

State of Arkansas

Exercise Task Force



Concept of Operations

(CONOPS)

Developed by the
Arkansas Department of Emergency Management
Exercise Section
February 2010

ARKANSAS EXERCISE TASK FORCE CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS (ARETF CONOPS)

Purpose

The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) and the Arkansas Homeland Security Advisory Group (ARHSAG) formed the Arkansas Exercise Task Force (ARETF) in order to coordinate and track the evaluation and assessment of state, regional, and local preparedness / response exercise improvement plans, develop and maintain a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan, and validate training activities in accordance with the Arkansas State Homeland Security Strategy (SHSS) and the State Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (SHSEEP).

To ensure regulatory oversight, as well as maximizing coordination and information sharing, the ARETF shall maintain a reporting duty primarily to the Arkansas Homeland Security Advisory Group (ARHSAG) and secondarily to the CDC / HRSA Advisory Committee. The ARETF will receive close coordination and direction from the ADEM Exercise Section (Exercise Administrative Authority or EAA) to ensure SHSEEP compliance.

Mission

The ARETF shall monitor and track the assessment and improvement planning activities of the State of Arkansas' training and exercise programs in regards to all-hazards / capabilities based preparedness.

Focus

The ARETF shall implement an all-hazard / capabilities based approach to assessing and validating training and exercise activities within the State of Arkansas. The primary focus areas of assessment and validation shall be synchronized with the goals and priorities delineated in the SHSS. However, the ARETF shall not preclude other emergency preparedness / response training and exercise activities that are not specified by the SHSS.

Due to the wide scope of preparedness training and exercise requirements for state and local agencies, federal partners, and non-governmental / private organizations that receive federal and state emergency preparedness funds and/or seek state and national accreditation, the ARETF shall strive to coordinate those activities in order to synchronize and deconflict multiple requirements through implementation of a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. This activity is in accordance with: HSPD – 8, the National Preparedness Goal, HSEEP, and the SHSS. Emergency preparedness exercise requirements associated with funding and/or accreditation requirements include:

- Department of Homeland Security Grant Programs (DHS / FEMA)
- Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP – FEMA, DOD)
- Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program (REP – FEMA, NRC, DOE)
- Centers for Disease Control Bioterrorism Public Health Preparedness Program (DHHS, CDC)
- Centers for Disease Control Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program (DHHS, CDC, HRSA)
- Centers for Disease Control Pandemic Flu Preparedness Program (DHHS, CDC)
- Metropolitan Medical Response System (DHS, DHHS)
- Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)
- Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP)

Facilitating the implementation of the SHSEEP through close coordination and direction from the ADEM Exercise Section (EAA) will be a key component of strengthening the integration of multiple state and federal agencies, associations, and organizations at all levels of government within the state in regards to all phases of emergency preparedness.

In accordance with the Arkansas SHSS (updated 11-18-09), the following objectives and steps have been developed in regards to emergency preparedness/ response training and exercise activities and the ARETF (note that many of the steps identified to achieve objectives are performed as required work activities of the ADEM Training and Exercise Branch):

Objective: ***Exercised (Strengthen Communications Capabilities)***

1.3 Utilizing the Arkansas Interoperable Communications Committee (AICC) and Working Groups, develop the overall procedures for entities to obtain access to the system, utilize all capabilities of the system, and provide policies on the usage and support required from the system. Initial development has been completed with the entire process being ongoing as any plan should that encompasses procedures that may need to be adjusted as situations change within our environment.

Steps: *1.3.2 Develop policies that will outline the process, required equipment, usage, proper training, and exercises necessary for the implementation and maintenance of the system.*

Objective: ***Exercised (Implement the National Incident Management System (NIMS)/ National Response Framework (NRF)***

2.5 Exercises will be conducted by all jurisdictions that not only test their equipment but their plans. Each jurisdiction will participate in at least one exercise within each grant period for which they have received equipment. The exercises will be progressive in nature and follow the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) as well as comply

with the State's Exercise Plan. The Arkansas Exercise Task Force (ARETF) will be responsible for this progression. Exercises will be completed each year in a progressive fashion beginning with a tabletop. The State Training and Exercise Plan will identify dates per year per jurisdiction.

