



# National Exercise Program

## Base Plan

October 22, 2018



# FEMA

**NATIONAL  
EXERCISE  
PROGRAM**

Validating our nation's preparedness

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# NATIONAL EXERCISE PROGRAM

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## National Exercise Program Base Plan

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### Purpose

The National Exercise Program (NEP) is the primary national-level mechanism for validating national preparedness. As part of the National Preparedness System, the NEP is a key component in developing a culture of preparedness, empowering communities and individuals to become more resilient against the threats and hazards that Americans face.

The National Preparedness System provides the overarching framework supporting nationwide efforts to build, sustain, and deliver the capabilities necessary to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the security of the Nation. Within the National Preparedness System, exercises provide the ability to examine and assess plans, validate capabilities, improve coordination, and identify strengths and areas for improvement.

The NEP serves as a holistic exercise program aligned to common strategic priorities, and fosters meaningful and systematic interaction with public officials at all levels of government while incorporating the participation of members of the whole community. By including exercises from diverse geographic locations and with a broad range of participants, the NEP can optimize limited resources and support integrated initiatives across the Nation to build a culture of preparedness and resilience.

### Mission

The NEP is the primary national-level mechanism for examining and validating core capabilities<sup>1</sup> across all preparedness mission areas by facilitating the design, coordination, conduct, and evaluation of selected exercises aligned to the Principals' Strategic Priorities, which are determined by the Principals Committee of the National Security Council.

### Scope

The NEP is designed to incorporate participants and exercise programs from the whole community, including Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments; private sector; non-governmental organizations; faith-based partners; and communities and individual citizens. When appropriate, international partners will be incorporated into specific NEP exercises. While the NEP is intended to serve all levels of government, program priorities are set by senior leadership of the Federal Executive Branch. These priorities are determined via stakeholder input, data obtained from the National Preparedness Report (NPR), Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR, formerly State Preparedness Reports), training completion and evaluation data, exercise and real world after-action reports and key findings, and intelligence community threat analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/core-capabilities>

## Authorities and References

The NEP was established by United States Code (U.S.C.), Title 6, Chapter 2, Subchapter II, Part A, Section 748(b)(1), which directs that “the Administrator [of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)], in coordination with the heads of appropriate Federal agencies, the National Council on Disability, and the National Advisory Council, shall carry out a national exercise program to test and evaluate the national preparedness goal, National Incident Management System, National Response Plan [now the National Response Framework], and other related plans and strategies.”

The following authorities and policies also guide and inform the NEP:

- **Presidential Policy Directive (PPD)-8: National Preparedness**, directs the establishment of the National Preparedness Goal and National Preparedness System to facilitate an integrated, capabilities-based approach to preparedness. PPD-8 requires that the National Preparedness System provide guidance for national training and exercise programs to facilitate our ability to build and sustain the capabilities defined in the National Preparedness Goal and evaluate progress toward meeting the goal.
- **6 U.S.C. § 1136(d)** directs that security exercises for public transportation agencies be a component of the NEP.
- **6 U.S.C. § 1166(d)** directs that security exercises for railroad carriers be a component of the NEP.
- **21 U.S.C. § 2225(d)** directs that food safety exercises to evaluate and identify weaknesses in decontamination and disposal model plans be a component of the NEP.
- **PPD-40: National Continuity Policy**, directs the Secretary of Homeland Security, through the Administrator of FEMA, to develop, lead, and conduct a Federal continuity training and exercise program, which shall be integrated into the NEP.

This document and the information contained herein supersedes the *National Exercise Program* (Base Plan) dated March 18, 2011.

## Terms of Reference

The following are key concepts and terms for the NEP:

- **Exercise:** An instrument to train for, assess, practice, and improve performance in prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery capabilities in a risk-free environment. Exercises can be used for testing and validating policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment, and interagency agreements; clarifying roles and responsibilities; improving coordination and communications; improving individual performance; identifying gaps in resources; and identifying opportunities for improvement.
- **Exercise Objectives:** Specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals that an organization aims to accomplish in an individual exercise. Exercise-specific objectives within a NEP exercise should tie directly to one or more of the Principals’ Strategic Priorities.
- **Exercise Implementation Committee (EIC):** The primary mechanism for guiding Federal interagency participation in NEP events and coordinating program implementation. Chaired by the National Exercise Division at FEMA.
- **Exercise-Specific Working Group (ESWG):** A temporary group of planning representatives that manages the design and planning of NEP exercises. These working groups are typically formed to support Federal and National Level Exercises but are not required to support all NEP exercises.
- **Homeland Security Enterprise:** Collective efforts and shared responsibilities to maintain critical homeland security capabilities that includes Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments;

non-governmental, private sector, and international partners; and individuals, families, and communities.

