



Exercise Management

Establishing the exercise team

Pre-exercise –planning team



• writing



• logistics



• evaluation

Exercises need to be carefully planned and managed.

Even the smallest of exercises require a coordinated approach to their design, conduct and evaluation.



• media



• observer



• safety

Determining the exercise planning team and identifying the functions that need to be managed are essential to the success of any exercise.

Exercise planning staff functions may include some or all the above

Planning team

The planning team assigns roles and responsibilities in accordance with the exercise planning governance structure.

It identifies which functions are required for the exercise and develops plans and strategies such as the:



Planning team - Functions

1. Exercise Director strategic oversight

The **Exercise Director** takes charge during concept phase. They play a pivotal role in approving the exercise's aim, objectives, concept document, plan, and instructions. While not directly involved in day-to-day planning, their strategic oversight is crucial for exercise authorisation.

2. Exercise planning team dynamics

Under the lead of the **Exercise Controller**, a planning team comes together. It comprises representatives from various participating organisations, ensuring a holistic approach. Team roles are based on the exercise planning governance, identifying necessary functions and creating key outputs.

3. Exercise writing in action

Specialised **writing teams** are established to reflect the complexity of exercises. These teams include subject-matter experts and focus on crafting master schedules of events (MSE), scenarios, and supporting documentation. To maintain continuity, the writing team transition to roles within Exercise Control (EXCON).

4. Evaluation planning for insightful feedback

During the concept phase it is necessary to integrate **evaluation** roles into the planning process. Led by an evaluation coordinator, this team strategically plans and coordinates the evaluation process. Key considerations involve defining evaluation types, purposes, criteria, and ensuring ethical data collection and storage practices.

Planning team - Functions

5. Media and public relations coordination

The **media coordinator** or team takes charge of crafting communication plans and implementing both real and pseudo media strategies. Real media handles stakeholder briefings and manages live media issues, while the pseudo media function creates simulated inputs for added realism.

6. Observer program and engagement

The planning team deliberates on the necessity of an observer program. Where required, the **observer function** coordinates the entire observer experience. This includes managing logistics, cultural considerations, and defining roles to ensure a safe and enriching interaction with exercise participants.

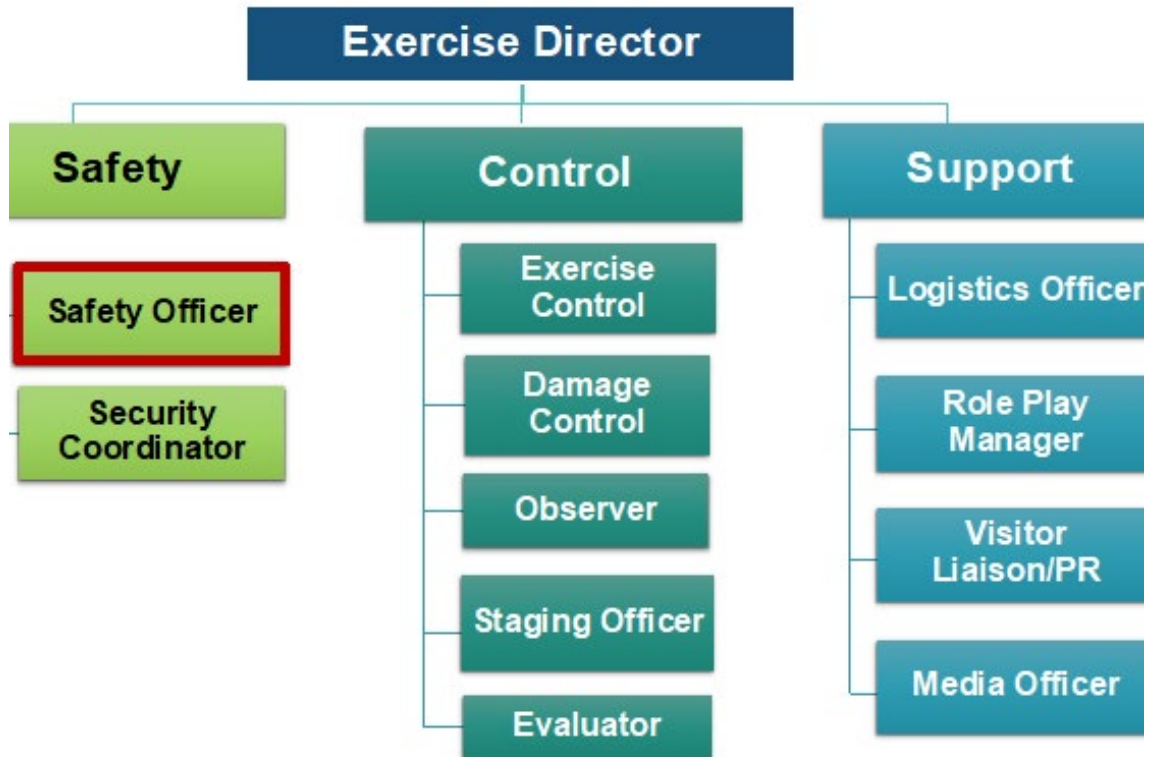
7. Safety first

The **safety function** addresses potential risks during an exercise. A comprehensive risk management plan is established, and safety officers monitor various aspects, including physical, psychological, cultural, and moral safety. Clear briefings, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and contingency plans contribute to a secure environment.