Steps: *2.5.1 Work with the exercise task force as exercises are developed and scheduled, as well as conduct an annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW) and an Improvement Plan Workshop (IPW).*

2.5.2 Ensure that as exercises are scheduled jurisdictions incorporate within the exercise play, all disciplines, utilize the NRF to consider the Universal Task List and the Task Capabilities List, as well as follow NIMS.

2.5.3 Track numbers of exercises conducted as well as participation.

2.5.4 Update the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) with scheduled exercise information.

Objective: ***Trained (Implement the National Incident Management System (NIMS)/ National Response Framework (NRF)***

2.6 Conduct courses, address disciplines with high training shortfalls and evaluate training system currently in place, expanding as required. ADEM will be responsible for the progression with a comprehensive Exercise/Training plan completed by January 2011. Continued training efforts however are a never-ending process.

Steps: *2.6.1 Track classes delivered and attendance at each class per discipline.*

2.6.2 Track numbers per discipline that is trained at each response level.

2.6.3 Ensure that part of the training opportunity provided includes all disciplines/responders and incorporates training as needed on ICS and NIMS.

Objective: ***Trained and Exercised (Strengthen CBRNE Detection, Response and Decontamination Capabilities)***

3.4 The Citizen Corps program will coordinate all volunteer resources in the state to plan, train, and exercise basic self-preparedness and response skills during the time of need, in support of identified Homeland Security priorities. The State Citizen Corps Council along with ADEM will be responsible for the progression in this area. Completion will be an ongoing process through the FY2010 grant period of performance.

Steps: 3.4.3. Continue awareness and training efforts to fully utilize all five existing Citizen Corps programs: Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), Neighborhood Watch (NW), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), and Fire Corps (FC).

Objective: ***Plans/Procedures (Strengthen Medical Surge and Mass Prophylaxis Capabilities)***

3.6 Through interagency coordination between ADEM and the Arkansas Department of Health and the Department of Human Services ensure that all funding for medical surge and mass prophylaxis is utilized to its fullest extent. Multi-agency coordination, between the Arkansas Homeland Security Advisory Group (ARHSAG) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention / Health Resources and Services (CDC/ASPR) Administration Advisory Committee, will also be implemented to coordinate implementation of CDC/ASPR Public Health Preparedness Cooperative Agreement, CDC/ASPR Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program (BHPP), and Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) funds. ADEM shall assume responsibility in the coordination of these entities and resources. This goal was met during the FY07 performance period and is reviewed annually

Steps: 3.6.5 Utilize the State Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (SHSEEP) and the Arkansas Exercise Task Force (ARETF) as the primary tool to assess and evaluate medical surge, mass care, and mass prophylaxis capabilities.

3.6.6 Utilize the SHSEEP, ARETF, ARHSAG, and CDC/ASPR Advisory Committee to identify possible solutions, assign responsibility, and track the improvement process in regards to medical surge, mass care, and mass prophylaxis.

Coordination

The ARETF shall meet twice a year to conduct the annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW) and the annual Improvement Plan Workshop (IPW). Meeting locations will be announced via email distribution by the ARETF Leader or designee no later than one week prior to the meeting.

The TEPW provides the opportunity to review the State or Urban homeland security strategy and develop its Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. The IPW, which precedes the TEPW, provides a forum to review items gleaned from the previous year's After Action Reports (AARs) and real world events, and drives the innovation of planning priorities.

