

HCA EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TABLETOP EXERCISE

JUNE 2011



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

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

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

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**

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



THE SITUATION

- 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...

PANIC!



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

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

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?

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?

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.*



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?

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?

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?

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



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



OUT OF CONTROL...

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

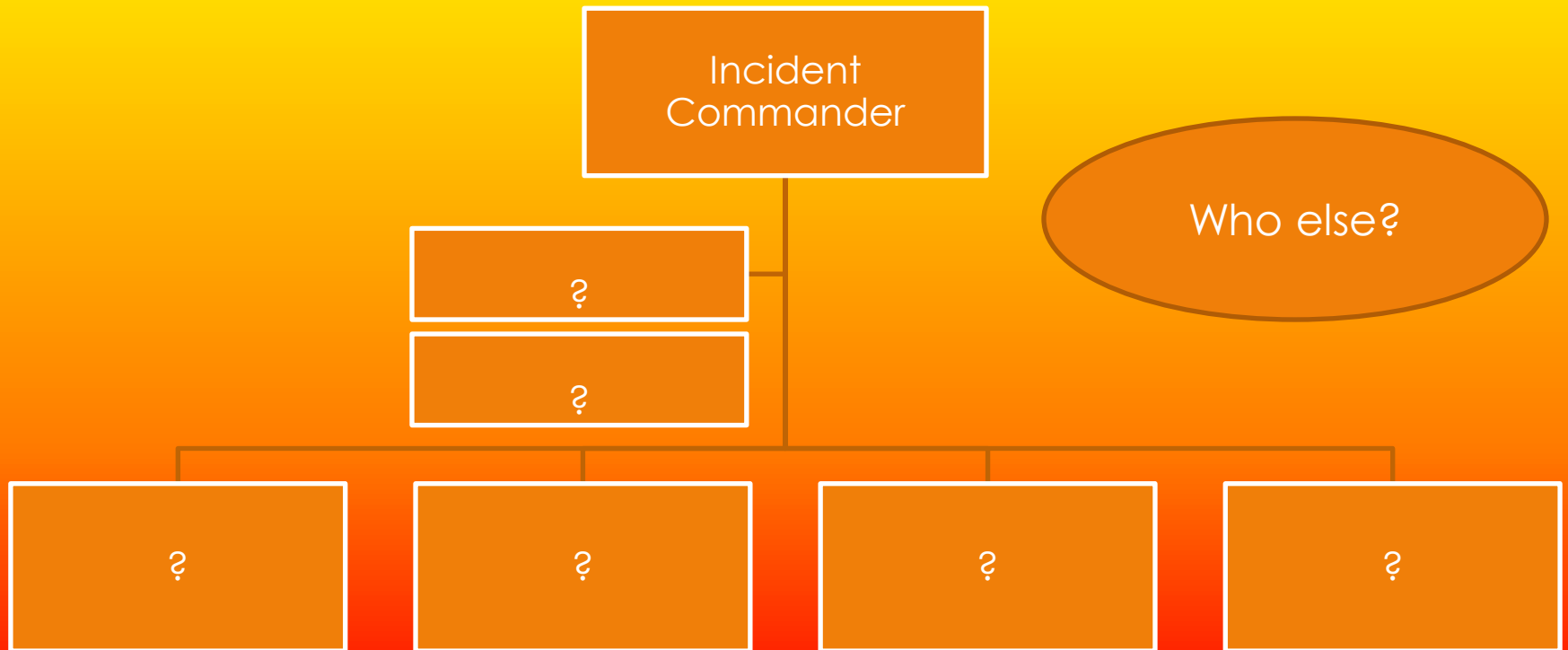


DAY 1, 11:20 a.m.

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?*)

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



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?

RECOVERY

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.

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?

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?

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?

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

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?

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?

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?

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. or asilver@hcanys.org.

PLANNING INFORMATION AVAILABLE

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

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