

TRAINING AND EXERCISE ANNEX

The Training and Exercise Annex of this Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan is designed to incorporate training programs and emergency exercise activities into the Preparedness Plan

The training annex defines educational requirements for employees, primary elected officials and key emergency management staff to aid in better management of emergencies and disasters. The exercise annex describes the types of exercises used to test and enhance the CEMP. Exercise requirements, program evaluations, and corrective actions are highlighted within this annex.

This document is not intended to be exclusive from other training and exercise requirements established by local, state, federal, or industrial accrediting organizations and agencies. It is a supplemental document designed to enhance capabilities and improve emergency management during a real-world event. It further provides a framework for all emergency management partners to develop cohesive operations through training and exercise.

Introduction

Larimer County faces multiple threats from both natural and human-caused disasters. Because of the nature of these threats, it is imperative that the County maintain a high state of readiness in an all-hazards program. An integral part of this program includes an effective and realistic training and exercise program which will give assurances to community members that the county, incorporated cities and towns, businesses, industries, and neighborhoods are taking a proactive approach to ensure that:

- Steps are being taken to identify and lessen the effects of disasters
- First responders and all leaders (both appointed and elected) are continually training and prepared to fully function effectively during an adverse event
- Recovery efforts are seamless between all levels of government and the effected communities
- Levels of preparedness are such that the normal confusion encountered during the first few minutes of initial response to event is minimal
- Lessons learned from previous events are captured and utilized to modify and progress training programs, ensuring a state of readiness that is aligned with our current environment to the best degree feasible

By defining a common level of training, sharing training and exercise resources and providing a realistic systematic exercise plan, all community members and visitors in Larimer County can be assured that their community is better prepared for any event that may occur.

Purpose

The purpose of this annex is to provide the community members, government, and public and private entities of Larimer County with an effective and efficient emergency response to real or threatened emergency situations by facilitating a trained and competent staff and system of coordination to operate and support the EOC and handle their responsibilities as identified in

the CEMP. An approved EOP and a staffed, functional EOC operating at its full capabilities provide a critical element of the overall emergency management effort and enhance the County's ability to provide acceptable levels of protection and assistance to the members of the community.

Objectives

- To provide for the assessment, development, and implementation of a training and education program for public/private officials and emergency personnel.
- To provide for a program of regularly scheduled drills, exercises and appropriate follow-through activities that are designed to assess and evaluate the emergency plans and capabilities that are critical to Larimer County.
- To continue to foster a root culture of innovation and adaptation through capturing and incorporating lessons learned from real or exercised events into training and exercise programs.

Training and Exercise Authority

The authority for training and exercise is granted by the Board of Commissioners within their responsibilities as outlined in the Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 24, Article 33.5, Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, as amended June 2012.

Assignment and Responsibilities

The Larimer County Office of Emergency Management has primary responsibility for executing the provisions of the CEMP and operation of the EOC. Therefore, they have primary responsibility for ensuring an adequately trained and tested operational capability.

The County Commissioners, Department/Division Heads, Elected Officials and other entities that either are responsible for staffing a position at the EOC during an emergency, or providing support to EOC operations, are responsible for cooperating and assisting OEM by making staff available to participate to the fullest extent possible in testing, training, and exercise activities.

Implementation

This training plan will be implemented upon the recommendation of the Director of Emergency Management for Larimer County with the approval of the Board of County Commissioners and the Larimer County Sheriff.

Training Program

Training involves the assessment, development and implementation of an educational development program for public and private officials and emergency personnel. It is delivered in the forms of classroom and "hands-on" training to enhance job performance skills and may be taught to individuals or a collective group. The four basic tenets of the training program include:

1. Formal, documented training that is composed of a training needs assessment, curriculum, course evaluations and training records. Formal training ensures continuity

in curriculum, understanding, and behavior modification. Training records management provides a history of course work and ensures the emergency managers meet standards established by OEM. The value of training is measured through successful exercises and real-world events. The training needs assessment includes all personnel with responsibilities in emergency management and response, including key public officials.

2. Emergency management and response personnel receive and maintain training that is consistent with current and potential responsibilities. Specialized training related to the threats identified in the Threat, Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) as part of the Mitigation Plan is included in the training program.