- **Principals' Strategic Priorities:** National-level strategic priorities established by the National Security Council (NSC) Principals Committee, aligned to common challenges and emerging issues across the Nation, that set the direction for each NEP cycle.
- **Preparedness Toolkit (PrepToolkit):** An IT platform that supports implementation of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) and aids exercise planners in program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.
- **Restricted Exercise Implementation Committee (EIC):** A classified sub-committee of the EIC established to discuss classified exercises and after-action reports that cannot be addressed through the standing EIC.
- **Senior Officials Exercise Program:** Exercises for senior officials of the Executive Branch hosted by the National Security Council centered on strategy, decision making, policy issues, and lines of authority that require the participation of senior Administration officials and key Executive Office of the President staff.
- **Trusted Agent:** Members of the exercise planning team that serve as liaisons between exercise development and their home components. Trusted agents typically are not players within the exercise, as they are privy to key design information that would impact realistic play.
- **Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP):** A set of guiding principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.
- **Whole Community:** A preparedness planning approach seeking a more effective and inclusive collaboration with all members of a community, to include all elements of the homeland security enterprise and the public.

## Governance

The NEP is guided by policy direction and decisions made by the Principals Committee of the National Security Council and its subordinate committees as defined in National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM) 4, *Organization of the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and Subcommittees*, or its successor.

**Figure 1** depicts the governance structure of the NEP.



**Figure 1: NEP Governance Structure**

*The NEP governance structure engages senior federal officials and leverages the interagency policy process to resolve issues.*

Every two years, the Principals Committee issues the Principals' Strategic Priorities, formerly referred to as Principals' Objectives. The Principals' Strategic Priorities provide the strategic guidance that drives the subsequent two-year NEP cycle. The Domestic Resilience Group (DRG) Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) and its Exercise and Evaluation Sub-Policy Coordination Committee (E&E Sub-PCC) provide strategic oversight for implementation of the Principals' Strategic Priorities. On occasion, the Principals Committee may provide specific guidance for the development of major interagency exercises, Senior Officials Exercises, or issue additional direction based on changing national priorities.

### Interagency Roles and Responsibilities

The following Federal officials and bodies play important roles in the governance of the NEP:

#### *NSC Principals Committee*

- Sets the Principals' Strategic Priorities for each biennial NEP cycle.
- Ensures appropriate participation and directs Department/Agency resources to support NEP exercises, when necessary.
- De-conflicts issues concerning participation in NEP exercises across relevant departments and agencies that are unable to be resolved at the EIC, E&E Sub-PCC, DRG, or Deputies level.
- Participates in Principals-level Senior Officials Exercises.

#### *Secretary of Homeland Security*

- In addition to all duties assigned to Principals Committee members, the Secretary will review and provide strategic exercise planning guidance to the FEMA Administrator.

#### *FEMA Administrator*

- Per U.S.C. Title 6, Chapter 2, Subchapter II, Part A, Section 748(b)(1), is legally charged with carrying out the NEP, in coordination with the heads of departments and agencies [through the NSPM-4 process], to examine and evaluate the National Preparedness Goal, National Incident Management System, National Frameworks, and other related plans and strategies.<sup>2</sup>
- Performs biennial National Level Exercises for the following purposes:
  - To test and evaluate the capability of Federal, state, local, and tribal governments to detect, disrupt, and prevent threatened or actual catastrophic acts of terrorism, especially those involving weapons of mass destruction<sup>3</sup>; and
  - To test and evaluate the readiness of Federal, state, local, and tribal governments to respond and recover in a coordinated and unified manner to catastrophic incidents.<sup>4</sup>
- Approves and issues an exercise directive for each NLE.

#### *Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (Homeland Security Advisor)*

- Solicits Principals' Strategic Priorities from the NSC Principals Committee.
- Provides strategic exercise planning guidance through the NSC to the DRG.

#### *National Security Council Staff*

- Coordinates NEP-related activities within the White House.
- Coordinates White House-level participation in exercises, working with other components within the Executive Office of the President.
- Facilitates the Senior Officials Exercise Program, in coordination with the National Exercise Division and Federal department and agency exercise planners.
- Administers the Exercise and Evaluation Sub-PCC.

