
UNIT 7: TRAINING AND EXERCISES

In this unit you will learn about:

- **CERT Training and Exercises.** The types of training and exercises offered by a CERT program.
- **Tailoring *CERT Basic Training*.** How to tailor *CERT Basic Training* to the local area.
- **Managing Training and Exercises.** The tasks and schedule needed to put on a CERT training or exercise.
- **The CERT Training and Exercise Plan.** How to develop a training and exercise (T&E) plan and assure that it is part of the jurisdiction's T&E plan.

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UNIT OVERVIEW

Delivering training and providing refresher exercises are essential to creating and maintaining a credible CERT program. This unit looks at:

- The types of training and exercises a program provides
- How to manage and schedule training
- How to develop and maintain a training and exercise (T&E) plan

At the conclusion of this unit, you will be able to build a plan for delivering and managing safe training and exercises:

- Identify training and exercises that are required or available for CERT volunteers.
- Explain how to tailor content from *CERT Basic Training*.
- Identify tasks required for managing CERT trainings.
- Describe the elements of a CERT Training and Exercise (T&E) Plan.
- Explain how to ensure safety during training and exercises.

This unit will look at the following topics:

- CERT Training and Exercises
- Tailoring *CERT Basic Training*
- Managing Training and Exercises
- The CERT T&E Plan

CERT TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Here are the reasons for providing training and practice opportunities:

- To keep skills sharp (“use it or lose it”)
- To improve the capabilities of the program (to become more valuable to the community)
- To maintain volunteer interest and involvement (see volunteer retention in Unit 4)
- To give you and instructors an opportunity to interact with the volunteers

CERT volunteers use training and exercises to develop and sharpen their skills:

- Training is required to participate in the CERT program.
- Other training is recommended and may be required by a local program.
- Other training is optional and may be offered by a local program.
- Exercises are used to refresh skills and keep them current.

TRAINING

This training is required:

- All volunteers must complete *CERT Basic Training*.
- The Course Manager and instructors for *CERT Basic Training* must complete *CERT Train-the-Trainer*.
 - Note: Individuals who conduct only one or two of the units may do so without taking the *CERT Train-the-Trainer* course.
 - However, they should be briefed on CERT, the *CERT Basic Training* course, and how the unit they are teaching fits into the course.

CERT TRAINING AND EXERCISES (CONTINUED)

This training is recommended:

- FEMA IS-100.b: *Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS)*
- FEMA IS-200.b: *ICS for Single Resources*
- FEMA IS-700: *National Incident Management System (NIMS) Introduction*
- FEMA IS-800.b: *National Response Framework Introduction*
- CPR/AED: Cardiopulmonary resuscitation/automated external defibrillator training

Note: some local programs may require some of these.

In addition to the required and recommended training courses, there are a number of other training opportunities that a local CERT program may offer.

See *Training Opportunities* on the next page.

Training Opportunities

Required Training

- *CERT Basic Training*
- The Course Manager and instructors for *CERT Basic Training* must complete *CERT Train-the-Trainer*.
 - Note: Individuals who conduct only one or two of the units may do so without taking the *CERT Train-the-Trainer* course. However, they should be briefed on CERT, the *CERT Basic Training* course, and how the unit they are teaching fits into the course.

Recommended Training

- FEMA IS-100.b: *Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS)*
- FEMA IS-200.b: *ICS for Single Resources*
- FEMA IS-700: *National Incident Management System (NIMS) Introduction*
- FEMA IS-800.b: *National Response Framework Introduction*
- CPR/AED: Cardiopulmonary resuscitation/automated external defibrillator training
 - Note: The FEMA Independent Study courses can be completed online at <http://training.fema.gov/is>.

CERT Supplemental Training Modules

- *Animal Response I*: General animal behavior, disaster planning for your animals, animal issues in emergency management
- *Animal Response II*: Knowledge and skills a CERT member would need when handling and caring for animals in an emergency
- *CERT Emergency Communications*: Emergency modes and technologies, proper radio use, how a CERT member participates in Net Operations
- *CERT Traffic and Crowd Management*: Hand signals and communication skills when working with traffic and crowd situations, maintaining safety when managing traffic and crowds

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- *Flood Response for CERTs*: How emergency management responds to floods, working safely around floodwaters, how to fill and move sandbags and build a sandbag barrier correctly and safely
- *CERT Tools for Leadership Success*: The characteristics and responsibilities of team leaders and team members, team interactions, leadership styles, and how to lead successfully