8. Legal and ethics advice

The planning team identifies the need for **legal or ethics advice**. This could encompass contingent liability, insurance policies, legislative concerns, and ethical considerations, especially when capturing observations from human subjects.

Exercise control and exercise staff



An effective control mechanism needs to be built into exercise design and applied during the exercise.

Control is essential for exercise events to occur at the right time and place.

Exercise control is applied through the schedule of events and special ideas.

The people who run and support the exercise are called the exercise control (EXCON) staff.

EXCON staff are drawn from participating organisations and report to the Exercise Director and ensure the exercise is conducted in an effective manner.

They should monitor participants, help create a realistic atmosphere, keep the exercise running smoothly, make rulings for participants, introduce special ideas and guide participants towards achieving the stated outcomes.

*These are the 'typical' roles that are required for a field-based exercise
Source: AIDR Managing Exercises Handbook*

Exercise control roles and responsibilities

Exercise Director

- Appoints Exercise Control Staff and Evaluation Coordinator;
- Facilitates exercise planning including time, date, style, scenario and scope;
- Facilitates development of all documents including Concept Plan, Master Schedule of Events, Risk Management Plan, Participant Instructions, Control Staff Instructions and Evaluation Plan;
- Ensures the exercise stays within scope;
- Coordinates the funding, resources, catering, and agencies;
- Authorises alterations to the planned program;
- Coordinates and prepares the Final Evaluation Report
- Only authorised person to start, suspend or conclude the exercise

Exercise Safety officers

- Appointed by Exercise Director or Controller;
- Responsible for the final safety check of their exercise event site;
- Experience with procedures and protocols of involved agencies;
- Contributes to, and understand Risk Management Plan for exercise;
- Monitors the safe conduct of the exercise;
- Understands and implements “No Duff” protocols if needed;
- Maintains contact with Exercise Controller for their exercise event site;
- Consults with the Exercise Director regarding suspending the exercise due to safety reasons;
- Maintains safety during set, up, running and pulling down of the (field) sites.

Exercise Controllers

- Appointed by Exercise Director;
- Manages Master Schedule of Events for the exercise event site;
- Manages all Exercise activities relative to the exercise event site;
- Ensures adequate opportunities exist to achieve exercise and agency objectives;
- Manages safety and risk in accordance with approved plans;
- Simulates activities not performed by participants;
- Assists and contributes to debriefs;
- Contributes to the Exercise Evaluation Report.

Exercise Evaluators

- Appointed by Exercise Director or Controller;
- No responsibility for the mechanics of the exercise;
- Generally, one evaluator per agency per event site;
- Watches and listens to the exercise;
- Be fully briefed and know agency objectives and key performance indicators;
- Measures and evaluates if activities occur in the right place, at the right time and involve the right people;
- Assesses whether agency objectives are being met;
- Makes notes to assist the debrief and Evaluation Report;
- Assists or leads the hot debrief for their agency after the exercise;
- Assists and contributes to the formal debrief;
- Prepares Evaluation Report for submission to the Director.

Exercise control roles and responsibilities

Logistics coordinator

- Liaises with venue owners or operators
- Coordinates catering and welfare requirements
- Arranges transport of participants and equipment
- Commissions construction of props, models or other elements required for the scenario
- Procures additional equipment, consumables, and resources (e.g. lighting, portable toilets)
- Sets up registration or administration areas for exercise control.

Other possible roles

- Exercise facilitator – discussion exercises are usually led by an expert facilitator or facilitation team
- Role player manager – role players are integral to the conduct of many field exercises
- Observers' coordinator -Exercises may attract observers, ranging from prominent VIPs to members of participating organisations.



EXCON staff are easily identified in this exercise by their pink tabards

Photo credit: Risk-E Business 2023

Activity

1. Identify the roles and staff you require for the exercise control team (EXCON) for your exercise.
2. Identify team members (from within your agency or participating agencies) for:
 - logistics team
 - administration and support
 - public relations and media team
 - exercise evaluation team
 - exercise writing team(s)