#### *Domestic Resilience Group (DRG) PCC*

- Serves as a standing policy coordination committee of senior Federal department and agency representatives.
- Provides strategic input, program guidance, and feedback on NEP exercises.
- Provides input to and concurrence on exercise directives for the biennial NLE.
- De-conflicts competing issues concerning resourcing and participation in NEP exercises across relevant Federal departments and agencies that are unable to be resolved at the EIC or E&E Sub-PCC level.
- Elevates issues to the Principals or Deputies Committees to adjudicate, as necessary.

#### *Exercise and Evaluation Sub-Policy Coordination Committee (E&E Sub-PCC)*

- Serves as a standing committee of Federal department and agency representatives authorized to make policy recommendations on exercise-related issues.
- Supports concept development, scoping, scaling, and resourcing of interagency NEP exercises.

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<sup>2</sup> 6 U.S.C. § 748(b)

<sup>3</sup> 6 U.S.C. § 748(b)

<sup>4</sup> 6 U.S.C. § 748(b)

- Reviews and coordinates NEP planning, scheduling, exercise-specific objectives, evaluation, and after-action processes for NEP exercises that would benefit from Federal interagency participation, as needed.
- Elevates issues to the DRG to adjudicate, as necessary.
- In coordination with existing interagency bodies, oversees the progress of corrective action implementation from NEP exercises and other relevant events among Federal departments and agencies to help ensure priority issues are assigned, coordinated, and addressed within an appropriate timeframe.
- Reports corrective action status to the Domestic Resilience Group, as needed.

#### *Exercise Implementation Committee (EIC)*

- Serves as a standing committee of senior representatives, predominantly from Federal departments and agencies, responsible for implementation of the NEP.
- Executes primary exercise planning responsibilities within their respective organizations in support of the NEP.
- Supports NEP implementation through nomination and integration of Federal exercises, sharing of departmental exercise priorities, and communication of NEP activities and priorities with the exercise stakeholder community.
- Recruits regional and state stakeholders to participate in Federal-level exercises and to submit exercises to the NEP, as appropriate.
- Provides support to exercise-specific working groups, as required.
- Serves as trusted agents for exercise planning purposes.
- Submits any issues requiring adjudication by policymakers to the E&E sub-PCC.

#### *National Council on Disability*

- Coordinates with FEMA in carrying out the NEP.
- Provides guidance on incorporating the homeland security-related priorities and needs of individuals with disabilities into the implementation of the NEP, such as the Principals' Strategic Priorities, on behalf of stakeholders.

#### *Federal Departments and Agencies*

- Nominate exercises to the NEP.
- Provide an appropriate level of participation for NEP exercises and planning events based on roles, responsibilities, and relevance to the Principals' Strategic Priorities for each NEP cycle.
- Provide input on the development of exercise objectives.
- Actively participate in the E&E Sub-PCC's continuous improvement process and maintain a continuous improvement program within each department and agency.
- Forecast and budget for exercise personnel and resources to participate in NEP exercises.
- Report interagency exercises to the EIC through NED-designated platform.
- Designate an exercise and evaluation point of contact for programmatic coordination with NED.
- Assist in the coordination and facilitation of Federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based organizations into the NEP through existing Federal interagency regional leadership.

- As sponsor of a NEP-approved exercise, ensure that after-action reports and improvement plans, including corrective actions, are generated within 90 days following the completion of exercise conduct and submitted to NED upon completion. All NEP exercise sponsors are expected to provide after-action documentation to NED to help inform corrective actions and future events; however, organization-specific findings that do not impact the Principals' Strategic Priorities may be removed prior to submission.

## **FEMA Roles and Responsibilities**

The following FEMA offices play specific roles in administering the NEP:

