

Communications – The Practical Table Top Exercise NAEM Conference

After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

4/8/22

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	Communications – The Practical
Exercise Dates	Apr. 8, 2022 0930 - 1230
Scope	This exercise is a TableTop Exercise, planned for three hours at the NAEM Conference. Exercise play is limited to group discussions and communication equipment demonstrations.
Mission Area(s)	Response and Recovery
Core Capabilities	<p>Operational Communications: Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.</p> <p>Situational Assessment: Provide all decision makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.</p>
Objectives	To provide a no-fault learning environment for the organizations involved to discuss how they would coordinate efforts if a communication disruption occurred in their region.
Threat or Hazard	Communications Disruption
Scenario	An incident occurs causing loss of all normal communications.
Plans Exercised	Local Emergency Operation Plans
Sponsors	Nebraska Association of Emergency Management
Participating Organizations	See Appendix B
Point of Contact	Nicholas Kemnitz - Wayne County Emergency Manager Office: 402-833-5190 Email: nkemnitz@waynecountyne.gov

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)
To provide a no-fault learning environment for the organizations involved to discuss how they would coordinate efforts if a communication disruption occurred in their region.	Operational Communications: Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.		S		
To provide a no-fault learning environment for the organizations involved to discuss how they would coordinate efforts if a communication disruption occurred in their region.	Situational Assessment: Provide all decision makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.		S		

Ratings Definitions:

- 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

Objective	Core Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: To provide a no-fault learning environment for the organizations involved to discuss how they would coordinate efforts if a communication disruption occurred in their region.

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

Core Capability: Operational Communications - Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.

Strengths

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

Strength 1: Problem solving.

Strength 2: Good discussion amongst the groups.

Strength 3: Hands on with the equipment from the OCIO and the 72nd CST.

Areas for Improvement

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

Area for Improvement 1: More hands on, in the field exercise are needed.

Reference: Multi-Year Planning, Exercise, and Training Calendar

Analysis: Participants felt that more hands on, in the field exercises would be beneficial.

Area for Improvement 2: More training needs to take place at the local level.

Reference: Multi-Year Planning, Exercise, and Training Calendar

Analysis: Participants felt that more training with communications at the local level would be beneficial.

Area for Improvement 3: Work more closely in our regions to develop a coordinated response.

Reference: Multi-Year Planning, Exercise, and Training Calendar

Analysis Participants felt that working more closely in their regions to develop a coordinated response would be beneficial.

Area for Improvement 4: Western Nebraska needs a cache of radios due to the time it takes to get them from Lincoln.

Reference: Western Nebraska Regions and the Office of the Chief Information Officer

Analysis: Participants from Western Nebraska felt that a cache of radios are needed on the western side of the State due to the amount of time it takes to get them from Lincoln.

Area for Improvement 5: Some areas are too reliant on network-dependent communications.

Reference: Affected areas.

Analysis: Participants felt that some areas are too reliant on network-dependent communications.

Objective: To provide a no-fault learning environment for the organizations involved to discuss how they would coordinate efforts if a communication disruption occurred in their region.

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

Core Capability: Situational Assessment - Provide all decision makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.

Strengths

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

Strength 1: Great exercise to determine area needs and current capabilities.

Strength 2: Groups were knowledgeable about what resources are in their area.

Strength 3: Seeing the resources available from the OCIO and the 72nd CST.

Areas for Improvement

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

Area for Improvement 1: Increase buy-in from other entities.

Reference: Participants

Analysis: Participants felt that increased buy-in from other entities would be beneficial.

Area for Improvement 2: A list of local communication resources.

Reference: PET Regions

Analysis: Participants felt that a list of local communication resources would be beneficial.

Area for Improvement 3: A list of Communication Resources from NEMA, OCIO, and the Nebraska National Guard.

Reference: NEMA, OCIO, and the Nebraska National Guard.

Analysis: Participants felt that a list of communications resources from NEMA, OCIO, and the Nebraska National Guard would be beneficial so that the locals know what resources exist.

Area for Improvement 4: More communications with our neighbors to get a better understanding of resources.

