CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY IN TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Introduction

Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) understand their role includes building and supporting systems that allow for the introduction of new and emerging technologies. Part of that responsibility includes incorporating new technologies into state trainings and exercises. Please be advised this document is not all encompassing.

Before an Exercise

- Consider what the public needs to know about the exercise and technology usage
- Ensure there are people participating and controlling the exercise that know how to use the technology for its intended purpose
- Put standard operating procedures in place prior to activity-based exercises

Exercise Requirements

Exercise requirements are not about the technology, they are about how the exercise will use the technology. Consider:

- Exercise type, progression of related exercises (one-off or part of a Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP))
- Exercise goals, objectives, and scenario
- Initial evaluation concepts

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Logistics Requirements

Logistics requirements address everything related to using the technology during the exercise. Consider:

- Technologies that interface with the new technology (interoperability)
- Related and supporting equipment and infrastructure; Batteries, chargers, Generators, Wifi
- Duration of use – multiple days or a few hours

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Urban Considerations

In an urban environment you may also want to consider...

- Stress-testing a system’s user capacity
- Testing a system around and into tall buildings
Evaluating New Technologies

Consider the following when developing goals and objectives for new technologies:

☐ Crawl, walk, run – did you consider the abilities of the exercise players when deciding on evaluation criteria?

☐ Where does the exercise fit into the overall training and exercise program such as the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) progressive exercising?

☐ Are you testing the extent of the technology’s capabilities?

☐ Are you testing the technology’s effectiveness?

☐ Will you test if the technology meets accepted standards?

☐ Are you testing an everyday use of the technology or a disaster-specific capability?

Pro Tips

☐ Tie in vendors as a peer evaluator or have them shadow as a controller or evaluator; ask if vendors have exercise materials already developed

☐ Get buy-in early with elected and appointed leaders and understand available budget and support resources

☐ Ensure technology usage fits the exercise scenario; develop technology-specific injects to push limits of new technology

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Partners are Key

Internal

Technology “owner”, Technology “manager” IT, technical experts, system administrator, and operations experts

External

Industry technical experts, response teams, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Emergency Communications Division (ECD) subject matter experts, local, county and state level stakeholders and vendor representatives

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Background and Sourcing

The NCSWIC Planning, Training, and Exercises (PTE) Committee explored opportunities and challenges related to incorporating new technologies into training and exercises, as well as ways to maximize positive impacts and lower risks.

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