Exercise Toolkit

This Exercise Toolkit, which appears in Appendix I in *ACRP Research Report 201,* has been provided in Word format to facilitate use by practitioners.

Exercises are the primary way of measuring the understanding, effectiveness, and quality of the airport’s training and planning regimen. Exercises should test the items contained in the following checklist, which is based on FAA Advisory Circular 150/5200-31C (Change 2).

In addition to following regulatory requirements and guidance, it is suggested that airports develop an exercise strategy. Planners are encouraged to refer to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (available at <https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/hseep-resources>) and to other ACRP materials, including ACRP Project 04-19, “Airport Emergency Planning Template: NIMS – Incident Command System Compliance,” which addresses recommendations for integrating the disability, access and functional needs, and limited English proficiency (DAFN) communities into exercise planning. Airport exercise designers should familiarize themselves with these documents and programs to develop effective exercises.

Following the adherence checklist, the file contains a list of key considerations for planners regarding exercise scenarios, core capabilities, participants, and reference tools.

Following the key considerations, a series of tables present reference tools for developing a discussion-based exercise and a full-scale exercise. These tables do not include every question, objective, or evaluation criteria an airport may consider. As confidence in the process grows, airports can add complexity to the table.

The final documents included in this file are a list of additional considerations and an Exercise Planning Checklist.

Checklist for Adherence to FAA Advisory Circular 150/5200-31C (Change 2)

| **Criteria**  | **Reference to AC 150/5200-31C** | **Tested in Exercise?** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| In AEP planning, individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs must be identified. | p. 13, 3-4.d.  | Yes / No |
| There must be a fully functional alert and warning system for individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. | p. 54, 6-3-2.b.(1)  | Yes / No |
| Emergency warnings must be able to reach individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, as well as those with limited English proficiency. | p. 55, 6-3-2.c.(5) | Yes / No |
| Public information systems must be able to reach individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs and limited English proficiency in an emergency. | p. 59, 6-4-2.b.(1).(c) | Yes / No |
| For evacuation, accommodation procedures must be included for individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. | p. 69, 6-4-2.c.(3)(b) | Yes / No |
| The American Red Cross may play a role in helping individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. | p. 86, 6-4-2.d.(8)(g)  | Yes / No |
| Social services agencies may play a role in helping individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, those with restricted mobility, or seniors and children. | p. 86, 6-4-2.d.(9) | Yes / No |

**Key Considerations**

Possible scenarios that will test DAFN communications:

* Facility evacuation
	+ Weather
	+ Criminal event
* Shelter in place
	+ Weather
	+ Criminal event
* Aircraft accident
* Airport closure

Core capabilities:

* Operational coordination
* Public information and warning
* Operational communications
* Intelligence and communication sharing

Exercise participants:

* Person who has mobility limitations
* Person who is blind
* Person who is hard of hearing
* Person who has a cognitive impairment
* Person who is a non-native English speaker
* Representation of response stakeholders
* Airport emergency response team

**Reference Tools**

What follows is a sample of information that can be added to integrate communications that include members of the DAFN community into discussion-based and operational-based exercises. A checklist is included to outline the necessary planning steps. It is suggested that an airport follow a building-block approach that includes evaluating communications practices, technologies, and assumptions using the other tools of this guidebook. Ideally, operational exercises should be considered once plans and processes have been developed and staff have been trained; however, there are certain elements that can be integrated into any exercise. An airport can use any or all of these aspects and integrate them into the exercise documentation.

**Discussion-Based Exercise**

| Question | Objective | Evaluation Criteria |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Is the airport’s communications technology suitable for effective and timely dissemination to all people? | 1. The airport will have multiple methods of disseminating timely information to all people.
2. Airport users understand the different methods of communication.
 | 1. The methods used by the airport are diverse and inclusive of all people.
2. Exercise participants can describe the different methods of notification.
3. Exercise participants can describe the methods by which messaging will be activated.
4. Exercise participants demonstrated “dignity for all people” throughout the exercise.
 |
| Can the airport effectively adapt to the changing nature of an emergency and communicate to people affected by the emergency? | 1. The airport has established practices for adapting to the changing nature of an emergency.
2. The airport can effectively communicate changing conditions to all individuals.
 | 1. The airport demonstrated how it will adapt to ensure adequate communication throughout the exercise.
2. Exercise participants can describe how the airport is organized to adapt to the changing nature of emergencies.
3. Exercise participants can describe how the technology and methods used for communication are customizable and adaptable across all methods.
4. Exercise participants demonstrated “dignity for all people” throughout the exercise.
 |
| Do airport emergency plans adequately account for communicating to all individuals?  | 1. Airport plan(s) adequately describes communication methods for the variety of individuals accessing the airport, including people with disabilities, others with access and functional needs, and those with limited English proficiency (DAFN).
 | 1. The airport used representatives from the DAFN community in the development of the plan(s).
2. The airport plan addresses how it will communicate to all individuals.
3. Exercise participants can describe the differing people that the plan accommodates.
4. Exercise participants can describe the methods the plan lists.
5. Exercise participants demonstrated “dignity for all people” throughout the exercise.
 |
| Are airport personnel and stakeholders adequately prepared and/or trained to perform the functions necessary to communicate to people with disabilities? | 1. Airport personnel can effectively implement the communication elements of the emergency plan.
 | 1. Exercise participants can describe their roles in implementing the communication plan.
2. Exercise participants can describe how they fit into the overall emergency management efforts.
3. Exercise participants demonstrated “dignity for all people” throughout the exercise.
 |

