

Metascenario Table Top Exercise Facilitator Notes

Facilitator Background Information

A Tabletop Exercise (TTX) is a discussion-based exercise, with a facilitated discussion of a scripted scenario in an informal, stress-free environment. It is designed to elicit constructive discussion as participants examine and resolve problems based on existing operational plans and identify where those plans need to be refined. The success of the exercise is largely determined by group participation in the identification of new and innovative ideas.

As facilitator, your role is to create a framework that encourages dialogue and guide discussions to meet the objectives of this exercise, capture innovative ideas, create teamwork, and educate participants. Within this document we've provided suggested language for each slide that will engage exercise participants effectively and appropriately.

Please note that the time needed to conduct this exercise is flexible. It is estimated that it will take anywhere from two to four hours total. Before conducting, we recommend that you review these notes along with the exercise PowerPoint slides to optimize the exercise experience and participation.

The Whole Community: Planning for the Unthinkable: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 2 minutes]

FACILITATOR: Welcome, everyone! My name is [INSERT NAME], and I will be leading you through today's Tabletop Exercise on whole community planning. This exercise is designed to help us identify innovative, atypical solutions that will make an impact on the whole community in the first 72 hours following a catastrophic disaster.

Following today's exercise, if we would like, we will have the opportunity to capture and share the ideas that we identify with FEMA, ultimately contributing to the nationwide effort to optimize the whole community's readiness for a possible catastrophic emergency.

Housekeeping [*NOTE - Customize these to your organization's operations and policies*]: The exercise may take us up to four hours to complete. We will take two 15 minute breaks during the exercise. Please quiet your mobile phones and only use them in an emergency. Note that restrooms are located [WHERE], and emergency exits are located [WHERE].

Welcome and Introductions: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 5 minutes]

FACILITATOR:
Before I walk you through the agenda, let's all introduce ourselves.

[Participants introduce themselves]

FACILITATOR:
Thank you. As we get started, I'd like to call your attention to our agenda.

We will start with an overview of some important concepts, terms and ground rules that will be key to your participation in today's exercise.

As we move into the conduct of the exercise, we will work our way through three modules. The first is designed to facilitate a general discussion of what our immediate response priorities would be to a catastrophic disaster and how we can immediately aid the whole community. The other two are more specific, challenging us to develop out-of-the-box whole community solutions to challenges in the areas of crisis communications and search and rescue.

Finally, we can conclude by identifying and capturing the best of these ideas and, if we wish, sharing them with FEMA so that they can be incorporated into plans and processes designed to strengthen the whole community. So the idea generation and atypical solution development doesn't stop here, we have a unique opportunity to help large and small companies like us, organizations, government agencies and individuals with our creative thoughts!

Exercise Overview: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 5 minutes]

FACILITATOR: I would like to begin by providing you with a little background on two phrases and concepts that you will hear as we move through this exercise – “whole community” and “meta scenario.” This information will also be helpful as you begin to think about the innovative and atypical ways that we can all come together in response to a catastrophic disaster.

Whole Community

Whole community is a philosophical approach that views all facets of a community as vital partners in emergency management. This includes:

- Faith-based organizations (e.g., churches, synagogues, mosques)
- Community organizations (e.g., Rotary clubs, Kiwanis, scouts)
- Businesses (e.g., retailers, services)
- Public agencies (e.g., Law Enforcement, Fire Department)
- Individuals
- Any part of the population in your neighborhood

In other words, the whole community's biggest strength starts with you. Every individual and every organization has an important role in making our communities – and the nation as a whole – more prepared for every conceivable hazard. Working with individuals like yourselves – and those engaged in other community sectors – to identify innovative ways that we can help each other is what this effort is all about.

Meta Scenario

FACILITATOR: When looking to test and prepare the whole community, we have to use a scenario that would impact everyone in ways that are nearly unthinkable. This is called a “Meta Scenario”, which is a disaster event or combination of events so large that the resulting damage to infrastructure and people’s lives seems staggering - impacting millions of people, with more than 190,000 deaths and 250,000 injuries across a range of multiple states. Today’s exercise focuses on one such scenario.

Exercise Overview: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 3 minutes]

Today’s Goals

FACILITATOR: So what’s our role in this, and what are we doing here today?

Since, as I mentioned, we at [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] are a key member of the whole community, today we are going to focus on brainstorming truly innovative and unusual ways that we can help fill critical gaps and make a positive impact for ourselves and our neighbors within the first 72 hours of response to a catastrophic disaster. In addition to our immediate response, we will also focus specifically on the areas of crisis communications and search and rescue, developing out-of-the-box, unexpected ideas for overcoming challenges in these areas.