Reference: PET Regions

Analysis: Participants felt that more communications with their neighbors would increase their understanding of what communication resources are available.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for the exercise participants as a result of the Communications – The Practical Exercise conducted on Apr. 8, 2022.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Operational Communications: Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.	More hands on, in the field exercise are needed.	More hands on, in the field communication exercises need to be conducted.	Exercise	PET Regions	PET Region Chair	4/8/2022	Ongoing

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

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Operational Communications: Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.	More training needs to take place at the local level.	More communications training needs to take place at the local level.	Training	PET Regions	PET Region Chair	4/8/2022	Ongoing
Operational Communications: Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational	Work more closely in our regions to develop a coordinated response.	Work in the PET Regions to develop a coordinated response for a communication disruption.	Planning	PET Regions	PET Region Chair	4/8/2022	Ongoing

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.							
Operational Communications: Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area	Western Nebraska needs a cache of radios due to the time it takes to get them from Lincoln.	Continue discussions with the appropriate agencies about having a cache of radios staged in Western Nebraska.	Equipment	Western NE PET Regions	Western NE PET Region Chairs	4/8/2022	Ongoing

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
and all response forces.							
Operational Communications: Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.	Some areas are too reliant on network-dependent communications.	Have discussions with the identified areas about being too reliant on network-dependent communications.	Organization	PET Regions	PET Region Chairs	4/8/2022	Ongoing
Situational Assessment: Provide all decision makers with decision-relevant	Increase buy-in from other entities.	Continue to educate other entities on the importance of communications.	Organization	PET Regions	PET Region Chairs	4/8/2022	Ongoing

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.							
Situational Assessment: Provide all decision makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.	A list of local communication resources.	Determine if a list of local communication resources already exists? If not, compile a list of local communication resources and put them in a database such as CASM or Salamander.	Planning	PET Regions	PET Region Chairs	4/8/2022	Ongoing
Situational Assessment: Provide all decision makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any	A list of Communication Resources from NEMA, OCIO, and the Nebraska National Guard.	Determine if a list of communication resources from NEMA, OCIO, and the Nebraska National Guard is already available? If not, have discussions	Planning	PET Regions	PET Region Chairs	4/8/2022	Ongoing

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
cascading effects, and the status of the response.		with those agencies about providing a list to the locals.					
Situational Assessment: Provide all decision makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.	More communications with our neighbors to get a better understanding of resources.	Have discussions with neighboring PET Regions and neighboring agencies across the State line about what communication resources they have and what their capabilities are.	Organization	PET Regions	PET Region Chairs	4/8/2022	Ongoing

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations
Federal
United States Air Force – Frederick Phelan
Tribal
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska – Victoria Champaign
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska – Jessica Hitchcock
State
72 nd Civil Support Team – Travis Benda
72 nd Civil Support Team – William Cornish
Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management – Bob Heldenbrand
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency – Jodie Fawl
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency – Troy Harris
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency – Sue Krogman
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency – Logan Lueking
Nebraska Office of the CIO – Dave Collett
Nebraska Office of the CIO – Cory Simmons
Local
Adams County Emergency Management Agency – Ron Pughes
Adams County Emergency Management Agency – Dawna Whitcomb
Buffalo County Emergency Management Agency – Darrin Lewis
Cedar County Emergency Management Agency – Robert Hamilton
Clay County Emergency Management Agency – Haley Malone
Colfax County Emergency Management Agency – Mark Arps
Cuming County Emergency Management Agency – Jeff McGill
Dawson County Emergency Management Agency – Brian Woldt
Fillmore County Emergency Management Agency – Jean Engle
Gage County CERT – Kevin Rahe
Grand Island Hall County Emergency Management Agency – Jon Rosenlund
Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency – Kirt Smith
Johnson/Pawnee County Emergency Management Agency – Amanda Burki
Lancaster County Emergency Management Agency – Mark Hosking
Nemaha County Emergency Management Agency – Renee Critser
Nuckolls County Emergency Management Agency – Nicholas Elledge
Otoe County Emergency Management Agency – Steve Cody
Otoe County Emergency Management Agency – Gregg Goebel
Platte County Emergency Management Agency – Tim Hofbauer
Platte County Emergency Management Agency – Jan Zurcher
Platte County Sheriff – Robert Shepherd

Region 11 Emergency Management Agency – Bobbi Risor
Region 21 Emergency Management Agency – Evie Flessner
Region 22 Emergency Management Agency – Timothy Newman
Region 23 Emergency Management Agency – Nan Gould
Region 24 Emergency Management Agency – Glen May
Region 51 Emergency Management Agency – Kyle Clapp
Region 51 Emergency Management Agency – Joanna Le Moine
Region 51 Emergency Management Agency – Brandon Meyers
Region 51 Emergency Management Agency – Pamela Reichert
Rural Region One Medical Response System – Dennis Colsden
Stanton County Emergency Management Agency – Michael Frohberg
Thayer County Emergency Management Agency – Colt Farringer
Volunteer – LeRoy Janssen
Wayne County Emergency Management Agency – Nicholas Kemnitz
Yankton County (South Dakota) Emergency Management Agency – Erin Hacecky
Yankton County (South Dakota) Emergency Management Agency – Paul Scherschligt