



Emergency Management Issues Special Interest Group Annual Meeting

COOP Exercise: Implementation, Challenges, and Awareness

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Overview

- Implementing COOP into the existing Laboratory exercise program.
- Challenges planning and responding to COOP exercises.
- Going for gold—boosting awareness of COOP through exercises.

Implementing COOP

- Laboratory COOP documents state a formal training, testing, and exercise (TT&E) program will be developed to assess the Laboratory's ability to respond to a COOP event.
 - “The TT&E program should be as integrated as much as possible with the LANL exercise program...”

Implementing COOP (cont.)

- Current Laboratory exercise schedule consists of:
 - 17 operations-based facility exercises;
 - three functional exercises; and,
 - one site-wide, full-scale exercise.
- Incorporated COOP into two functional exercises (transportation and seismic scenarios).



Implementing COOP (cont.)

- Added three COOP tabletops (one weather, two epidemic) and one COOP functional (epidemic) to the existing Laboratory exercise schedule.

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Challenges

- “Response blinders.”
- Majority of emergency planning efforts are focused on protecting people.
- How do we best incorporate and exercise COOP?



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Challenges (cont.)

- Started planning a combined transportation/COOP event exercise.
- Identified the following overarching objectives for the Exercise Program:
 - Exercise an alternate EOC;
 - notifications; and,
 - response to a transportation event.
- Identified the following overarching objectives for the COOP Program:
 - Test the adequacy of an alternate EOC and
 - test the interaction between the COOP Emergency Management Team (CEMT) and the Emergency Response Organization (ERO).

Challenges (cont.)

- Scenario development—think how we can fully exercise our overarching objectives.
 - Begin with a local event (not a disaster), taking our primary EOC out of play.
- COOP exercise planning may require one to develop the scenario far in advance of and/or well after the initiating event.

Challenges (cont.)

- How aware of COOP are Laboratory response personnel?
- How familiar are responders with their role in COOP?
- These questions were raised even before conducting the exercise.

Challenges (cont.)

- Need for simulation of major events to drive COOP exercise elements.
 - Lack of alternate facility contingency planning and simulation of pre-existing condition led to confusion among players.
- Incorporation of CEMT into ERO raised awareness of how the two groups work with each other.

Going for Gold

- Exercises provide the opportunity to *do*.
- December COOP/functional exercise allowed majority of Emergency Operations Division the opportunity to actively engage in a COOP event.
 - Exercised COOP at local level.
- Change of pace from “normal” exercises that at the response or recovery phase.
 - COOP exists beyond the emergency.

Going for Gold (cont.)

- COOP Program awareness is important.
- Emergency Management Program must embrace COOP.
- Although different response aspects, both programs feed into each other.



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**Questions?
Comments?
Suggestions?**

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