Other CERT Training

- FEMA IS-317: *Introduction to Community Emergency Response Teams* (An introduction to CERT for anyone interested in CERT or as a refresher for current team members)
- Search and rescue tutorial on CERT Web site

Training That May Be Arranged by Local Program

- Advanced first aid techniques
- Advanced search and rescue
- Community relations
- Damage assessment
- Debris removal
- Donations management
- Shelter management
- Concerns of individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs
- Utilities control
- Wild land firefighting assistance

Local public and private agencies may have training that, if modified, would be useful for CERT volunteers (utility companies, Humane Society, ARES/RACES [amateur radio], police departments, National Weather Service, mental health departments, and more).

CERT TRAINING AND EXERCISES (CONTINUED)

EXERCISES

Just providing the initial training is not the end of the story. For skills to stay current they must be practiced. Skills can be practiced at:

- Periodic meetings of CERT members
- An annual refresher training with multiple CERTs
- Exercises of all types conducted specifically for CERT members and teams
- Large-scale municipal or regional exercises

All types of exercises will help maintain and expand CERT members' skills and team capabilities. Exercises include:

- Discussion-based exercises
 - Tabletop exercises
 - Functional exercises
- Operations-based exercises
 - Drills
 - Full-scale exercises
 - Gaming exercises (e.g., "CERT rodeo")

CERT TRAINING AND EXERCISES (CONTINUED)

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program

The Department of Homeland Security has developed the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

“The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is a capabilities- and performance-based exercise program that provides a standardized methodology and terminology for exercise design, development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.” (from HSEEP Web site, www.fema.gov/exercise)

In other words, HSEEP is a national standard for all exercises. All programs receiving Homeland Security Grant Program funding must use HSEEP standards.

CERT Program Managers need to be aware of HSEEP because CERT should and will be involved in HSEEP exercises. Specifically, you should:

- Be familiar with the terminology and basic requirements of HSEEP.
- Keep informed about events in the Exercise Plan of your jurisdiction or State and possible opportunities your program to participate.
- Be sure that exercises conducted by your CERT program are included in the jurisdiction’s Exercise Plan.

Become familiar with *What Does It Mean to Be “HSEEP Compliant”?* on the next page.

What Does It Means to Be “HSEEP Compliant”?

HSEEP compliance involves four steps:

1. Development and maintenance of an annual Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (T&EPW) and Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan, to include use of the National Exercise Schedule (NEXS)
2. Planning and designing exercises in accordance with HSEEP, to include the development of documentation and following of planning timelines
3. Development and submission of an After-Action Report (AAR)
4. Implementation of action items identified in the Improvement Plan

These four steps are cyclical and lead to the successful implementation of a self-sustaining exercise program. Below is an overview of tasks that must be accomplished for an entity to be HSEEP compliant.

Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (T&EPW)

Every State and Urban Area must conduct an Exercise Plan Workshop each calendar year. As a result of the T&EPW, each State or Urban Area will develop/update its Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. The Training and Exercise Plan will include the State or Urban Area's training and exercise priorities (based on the homeland security strategy and previous year improvement plans), associated training and exercise capabilities, and a multi-year training and exercise schedule. The schedule should reflect all exercises that are being conducted throughout the State, not just those that are sponsored by Preparedness Directorate. The new Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan must be submitted to Preparedness Directorate within 60 days of the workshop.

All exercises included in the Training and Exercise Plan must be entered through the NEXS system. This list must be updated at least quarterly to reflect schedule changes. States are responsible for ensuring all exercises are placed on the schedule; this includes exercises conducted using Preparedness Directorate-approved direct support.

Exercises

The scenarios used in Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)-funded exercises must focus on validating existing capabilities (e.g., training, equipment, plans) and must be large enough in scope and size to exercise several tasks and involve multiple jurisdictions and disciplines. Exercise scenarios should be based on the State or Urban Area Homeland Security Strategy, including threat and vulnerability assessments. The type of exercise selected should be based on the Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. Exercises must be capability and performance based. Every State and Urban Area is required to follow HSEEP for the development of exercise documentation. Exercises should adhere to HSEEP planning timelines. Exercises must be National Incident Management System (NIMS)-compliant, as outlined in the "State and Territorial

Compliance Activities: Federal Fiscal Year 2006" and "Tribal Government and Local Jurisdiction Compliance Activities: Federal Fiscal Year 2006" documents.

