



Exercise management

Choosing an exercise type

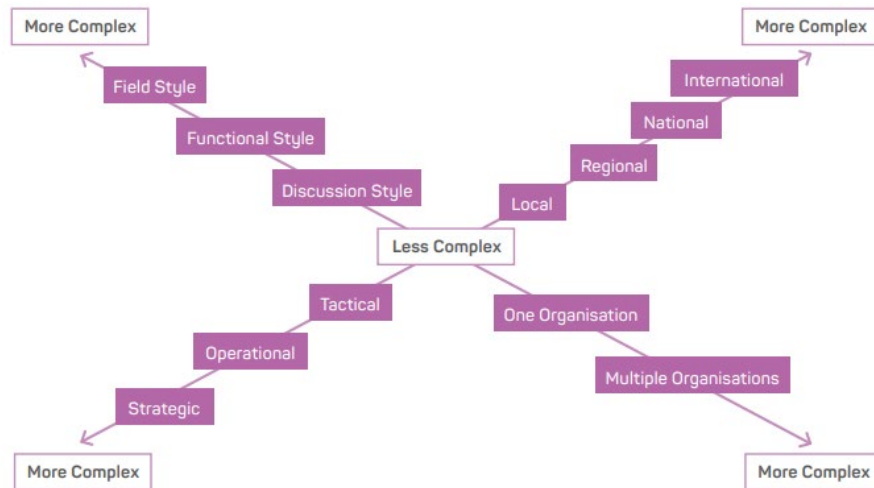
What are the 3 types of exercises?

1. **Discussion exercises** include seminars, presentations, hypotheticals and immersive simulations and two-way conversations.
2. **Functional exercises** are designed to test or practise individual functions such as command, planning or intelligence.
3. **Field- Based exercises** are generally large scale, complex activities conducted in 'real time' under simulated conditions. Field exercises usually involve the deployment of personnel and other resources.



Exercise complexity

Exercises come in different degrees of difficulty. Local exercises that focus on just one organisation and deal with tactical response are simpler than state level exercises that involve multiple organisations, strategic planning, and operational field scenarios.



Discussion Exercise

- Built around the discussion of a scenario.
- Allows for exploring issues in depth and provide verbal responses and useful for:
 - developing agreed approaches to events,
 - assessing the effectiveness of plans,
 - building relationships,
 - exploring novel ideas or approaches.
- Used for strategic level brainstorming to find solutions to problems.
- Cost-effective and efficient
- Often only need a room and a whiteboard.
- Can be conducted face-to-face or online