**Full-Scale Exercise**

| Question | Objective | Evaluation Criteria |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Is the airport’s communication technology suitable for an effective and a timely dissemination to all people? | 1. The airport will have multiple methods for disseminating timely information to all people.
2. Airport users understand the different methods of communication.
 | 1. Emergency messages were disseminated across all methods within \_\_\_\_\_ minutes of initial notification.
2. Emergency messages were accurate.
3. Exercise participants understood and took appropriate action.
4. Exercise participants demonstrated “dignity for all people” throughout the exercise.
 |
| Can the airport effectively adapt to the changing nature of an emergency and communicate to people affected by the emergency? | 1. The airport has established practices for adapting to the changing nature of an emergency.
2. The airport can effectively communicate changing conditions to all people.
 | 1. Incident command was effective in adapting to the scenario, and objectives/span of control were adjusted accordingly.
2. Exercise participants used all available methods to ensure effective communication as the scenario dictated.
3. Exercise participants demonstrated “dignity for all people” throughout the exercise.
 |
| Do airport emergency plans adequately account for communicating to all people? | 1. Airport plan(s) adequately describes communication methods for the variety of individuals accessing the airport, including individuals with disabilities, people with access and functional needs, and people with limited English proficiency.
 | 1. Exercise participants effectively used available plans to communicate to all impacted parties.
2. All exercise participants received exercise messaging in the manner they expected.
3. Exercise participants demonstrated “dignity for all people” throughout the exercise.
 |
| Are the airport personnel and stakeholders adequately prepared/trained to perform the functions necessary to communicate to people with disabilities? | 1. Airport personnel can effectively implement the communication elements of the emergency plan.
 | 1. Exercise participants performed their roles in accordance with the plan.
2. Exercise participants demonstrated “dignity for all people” throughout the exercise.
 |

**Additional Considerations**

Consider having three types of evaluators:

* Subject matter experts (SMEs) who are familiar with the policies and procedures of the elements being evaluated
* Individuals within the DAFN community who can speak to expectations
* Outside eyes who can provide an overview of how things look to an outsider

Evaluations guides should contain the following elements at a minimum:

* Ranking criteria using a Likert type scale (i.e., from 1 [not accomplished] to
5 [mastered])
* The ability for the evaluator to add notes, comments, and/or explanations
* A location to note the time observed and the location within the exercise
* Contact information for follow-up questions

Take into account the level of care that is provided to people with DAFN and their service animals on a regular basis, not just during the exercise or in an emergency. Include the following:

* Medicines
* Transportation
* Restrooms and relief areas for service/support animals
* Dietary restrictions/food allergies
* Real-life emergency contact
* Personal protective equipment

For actors/role players, communicate expected actions. If at all possible, manage expectations for no surprises.

* Lights/sirens
* Moulage
* Gunshots
* Will it be a full-lift exercise or simulated?
* What stretchers and/or safety restraints may be used?

For responding role players, encourage any pre-training to be accomplished and brief them to expect a mixture of all types of people. The purpose is to evaluate processes and procedures.

**Exercise Planning Checklist**

This checklist presents an estimate timeline and key tasks that must be accomplished for a successful exercise. Each key task can be broken into further steps. For the timeline, the smaller number represents discussion-based exercises, and the larger number represents a full-scale exercise. This timing will vary depending on the complexity and nature of each airport. Flexibility is required.

| Activity to Be Accomplished | Time in Relation to Exercise Date |
| --- | --- |
| What is the exercise trying to accomplish, and what type of exercise will be most appropriate for these objectives? * Review and/or develop quality control plans (discussion-based exercise)
* Evaluate the performance and/or effectiveness of plans (operational-based exercise)
 | 60–360 days prior  |
| Determine initial planning team:* Emergency management community
* Stakeholders
* Community representatives for people with disabilities, others with access and functional needs, and those with limited English proficiency (DAFN)

Consider assigning roles for different aspects:* Site manager
* Logistics
* Finance
* Safety
 | 60–360 days prior |
| Determine initial exercise objectives and scope (see section above on possible objectives for different communication challenges for people with DAFN) | 60–360 days prior |
| With the planning team, develop and/or refine a scenario that will evaluate against the established objectives (Caution: A scenario that is too elaborate may result in an inaccurate evaluation of stated objectives.) | 30–270 days prior |
| Issue a save-the-date notice and/or an invitation for the exercise early enough to ensure adequate participation, as participation will depend on the availability of stakeholders* Develop a registration process
* Provide minimum participation requests to stakeholders

(*continued on next page*) | 15–180 days prior  |
| Develop exercise documents: (for more information, see ACRP/FEMA):* Evaluation guides (How do you know if the objectives were met?)
* Timeline of expected exercise activities, sometimes called aMaster Scenario Events List (MSEL)
* Briefing materials

For more information, see resources at:* ACRP: <http://www.trb.org/Publications/PubsACRPSynthesisReports.aspx>
* FEMA: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/100098>
 | 15–60 days prior |
| Train exercise staff and players:* What are the rules?
* What are the objectives?
* Safety requirements
* Artificialities
 | 1 week prior |
| Conduct exercise:* Capture immediate evaluation feedback through a post-exercise discussion and evaluation of stakeholder(s) performance
* Collect evaluations
 | Day of exercise |
| Complete summary:* Provide highlights of exercise demographics
* Include pictures
* Include initial observations
 | 1 week post-exercise |
| Prepare an after-action report:* If requested, schedule an after-action conference
 | 30–90 days post-exercise |