After-Action Reporting

After-Action Reports (AARs)/Improvement Plans created for exercises are required to comply with the guidance set forth in HSEEP and to use the report template provided. AARs/Improvement Plans must be based on information gathered through Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) found in the HSEEP Volume IV Library. States and Urban Areas must conduct an After-Action Conference, in which key personnel and the Exercise Planning Team are presented with findings and recommendations from the draft AAR/Improvement Plan. AARs/Improvement Plans must be provided to Preparedness Directorate within 60 days of each exercise. The AARs/Improvement Plans should be submitted via the HSEEP Web page.

Improvement Planning

Improvement Plans must include input from the affected jurisdictions, usually captured at the After-Action Conference. Action items for inclusion in the Improvement Plan must include the following characteristics:

- They must be measurable.
- They must have a deadline.
- They must have a designated lead (either by name or by agency).
- They must be tracked to completion.

CERT TRAINING AND EXERCISES (CONTINUED)

CERT programs also should follow the general concepts of HSEEP:

- They should develop a training and exercise plan.
- Exercises should be performance-based and should focus on validating existing capabilities:
 - The scenarios should require CERT members to do tasks that they have been taught and will be expected to do.
 - The exercise should be evaluated by seeing how well CERT members correctly and safely do the tasks required by the exercise scenario.
- At the conclusion of an exercise, an After-Action Report/Improvement Plan should be developed.
 - The report should include findings and recommendations.
- The Improvement Plan should include action items that:
 - Are measurable
 - Have a deadline
 - Have a designated lead
 - Are tracked to completion

Remember that, in addition to implementing a CERT training and exercise plan, you also need to be sure that exercises conducted by your program are included in the jurisdiction's Exercise Plan.

TAILORING CERT BASIC TRAINING

The *CERT Basic Training* materials use an all-hazards approach and are intended for a national audience. To make the materials relevant for situations that local CERTs will encounter, you can tailor them to situations that your CERTs will encounter.

Caution: Tailoring the training does not mean eliminating topics. New content may be added and existing content should be tailored, but all existing topics must be covered.

TAILORING CERT BASIC TRAINING (CONTINUED)

Here are the ways that the materials need to be tailored:

- For local hazards (Unit 1)
 - Use the threats facing your community. If the program is in Missouri, hurricanes are not a concern, but flooding is and earthquakes might be.
- For local resources
 - Learn about the first responder resources that the community has and refer to them correctly.
- For local protocols, procedures, and terminology
 - Because teams are local resources, they need to interact effectively with local agencies using local standards, protocols, and terminology.
- For the audience
 - Learn the audience's concerns and abilities and modify the training to fit them. How one teaches leveraging and cribbing will be different for a group in a retirement community than for a group of young professionals at a corporate headquarters. Other concerns could relate to culture, age, language, or venue (e.g., neighborhood, workplace, school).
- For the training facility
 - Some facilities do not have all the space that would be optimal for the hands-on exercises. You may need to be creative in how the space is used.

Review the *CERT Basic Training* materials carefully both to familiarize yourself with the course content and to identify areas that require tailoring. Make sure to review the Instructor Guide, the Participant Manual, and the PowerPoint visuals. Changes may need to be made in all three.

TAILORING CERT BASIC TRAINING (CONTINUED)

Materials can be customized with local:

- Case studies
- Scenarios
- Photographs
- Anecdotes
- Examples
- Success stories
- Handouts

Go to the CERT Web site for numerous tips on tailoring CERT training:

- How to tailor Unit 1
- How to hide PowerPoint visuals that are not relevant
- How to insert photos into PowerPoint
- How to keep Word files accessible for people with disabilities
- www.fema.gov/cert

ACTIVITY: DEVELOP A LOCAL SCENARIO

Purpose: This activity allows you to develop a local scenario for an activity in Unit 5 of *CERT Basic Training*.

Instructions:

1. Work individually to complete the *Develop a Local Scenario* worksheet on the next page.
2. You have 10 minutes.

Develop a Local Scenario

Background:

In *CERT Basic Training* Unit 5, Light Search and Rescue Operations, there is an activity on search and rescue sizeup. The activity is done in small groups and each small group is provided with a local scenario (if possible with photos) describing a local building in a disaster event that is realistic for the community. The *CERT Basic Training* participants are asked to answer four questions:

- What are the pertinent facts to be gathered?
- What kind of prediction can you make regarding damage, based on the incident and the building construction?
- What probable search and rescue problems can you identify?
- What specific safety considerations can you identify?