Primary training needs for the following have been identified:

- a. Primary Emergency Responders
 - Defensive Driving Course or Emergency Operations Driving Course
 - Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
 - Basic First Aid
 - Communications Training (VHF and 800 MHz)
 - EOC Operations Training
 - Hazmat Awareness
 - Storm Spotter
 - ICS/NIMS Courses: IS 100, IS 200, IS 700
 - Virtual Tools Training
- b. Secondary Responders (Public Health, Building Dept, EOC Ops, etc)
 - Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
 - Basic First Aid
 - Communications Training (VHF and 800 MHz)
 - EOC Operations Training
 - ICS/NIMS Courses: IS 100, IS 200, IS 700
 - Virtual Tools Training
- c. Personnel with Emergency Management Roles and Responsibilities
 - Individual Professional Development course for licensure (if needed)
 - Organizational training courses (i.e. water/wastewater system management)
 - ICS/NIMS Training Courses (minimum of IS100, IS200 and IS 700)
 - Communications Training (VHF and 800 MHz) for those with field responsibilities
 - EOC Operations Training
 - WebEOC Training
 - Virtual Tools Training

- d. Elected Officials
 - G-402 Emergency and Disaster Considerations for Elected Officials
 - Media Relations / Public Affairs
3. Training is scheduled and conducted on a regular basis. The training is realistic and is based on identified training needs of the individual or organization, assessments, internal and external requirements, and addresses any deficiencies identified in a corrective action program.
4. Records are maintained including the names of those who received training, the type of training received, names and qualifications of trainers, and results of any tests or training evaluations. The length of time for record retention of the training shall be specified by the training program.

Records of Training

- Each individual is responsible to maintain his or her own training records and submit verification of the training to Training Officers, certification authorities, and/or other recording entities as required by the organization.
- Employees will ensure copies of their training records and completion certificates are maintained in accordance with their organizational SOP's. Their records will be maintained until they separate from service, or as long as required by their department/division.
- Training records and completion certificates should include the basic course completion documents and any required refresher or recertification training certificate.

Culture of Consequence Management

Incidents are inherently complex, and activities that occur within an incident always have the potential for cascading, or secondary impacts that further create adverse effects in a community experiencing the disaster. Additionally, our environment is dynamic, meaning that nothing remains static, and this can result in unknown factors that contribute to the intensity of an incident. Beyond foundational training, Larimer OEM seeks to conduct training and exercises in such a way that fosters the critical thinking and forward-leaning activities that help all community members and personnel to be better prepared and ready for potential unknowns or cascading impacts, and help EOC staff and partners be more confident in this type of environment.

Training Requirements for County Personnel

Larimer County Divisions and Departments are at various stages of implementing the NIMS. Everyone involved in emergency management (to include emergency operation center personnel in support of the field), regardless of discipline or level of government, should take the NIMS baseline curriculum courses:

IS-100 – Introduction to the Incident Command System: Introduces ICS and provides the foundation for higher level ICS training. This course describes the history, features and principles, and organizational structure of the system. It also explains the relationship between ICS and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

IS-200 ICS for Single Resource and Initial Action Incidents: is designed to enable personnel to operate efficiently during an incident or event within the ICS. IS-200 provides training on and resources for personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within the ICS.

IS-700 – Introduction to the National Incident Management System: This course introduces and overviews the NIMS. NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable all government, private sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents.

Senior and Elected Officials are expected to understand their roles and responsibilities in emergencies and disasters, and the process by which to integrate into the Incident Management System through the Emergency Operations Center. One course is essential for all elected and key officials, including legal staff:

G-402 Emergency and Disaster Considerations for Executives: This course is specific to policy-level officials who will be making key decisions during and after emergencies and disasters. This is the only course required for NIMS compliance for senior and elected officials.

Incident command occurs in the field; therefore, the National Integration Center recommends that only individuals with a command and general staff role take advanced ICS courses.

ICS-300 Intermediate ICS: ICS-300 provides training and resources for personnel who require advanced application of the ICS. This course expands upon information covered in the ICS-100 and ICS-200 courses.

ICS-400 Advanced ICS: This course provides training and resources for personnel who require advanced application of the ICS. This course expands upon information covered in ICS-100 through ICS-300.

Additional training recommendations

The following courses are designed to provide an overview of key NIMS principles relating to multi-agency coordination, public information, resource management, mutual aid, and communication and information management. Larimer County Emergency Management recommends completion of the two baseline courses identified above prior to taking the following awareness and additional training.

IS-800 National Response Framework, An Introduction: The course introduces participants to the concepts and principles of the National Response Framework (NRF).

G-191 Incident Command System/Emergency Operations Center Interface: This course reviews ICS and EOC responsibilities and functions and depends heavily on exercises and group discussions to formulate the interface. This course works best when delivered to ICS and EOC personnel from the same community. The course provides an opportunity for participants to begin developing an ICS/EOC interface for their community.

G-290 Basic Public Information Officer Course: This course focuses upon the unique role of the Public Information Officer (PIO) in emergency management, this course will help PIOs or people assigned that role to fine-tune their job skills. Through individual and group activities, students will develop and practice a series of communication skills and identify ways to integrate all phases of emergency management into a comprehensive public information program.