The ARETF is comprised of several state and federal agencies, associations, and organizations. The State level agencies and organizations shall represent the respective Emergency Support Function as specified in the State EOP. Federal partnering agencies with a preparedness / response role in the State of Arkansas will also be included in the ARETF structure as supporting entities. These entities are as follows:

ESF Representative State Agencies

- Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (ESF 1 – Transportation)
- Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ESF 2 – Communications, ESF 5 – Emergency Management, ESF 14 – Long Term Community Recovery and Mitigation, and ESF 15 – External Affairs)
- Arkansas National Guard (ESF 3 – Public Works and Engineering)
- Arkansas Forestry Commission (ESF 4 – Firefighting)
- Arkansas Department of Health (ESF 8 – Public Health and Medical Services)
- Arkansas Department of Human Services (ESF 6 – Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services)
- Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (ESF 7 – Resource Support)
- Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (ESF 9 – Urban Search and Rescue)
- Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ESF 10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response)
- Arkansas Agriculture Department (ESF 11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources)
- Arkansas Energy Office (ESF 12 – Energy)
- Arkansas Public Service Commission (ESF 12 – Energy)
- Arkansas State Police (ESF 13 – Public Safety and Security)

Federal Agency Partners

- Federal Bureau of Investigation, Little Rock Field Office
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Disaster Medical System / Emergency Management Strategic Healthcare Group
- U.S. Postal Service
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Protective Security Advisor

A comprehensive membership roster and email distribution list will be maintained by the ARETF leader and/or designee. Implementation of the ARETF email distribution list will be the primary means of disseminating information regarding meeting locations, meeting changes, distribution of meeting minutes and agendas, and document exchange and coordination.

A representative of the State Authorizing Agency (SAA [ADEM]), preferably the designated Exercise Administrative Authority(s) (EAA), shall maintain membership of both the ARETF and ARHSAG to ensure information reporting and sharing between the two entities. This individual shall be designated as the task force leader unless otherwise

indicated by the ARHSAG. In accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the CDC / HRSA Advisory Committee, the Workgroup Chairperson of the CDC / HRSA Drill Coordination Workgroup will maintain reporting responsibilities to the CDC / HRSA Advisory Committee at the committee's quarterly meetings. This individual shall be the designated representative for the Arkansas Department of Health.

Effort

The ARETF shall work closely with its members and partner entities to determine best practices and courses of action in regards to tracking and assessing State and pertinent local (as aligned with priorities promulgated by the SHSS) exercise improvement plans. Implementation of HSEEP Toolkit technologies such as the National Exercise Schedule (NEXS) and the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) shall be the primary means of meeting overall Exercise Program Management goals, as stated in the Purpose section of this document, for the State of Arkansas. The ARETF shall also provide overarching coordination and support to ensure that State and local exercise participation is maximized while duplication of efforts is minimized.

The NEXS shall be the primary tool to schedule, synchronize, and deconflict federal, regional, state, multi-local, and local exercise activities. Members of the ARETF will be granted "Scheduler" rights for the Arkansas Domain of the NEXS, enabling each member to schedule pending exercises. Once reviewed and approved by the EAA, pending exercises will populate the NEXS Calendar. The EAA will set agency / jurisdiction synchronization and deconfliction rules on the NEXS based on participants, shared Target Capabilities, and proximity.

The HSIN Portal shall be the primary tool to post and track federal, state, multi-local, and local After Action Reports / Improvement Plans (AAR/IP's). HSIN provides optional secure messaging and secure document sharing to be used at the discretion of the ARETF members. The EAA will retain administrative controls over user rights within the Arkansas Domain of this secure portal.

Improvement Plan implementation and tracking shall be conducted jointly by the ARETF and the ADEM Exercise Section.

The EAA and / or designee shall retain all documents generated by the ARETF including meeting minutes, plans, and other documents. All documents required to be submitted to the Department of Homeland Security for review / approval shall be reviewed by the EAA / SAA prior to submittal.

CONOPS Maintenance

This document shall be reviewed, updated, and distributed on an annual and "as-needed" basis by the ARETF Leader, ADEM Exercise Section (SAA / EAA), and/or the

ARHSAG. Additionally, this document will be appended to the Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan and will subsequently be included in its review cycle as well.