

# Tabletop Exercise

## SEVERE WINTER STORM



## Agenda

- Introductions
- Exercise Continuum
- Today's Tabletop Scenario
- Discussions
- Hot Wash (Debrief)
- Action Planning
- Closure

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## Rules of the Road

- Creativity/Group Problem Solving
- Use the knowledge and information available in the room
- Active Thinking
- Active Listening
- Active Participation
- Respect – challenge ideas, not people
- Reality Check – make the exercise real for you.



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## Introductions



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# The Exercise Continuum

Briefly:

- Drills
- **Tabletop Exercises**
- Functional Exercises
- Full-Scale Exercises

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## Tabletop Exercises

- Simulate an emergency situation in an informal, stress-free environment.
- Initiate discussion of emergency guidelines.
- Focus on training and familiarization with roles, guidelines, and responsibilities.

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## How a Tabletop Works

- A scenario-based discussion is guided by a facilitator;
- Problems talked through without stress;
- Observers offer feedback on the proceedings
- Policies, procedures, plans, and guidelines are discussed and updated.



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## Tabletop Success

Participants leave with:

- A positive learning experience
- Organizational learning
- Improvement action planning
- More effective policies, plans, and guidelines
- Improved preparedness



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## Exercise Guidelines

- This exercise is designed to test the preparedness of the district/school to respond to a multi-agency, multi-site emergency event.
- Following the exercise, there will be a debriefing time, aka a “**Hot Wash**”.
- Each participant will be given the opportunity to share his/her views on what worked well and what needs to be addressed in additional planning, training and/or drilling

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## Guidelines (Continued)

- LEA policies and existing safety plan(s) govern all activities relating to the emergency event.
- The facilitator will serve as the exercise referee and provide any official interpretation of the exercise rules.
- From time to time, there will be **injections** into the scenario. These are intended to further assess response to the exercise scenario.

*This is designed to be a learning experience for all.*

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## Purpose

- To examine current policies, procedures, resources and actions in the context to a response to an earthquake in a district/school setting
- To promote greater understanding and ability to apply NIMS/ICS principles to your setting
- To make improvements as identified as an outcome of the exercise



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## Objectives

- To evaluate policies and procedures... your plan
- To evaluate command and control including communications procedures
- To identify resources needed vs. available
- To identify training needs
- To identify needed improvements and create an action plan to address those needs



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## Situation Demographics Overview:

For today's exercise, your LEA/school has:

- Number of schools/facilities
- Types of schools/facilities
- Athletic facilities
- Student population
- Employee population



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## First Responder Resource Overview

The first responder resources immediately available to your school, include but are not limited to:

- Police
- Fire
- EMS



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# Risk Assessment Overview:

Known threats and hazards to your district  
and school:

- Natural \_\_\_\_\_
- Biological \_\_\_\_\_
- Technological \_\_\_\_\_
- Adversarial/Human \_\_\_\_\_

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## Scenario

### The Day Before

Late Monday evening, the media issue this warning:

*"An ice storm warning means severe winter weather conditions are imminent or occurring. Significant amounts of ice accumulations will make travel dangerous or impossible.*

*Travel is strongly discouraged. If you must travel keep an extra flashlight, food and water in your vehicle in case of an emergency.*

*Ice accumulations may lead to snapped power lines and falling tree branches that add to the danger."*



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## Scenario

### The Start

- The night and early morning are quite, but cold. Your Tuesday school day begins normally.
- Around 9:30-9:45 a.m. on Tuesday morning, snow flurries begin. The students are excited! They love snow.
- You hear from the National Weather Service that this is a fast moving storm coming quickly out of the Frasier River Valley.



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## Questions

Based on this much information,

- What are your immediate concerns?
- What initial actions should you take?
- What have you done to this point?
- What should you do next?
- What do you need to know?
- How do you find the information?
- Who do you contact?



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## Inject #1

1:00 p.m.

- By now, this has become a major wind and freezing rain storm.
- Winds are reaching 75-80mph.
- The snow continues to fall; temperatures drop to 20 degrees.
- The snow is turning into freezing rain. The snow and freezing rain has made travel treacherous in most areas.
- Your power fluctuates. You hear that there are already some places in the area are actually without power.



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## Questions

- What does your EOP/Safety Plan call for?
- What are you going to do?  
What actions will you take?
- Do you need to activate your school incident command at this point?
- What is your ICS structure?

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## Questions

### ICS Structure

- Who is the Incident Commander?
- Who is the Public Information Officer?
- Who is the Liaison Officer?
- Who is the Operations Chief?
- What other ICS positions will you activate and who will fill them?

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## Inject #2

2:30 p.m.

- By now, there are 3-4 inches of snow and ice in most places.
- The snow and freezing rain continue.
- With the weight of the snow and ice, trees and branches are already breaking and falling around campus.
- You can see some across power lines and roads.  
You know that it is all but impossible for your buses to run.
- The news reports that trees and limbs continue to break and damaging power lines, resulting in power outages.
- You still have power, but you are not sure how much longer it will be on.
- Due to power outages and downed cables, internet service is seriously degraded and intermittent at best.



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## Inject #2

2:30

- Cell service is still functional but spotty.
- You have gotten frantic calls from a few families which were able to get through.
- Some parents have managed to get to school to pick up their children.
- The only way that they can leave is to walk through the storm.
- You realize that your students and staff are very likely going to have to stay at school for the duration of the storm.



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## Questions

- What actions should you take based on this realization?
- How will you tell those parents who came to school?  
How will you notify others?  
What will you tell them?
- Does your safety plan have contingencies for such a situation?

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## Questions

- How have you prepared for the extended time period for sheltering students and staff?
- What should you do about the special needs children and those who are feeling sick?
- What should you do about the parents who want to walk *additional* children home?

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## Inject #3

6:00 p.m.

- The area weather remains cold with lows in the teens and 20s.
- The National Weather Service predicts more snowfall through the night and into Wednesday .
- You can expect at least 6-8 more inches of snow on top of the 10 or so which has fallen during the day.
- The storm moved *so* fast and did *so* much damage *so* quickly that the Governor has already issued a Proclamation of Emergency.



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## Inject #3

6:30 p.m.

- By 6:30, your power is now out.  
It will remain out for 2 more days.



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## Questions

- What actions should school personnel take based on the information from the NWS?
- Knowing that you will have students, staff and potentially parents, what is your back-up plan?
- What do you do about staff who want to leave to be with their own families?
- Will you need to make additional ICS assignments?



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## Questions

- When possible, how will you ensure that everyone (including students, parents, and staff) is accounted for?
- What is your reunification plan?
- What further actions will you take?
- What additional contingencies must you now prepare for?
- Will you need to address long-term recovery?



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TAKE A  
DEEP  
BREATH  
THEN  
CONTINUE

....

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**Hot Wash**



KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
DEBRIEF

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## Hot Wash

- How well did your EOP/Safety Plan operate and what actions will you take toward improvement?
- How well did your ICS Team operate and what actions will you take toward improvement?
- How well did your Communications Plan operate and what actions will you take toward improvement?

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## Hot Wash

- What can be done to improve school safety & security operations?
- What internal district-level offices were required to work together in this scenario?
- What external agencies did the Liaison Officer need to work with in this scenario?
- Are all necessary agreements in place to facilitate cooperation among agencies?

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## After Action Plan

- Lessons Learned:

For an improved action plan, consider what you will:

- Keep Doing \_\_\_\_\_
- Stop Doing \_\_\_\_\_
- Do Differently \_\_\_\_\_
- Start Doing \_\_\_\_\_



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## Conclusion

- What is your biggest take away today?



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