G-775 Emergency Operations Center Management and Operations: This course provides participants with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage and operate EOCs and multiagency coordination systems at the Federal, State, tribal, and local levels of government. This course describes the role, design, and functions of EOCs and their relationships as components of a multiagency coordination system.

* IS courses are independent study courses through FEMA and can be found at the following link: <https://training.fema.gov/is/crslst.aspx?lang=en&page=7>

Exercise Program

A program of regularly scheduled drills, exercises, and appropriate follow-through activities serves as a gauge to measure the effectiveness of the emergency management training program. The drills, exercises and follow-through activities allow employees and support personnel to rehearse, assess, and evaluate their roles and responsibilities defined in the CEMP. Drills and exercises also allow an agency to assess their current capabilities to support this plan. Shortfalls identified as a result of drills and exercises can be addressed and a corrective action plan implemented.

The basic principles of an exercise program are:

- The drills and exercises regularly assess the skills, abilities, and experience of emergency personnel as well as policies, plans, procedures, equipment, and facilities in the county. The program is tailored to the range of identified threats that confront Larimer County as outlined in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, Part 2 of this CEMP.
- The program evaluates plans, procedures, and capabilities by using regularly scheduled reviews, tests, post-incident reports, AARs, performance evaluations, and exercises. A summary of findings discovered through the exercises will be documented and disseminated within the program, to key stakeholders, and selected community partners.

- The program continues to foster a forward-leaning mentality in the EOC and in support to partners. Exercises and drills are continuously developed utilizing such things as scenarios, lessons learned, tools, etc. to encourage participants to become more flexible in working in an environment where outcomes are not always known.
- A process of corrective action will be established to prioritize and track resolutions to any identified shortfalls.
- Exercises and drills are always conducted in such a way that failures occur, but that the outcomes are positive and end in success for the participants.

Responsibilities

Larimer County OEM serves as the coordination agency whenever exercises are designed for multi-agency response and is responsible for the activations and staffing of the Larimer EOC. OEM also conducts periodic exercises as needed to ensure operational readiness. The minimum exercise requirements are:

- Conduct a minimum of two exercises per calendar year
- Conduct at least one full-scale exercise every five years
 - The EOC must be activated and operational personnel must be in the field
 - It must coordinate the efforts of multiple agencies
- Conduct position-specific and/or function-specific drills at least quarterly

Individuals should understand the CEMP and be trained in their role(s) in the implementation and activation of the plan, including all phases of emergency management.

Exercise Types

There are seven types of exercises, each of which is either discussions-based or operations-based.

Discussions-based Exercises familiarize participants with current plans, policies, agreements, and procedures, or may be used to develop new plans, policies, agreements, and procedures.

- Seminar - A seminar is an informal discussion, designed to orient participants to new or updated plans, policies, or procedures (e.g., a seminar to review a new Evacuation Standard Operating Procedure).
- Workshop – A workshop resembles a seminar, but is employed to build specific products, such as a draft plan or policy (e.g., a Training and Exercise Plan Workshop is used to develop a Multi-year Training and Exercise Plan).
- Tabletop Exercise (TTX) - A tabletop exercise involves key personnel discussing simulated scenarios in an informal setting. TTXs can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures. These are also an excellent way to encourage consequence management planning by walking participants through a series of “what if?” scenarios and encouraging participants to think through all possible outcomes and associated solutions or needs.
- Game – A game is a simulation of operations that often involves two or more teams, usually in a competitive environment, using rules, data, and procedure designed to depict an actual or assumed real-life situation.

Operations-based Exercises validate plans, policies, agreements, and procedures, clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify resource gaps in an operational environment.

- Drill – A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to test a single, specific operation or function within a single entity (e.g., a fire department conducts a decontamination drill).
- Functional Exercise (FE) – A functional exercise examines and/or validates the coordination, command, and control between various multi-agency coordination centers (e.g., emergency operation center, joint field office, etc.). A functional exercise does not involve any “boots on the ground” (i.e. first responders or emergency officials responding to an incident in real time).
- Full-Scale Exercise (FSE) – A full-scale exercise is a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, multi-discipline exercise involving functional response (i.e. joint field office, emergency operations centers, etc.)