### *National Exercise Division*

- Provides counsel to the Secretary of Homeland Security and the FEMA Administrator on NEP implementation.
- Serves as chair of the NEP EIC.
- Facilitates day-to-day operations of the NEP, and guides the planning and conduct of Federal participation in NEP exercises.
- Coordinates participation in National Level Exercises, as appropriate.
- Coordinates NEP activities with exercise sponsors across the whole community, in coordination with FEMA Regions.
- Recruits exercises to be incorporated into each NEP cycle, in coordination with Federal interagency partners, the FEMA Regions, national organizations, and others, as appropriate.
- Provides supporting analysis to NEP sponsors to facilitate development of exercise-specific objectives based on prior exercise findings, real-world trends, and lessons learned, in coordination with FEMA's National Preparedness Assessment Division.
- Organizes and coordinates individual exercise-specific working groups, as needed, to assist with the development of exercise-specific directives and the planning of individual exercise programs.
- Coordinates with Federal departments and agencies to ensure effective interagency evaluation and after-action reporting for National Level Exercises and Senior Officials Exercises, as needed.
- Oversees the development of a NEP mid-cycle and end-of-cycle report in coordination with appropriate Federal departments and agencies.
- Ensures observations, lessons learned, and best practices from NEP exercises are shared across the homeland security enterprise through the NEP mid-cycle and end-of-cycle report.
- Tracks the timely submission (within 90 days of conduct) of after-action reports (AARs) and improvement plans for NEP exercises from exercise sponsors to NED for analysis.
- Oversees HSEEP and related doctrine and systems for support of the NEP.
- Manages all logistics, coordination, and administrative tasks for the NEP. Maintains the ability to handle both unclassified and classified information.

### *National Preparedness Assessment Division*

- In collaboration with NED and in coordination with appropriate departments and agencies, develop performance measures and benchmarking metrics for NEP exercises to support larger preparedness assessments and trend analyses.

- Provide THIRA<sup>5</sup>, SPR, and NPR analysis annually to NED for data-based decision making to inform NEP objectives and guidance.
- Provide trend analysis of Federal, state, and local exercises and real-world incident AARs to information NEP objectives and guidance.

#### *National Integration Center*

- In coordination with NED, develop standard objectives and/or capability targets to effectively examine and evaluate the National Preparedness Goal, National Incident Management System, National Frameworks, and other related plans and strategies.

#### *FEMA Regional Offices*

- Assist in the coordination and facilitation of regional, state, local, tribal, territorial, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based organizations into the NEP.
- Facilitate the reporting of regional, state, and local exercises to NED.

#### *National Advisory Council*

- Coordinates with FEMA in providing input and recommendations on the NEP.
- Provides guidance on incorporating the priorities of FEMA's partners and stakeholders into the implementation of the NEP, such as the Principals' Strategic Priorities, including local, state, tribal, territorial, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based organizations.

### **Concept of Operations**

The NEP is conducted as a two-year exercise cycle based on an identified set of Principals' Strategic Priorities that provide national-level strategic direction. The NSC Principals Committee sets the Principals' Strategic Priorities for each cycle based on stakeholder input, data obtained from the National Preparedness Report, Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, and Stakeholder Preparedness Review, exercise and real-world after-action reports and key findings, and intelligence community threat analysis. Based on these Principals' Strategic Priorities, the NEP incorporates—to the highest degree possible—exercises established by the Federal interagency; state, local, tribal, and territorial governments; non-governmental organizations; and the private sector. Specifically, each NEP cycle features: (1) a series of exercises sponsored and controlled by the Federal interagency, approved through the NSPM-4 process; and (2) exercises of all types from sponsors across the whole community that are selected for incorporation into the NEP based on their adherence to the Principals' Strategic Priorities and cross-jurisdictional reach. Each NEP cycle includes a biennial NLE which serves as the capstone exercise of the cycle. The NLE aims to include the broadest level of engagement, ranging from individuals to Federal Cabinet-level officials.

In the event that national priorities change or real-world events compel a mid-course adjustment to the NEP, the NSC Principals Committee may consider modifying the Principals' Strategic Priorities to meet preparedness demands in an ever-changing homeland security environment.

#### **Cycle**

Each NEP cycle is two (2) calendar years in duration. Planning for each NEP cycle begins no less than six (6) months prior to the commencement of that cycle.

#### **Calendar**

While the NEP runs on a two-year cycle based on Principals' Strategic Priorities, NED also maintains a multi-year exercise calendar of exercises scheduled beyond the two-year NEP cycle. The purpose of the calendar is to

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/threat-and-hazard-identification-and-risk-assessment>

support longer term planning based on department and agency planning and budgeting cycles, in alignment with interagency plans development and implementation.

### **Objectives-based Exercises**

The NEP is objectives-driven and capabilities-based, with established Principals' Strategic Priorities driving the focus and schedule of each NEP cycle.

In addition to the Principals' Strategic Priorities, exercise objectives and planning should be *framed* around specific core capabilities as outlined in the National Preparedness Goal, critical tasks from National Frameworks, THIRA target language, and particularly aimed at weaknesses identified in the National Preparedness Report and Stakeholder Preparedness Reviews.

