

Binary Blizzard Tabletop Exercise

Mid-Term Planning Meeting

June 26, 2024 – 10:00 AM (EST)

Attendee List

Federal Emergency Management Agency

- Earl Galloway, FEMA National Exercise Division (NED)
- Pat Maloney, FEMA NED Support
- Rich Cogliano, FEMA NED Support

Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 1

- Kerri Ann Trepanier

Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

- Sydney Steinle

Vermont Agency of Human Services

- Jason Gosselin

Vermont Agency of Transportation

- Meg Krum

Vermont Buildings and General Services

- Adam Bunde

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

- Sean McVeigh

Vermont Department of Health

- Liam Knight



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Vermont Emergency Management Agency

- Julie Benedict

Veteran's Affairs Hospital

- Ariel Young

Meeting Objective

- The Initial Planning Meeting (IPM) is the next major step in the exercise planning process. The purpose is to review key design elements and exercise logistics. The meeting also serves for stakeholders to review involvement in exercise planning and conduct.

Exercise Scope and Focus

- The Planning Team affirmed the exercise will be a one-day tabletop exercise held on Wednesday October 23, 2024, at the Vermont State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) as well as virtually in regional EOCs.
- Mission Area: Response
- Duration: 8 hours.
- Action Item: Julie B. will meet with regional health partners to determine if they will have a separate location than the regional conduct locations.

Exercise Structure

- The draft scenario was divided into three different modules:
 - Module 1 sets up that Vermont has had some snow in the past that they had already responded to. A blizzard is predicted to be coming soon. Additionally, there has been mentions of a potential cyber attack on the power grid that have been flagged.
 - Module 2 establishes the effects of the blizzard, leaving parts of the state with 4 feet of snow, downed power lines, collapsed roofs, and heating needs. That same day, the hacktivist group makes their attack on the power grid.
 - Module 3 jumps in time to two weeks after the storm, when physical infrastructure is mostly restored.
- Planning team members identified that in the given scenario, the EOC would already be set up, which was something there were interested in exercising. Module one will be reworked to focus on activation.
- The planning team also reviewed the facilitation questions for the discussion.



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- It was suggested to add a communications capability focus, so that the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) could participate.
- The facilitation questions should be reworded to target the different agencies playing (Regional, State, and Health).
- Module 3 should focus on how to demobilize or scale back resources.
- Action Items: Develop products for ground truth, such as map of closures, IAP, and hospital census.
- Action Item: FEMA NED will further develop the scenario to include more details and ground truth.

Exercise Participants

- Participants will include 1-2 representatives of agencies and organizations involved in active response, including LE, fire, EMS, hospital/medical care providers, and those from public or private sectors. Key staff serving the State Emergency Operations Center will also participate.
- The planning team suggested including:
 - Red Cross
 - Social Service partners
 - National Guard
 - Cross Border partners
 - VOAD partners
 - Southeastern Vermont Community Action
 - Vermont Medical Reserve Corps
 - Superintendents
- Action Item: Planning team members to identify participating partners and coordinate invitations

Objectives and Core Capabilities

- The Planning Team reviewed and approved on the following objectives for the overarching exercise:
 - **Objective 1:** Participants will discuss the capability to coordinate a response to a cyber-attack impacting the power grid and a severe winter storm across all of Vermont between local, regional, state and federal stakeholders using current plans and procedures. (*Core Capability: Operational Coordination*)



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- **Objective 2:** Participants will discuss the methods, type and extent of information shared between responders at local, regional, state and federal levels using current operational plans, procedures and mutual aid agreements to coordinate the response to a cyber-attack by a hacking group utilizing ransomware. *(Core Capability: Intelligence and Information Sharing)*
 - **Objective 3:** Local and regional entities, with the assistance of the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will discuss the methods and plans for prioritizing available and requested resources and determine how those resources will be delivered following a severe winter storm and a cyber incident. *(Core Capability: Critical Transportation)*
 - **Objective 4:** Local municipalities, regional partners and the State EOC will discuss the methods of communicating critical information requirements and situational awareness information throughout Vermont following a severe winter storm and cyber-attack. *(Core Capability: Operational Communications)*
 - **Objective 5:** Participants will discuss how to re-establish critical infrastructure across the state to support ongoing emergency response operations and community functionality during a cyber attack impacting the power grid and a severe winter storm. *(Core Capability: Infrastructure Systems)*
 - **Objective 6:** Participants will identify alternative or secondary information sharing networks and key infrastructure systems that could be utilized in response to a cyber-attack impacting the power grid and a severe winter storm. *(Core Capability: Situational Assessment)*
 - **Objective 7:** The State EOC with local and regional partners will discuss the process for establishing commodity points of distribution throughout impacted areas of Vermont following a severe winter storm and cyber-attack. *(Core Capability: Logistics and Supply Chain Management)*
 - **Objective 8:** Participants will discuss how to establish, staff, supply and maintain congregate and non-congregate sheltering throughout the power outage. *(Core Capability: Mass Care Services)*
- Agency specific objectives were also reviewed and discussed. Any additions or changes to those objects would be handled directly between the agency and Julie B.

Plans, Policies and Procedures

- The main plans to be exercised at the State SEOC include:
 - Vermont State Emergency Management Plan
 - State of Vermont Cybersecurity Annex
 - State of Vermont Distribution Management Annex



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Exercise Documentation

- Documentation will include the following:
 - Conduct presentation
 - Situation manual
 - Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEG)
 - Facilitator/Evaluator Handbook
 - Placemat
 - Videos
- Action Item: NED Support to draft documentation and provide to the planning team for review.

Exercise Logistics

- The exercise will be conducted via Microsoft Teams.
 - Action Item: Create a Teams meeting link for the exercise and identify IT mitigation strategies.
- Lunch will be provided for those participating at a State or Regional conduct locations. Other locations would need to provide their own lunch.

Action Item: NED Support to draft documentation

Exercise Staffing

- Evaluation
 - Action Item: Planning team to identify evaluators for each of the regional conduct locations.
- Facilitation: Rich C. of NED Support will facilitate the exercise from the State Emergency Operations Center. Regional locations will be facilitated with FEMA NED staff.
- NED Support will provide a notetaker.
 - Action Item: Regional partners to identify additional notetakers if they want additional support

Exercise Timeline

Name	Department/Organization	Contact
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Final Planning Meeting	September 18, 2024 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	In Person
Exercise Controller and Evaluator Brief	October 9 th , 2024 12:30 PM – 4:30 PM	Virtual
Exercise Conduct and Hotwash	October 23, 2024 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM	In Person
After-Action/IP Meeting	December 4, 2024 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Virtual

- NED Support will send the AAR/IP to the Planning Team for review 30 days after the exercise.
 - Final report and feedback consolidation will be during the After-Action Meeting.

Action Items and Next Steps

Name	Department/Organization	Date
Distribute MPM Minutes	FEMA NED	July 3, 2024
Develop draft exercise documentation	FEMA NED	Ongoing
Review and finalize objectives and core capabilities	FEMA NED/Planning Team	FPM
Edit exercise scenario	Planning Team	FPM
Identify exercise staff	Planning Team	FPM
Confirm participants	Planning Team	FPM



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