

Binary Blizzard Tabletop Exercise

Midterm Planning Meeting

June 26, 2024



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Ground Rules For Hybrid Participation – In Person and Virtual

- **If you are virtual:**
 - To speak, use the Raise Hand function and wait to be called on
 - When using the Chat box, use appropriate and professional decorum
 - The facilitator will periodically solicit input from the virtual attendees
- **If you are in person:**
 - Refrain from side conversations to prevent background noise for virtual attendees
- **For everyone:**
 - When speaking, please state your name and organization



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Opening Remarks

Julie Benedict

State Exercise Administrator

Vermont Emergency Management

Earl Galloway

Exercise Program Manager

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Exercise Division (NED)



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Welcome and Introductions

- Name
- Organization
- Day-to-Day Role
- Exercise Planning Role



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Trusted Agents

- Trusted Agents (TAs) are the individuals on the Exercise Planning Team(s) who are trusted to not reveal exercise and scenario details to players or third parties before exercise conduct
- TAs also develop pre-exercise materials, conduct exercise briefs and support training sessions
- Information in this presentation is for exclusive use by the exercise planners and not to be released to the public or other personnel who do not have a valid need to know without prior approval from an authorized sponsor organization representative
- This presentation is not releasable to any public website



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Meeting Agenda

- Planning Updates
 - Plans, Policies and Procedures
 - Exercise Objectives
 - Proposed Exercise Scenario
 - Proposed Discussion Questions
 - Proposed Participants
 - Proposed Exercise Agenda
 - Roles, Responsibilities and Documentation
- Evaluation Development
 - Draft Exercise Staff Structure
 - Proposed Exercise Date
 - Exercise Logistics
 - Stakeholder Engagement
 - Planning Timeline and Milestones
 - Action Items
- Closing Comments
 - Closing Remarks



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Planning Updates

Plans, Policies and Procedures

- Vermont State Emergency Management Plan
- State of Vermont Cybersecurity Annex
- State of Vermont Distribution Management Annex



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Exercise Objectives (1 of 2)

- **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)
- **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)



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Exercise Objectives (2 of 2)

- **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)



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Proposed Exercise Scenario (Module 1)

- Over the past two weeks, southern Vermont has experienced several different snowstorms, resulting in an accumulation of 18 inches of snow and a ½ inch of ice; some areas were without power for the past 6 days
- Local municipalities were able to provide food and fuel to the areas but were beginning to run low on supplies
- National Weather Service (NWS) is forecasting a significant winter storm with blizzard conditions to impact southern and central Vermont; heavy snowfall and high sustained winds are expected.
- Additionally, the Vermont Intelligence Center has flagged several mentions of a possible cyber attack on the power grid at the same time of the blizzard



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Proposed Exercise Scenario (Module 1 continued)

A significant storm begins on the evening of Monday, January 6, 2025 bringing constant snowfall and sustained winds more than 35 mph to the southern 2/3 of Vermont. NWS forecasts the storm to continue late into the following day. Snow has begun to build up on the roads as plows are having difficulty on the roads due to the poor visibility and blowing snow.



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Proposed Discussion Questions for Module 1

1. What type of messaging is being sent to both response partners and to the public? Who is creating this messaging?
2. How are resources getting prioritized and allocated in preparation for the storm?
3. What actions are taking place to mitigate a possible cyber attack on the power grid?
4. Who determines whether the Cyber Response Advisory Board should convene?
5. At what point would the State EOC open?
 - a. Which partners are activated?
 - b. Is it an in-person, hybrid, or virtual activation?
6. What are the immediate objectives for the incident as it unfolds?



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Proposed Exercise Scenario (Module 2)

- Vermont wakes up on January 8, 2025 to temperatures in the low single digits
- The storm let up overnight and Vermonters find snowfall more than 4 feet in places
 - Windsor – 44”
 - Brattleboro – 38”
 - Rutland – 42”
 - Morrisville – 21”
- There are several road closures throughout the southern part of the state.
- Utilities report widespread power outages more than 50,000 customers
- Homes and barns have collapsed roofs and dozens require shelter
- Heating fuel across the entire region is low due to the previous power outages
- At 10:00 AM, those areas with power suddenly go dark; the Hactivist group AnonyMoose claims responsibility



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Proposed Discussion Questions for Module 2 (1 of 2)

1. What are your objectives at the start of this operational period?
 - a. What actions are needed to respond to the storm?
 - b. What decisions need to be made?
2. What role does your agency have in this scenario?
 - a. Who are you partnering with at this time?
3. What information does your agency require?
 - a. What partners would you expect to work with to provide that information?



