

# **GUIDE**



## **How to Conduct a Training & Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW)**

## **Conducting a Training & Exercise Planning Workshop**

**Step 1. Set a Date and Location**

**Step 2. Create the Agenda**

**Step 3. Send out Invitations – Save the Date**

**Step 4. Identify a Recorder**

**Step 5. Design Room for Effective Discussions**

**Step 6. Facilitate the TEPW**

**Step 7. Collect all Documentation**

**Step 8. Develop Multi-Year Training & Exercise Plan**

# Step 1. Set a Date and Location

## DATE

The date chosen for the **annual** Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW) is determined by the jurisdiction. The date selected must be scheduled during a calendar year (e.g. January – December) to match the performance period for sub-recipients in the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG).

When selecting a date, it is helpful to consider the time of year that most participants are available to attend. Having knowledge of major events already scheduled or ‘seasons’ of the year could potentially impact attendance numbers. For example, hunting season and/or holidays are typically a popular time for vacations. Try to select a date or time of the year that does not conflict with a majority of those that need to attend a TEPW.



When establishing a date to schedule a TEPW, solicit input from partners and get buy-in from them for best dates. Also consider scheduling the TEPW around the same time each year so participants can get these on their calendars well in advance.

Trying to place the activities of a TEPW on top of another meeting, may or may not be beneficial for what the jurisdiction is trying to accomplish. Finding a time when the targeted audience is already coming together is sometimes helpful (i.e. LEPC meeting). But sometimes placing the TEPW on top of other business or activities detracts from getting the best possible outcome of the process.

## LOCATION

The location for the TEPW may be just as important as the date. Finding a location that can comfortably seat the number of participants invited to a TEPW is crucial.

Scheduling the TEPW in a location that is commonly used can be helpful, as people are familiar with the location. But hosting a TEPW in the same location as other meetings can sometimes taint the mindset and keep participants focused on ‘typical’ discussions. Hosting the TEPW in a unique location can motivate participants into more open and strategic thinking.

## Step 2. Create the Agenda

The agenda for your Training and Exercise Planning Workshop can not only be a map or schedule of your meeting, but a tool to assist the organizer as well.

When creating an agenda, take the time to reach out to your participants before creating the final draft and use that as an opportunity to bring them to the table. This can be helpful in multiple ways. Your phone call might be the first time they've heard of the event being scheduled. The common challenge of gaining buy-in may be mitigated by personally reaching out to your participants to ask if they have any agenda items. By performing this simple task, you're letting your stakeholders know that their participation is valued.

Items listed on the TEPW agenda vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Some of these items may include, but are not limited to; introductions, expectations, accomplishments, local or state updates, needs assessments, discussions on capability gaps, and planned training or exercises. When and where you decide to conduct your TEPW will help you determine how much time you have for your workshop and what items to place on your agenda.

If you are an EMPG funded county, at a minimum, you should at least have on the agenda:

- a needs assessment that identifies the priority capabilities to focus upon, and
- time to create your multi-year training and exercise calendar.

These, along with the sign-in sheet, will assist with your annual grant reporting requirements.



Sample

Annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshop

[Location]

[DATE]

- Welcome and Introductions
  - ◆ Expectations
- Purpose, Scope and Outcomes of today's TEPW
- Updates from Local, State, and Federal Initiatives
  - ◆ Recent Agency/Organization Accomplishments
- Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis
  - ◆ Year in review of local incidents and exercises
  - ◆ Capability Priorities
- Scheduled Training and Exercise
- Training and Exercise Needing to be Scheduled
- Closing Comments and Summary

## Step 3. Send Out Invitations – Save the Date

Oftentimes events don't get the level of participation that is expected or needed. Various reasons can attribute to that fact but sometimes it can be as simple as getting a "special" invitation to a TEPW.

Getting an invitation can explain how their participation is important to the overall TEPW process; they are a valuable partner and their input is vital to the jurisdiction's preparedness efforts. An invitation can also explain what the workshop is and what outcomes are being planned. Build the workshop in a way that participants will gain something from the experience.