At the end of the day, we have an opportunity to identify the best of our ideas and share them with FEMA through their online collaboration tool at the URL you see here. FEMA will then incorporate all the great ideas they receive into our nation’s plans and preparedness efforts for future catastrophic disasters. So think big today – this is an effort that goes well beyond our organization; we’re helping all Americans be better prepared.

Exercise Overview: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 3 minutes]

Exercise Ground Rules

FACILITATOR: To ensure today’s conversation is as productive as possible, there are a few ground rules that you should keep in mind. The effectiveness of a tabletop exercise comes from the energetic involvement of participants, so these rules are designed to stimulate discussion that’s both creative and structured. As you participate in this exercise, please keep in mind the following:

- There are no right or wrong answers. All ideas are welcome and will be captured and acted on as appropriate.
- Maintain a no-fault, stress-free environment. It’s very important that today’s discussion is driven by group decision making and problem-solving, so the environment in this room must remain open, positive and encouraging.
- Use the scenario to provide context and spark creative ideas. All ideas and thoughts should be based on the information provided by the scenario, but this should not limit your thinking. We are looking for creative – yet realistic – ideas.

- Do not limit the discussion to official positions or policies. Don't be afraid to go beyond your title/position as you think about new/innovative solutions.
- Tap community resources and assets to aid and enhance your brainstorming. Go beyond this organization's four walls to consider how you can be aided by and provide aid to your community during a disaster. In other words, maintain a whole community mindset!

We're now about to start the exercise. Before we move into the first module, are there any questions on the information we have reviewed so far?

[RESPOND TO QUESTIONS]

Module #1: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 2 minutes]

FACILITATOR:

We've now come to the first module, which focuses on introducing the meta scenario and discussing the ways in which we could immediately respond to help the whole community.

As you'll see in this first video clip from the Virtual News Network, or VNN, we're jumping into this exercise with a disaster very much in progress. A Category 5 Hurricane has caused extensive damage and taken lives up and down the East Coast, and the nation is three days into the response effort. And that's not all – as you'll see in the clip, another disaster is about to impact the U.S., making the situation truly catastrophic. Please pay close attention – what you are about to see and learn will be critical for the discussion that follows.

VNN Inject #1 – [TIMING OF VIDEO: 5 minutes]

Please see VNN Inject #1 script for details.

Key Information [TIMING OF SLIDE: 5 minutes]

FACILITATOR:

Wow. So from the newscast we just saw, we know we are three days into the response period following mass destruction and flooding from the category 5 Hurricane Kenley, which hit the Outer Banks of North Carolina and moved up the Eastern seaboard.

13 states have declared a state of emergency. There's severe flooding that has completely submerged some New England communities, and 10 million people are still without power. In Jeanne's report, she said "the breadth of devastation and catastrophic impact of this storm will likely eclipse Hurricane Katrina." Take a second to just think about what that means exactly – for companies and citizens alike.

[PAUSE]

In addition to Hurricane Kenley, we also learn that a 7.8 magnitude earthquake has shaken Puerto Rico, and possibly spawned a tsunami that could affect the surrounding islands and east coast of the U.S. Communications are apparently limited to alternate methods, if not completely out, and the hurricane and earthquake have caused significant critical infrastructure damages.

The bottom line is that traditional Federal assets (for example: Incident Management Assistance Teams, Urban Search & Rescue teams, medical surge support, etc.) were already stretched to their full capacity with Hurricane Kenley response efforts, and now we have another catastrophic disaster in Puerto Rico. Those who are on-the-ground in the affected areas are going to have to help themselves first, as it may be days until additional help arrives.

As we move to the discussion part of this inject, focus on what this would mean for us and for the overall community.

Are there any questions before we begin brainstorming and discussion?

[RESPOND TO QUESTIONS]

Discussion: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 45 minutes]

[FACILITATOR LEADS discussion. FACILITATOR instructs each table of participants to discuss each topic area among themselves. AFTER 15 MINUTES, FACILITATOR asks a representative from each table to stand and share two to three innovative thoughts/ideas for each topic. These are discussed with all the participants in the room and captured on paper, laptop or other media for later follow up. In addition to these questions, FACILITATOR can prompt the participants with more specific questions customized to the organization/community.]