In preparation for this activity, the instructor must develop the scenarios to be used. The following elements are to be included in the scenarios:

- Type of event
- Intensity/severity/duration
- Occupancy affected
- Current/forecast weather conditions
- Time of day and week
- Other factors that may affect search and rescue operations

Instructions:

1. Develop one scenario that would be appropriate for your community.
2. Include the elements in the list.
3. Think about the questions that the *CERT Basic Training* participants need to answer and make sure that you include the information they would need.
4. Identify 2-3 photos that might be presented as part of the scenario.

TAILORING CERT BASIC TRAINING (CONTINUED)

ACTIVITY: DRAFT PROGRAM PLAN: IDENTIFY IDEAS FOR TAILORING TRAINING

Purpose: This activity allows you to record ideas you might have for tailoring training to your own community.

Instructions:

1. Go to the Draft Program Plan in Unit 1.
2. Individually enter ideas in the seventh section, *Training and Exercises*. The title is "Some ideas for tailoring training to my community."

MANAGING TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Holding a CERT training class requires coordination and planning. The job can feel overwhelming when you first get started. Developing a list of tasks and a schedule helps make the process manageable.

See the *Sample Training Schedule* in the *Draft Program Plan* in Unit 1. It is the same as the worksheet that starts on the next page. Use the worksheet as the class works through Week 8 to Week 1.

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Sample Training Schedule

Week 8 Before Training	Week 7 Before Training	Week 6 Before Training	Week 5 Before Training

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Week 4 Before Training	Week 3 Before Training	Week 2 Before Training	Week 1 Before Training

MANAGING TRAINING AND EXERCISES (CONTINUED)

There are resources on the CERT Web site that are very useful for the new Program Manager who is coordinating training for the first time.

- Starting and Maintaining a CERT Program document is available at:
www.fema.gov/start-and-maintain-community-emergency-response-team-program

THE CERT TRAINING AND EXERCISE PLAN

As discussed earlier, training is not done once the *CERT Basic Training* course is complete. Ongoing training and exercises are a core part of the CERT program. More than half of continuing education deals with embellishing what was taught in the *CERT Basic Training* course; the other half deals with other emergency- or disaster-related subjects that weren't addressed in the *CERT Basic Training* course but are of interest to members and the program.

Whatever the overall objectives may be, all CERT training and exercises should be incorporated into your local CERT program plan.

See the *Sample Training and Exercise Plan* on the next page. Use the plan as a guide as the unit continues.

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Sample Training and Exercise Plan

Objective	Plan for Meeting Objective	Logistical Needs to Meet Objective	Risk to Members	Evaluation of Objective

THE CERT TRAINING AND EXERCISE PLAN (CONTINUED)

OBJECTIVE

The first step in developing a training and exercise plan is to develop objectives. An objective is a statement of a particular milestone that you would like a CERT program to accomplish that year.

Remind participants that good objectives are SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time Bound

How to Choose Objectives

Identifying objectives should not be a haphazard process. Your program's annual training and exercise objectives are tied to and compatible with your program's goals and strategic plan. They also are tied to the community's most recent risk assessment.

Do your homework before identifying annual objectives:

- Review your program's goals and strategic plan (drafted in Unit 2 of the course).
- Talk to the local emergency manager about the hazards that are a priority for your community and about resource gaps your CERT members might help fill.
- Consult with your municipal sponsor. Make sure your program's training and exercise objectives are in sync with what that agency is doing and what the agency needs from your CERT program.
- Ask CERT members what additional training will make them more effective in a disaster. They will know what they need. Remember that one size does not fit all. A team of senior citizens needs different types of continuing training than does a student team at the local high school.

After the research is complete, you should review the possibilities and set priorities for what your program can realistically accomplish.

THE CERT TRAINING AND EXERCISE PLAN (CONTINUED)

PLAN FOR MEETING AN OBJECTIVE

The next step is to describe how the objective will be met.

The plan should include a full description with as many details as possible.

LOGISTICAL NEEDS TO MEET OBJECTIVE

In the logistical needs column, you should list the resources that you would need to put the plan into action.

See Unit 6, Procuring and Managing Resources, for the discussion of resource requirements.