### Sample Invitation

#### **You are Invited to Attend...**

**What:** Annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW)

**When:** XXXXX, XX, XXXX  
*(include times)*

**Where:** *(list the location, and any specific directions if needed)*

**Who:** ESF partners and other Critical Stakeholders

**Why:** Annual review of current capabilities and future priorities

As a subject matter expert, you are invited to participate in discussions that will provide an opportunity to review our jurisdiction's current capabilities, identify obstacles/gaps in meeting incident requirements/standards, and define the knowledge and skills needed to improve our response and recovery efforts.

The discussions during this workshop will help examine how exercises and related training can impact our preparedness efforts and to frame the direction and priorities for the multi-year training and exercise plan.

Please take a moment to prepare a list of any exercises and trainings you already have scheduled for 20XX – 20XX to streamline the process of completing a combined, comprehensive training and exercise calendar.

**Your participation and input is very important  
Looking forward to seeing you**

## Step 4. Identify a Recorder

The discussions that occur during a TEPW help jurisdictions review their progress and accomplishments over the previous year, and identify each discipline's challenges and priorities. In large part it is a time to reflect on past experiences and discuss how things could be improved upon.

While the discussions are important, it is critical to capture the information so that highlights and summaries can be documented for future reference. Identifying a person, or even multiple people, before the TEPW is necessary; getting them the right equipment and supplies, as well as instructions on what they will be doing, is what makes the documentation piece seamless.

Record-keeping can be accomplished many ways: 1) taking notes by hand, 2) taking notes on a computer, 3) taking notes on chart paper, 4) taking notes from a computer and displaying comments on a screen. Taking notes that are visibly being recorded shows participants that their comments are important and being heard correctly. It also helps a facilitator of the TEPW to refer to the notes and highlight common themes throughout the workshop.

### Helpful tips for a recorder

There are at least three (3) words that should alert a recorder to recognize something that needs to be captured: 1) we need, 2) I assume, 3) I want

Generally these words come with phrases that identify areas to be improved upon [actions to be taken] or highlights things that are confusing or desired.

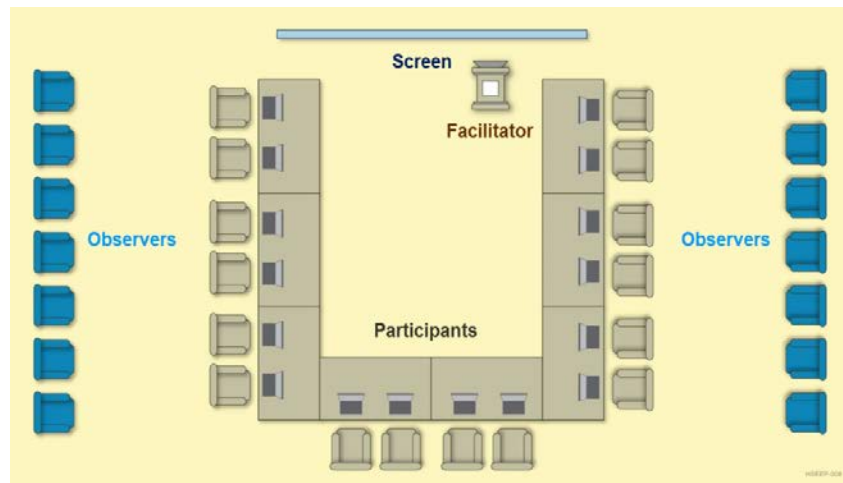
Having multiple recorders identified provides an opportunity to capture things from different perspectives. It also helps to ensure what was said was captured correctly or fills in any gaps. Placing recorders in different parts of the room helps to capture things that may not have been heard, depending on the size of the room and the locations participants are seated.



## Step 5. Design Room for Effective Discussions

The room layout for a TEPW is an integral piece of creating an atmosphere of open dialogue. When people are seated in an arrangement where they can see each other and can hear what each person is saying helps to build good rapport and cohesion. While setting up a room takes some time, the benefits outweigh the work.