FACILITATOR:

At this point, we will discuss what our organization's immediate whole community response – in a very general way – would be to this catastrophic disaster, specifically focusing on the following questions:

- Given this scenario, what are the highest priority issues that the community would need to address? What would the whole community's immediate needs be?
- What capabilities could we bring to the table to improve the situation? What assets do we have that could be used to help the whole community?
- What unique and innovative solutions could we come up with to address these immediate needs? What are some out-of-the-box ways that we could immediately begin assisting our neighbors?

Over the next 15 minutes, work in a group with those sitting at your table to discuss each of these points, noting the innovative ideas or thoughts that you come up with on the [NOTEPAD, FLIP CHART] that's been provided.

We will then go around the room and each group can share their top 2-3 innovative, atypical ideas. As ideas are shared, the other players can comment and build on them, all of us brainstorming together.

[DESIGNATE SOMEONE TO CAPTURE THE BEST IDEAS; FACILITATE DISCUSSION/BRAINSTORM AS APPROPRIATE; IF DESIRED, SHARE IDEAS WITH FEMA AT IDEASCALE WEBSITE AFTER DISCUSSION]

Break: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 15 minutes]

FACILITATOR: Thank you everyone. At this time we're going to take a fifteen minute break, during which time I'll be looking to capture our best thoughts. If you have any additional ideas for this module that you'd like to share, feel free to let me know during this time. You can also use this time to grab a quick refreshment or restroom break if you need to, keeping in mind that we'll have another break later on.

Module #2: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 2 minutes]

FACILITATOR:

It's now time for the second module. As you will see in this next VNN inject, the scenario has become even worse and, as a result, we're being challenged to be even more creative and innovative in our brainstorming.

As you listen, think specifically about the communications challenges that have now arisen and the creative and innovative solutions that will be needed to overcome them. And to put these challenges in perspective, think of it this way. With tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes and more, the year 2011 was a record setting year for disasters. Yet still, despite the variety and severity of the damage, we communicated using the same tried and true methods – phone, email, social media, etc.

In this situation, none of those usual methods would work. We're going to need to be really out of the box – can we use GPS technology to communicate and share information? Are there any back-to-basics approaches like fliers that we could employ? Please start thinking of and developing ideas like these as you watch this video inject and we head into the discussion that will follow.

VNN Inject #2: [TIMING OF VIDEO: 5 minutes]

Please see VNN Inject #2 script for details.

Key Information: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 5 minutes]

FACILITATOR:

With this report, we've learned that the scenario now involves three catastrophic disasters – a hurricane, an earthquake, and now, an 8-10 foot tsunami that first hit Puerto Rico, with smaller iterations hitting the surrounding Caribbean islands and sections of the East Coast from Florida up to the already-hurricane-stricken Carolinas. As a result, the numbers of fatalities and missing people continue to grow rapidly, with 8,369 known deaths and thousands missing.

Traditional methods of communications – including cell phones, land-lines, cable and internet service – are inoperable in 90 percent of the tsunami-impacted areas. Across all of the disaster-impacted area, over 12.1 million people are without power and phones are operating at about 30 percent capacity. Local

television stations and internet and cable service providers are without power and unable transmit or provide service and, without backup power, even those with battery powered equipment will begin to fail after 48 – 72 hours.

In the most heavily-impacted areas, repairs to these communications and power systems will take weeks – officials estimate that communication and power systems will be restored to 50 percent capacity within a month and 100 percent within 4 months.

The bottom line is that our impact area has expanded, and all of our traditional communications mechanisms – from the phone to the news to social media – are not functioning and won't be for some time. Those who are on-the-ground in the affected areas are going to have to find alternate methods for communicating critical information to first responders, disaster response organizations and survivors.

As we move to the discussion part of this inject, focus on what this would mean for us and for the overall community.

Are there any questions before we begin brainstorming and discussion?

[RESPOND TO QUESTIONS]

Discussion: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 45 minutes]

[FACILITATOR LEADS discussion. FACILITATOR instructs each table of participants to discuss each topic area among themselves. AFTER 15 MINUTES, FACILITATOR asks a representative from each table to stand and share two to three innovative thoughts/ideas for each topic. These are discussed with all the participants in the room and captured on paper, laptop or other media for later follow up. In addition to these questions, FACILITATOR can prompt the participants with more specific questions customized to the organization/community.]

[At the start of the discussion, FACILITATOR confiscates one cell phone from each group or table.]