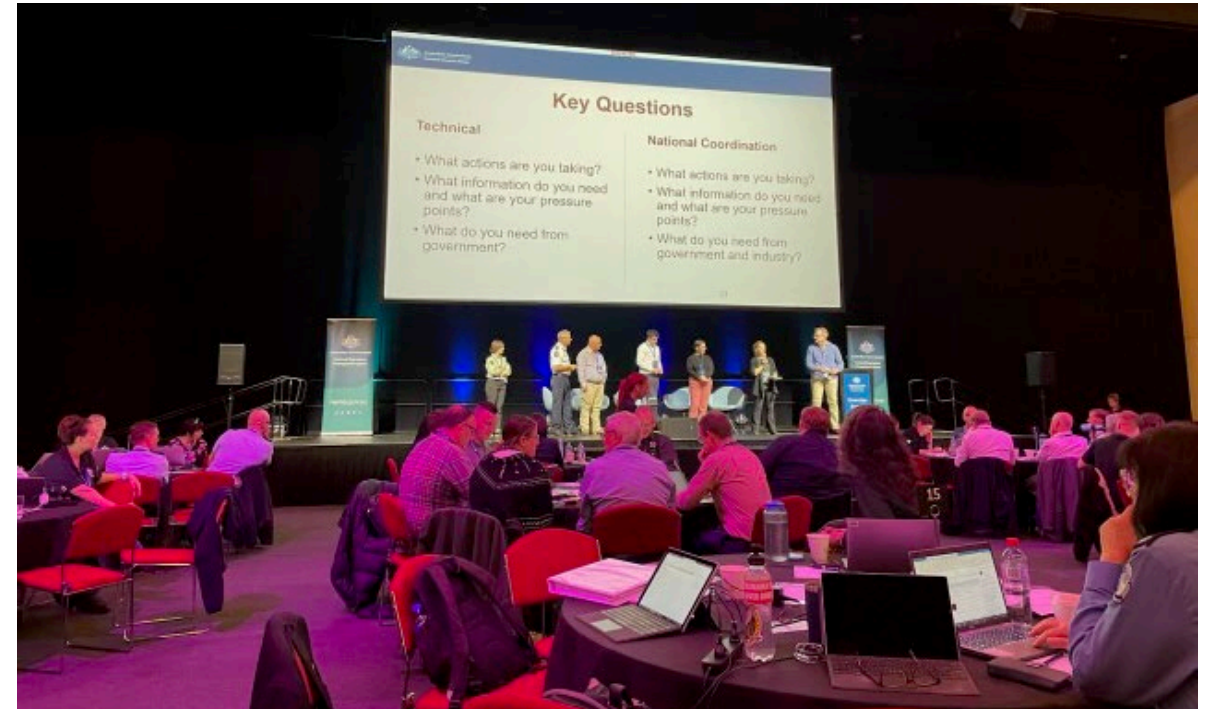


Photo from Exercise Aurora 2024

Discussion Exercise- Example

A discussion exercise is appropriate for exploring planning arrangements, validating existing plans and engaging with and educating stakeholders.

In June 2024, a local level discussion exercise called Exercise Barka Mickatja (Menindee-Mass Fish Death Exercise) was conducted. The objective was to exercise the arrangements for the notification process and trigger points, management of the multi-agency response and the community engagement processes that are in place in the event of a mass fish death event.

An exercise facilitator was engaged by The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to guide the discussion. A scenario was presented to the group. Special ideas were presented at specific inject points. Attendees were encouraged to speak on behalf of their organisations.

Participants were able to gain a greater understanding of their organisation's roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to and intersect with decision and action points when responding to this type of incident.

Photo taken at Exercise Barka Mickatja
June 2024

Functional Exercise



- Functions are conducted as if a real event was happening.
- They are normally run in real time.
- Scenario information is given to participants like they would receive ‘in the real world’
 - via phone, email or web-based incident management system
- May be complex to prepare and manage.
- Can generate significant administrative work, both in preparation and conduct.
- Can be expensive to prepare.

Photo source: Risk-e Business 2023

Functional Exercise – Example

A State Level functional exercise called 'Operation Grim Spectre' was run 'in real time' at the State Emergency Operations Centre. It was designed to test a statewide response to Foot and Mouth Disease commonly known as FMD.

The Incident Controller from the Department of Primary Industries (as the Combat Agency for biosecurity events) led the functional exercise.

State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) member agencies participated in the exercise (onsite) as appropriate.

Field operations personnel did not participate in the exercise. The DPI State Coordination Centre (SCC) at Orange was also not activated for this exercise.



Field Exercise



- Can be very expensive.
- Effective way to simulate likely events and occurrences in emergencies
- Are useful to:
 - practise, develop or assess the competencies of on ground participants
 - evaluate the effectiveness of inter-organisation coordination and cooperation.

Photo source: VRA Rescue NSW 2024

Field-Base Exercise

Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) are primarily responsible for maintaining an International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Heavy classified USAR team. To test the capability of USAR, a field exercise was run to demonstrate a heavy USAR deployment to an international sudden onset earthquake. Duration of this field exercise was 36hrs.

The USAR field exercise served as a valuable learning experience to enhance preparedness for real-life emergencies. The conclusion of the exercise marks the beginning of a continuous improvement cycle, where lessons identified are integrated into future training and response efforts.

Photo taken at Sydney International Shooting Centre (SISC) 2024

Activity

Think about the exercise you want to run:

1. What capabilities and skills do you want to test?
2. What could be tested in a discussion exercise?
3. What could be tested in a functional exercise?
4. What could be tested in a field exercise?