Examples for setting up a room for a TEPW is similar to what is expected during a tabletop exercise. The illustration shown here is an example of how set the room to create an opportunity for open dialogue.



Ensure that recorders have designated areas pre-established and have the appropriate supplies and resources available.

Seating arrangements of TEPW participants also needs to be considered. The decision needs to be made on whether to let participants sit wherever they want or is it better arrange them close or across from people they will be conversing with the most. There are advantages and disadvantages for both, but that is totally dependent on knowing the audience and their needs. If assigned seating is the recommendation, table tents need to be made.



## Step 6. Facilitate the TEPW

According to Merriam-Webster, the definition of facilitate is “to make easier” or to “help bring about” (Facilitate." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 12 Sept. 2017).

As the facilitator, your job is to “help bring about” information from your stakeholders regarding training and exercise by guiding conversations throughout the workshop. Sounds easy, right? It can be, if you prepare properly and know your audience.

Your role as the facilitator can be made easier by taking the time to gather some basic information prior to holding your TEPW. No one expects you to have all of the answers, as long as you know where to find them. Utilize the resources around you to develop key questions you need answered prior to your TEPW. Write them down in the order you want conversations to occur. This list is referred to as a “facilitator’s guide”. This will help ensure your group discusses questions needing to be answered first, in order to build upon those decisions throughout the workshop. By placing your questions in a proper order, the conversations will flow naturally from topic to topic without as much interaction from you or your facilitator.

Goals of a facilitator:

- Be more about starting group discussions than about having an “ask and answer” environment.
- Make sure there is only one conversation occurring at a time (unless you have multiple groups).
  - Side conversations are extremely distracting and makes it difficult for the recorder(s) to capture important information.
- Always remain neutral, objective, and fair

There are many different strategies for facilitation. Use your knowledge of the subject and of your audience to determine what strategy works best for you. Your soft skills and personality can be a huge asset to you when facilitating these types of workshops, especially if you know how to apply them.

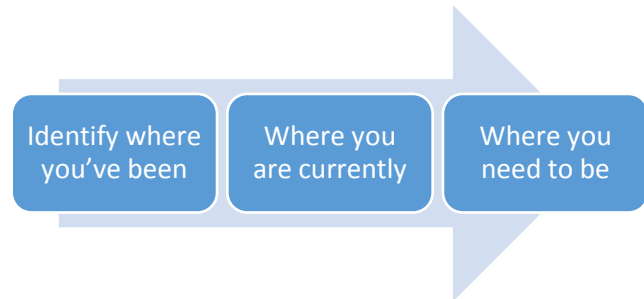


## Step 7. Collect all Documentation

Discussions generate the documentation necessary to have a successful TEPW. What makes a TEPW successful?

There are multiple answers to that question and are generally tied to each specific jurisdiction. Getting partners together to discuss strategy and direction is always a

positive outcome. When partners learn about new initiatives being taken and some of the challenges everyone is facing, this tends to help build relationships, especially when there are common issues and concerns. Some say that the only way to move forward is to know where you've been. Documentation aids in building a community's story.



### Identify where you've been

What challenges has your jurisdiction faced? What issues have been identified? Where are the gaps that need to be addressed before the next big event strikes?

These are some of the questions that each jurisdiction needs to answer in order to identify any improvement actions. Each jurisdiction has areas to improve upon, but it involves strong leadership to push it forward.

### Where you are currently

Over the years investments have been made to improve the state's capabilities in many different areas. Determining what is needed has a great deal to do with what is currently in place. Accomplishments gained over the previous year helps to show progress and validates the importance of what is being done. Can we do what we say we can do?

### Where you need to be

Each jurisdiction needs to conduct a thorough capability assessment to find out what capability requirements still exist. Addressing these three topics begins to frame the strategy for moving jurisdictions in a positive direction.

There are several ways to capture information that will help jurisdictions identify and prioritize where they should focus improvement efforts.