FACILITATOR: Remember, we get all the traditional ways of communications and understand that those options are not available to us, so let's not spend a lot of time talking about that. Instead, imagine that you're without the typical means of communication that you depend on every day *[FACILITATOR holds up phones]* – your phone, your email, news reports. In the scenario we're discussing today, not only is that the reality, but the need for these things is compounded by the life-or-death nature of the situation. What alternate methods could we employ for this critical communication?

Over the next 45 minutes, we will discuss and brainstorm ideas for helping the whole community overcome these communications challenges, focusing specifically on the following question:

- With traditional communications out and unavailable for the foreseeable future, what creative and innovative alternate solutions can we identify to assist the community with critical emergency communications?
 - Specific areas of focus could include:

- Distributing critical information to survivors
- Connecting with and providing updates to first responders
- Communicating information to people with loved ones in the affected areas

Over the next 15 minutes, work in a group with those sitting at your table to discuss each of these points, noting the innovative ideas or thoughts that you come up with on the [NOTEPAD, FLIP CHART] that's been provided.

We will then go around the room and each group can share their top 2-3 innovative, atypical ideas. As ideas are shared, the other players can comment and build on them, all of us brainstorming together.

[FACILITATOR walks around the room and listens in to the group brainstorm. If they seem stuck, FACILITATOR provides them with "starter ideas" such as engaging HAM radio operators, distributing leaflets via helicopter, engaging skywriters, etc.]

[DESIGNATE SOMEONE TO CAPTURE THE BEST IDEAS; FACILITATE DISCUSSION/BRAINSTORM AS APPROPRIATE; IF DESIRED, SHARE IDEAS WITH FEMA AT IDEASCALE WEBSITE AFTER DISCUSSION]

Break: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 15 minutes]

FACILITATOR: Thank you everyone. At this time we're going to take a fifteen minute break, during which time I'll again be looking to capture our best thoughts. If you have any additional ideas for this module that you'd like to share, feel free to let me know during this time. You can also use this time to grab a quick refreshment or restroom break if you need to. We will resume promptly at [INSERT TIME].

Module #3: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 2 minutes]

FACILITATOR:

We've now reached the third module. As we watch this next VNN inject, you'll see that many challenges have arisen in the area of search and rescue. This module will challenge us to focus on these challenges, brainstorming creative and innovative whole community solutions to overcome them.

Again, this situation is unusual. The search and rescue resources that are usually deployed are largely unavailable and a lot of the "usual" procedures are null and void. Plus, this is specialized, dangerous work that should not be attempted by the average citizen. It's critical that we come up with alternate ways of safely conducting search and rescue and saving lives – maybe we can contribute technology that will help train and organize citizens to do this work? Perhaps we have other equipment that will be helpful? These are the types of things we should be considering during this module.

VNN Inject #3: [TIMING OF VIDEO: 5 minutes]

Please see VNN Inject #3 script for details.

Search and Rescue Key Information: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 5 minutes]

FACILITATOR:

As we just heard in Ms. Meserve's report, six days after Hurricane Kenley and three after the earthquake and tsunami, we now have new details on the three disasters' damages. On the eastern shore of the Carolinas, major roadways and bridges are completely gone, airport runways in Puerto Rico have been deemed unsafe and the same has been reported for all of the islands' harbors. The majority of first responders – including the U.S. Coast Guard, fire and rescue and law enforcement – remain focused on responding to Hurricane Kenley, and those who are shifting focus to the earthquake and tsunami-ravaged areas are finding that they cannot get access to the affected areas because of the infrastructure damages.

At the same time, the numbers of casualties continue to grow, with more than 23,000 people confirmed dead and more than 70,000 trapped or missing. With traditional search and rescue entities either shut out or overtaxed, uninjured and non-trapped citizens are beginning amateur search and rescue attempts to locate family, friends and coworkers. These efforts, while well-intended, are unorganized at best and dangerous at worst.

Only two federally organized search and rescue operations are being conducted in the Outer Banks, along with one local police and fire rescue effort. In addition, several members of various local communities have been seen performing amateur search and rescue efforts. As a result of the vast damages and lack of additional search and rescue assets, the Governor of North Carolina has requested assistance from other states and even other countries.

The bottom line is that there are thousands of people buried in rubble or trapped in flooded areas, and the experts can't get in to help them. In addition, there is a shortage of traditional assets to support rescue efforts. However, there are many survivors in the affected areas who, with some training and organization, could safely conduct their own search and rescue missions, and likely other groups that could be tapped to assist. To save the lives of the trapped victims, those who are on-the-ground in the affected areas are going to have to find innovative alternate methods for organizing and conducting search and rescue efforts.