While objectives are primarily capabilities-based, scenarios provide a vehicle by which to connect exercise-specific objectives to current risk and threat assessment analysis (e.g., THIRA and intelligence community threat analysis) by providing the necessary conditions to test the objectives. Scenarios also provide the means to place objectives against a wide range of relevant threats and hazards, protect assessments against sudden swings in priorities, and test the objectives against the breadth of a larger strategy.

### **Participation**

Maintaining a dynamic and successful NEP that incorporates the whole community, including participation from the entire homeland security enterprise, is critical to national preparedness.

To facilitate this participation at the Federal level, the DRG, or delegated entity, assembles, through an interagency collaborative process, a calendar of specific NEP exercises in which participation by relevant Federal departments and agencies should be required. In general, Federal departments and agencies will participate in as many NEP exercises related to their mission space as feasible to help ensure adequate evaluation of the Principals' Strategic Priorities, in consideration of operational and budgetary constraints. The extent and manner of each organization's participation varies, subject to their respective missions relative to the NEP cycle's Principals' Strategic Priorities. Participation by Federal departments and agencies in Federal interagency exercises that fall outside the scope of the NEP is encouraged to support whole community preparedness.

Participation recommendations and decisions by the DRG, Deputies Committee, or Principals Committee should account for resource and scheduling priorities of the Federal interagency, given real-world operational commitments, evolving threat and risk forecasts, budget, resources, and other relevant variables.

To facilitate participation at the state and local level, E&E Sub-PCC and EIC members will work through their regional, state, tribal, and territorial counterparts to recruit exercises to the NEP that support the Principals' Strategic Priorities, as well as to engage state and local partners in Federal level exercises.

State, local, tribal, and territorial partners across the whole community who choose to participate and whose exercises are selected for inclusion in a NEP cycle will be offered various degrees of technical assistance, collaboration, networking, and evaluation assistance through the National Exercise Division.

### **Exercise Selection**

NED, in coordination with Federal interagency partners, the FEMA Regions, national organizations, and others as appropriate, identify prospective exercises to be incorporated into each NEP cycle. NED and Federal interagency partners also identify and present prospective exercises for inclusion in the NEP through annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshops and other forums.

#### *Federal Interagency Exercises*

The DRG reviews and approves Federal interagency exercises for inclusion into the NEP through the process outlined in NSPM-4.

### *Whole Community Exercises*

The FEMA Administrator, through the NED Director, selects exercises nominated from partners across the whole community for inclusion into the NEP based on their alignment with the Principals' Strategic Priorities, regional distribution, timing, and level of complexity.

### **Planning and Scheduling**

The planning and scheduling of each two-year NEP cycle shall be informed by the Principals' Strategic Priorities.

The following principles guide the planning and scheduling of NEP exercises:

- Exercises should be conducted with a high degree of realism and will be based on current risk assessments.
- Formal exercise planning and build-up activities should be conducted in accordance with the Principals' Strategic Priorities and best practices of HSEEP.
- Each NEP cycle schedule should reflect diversity of objective, mission area, scenario, setting, and participation to ensure the NEP is truly national in scope.
- Each NEP cycle should include a mix of all exercise types. The NEP exercise schedule should remain agile and flexible to allow for the inclusion of additional exercises to address findings from preceding exercises and to account for emerging threats.

### **Composition**

Each NEP cycle is driven by data through the NPS and current risk and threat assessments, and shall be responsive to changes in policy, national strategy, emerging threats and hazards, and lessons learned from previous exercises and actual events. Therefore, the number of exercises identified for inclusion to the NEP varies, drawn from the catalog of exercises being conducted by Federal and non-Federal entities to the maximum extent possible. The exercises include both discussion and operations-based exercises. This flexibility in the design of NEP exercises enables planners to develop and schedule exercises that best address the Principals' Strategic Priorities and related exercise objectives, in consideration of resource constraints, for a given cycle.

### **Modeling and Simulation**

The NEP actively incorporates modeling and simulation technologies and capabilities to increase the accessibility of exercise opportunities, promote realism, and improve the efficiency of NEP planning and exercise conduct. Exercises may simulate the actual deliberative bodies that would convene in the event of a real-world incident.

### **National Level Exercise (NLE)**

The NLE is the capstone exercise of the two-year NEP cycle, which includes lead up events and exercises designed around a select set of capabilities. Lead up exercises are further reinforced through the collective preparedness efforts of FEMA and interagency counterparts.

