


**HCA EDUCATION AND RESEARCH**

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS  
TABLETOP EXERCISE  
JUNE 2011




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**WHAT IS A TABLETOP EXERCISE?**

- “ People come together to review and discuss a hypothetical emergency situation
- “ Designed to allow participants to talk through plans and problems
- “ NOT designed to measure anyone's performance
- “ Serves as a springboard for further planning and more comprehensive exercises

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**EXERCISE FORMAT**

- “ This scenario has several sections
- “ Discussion questions follow each section – please discuss your actions and thoughts with your colleagues
- “ At the end of the scenario, everyone will participate in a debriefing or “hotwash” to evaluate their performance and share identified gaps

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## EXERCISE ROLES

- “ Facilitator
  - “ Provide instructions, tell the story, introduce the questions, guide the discussion
- “ Participants
  - “ Immerse yourself as if the scenario were truly occurring in your agency, using resources that are available to you (Emergency Operations Plan, policies, procedures, references)
- “ Evaluator if possible

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## GROUND RULES

- “ Respond as if the scenario is real
- “ Play your role within your department throughout the exercise
- “ Operate within current resource constraints and realities
- “ **Respond in accordance with your current plan**

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- By the end of this exercise, you should be able to:
  - Identify gaps in your fire safety plan
  - Describe your role or your department's roles in the planning, response, recovery and mitigation after an internal disaster
  - Identify gaps in your agency's existing emergency preparedness/continuity of operations plan and provide an action plan to remedy the gaps

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**THE SITUATION**

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~ It's nearing five o'clock on a dark rainy November night. You smell something burning...did someone leave something on in the kitchen?  
~ Someone yells that it's the electrical box and to call the power company.  
~ Someone else yells to grab a fire extinguisher– the wall by the electrical box is on fire  
~ As you struggle to find a fire extinguisher, the burning smell gets worse and smoke starts to creep down the hall way.  
~ You hear a loud bang and the power goes out.  
~ You dial 911, call in the fire and feel your way down the hall in darkness towards what you hope is a doorway...

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**PANIC!**



~ Oh .....[insert expletive here]  
~ What now?  
~ Oh [ \*&^!@ ] – how do I warn the others?

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You do know where the fire alarms are, don't you??? Can you name the location of them right now?

# FIRE ALARM!



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## RESPONSE

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## QUESTIONS

### Administrative Staff

- ~ Do you know where all the fire extinguishers are in your building?
- ~ Are they rated for electrical fires?
- ~ Do your hallways have emergency lighting or fluorescent guidelines for evacuation?
- ~ How do you know who is in the building to make sure they evacuate?
- ~ Who gives the order to evacuate?
- ~ Do you have any critical paperwork or business information you should take with you?

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## QUESTIONS

- What are the policies and procedures for fire safety drills in your agency?
  - Is this coordinated by building management? If not, who is responsible? How often do you have them? Are you tipped off first?
  - Is your staff educated about your evacuation policy?
  - Oh, and since most of your office is interior cubies and hallways...is there enough emergency lighting?
  - Do people have flashlights or light sticks in their desks to assist them? Will they think of using their cell phones for light?

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## IS EVERYONE OUT?

“ Some staff on upper floors shut their doors to continue their work and ignore the alarm thinking it is a drill.

“ Is there any other way to warn them?

“ Research findings show that a fire alarm signal by itself is usually not sufficient to initiate occupant evacuation from buildings.



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## IS EVERYONE OUT?



“ You have a staff member who is wheelchair bound ~ Did they leave already?

“ Can they get out without the elevator being operational?

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## QUESTIONS

- ~ How can you be sure your entire staff has been evacuated?
- ~ Does your agency track staff and visitors who enter and leave the building during the day?
- ~ Do you have a standard gathering place once you've evacuated?
- ~ Does your evacuation plan provide assistance to individuals with physical limitations or disabilities?
- ~ What about hearing or visually impaired?

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## QUESTIONS

What documentation are you readily able to take with you out of the building? Do you have a business "go bag"?