As we move to the discussion part of this inject, focus on what this would mean for us and for the overall community.

Are there any questions before we begin brainstorming and discussion?

[RESPOND TO QUESTIONS]

Discussion: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 45 minutes]

[FACILITATOR LEADS discussion. FACILITATOR instructs each table of participants to discuss each topic area among themselves. AFTER 15 MINUTES, FACILITATOR asks a representative from each table to stand and share two to three innovative thoughts/ideas for each topic. These are discussed with all the participants in the room and captured on paper, laptop or other media for later follow up. In addition to these questions, FACILITATOR can prompt the participants with more specific questions customized to the organization/community.]

FACILITATOR: Once again, remember, we know all the traditional ways of conducting search and rescue and understand that these options are not available to us, so let's not spend a lot of time talking about them. Instead, imagine that we're in one of the areas that have been made isolated and unreachable by these disasters. The place where we are is surrounded by collapsed buildings, and we believe that there may be survivors inside. How can we – and our whole community partners – safely provide resources, support and trained manpower to help save these victims?

Over the next 45 minutes, we will discuss and brainstorm ideas for helping the whole community handle search and rescue challenges, focusing specifically on the following question:

- Facing mounting search and rescue needs, and with experts unable to get in to help, what creative and innovative alternate solutions can we identify to safely assist the whole community with locating and rescuing missing/trapped persons?
 - Specific areas of focus could include:
 - Citizen training
 - Search and rescue technology and assets
 - Organization of efforts

Over the next 15 minutes, work in a group with those sitting at your table to discuss each of these points, noting the innovative ideas or thoughts that you come up with on the [NOTEPAD, FLIP CHART] that's been provided.

We will then go around the room and each group can share their top 2-3 innovative, atypical ideas. As ideas are shared, the other players can comment and build on them, all of us brainstorming together.

[FACILITATOR walks around the room and listens in to the group brainstorms. If they seem stuck, FACILITATOR provides them with “starter ideas” such as engaging diver clubs and life guard associations to rescue flood victims, working with fishing fleets to locate bodies, or enlisting leasing and building management personnel to share details of people living in their buildings.]

[DESIGNATE SOMEONE TO CAPTURE THE BEST IDEAS; FACILITATE DISCUSSION/BRAINSTORM AS APPROPRIATE; IF DESIRED, SHARE IDEAS WITH FEMA AT IDEASCALE WEBSITE AFTER DISCUSSION]

Strengthening the Whole Community: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 3 minutes]

FACILITATOR:

The exercise has now concluded – thank you all for your active participation! I think we have identified some really unique and realistic ideas that will help the whole community – and our organization – be more prepared for catastrophic disasters.

So where do we go from here?

As I mentioned earlier, if we'd like to, we have a great opportunity to support the whole community in being more resilient by sharing our great ideas with FEMA. If that is something that we'd like to do, I can compile the ideas that we identified today and submit them via the collaboration site at <http://fema.ideascale.com/a/ideafactory.do?id=14692&mode=recent&discussionFilter=byids&discussionID=58329>. Alternately, if you'd prefer to share your favorite ideas and thoughts individually, I'm happy to email around this link for those who would like it. I'm sure that FEMA would be thrilled to receive any input that we may want to provide.

If we'd prefer to keep our lessons learned internal, then that is fine as well, and I am happy to compile them so that they can be integrated into any future plans that we develop.

Additional Resources: [TIMING OF SLIDE: 2 minutes]

FACILITATOR:

Also, for those who would like to learn more, feel free to visit any of the following resources listed here on the screen, including:

- FEMA's website – fema.gov
- FEMA Private Sector Division's website – fema.gov/privatesector
- FEMA's whole community website – fema.gov/about/wholecommunity
- FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue website – fema.gov/emergency/usr
- The website for the Ready campaign, FEMA's effort to help everyone be more prepared for emergencies – ready.gov
- A variety of educational training resources available on and offline from FEMA – training.fema.gov
- The national, online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency management communities – llis.gov
- The website for Citizen Corps, the government organization that helps coordinate volunteer activities that will make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any emergency situation – citizencorps.gov

Again, thank you all very much for your active participation in today's exercise. If you have any questions or comments that you'd like to share, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at any time or to the FEMA Private Sector Division directly at FEMA-Private-Sector@dhs.gov.

Thank you!