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Proposed Discussion Questions for Module 2 (2 of 2)

4. What methods are being used to communicate with response partners?
 - a. How are you communicating with the public?
 - b. What needs do you have to maintain communication?
5. How does the cyber attack from AnonyMoose change or hinder response priorities?
6. What resources are needed to meet the needs of survivors?
 - a. Where and how are they distributed?



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Proposed Exercise Scenario (Module 3)

- January 22 – Two weeks after the storm ended, the physical infrastructure is mostly restored to all customers
- The State EOC partnered with communities to distribute commodities to survivors (need to determine locations)



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Proposed Discussion Questions for Module 3

1. What are your agencies long term goals and priorities and how will they evolve as the response continues into the long term?
2. What information needs do you currently have and what partners would you expect to work with to provide that information?
3. What resources are now required?
 - a. What resources do you have available to provide to partner agencies?
 - b. How are these resources getting transported?
 - c. What Memorandums of Understanding do you have in place?
4. How are critical utilities and other infrastructure facilities being evaluated for damage?
 - a. How are they being prioritized?
5. What is the process for winding down commodity points of distribution?
6. How are survivors transitioned into existing aid programs?
7. What does the recovery process look like?



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Proposed Participants

- Vermont State EOC:
 - Vermont State Agencies
- Regional Planning Commissions:
 - Local Municipalities
- Healthcare/Health Operations Center
- Who has been confirmed?
- Who else should be included?



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Proposed Exercise Agenda

Activity	Time
Registration	8:00 AM
Welcome and Opening Remarks	8:30 AM
Module 1	9:00 AM
Break	10:30 AM
Module 2	10:45 AM
Lunch	12:15 PM
Module 3	12:45 PM
Hotwash	2:15 PM
Closing Remarks and Next Steps	3:00 PM
Adjourn	3:30 PM



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Roles and Responsibilities and Documentation

- Roles:
 - Exercise Director
 - Tabletop Facilitators
 - Evaluators
 - Participants
 - Observers
- Exercise Documentation:
 - Facilitator/Evaluator Handbook
 - Exercise Evaluation Guides
 - Conduct PowerPoint Deck
 - Situation Manual and Placemat
 - Videos



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Exercise Development

Draft Exercise Staff Structure

Position	Name
Exercise Director	Julie Benedict
Facilitator (Central)	Rich Cogliano
Evaluator (Central)	Pat Maloney
Facilitators (Each location)	FEMA NED
Evaluators (Each location)	Vermont Emergency Management



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Proposed Exercise Date

- Location: Various
- Date: October 23, 2024
- Time: 8 Hours



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Exercise Logistics

- Information technology and technical assistance
- Exercise facilitators and evaluators
- Brunch, coffee, lunch
- Document printing



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Stakeholder Engagement

- Local issues, concerns or sensitivities
- Engagement with senior leaders



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Planning Timeline and Milestones

Meeting	Date	Location
Final Planning Meeting (FPM)	September 18, 2024	In-Person
Evaluator and Facilitator Training	TBD - Approximately 4 hours	Virtual
Exercise Conduct	October 23, 2024	In-Person
After-Action Meeting	Late November/Early December	In-Person



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Action Items

- FEMA NED Support:
 - Distribute Midterm Planning Meeting minutes
 - Refine exercise materials
 - Develop agenda for the FPM
- VEM:
 - Confirm availability of exercise location and resources
 - Distribute invitation and confirm participant attendance



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Closing Comments

Closing Remarks

Julie Benedict

State Exercise Administrator

Vermont Emergency Management

Earl Galloway

Exercise Program Manager

FEMA NED



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