Exercise Requirements

- Orientations - Should be part of the Larimer County New Employee Orientation. Additionally, whenever the county changes or amends its plans, policies and/or procedures, it should hold orientation exercises to make employees aware of the changes.
- Drills - The drill focuses on a single operation and exercises only one section of part of an emergency management organization. Drills should be scheduled at least quarterly, more frequently if complex tasks are required to be performed. Additionally, if there are changes in the EOP, or policies and procedures that require modification of tasks, a drill should be scheduled to test the new or amended policy.
- Table-Top Exercises (TTX) – TTXs serve as a tool to problem solve, team build, and identify shortfalls and weaknesses in a written plan or procedure without deploying responders and equipment. They should be conducted at least annually. A TTX is recommended to measure any necessary training to meet the objectives of the EOP.
- Functional Exercises – Outside of section-specific functional exercises that are scheduled quarterly, larger functional exercises (such as on that incorporates a full EOC activation and key partners) should be conducted every two years, or any time there are changes in key personnel or processes. This exercise simulates a real event in real time and may require an EOC activation or simulation to coordinate multiple functions or organizations. Though resources and people are not deployed, realism can be added to the Functional Exercise by requiring communications equipment, displays, and other enhancements to be used.
- Full-Scale Exercises (FSE) - Should be conducted every five years, or if there are major

changes in key personnel or processes. Like the functional exercise, the full-scale exercise requires an organization to focus on multiple functions, deployment of resources and external coordination with outside responding agencies through an EOC. However, the major difference is that in a full-scale exercise, resources and people are actually deployed in a real time scenario.

- Actual Events - The measure of a successful training and exercise program is in the ability of the county to respond to an actual event. If the Training and Exercise Program is realistic and based on the threat analysis conducted by the organization the response should be a cohesive and coordinated effort. Interagency communication and coordination will be relatively seamless and the recovery efforts should progress quickly and smoothly. An actual event counts as a full-scale exercise for training and exercise purposes.

Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning

Exercise evaluation maintains a fundamental link to improvement planning because it assesses the county's performance and identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Following exercise conduct, improvement planning leverages the outputs of the evaluation process by developing Improvement Plans (IPs), which assign responsibility for correcting deficiencies or shortcomings observed during a given exercise. Through this process, evaluation identifies improvement opportunities, and improvement planning provides a disciplined process for implementing corrective actions.

Evaluation Requirements

- To guarantee operational effectiveness, training and exercise programs should have an evaluation process. The exercise evaluation and improvement plan ensures that programs are implemented and conducted in a manner consistent with the CEMP; that strengths and weaknesses are identified, an IP is developed, and correction actions are implemented.
- The evaluation process also guarantees that the county can function within the scope of the CEMP and is training in realistic environments with properly trained staff.
- Exercise evaluations should also include documentation that demonstrates lessons learned that were captured and implemented into the exercise from previous events when applicable, especially if an exercise simulates previous real-world events.

Conducting a Player Hotwash

A "hot wash" is an immediate after-action discussion and/or evaluation of the performance of agencies participating following an exercise, training session, or major event. The hot wash is conducted as soon as possible after the exercise, usually the same day. In exercises with several venues, separate hot washes may take place at each location. A hot wash is led by an experienced facilitator who can ensure that the discussion remains brief and constructive, and who can focus conversation on strengths and areas for improvement.

Immediately after an operations-based exercise, each evaluator (or team of evaluators and controllers) should debrief the players and controllers in his/her observed discipline, either separately or as a large group. This facilitated discussion allows players to engage in a self-assessment of their exercise play and provides a general assessment of how the entity performed in the exercise. The hot wash also provides evaluators with the opportunity to clarify points or collect any missing information from players before they leave the exercise venue.

Conducting After Action Reviews (AAR)

All discussion-based and operations-based exercises result in the development of an AAR/Improvement Plan (IP), the final exercise document that provides a description of what happened, describes any best practices or strengths, identifies areas for improvement that need to be addressed, and provides recommendations for improvement. As directed by the lead evaluator, the exercise evaluation team drafts the AAR using the evaluation products (timeline, narratives, and EEG analysis) gathered from the data analysis.

Improvement Planning (IP)

Improvement planning is the process by which the observations and recommendations recorded in the draft After Action Report (AAR) are resolved through development of concrete corrective actions that are prioritized, tracked, and analyzed by program.

Following completion of the draft AAR, the exercise planning team, evaluation team, and other stakeholders should meet for an After-Action Conference to review and refine the draft AAR. As part of the After-Action Conference, attendees develop an Improvement Plan (IP) that articulates specific corrective actions by addressing issues identified in the AAR; it also provides completion dates by which the corrective action should be completed, and each corrective action is assigned to a responsible person or agency(s). The refined AAR and IP are then finalized as a combined AAR/IP.

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

The Training and Exercise Annex has hereby been reviewed and approved by the Director for the Larimer County Office of Emergency Management this 3rd day of March, 2025, and will be added to the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for Larimer County.

BY: 
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