- ~ Patient information?
- ~ Staff information? Are all your personnel records literally going up in smoke?
- ~ Business information?
- ~ Community partners?

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## ICS - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Both Police and Fire Departments operate under an Incident Command Structure
- They will seek out your Incident Commander to coordinate response effort



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## FIRST RESPONDERS ARRIVE

- First responders assist in evacuation efforts
- They remove several staff members with smoke inhalation including your Incident Commander or Boss who is taken to the hospital



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## OUT OF CONTROL...

- ~ The fire is spreading quickly
- ~ Firefighters are working to control the blaze



DAY 1, 11:20 a.m.

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## QUESTIONS

- ~ Your Incident Commander/Administrator is incapacitated. Who is now in charge during this emergency?
  - ~ Has that person been trained?
  - ~ Does the staff know your agency's chain of command?
- ~ How long will it take to contact off-site staff about the current emergency (*Everyone has an up-to-date phone tree, right?*)

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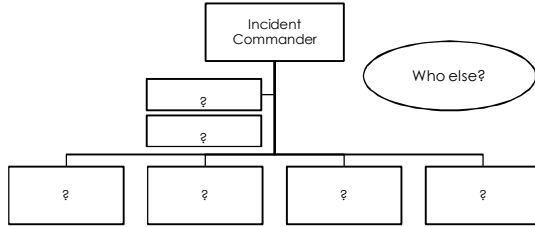
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ICS - HOW DOES YOUR CHART LOOK?  
HOW BIG DOES IT GROW?



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QUESTIONS

- ~ How will alternate communications with your staff be handled if your central office is damaged?
  - ~ Call center? Web site? Text blasts?
- ~ Do you have a message ready for the public if they call?

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RECOVERY

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## AFTER THE FIRE...



“ Extensive damage to the building will prevent your return to the building for months, if ever

DAY 1, 3:55 p.m.

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## YOU'RE ON THE NEWS

“Your fire is all over the local news! Building is declared a “complete loss!”

“What plans have you made for a possible event of this type?”

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## QUESTIONS

Does your agency have an up-to-date Business Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)?

- ~ Do you have a pre-arranged alternate location for business operations?
- ~ What off-site back up systems does your agency have in place?
- ~ How long will it take for you to resume operations in a new location?
- ~ What can you do to improve your readiness in the event of the destruction of your main offices?

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**QUESTIONS**

~ What messages do you have for the public about your ability to maintain patient care?  
~ What can be done to minimize the impact on patient care?

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**QUESTIONS**

- How will your agency continue day to day operations?
- Referrals and patient management?
  - Day to day business operations?
    - Accounts payable & receivable
    - Payroll and time sheets
    - Supplier deliveries

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**CLINICAL STAFF**

How will this fire affect your ability to visit your patients?  
~ If you have paper records?  
~ If you have electronic records?  
~ If you use telehealth?

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## FIRE INVESTIGATION

- “ Reveals the cause of the fire was circuit overload, caused by too many small electric heaters left on in staff offices, some of which were old and in poor condition.
- “ Who is responsible?
- “ Will your insurance cover it?

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## FUTURE MITIGATION

- “ What should be done in the future to prevent fire in your building?
- “ Does your plan need to be updated?
- “ Have your “fire drills” prepared you?
- “ What can you do to improve your readiness in the event of the destruction of your main offices?

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## END OF DRILL

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## "HOT WASH"

- ~ So... what did you learn?
- ~ Does your plan need to be updated?
- ~ How do you feel about fire drills now?
  
- ~ For a certificate of participation/ credit for this tabletop... fill out the accompanying AAR and email it to [mfallon@hcanys.org](mailto:mfallon@hcanys.org) or [asliver@hcanys.org](mailto:asliver@hcanys.org).

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## PLANNING INFORMATION AVAILABLE

- ~ Ready.gov
  - ~ <http://www.ready.gov/business/>
- ~ Home Care Prepare
  - ~ <http://homecareprepare.org/>

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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