## Introduction

CNA and the National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA) developed this Exercise Kit to help organizations communicate and collaborate when planning for an active shooter incident on a military installation. This document provides instructions for law enforcement agencies on how to plan, conduct, and evaluate a tabletop exercise to assess their preparedness for responding to an active shooter (or similar) incident on U.S. military installations and identify actions for improvement.

## Exercise Kit Contents

Table 1 describes the contents and purpose of each item contained in this Exercise Kit. Items provided in Microsoft PowerPoint and Word may be edited and modified as desired.

**Table 1: Exercise Kit Materials**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Item | File Type | Purpose |
| Instruction Document | Adobe Acrobat | Provides instructions on how to use this Exercise Kit |
| Exercise Conduct Slides | Microsoft PowerPoint | Presented to participants during exercise conduct. There are two separate decks, each one with a different scenario. |
| Participant Handbook | Microsoft Word | Provides participants with a read-ahead containing instructions and general questions they should prepare to discuss |
| Facilitator Guide | Microsoft Word | Used by the facilitator to guide discussion |
| Participant Feedback Form | Microsoft Word | Used to capture written feedback from participants |
| Summary Report Template | Microsoft Word | Used to develop a report that provides an overview of the exercise and the resulting actions for improvement |

There is no “one-size-fits-all” exercise, so these materials are designed to be easily tailored to meet the needs of your agency or jurisdiction. Materials in the Exercise Kit contain instructions and sample content in **red text** that should be removed or modified before the materials are finalized.

## Step 1: Identify the topics you want to discuss

The first step in planning an exercise is to decide what you would like to achieve through the exercise. We suggest that you begin by writing a few objectives that you can use as a guide for tailoring Exercise Kit materials. The following are examples of objectives:

* Provide a forum for agencies to communicate and collaborate on planning for an active shooter incident on a military installation.
* Confirm the roles, responsibilities, lines of authority, logistics, and operational coordination of civilian law enforcement and military personnel during an active shooter incident on a military installation.
* Confirm proper channels for information sharing among civilian law enforcement and military personnel during an active shooter incident on a military installation.
* Confirm the process for coordinating public information and family reunification following an active shooter incident on a military installation.
* Identify any gaps in planning, policy, or response coordination that would hinder response efforts.

The materials contained in this Exercise Kit are organized according to the modules described in Table 2. Select those modules that relate to your objectives.

**Table 2: Exercise Toolkit Modules**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Module | Topics |
| 1. Planning | Authorities, memorandums of understanding and memorandums of agreement, plans and procedures, training and exercises |
| 1. Immediate Incident Response | Emergency communications, 9-1-1 operations and dispatch, notification of civilian agencies, base access and control, incident/unified command procedures, tactical operations, EMS operations |
| 1. Public Information and Family Reunification | Media monitoring, on-site management of media, senior official briefings, joint information center procedures, victim assistance, family reunification |

## Step 2: Schedule the exercise and invite participants

* Identify which personnel in your agency or jurisdiction have roles and responsibilities related to the topics you selected in Step 1.
* Identify a planning partner from the military installation to do the same in their organization.
* Together, select a date and time for the exercise and schedule enough time to accommodate the modules you have selected.
  + We recommend scheduling approximately 30 minutes per module.
* Determine whether you will conduct the exercise in person (e.g., in a meeting room) or virtually, through a collaboration platform such as WebEx or Zoom.
* Send exercise invitations to those personnel you have identified to attend.
  + If you are conducting the exercise in person, make sure you book a room in your facility that can accommodate all of the invitees and make sure you have appropriate audiovisual equipment.
  + If you are conducting the exercise virtually, set up and test the collaboration technology you intend to use

## Step 3: Identify the staff who will conduct the exercise

Identify a facilitator who will lead the exercise and moderate the discussion. This could be an individual who has knowledge of the topics you have chosen to discuss or an individual who is an experienced meeting facilitator. Identify someone who will develop a summary report after the exercise, and one or more note-takers who will capture key points from the discussion to support that summary report.

## Step 4: Prepare the materials and Room

**Choose a scenario and tailor it to your jurisdiction.** This Exercise Kit includes two scenarios: (1) a steady-state scenario and (2) a festival scenario. In collaboration with your military installation planning partner, select the PowerPoint slides for the scenario you would like to exercise and make adjustments to the scenario slides to reflect your jurisdiction. Review the Player Handbook and Facilitator Guide and make adjustments that mirror the changes you made in the PowerPoint slide deck.

**Choose the modules and tailor the questions.** Review the PowerPoint slide deck and delete those modules you do not intend to use. Modify the discussion question slides by adding or deleting questions. Review the Player Handbook and Facilitator Guide and make adjustments that mirror the changes you made in the PowerPoint slide deck.

**Prepare read-ahead materials and handouts.** The Player Handbook and any additional read-ahead materials should be emailed to participants about one week before the exercise. Decide what materials you would like to include in the read-ahead packet and what materials you would like to hand out at the exercise. These could include copies of your organization’s policies and plans, an agenda for the exercise, the participant feedback form, and/or the discussion questions. Print out any materials you would like the participants to have during the exercise, if you are conducting the exercise in person.

**Prepare for exercise conduct.** Conduct a pre-meeting with your facilitator, note-takers, and any supporting staff (e.g., audiovisual support) to review plans for the exercise and make sure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. For in-person exercises, ensure that the room is set up in a manner that promotes discussion. Small groups do best when seated around a single table. Larger groups may be seated in small groupings representing functional areas.

## Step 5: Conduct the exercise

The facilitator should introduce the exercise, have participants introduce themselves (if they do not know each other), present the scenario slides, and then moderate a discussion of the questions. The facilitator should be mindful of time, ensuring that all of the questions are discussed in the time available. The facilitator should also make sure that everyone has a chance to speak and that more vocal participants are not allowed to dominate the discussion.

The exercise should close with a “hot wash” during which participants are asked to provide up to three of their most important takeaways from the exercise. This is a valuable way to capture high-priority items while they are still fresh in the participants’ minds. If you choose to use the feedback form—which is recommended to support development of your summary report—distribute copies to participants and ask them to complete and return them.

## Step 6: Develop an exercise summary report

Review the notes captured during the exercise and develop a report including a list of the items that your organization or jurisdiction needs to address as a result of the discussion. These could include the development of new plans or agreements, updates to existing plans, changes to training, or the purchase of equipment. Include a brief description of the issue and document any recommendations that participants raised on how to address the issue. You can use the template provided in this Exercise Kit or another format. You may want to have the facilitator or others involved in organizing the exercise review the report before finalizing it. Once the report is finished, it should be presented to your organization’s leaders and exercise participants. Your organization’s leaders should then prioritize the list of issues, assign responsibility for addressing each issue, and develop a timeline for completion.