



Examine the ability of all levels of government to identify appropriate roles and required authorities; proactively share incident information; coordinate decision-making; prioritize and mobilize resources; continue essential functions; protect affected populations; and conduct effective public messaging for any incident that threatens the national security of the United States.

The National Exercise Program (NEP) is a two-year cycle of exercises across the nation that examines and validates capabilities in all preparedness mission areas. The 2019-2020 NEP cycle is guided by nine Principals’ Strategic Priorities, established by the National Security Council and informed by national preparedness data.

What are National Security Emergencies exercises?

National Security Emergencies are incidents with significant regional or national impacts that strain the resources of the nation, such as those involving a weapon of mass destruction, asymmetrical state attacks, significant cyberattacks, or massive natural disasters.

Exercises aligned to this priority should:

- Identify and clarify the appropriate roles and required authorities to respond
- Evaluate the ability to share incident information and coordinate decision-making
- Assess prioritization and mobilization of resources and the ability to continue essential functions, protect affected populations, and conduct public messaging

Related Core Capabilities

- Environmental Response/Health and Safety
- Forensics and Attribution
- Intelligence and Information Sharing
- Interdiction and Disruption
- Mass Search and Rescue Operations
- Operational Coordination
- Planning
- Public Information and Warning
- Situational Assessment
- Supply Chain Integrity and Security

Why is this important?

States, territories, tribes, urban areas, and other communities use the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR) to assess their preparedness. FEMA includes the results of the THIRA and SPR, along with several other preparedness indicators, in the annual National Preparedness Report (NPR). Analytic results help shape planning, training, exercise, and other prioritization decisions at all levels.

Stakeholder Preparedness Review

- 85% of states and territories identified Operational Coordination as a high priority, but reported a **10% decrease in proficiency** from 2015 to 2017
- 73% identified Planning as a high priority, but **only 55% of jurisdictions reported proficiency** in the Planning core capability in 2017

Lessons Learned and Emerging Threats

- Results from the 2017-2018 NEP Cycle **highlighted critical gaps** in creating unified messaging, delivering protective action recommendations, and leveraging mass notification infrastructure
- In 2017, the nation responded to an **unprecedented four concurrent major disasters**, including three hurricanes and the California Wildfires. Approximately 25.8 million people were affected by the hurricanes, receiving more than \$2 billion in disaster assistance as of November 2017

Spotlight: IPAWS

During an emergency, the **Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)** provides several services in an integrated platform for public safety officials to communicate with the public about national, regional, and local emergencies. It also provides a capability to the President for nationwide emergency communication under all conditions. On October 3, 2018, IPAWS successfully conducted the first Nationwide Presidential-level Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) test. To learn more, visit [fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system](https://www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system).





What are the major challenges?

An analysis of 15 exercise after-action reports (AARs) revealed common challenges:

- Expanding upon the capabilities of Wireless Priority Service, Government Emergency Telecommunications Service, and other automated communication processes to facilitate cross-agency communications
- Ensuring continuous communication between FEMA and the Intelligence Community in the absence of unclassified information during national security emergencies
- Instituting formal processes for emergency management officials to mitigate misinformation throughout national security emergencies
- Mitigating the tendency of emergency response personnel to self-deploy, resulting in overconvergence during large-scale incidents
- Ensuring local officials maintain a common operating picture with Federal partners before, during, and after a catastrophic event



Distribution of jurisdictions that submitted AARs for exercises aligning to National Security Emergencies capabilities

Case Study: Cascadia Rising

More than 20,000 individuals participated in a **four-day exercise addressing a 9.0 magnitude earthquake** along the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a 700-mile fault line off the coast of the Pacific Northwest. The exercise revealed that **personnel rely on individual agency capabilities** rather than exploring the full capabilities of partners to address life-saving needs.

What can I do?

Training and exercises can help all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and other partners across the whole community be better prepared. The National Exercise Division at FEMA is committed to providing assistance to partners in planning, designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating their own exercises that validate core capabilities.

Exercise Starter Kits

Exercise Starter Kits are pre-packaged sets of guides and templates to help exercise planners develop tabletop exercises that can be tailored to the specific threats, resources, and operational plans of their community.

Spotlight Initiative

The United States Geological Survey, in partnership with several universities and state agencies, rolled out a free-to-use smartphone application, **ShakeAlert**, in early 2018. This app, which is currently undergoing testing in Oregon, California, and Washington, provides early warning for earthquakes, up to ten seconds before impact. Learn more at shakealert.org.

Please visit preptoolkit.fema.gov for Exercise Starter Kits, training courses, and additional resources.

Related Training Courses

Examples of relevant training courses are provided below. Course offerings frequently change; please visit firstrespondertraining.gov for a full list of training courses and resources.

- G0358:** Evacuation and Re-Entry Planning Course
- G0386:** Mass Fatalities Incident Response Course
- IS-836:** Nuclear/Radiological Incident Annex
- PER-211:** Medical Management of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive Events
- PER-335:** Critical Decision Making for Complex Coordinated Attacks
- PER-354:** Response to Radiological/Nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents

FEMA training courses are provided at no cost to first responders.

Nominate an Exercise to the National Exercise Program

Benefits of participating in the NEP include:

- Receiving technical assistance and support for your exercises from experienced exercise specialists
- Access to exercise templates, tools, and other resources to help you design, conduct, and evaluate your exercises
- The ability to pursue new exercise ideas and broaden the impact of your exercises to a wider group of stakeholders
- The opportunity to influence national preparedness policy and resource allocation decisions at all levels by contributing exercise findings

How to Participate in the NEP

1. Visit fema.gov/nep to learn more about the NEP
2. Download and complete the Exercise Nomination Form
3. Submit your completed Exercise Nomination Form to nep@fema.dhs.gov
4. The FEMA National Exercise Division will respond to discuss your exercise