To maximize participation in the National Level Exercise, NED will begin NLE planning no later than two years prior to the subsequent NLE, with additional NLE concept discussions occurring up to four years prior to conduct. This approach allows Departments, Agencies, and external stakeholders to budget for participation through established budget cycles. Advance planning also allows for department and agency plans to guide NLE development, ensuring the exercise is tied to validating plans and capabilities, as intended.

The NLE serves to validate department and agency plans, while also serving as a catalyst for preparedness across the Nation. The NLE will incorporate a progressive series of events over a two-year period aimed at

building national preparedness on a discrete set of topics. These events may include workshops, training events, and public outreach, incorporating existing efforts of the interagency and Nation, at-large.

Federal departments and agencies participate in each NLE to the extent appropriate, as determined by department/agency leadership and the DRG. Local, state, tribal, and territorial entities participate in accordance with their agreement with NED. The NLE within the NEP satisfies the biennial national exercise requirement established in 6 U.S.C. § 748(b)(3). NED leads the planning and administration of the NLE and the scheduling of planning meetings and build-up activities.

## **Exercise Conduct**

All NEP exercises should be planned and conducted in accordance with applicable HSEEP guidance.

## **Classified Exercises**

Most NEP cycles include exercises that are either classified or include a classified component. Classified exercises are coordinated through the Restricted EIC, a subset of the standing EIC. Specific procedures and special considerations for conducting classified exercises are included in NEP supporting documentation. The NEP will aim to downgrade and share unclassified findings from these exercises with the interagency to the maximum extent practical.

## **Evaluation**

The NEP incorporates a comprehensive system for exercise evaluation to identify trends and determine key findings pertaining to our collective ability to build and sustain the core capabilities needed to achieve the National Preparedness Goal. FEMA, in coordination with the pertinent local, state, tribal, territorial, and Federal stakeholders, facilitates an evaluation program tailored to suit the Principals' Strategic Priorities for each two-year cycle. A rigorous, effective NEP evaluation methodology ensures that issues identified during exercises are remediated, participants maximize learning, and the entire Nation benefits from the knowledge and experience gained through these exercises.

### *Evaluation Data*

The NEP incorporates a comprehensive system for exercise evaluation to identify trends and determine key findings pertaining to the collective ability to build and sustain the core capabilities needed to achieve the National Preparedness Goal. NEP evaluation is focused on using the results of exercises, documented in AARs, to validate capability levels, identify lessons learned, and develop corrective actions. Evaluation is based on objectives that match the jurisdiction's THIRA targets to the extent possible.

### *NEP Mid-Cycle and End-of-Cycle Report*

Issues, trends, and key lessons learned are captured through a periodic report that provides senior U.S. Government leadership with a summary of NEP evaluation during the two-year cycle. The NEP Mid-Cycle and End-of-Cycle Reports enable NEP planners to refine and improve exercise planning in a continuous fashion to reflect gaps identified during the cycle. The NEP Mid-Cycle Report is prepared and distributed to the EIC, E&E Sub-PCC, and DRG following the conclusion of the first year of the two-year cycle, and serves as a foundational document for the following cycle's Principals Priorities. The End-of-Cycle Report is developed at the conclusion of each NEP cycle to provide a final review of key findings, trends, and lessons learned to help inform specific priority issues and guide recruitment for the following cycle.

### *Performance Measures and Metrics*

NEP evaluation is focused on examination of those core capabilities that align to the Principals' Strategic Priorities for a given two-year cycle. This capabilities-based approach ensures that NEP performance measurement supports and aligns with other capabilities-based preparedness assessments, such as the THIRA targets, SPR, and NPR.

## Contact Information

All inquiries regarding the NEP or requests for modifications to this document should be directed to the following:

Director, National Exercise Division  
National Preparedness Directorate  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
400 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20472

[nep@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:nep@fema.dhs.gov)  
[www.fema.gov/nep](http://www.fema.gov/nep)

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DRG	Domestic Resilience Group
E&E Sub-PCC	Exercise and Evaluation Sub-Policy Coordination Committee
EIC	Exercise Implementation Committee
ESWG	Exercise-Specific Working Group
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
HSC	Homeland Security Council
NED	National Exercise Division
NEP	National Exercise Program
NLE	National Level Exercise
NPR	National Preparedness Report
NSPM	National Security Presidential Memorandum
PPD	Presidential Policy Directive
SPR	Stakeholder Preparedness Review (formerly State Preparedness Report)
THIRA	Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
U.S.C.	United States Code