**WORKSHEET**

List Accomplishments Made in Past Year(s)	Planning ✓	Organization ✓	Equipment ✓	Training ✓	Exercise ✓

### WORKSHEET

List what challenges / issues your jurisdiction is facing? What gaps need to be addressed before the next big event strikes?	Linked to which Core Capability(ies) <i>(defined after discussions)</i>

## WORKSHEET

Areas of Performance (Capability Gaps) we need to focus on			
	Planning		Operational Coordination
	Public Information & Warning		
	Intelligence & Info Sharing		Access Control & Identify Verification
	Interdiction & Disruption		Cybersecurity
			Physical Protective Measures
	Screening, Search & Detection		Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities
	Forensics & Attribution		
			Infrastructure Systems
	Supply Chain Integrity & Security		Critical Transportation
			Environmental Response/Health & Safety
	Community Resilience		
	Long-term Vulnerability Reduction		Fatality Management Services
	Risk & Disaster Resilience Assessment		Fire Management/Suppression
	Threats & Hazards Identification		Logistics & Supply Chain Management
	Mass Care Services		On-scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement
	Mass Search & Rescue Operations		Operational Communications
	Situational Assessment		
	Economic Recovery		Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
	Health & Social Services		
	Housing		
	Natural & Cultural Resources		

**Define which Core Capabilities that Exercises and/or Training can impact [PRIORITIZE]**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operational Coordination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Information & Warning	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Access Control & Identify Verification
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intelligence & Info Sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cybersecurity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interdiction & Disruption	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Protective Measures
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Screening, Search & Detection	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Forensics & Attribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	Infrastructure Systems
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Critical Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supply Chain Integrity & Security	<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental Response/Health & Safety
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fatality Management Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-term Vulnerability Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire Management/Suppression
<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk & Disaster Resilience Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Logistics & Supply Chain Management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Threats & Hazards Identification	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	On-scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mass Care Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operational Communications
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mass Search & Rescue Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Situational Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Economic Recovery	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health & Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural & Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	

For the Core Capabilities selected to Exercise or Train upon, list what skills [capability targets] need to be discussed / demonstrated.

Example:

Core Capability Public Information and Warning

1. Rumor control
2. Monitoring social media sites to stay consistent with current situation
3. Setting up (activating) JIC in a timely fashion
4. Preparing / getting approval from policy on press releases
5. Communication flow between JIC and EOC

Core Capability \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Core Capability \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Core Capability \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Core Capability \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*(Continue, for each core capability identified)*

## Step 8. Develop Multi-Year Training & Exercise Plan

The TEPW is a forum for developing, reviewing, and updating a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan and schedule. This should be conducted annually, and should be scheduled sometime during the calendar year (January – December).

It is an opportunity for states and locals to discuss their strategies and develop a plan to increase preparedness through training and exercises.

It allows whole community partners to translate goals and priorities into specific objectives and exercises, coordinate exercise activities that will work across various disciplines, and track improvement plan actions against current capabilities, training, and exercises.



During Step 7 participants participated in discussions that identified:

- Accomplishments made in past year(s)
- Challenges / Gaps that need addressed
- Capabilities to address those gaps
- Capabilities that Exercises & Training can impact

Now becomes an excellent opportunity for participants to develop a list of proposed training and exercises to be conducted over the ensuing 3 years. These exercises and trainings should be planned in a way that can tie to addressing identified gaps, and ultimately increase readiness.

A TEPW template for recording these exercises and trainings can be found on the Kansas Exercise Tracking System (KETS) website at <https://www.kdemexercises.com/login> under Forms & Templates.

There are specific documentation requirements for utilizing a Training & Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW) for EMPG exercise credit. EMPG-funded county exercise coordinators need to upload into the KETS system:

- ✓ TEPW sign-in sheet, showing the individuals participating
- ✓ List of the priority core capabilities, displaying those areas of focus for coming years
- ✓ The 3-year calendar of exercises and training to be conducted

*(summaries of all the notes taken during the TEPW can be uploaded into KETS under Other)*