenario	A thunderstorm in February causes a tornado to rip through several Franklin County towns, causing parts of each town to lose electricity.
Sponsor	Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition Funding for this conference was made possible (in whole or in part) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and/or the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. The views expressed in written conference materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement.
Participating Organizations	16 players from local, regional, and state organizations were involved in the exercise.
Point of Contact	Tracy Rogers Regional Preparedness Program Manager Franklin Regional Council of Governments



Phone: 413-774-3167 x118
Email: regionalprep@frcog.org

ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and core capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned core capabilities, and performance ratings for each core capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Core Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Issue public information, alerts, warnings, and notifications	Emergency public information and warning		S		
Direct economic and community recovery operations	Economic and community recovery		S		
Complete appropriate economic and community recovery documentation	Demobilize economic and community recovery		S		
Organize, assemble, and dispatch volunteers	Volunteer management		S		
<p>Ratings Definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed without Challenges (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. • Performed with Some Challenges (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified. • Performed with Major Challenges (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. • Unable to be Performed (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s). 					

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Objective 1: Issue public information, alerts, warnings, and notifications

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability 1: Emergency public information and warning

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Players identified the use of amateur radio and Shutesbury's neighborhood pilot program to aid in risk communications when traditional communication methods are down.

Strength 2: Players who attended the risk communications seminar in the Elected Officials series applied the skills learned when crafting messages for the public.

Strength 3: Players acknowledged that it's better to work with the media than let the media look for their own stories.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Not all messages written for the public were clear and concise.

Reference: Handouts from the Risk Communications seminar.

Analysis: Many elected officials have not taken a risk communications class or practiced the skills learned in such a class so as to become comfortable enough with the principles to apply them in an emergency.

Objective 2: Direct economic and community recovery operations

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability 2: Economic and community recovery

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Players were generally in favor of including town elected officials and finance staff from the start, noting that they are the ones who can approve overtime and enable overspending.

Strength 2: Players referred to the regional debris management plan as a resource.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Players were struggling to determine which steps to take in which order.

Reference: None.

Analysis: There's no standard set of procedures for emergency management directors or elected officials to use to jog their memories of their duties during an emergency.

Area for Improvement 2: Towns don't know which private contractors to contact, using proper procurement procedures, for storm cleanup.

Reference: Handouts from Administrative Preparedness seminar.

Analysis: Towns do not have contracts with vendors already in place that can just be activated during an emergency.

Objective 3: Complete appropriate economic and community recovery documentation

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability 3: Demobilize economic and community recovery

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Players were very aware that data must be tracked in order to prepare for FEMA reimbursement.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Players were unclear on exactly what pieces of information needed to be tracked to prepare for FEMA reimbursement.

Reference: None.

Analysis: There are no standardized forms to capture the information necessary for FEMA.

Objective 4: Organize, assemble, and dispatch volunteers

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability 4: Volunteer management

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Players made note that a volunteer and donations coordinator(s) would be necessary to assist with the influx of spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers and donations of goods and cash.

Strength 2: Players identified several ways spontaneous volunteers could assist without needing to conduct background checks, and ways they should not be allowed to assist.

Strength 3: Players acknowledged that a single location for volunteers to assemble is necessary as well as a just-in-time training for them.

Strength 4: Players determined they should use the media to get out clear messages about volunteering (e.g. where to go to sign up) and donations (e.g. what items are needed).

Strength 5: Players suggested unaffiliated volunteers could be connected to affiliated organizations during the response and referenced the list of affiliated volunteer organizations handed out during the Volunteer Management seminar.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: There is no clear guidance for small towns to use to manage spontaneous volunteers.

Reference: Western Massachusetts Spontaneous Unaffiliated Volunteer Plan

Analysis: Though a regional plan exists to address spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers, it is written for a large incident and for a town that has the resources to provide someone to coordinate a fully operational volunteer reception center.

Area for Improvement 2: Only one town present had a volunteer coordinator identified.

Reference: Western Massachusetts Spontaneous Unaffiliated Volunteer Plan

Analysis: Many towns have not thought about the need for a volunteer coordinator.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition as a result of Twisted Sister conducted on March 1, 2018.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Core Capability 1: Emergency public information and warning	1. Not all messages written for the public were clear and concise.	Elected officials should be encouraged to take basic and advanced risk communications seminars	Training	Towns	Selectmen, town administrators		Ongoing
Core Capability 2: Economic and community recovery	1. Players were struggling to determine which steps to take in which order.	A standardized emergency operations center “playbook” should be developed and shared with towns.	Planning	FRCOG	Tracy Rogers	7/1/18	6/30/19
	2. Towns don’t know which private contractors to contact, using proper procurement procedures, for storm cleanup.	Towns should institute standby contracts with vendors so they can be quickly engaged during an emergency.	Planning	Towns with assistance from FRCOG chief procurement officer	Town administrators	4/1/18	6/30/19
		Towns should become familiar with statewide contracts for such vendors.	Organization	Towns	Town administrators	4/1/18	6/30/19
Core Capability 3: Demobilize economic and community recovery	1. Players were unclear on exactly what pieces of information needed to be tracked to prepare for FEMA reimbursement.	A set of standard tracking forms should be developed and distributed to towns.	Planning	FRCOG	Tracy Rogers	7/1/18	6/30/19

¹ Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

Core Capability 4: Volunteer management	1. There is no clear guidance for small towns to use to manage spontaneous volunteers.	The Western Massachusetts Spontaneous Unaffiliated Volunteer Plan should be operationalized for small towns.	Planning	FRCOG	Greg Lewis	7/1/18	6/30/19
	2. Only one town present had a volunteer coordinator identified.	Towns should identify and train at least two individuals to act as volunteer coordinators.	Organization & Training	Towns	Emergency management directors	4/1/18	6/30/19

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations
Federal
State
MA State Police – Shelburne Control Dispatch Center
Regional
Hospice of Franklin County
Charlemont
Selectboard
Conway
Town administration
Heath
Board of Health
Emergency management
Selectboard
Montague
Selectboard
Turners Falls Fire Department
Shelburne
Board of Health
Emergency management
Shelburne Fire District
Town clerk
Shutesbury
Board of Health
Emergency management
Fire Department