RISK TO MEMBERS

The Risk to Members column is where you should evaluate risk versus benefit. In particular, you should assess any safety concerns.

Managing liability is a serious concern for CERT Program Managers. Addressing safety concerns during training and exercises is a positive way to reduce liability through risk management. There are several resources you on the CERT Web site at <http://www.fema.gov/cert>.

See *Reducing Risk and Liability During Training and Exercises* on the next pages. Use this job aid when you are identifying safety concerns for the training and exercise plan.

Reducing Risk and Liability During Training and Exercises

Reducing Risk and Liability During Training: Instructors

Steps that you can take with your instructors to help reduce liability include:

- Establishing training standards and safety requirements for training.
- Briefing all instructors on their responsibilities to conduct safe and effective training.
- Ensuring that all instructors are prepared to meet the objectives for their sessions.
- Providing co-instructors to assist the instructors for all activities.
- Ensuring that all instructors model appropriate safety behavior, such as safety gear for all demonstrations.

Additionally, be sure that your instructors understand that they can give participants permission to opt out of an activity if they have a condition that they may aggravate by participating.

Reducing Risk and Liability During Training: Participants

Steps that you can take with CERT participants to help reduce liability include:

- Ensure that participants understand that they may opt out of activities if they have a condition that they may aggravate by participating.
- Require all participants to sign a hold harmless agreement. (See sample agreement in the resources.)
- Explain the potential hazards that participants may face in class activities, during exercises, and during activation.
- Provide copies of all CERT safety rules and requirements to each participant. Require them to sign one copy and return it to you before class begins. Encourage the participants to keep the other copy for their records.
- Require all participants to wear safety gear for all activities.
- When you see an unsafe act, correct it immediately!
- If someone is injured during class, document the injury and ensure that the participant receives appropriate medical treatment.
- Emphasize that rescuer safety is the primary concern in training and activation.

Reducing Risk and Liability During Training: Classroom/Exercise Areas

Steps that you can take to ensure that the CERT classroom and exercise area are safe include:

- Walk through the classroom and exercise area(s) before each class to identify and correct unsafe conditions.
- Check all equipment to ensure that it is in good working order.

Be sure to make these checks **before every class begins**.

Reducing Risk and Liability During Training: Materials

The main step to take to reduce liability related to the CERT materials is to ensure that you have written releases for all copyrighted materials (including photographs and cartoons). (Note that if you are using FEMA's materials without alteration, all necessary copyright releases have been secured.) Remember that photographs and other materials found on the Internet are copyrighted.

Reducing Liability: During Exercises

Always take the measures below to reduce liability during exercises:

- Conduct a pre-exercise briefing in which you provide the objectives (including safety objectives) for the exercise.
- Treat all drills, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises as the real thing. Enforce all safety rules strictly.
- Stress teamwork, safety equipment, and the use of the buddy system.
- If you see an unsafe act, intervene immediately!
- Conduct a post-exercise debriefing, and cover safety issues as part of the debriefing.
- Stress the need to document everything using the forms approved by the jurisdiction.
- If someone is injured, document the injury, and ensure that the volunteer receives appropriate medical care.

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EVALUATION OF OBJECTIVE

In the Evaluation of Objective column enter your observations, lessons learned, and recommendations after the event has occurred. Use this information to write an After-Action Report/Improvements Plan for the next event.

REPEAT PLANNING PROCESS ANNUALLY

Planning for training and exercises is a cyclical process. Once a year the training and exercise plan should be revised.

- Measure the degree of achievement of previous year's objectives.
 - Review successes and "less than successes."
- Develop new objectives.
- Write a plan for meeting the objective.
- Identify the logistical needs for meeting the objective.
- Evaluate risk to members.

ACTIVITY: DRAFT PROGRAM PLAN: IDENTIFY POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES FOR TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Purpose: This activity allows you to record ideas you have for possible objectives for your training and exercise plan.

Instructions:

1. Go to the Draft Program Plan in Unit 1.
2. Turn to the seventh section, *Training and Exercises*. In the Training and Exercise Plan Individually enter your ideas for objectives. Remember that these objectives will have to be reviewed and checked with others in the program and the community (e.g., volunteers, sponsor, emergency manager).

UNIT SUMMARY

This unit has looked at training and exercises:

- CERT Training and Exercises
- Tailoring *CERT Basic Training*
- Managing Training and Exercises
- The CERT Training and Exercise Plan

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