All Hazards - Winter Weather

Situation Manual - 2022

This Situation Manual (SitMan) provides exercise participants with all the necessary tools for their roles in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, facilitators, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the SitMan.

# Exercise Overview

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Exercise Name** | Tabletop Exercise (TTX) – Winter Weather |
| **Exercise Date** | **Organization should populate their exercise date here** |
| **Scope** | This exercise is a Tabletop exercise and can be tailored to the needs of any organization. Exercise play is focused on PEMA Area Offices, counties, municipalities, schools, healthcare facilities, and day care centers. |
| **Focus Area(s)** | Preparedness, Response, and Recovery |
| **Capabilities** | Planning  Operational Communications  Operational Coordination  Situational Assessment  **[Other: Add here]** |
| **Objectives** | 1. Participants will assess the situation to determine the appropriate protective actions to be taken based upon their organization’s emergency plan/EOP.  2. Participants will be able to manage the event using their existing procedures and policies or will identify areas for improvement.  **3. Participants should also develop their own Objectives to be accomplished to demonstrate that they can effectively respond to the incident.** |
| **Threat or Hazard** | Winter Weather |
| **Scenario** | Several small storms that quickly turn into a larger incident that produces heavy snow throughout the Commonwealth. The sudden onset and intensity of the storm creates transportation issues and power outages, and damage to buildings. |
| **Sponsor** | Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency |
| **Participating Jurisdictions/ Organizations** | **[Agency/Organization to fill in]** |
| **Point of Contact** | PEMA: Kamie Hughes, State Exercise Officer  [ra-exerciseofficer@pa.gov](mailto:ra-exerciseofficer@pa.gov)  **Organization POC: Fill in contact info here** |
| **Copyright Credit** | Copyright Credits: Portions of this exercise were copied from the FEMA Winter Weather Table-Top Exercise and some questions are from Texas State Severe Weather Incident Tabletop Exercise. |

# General Information

## Exercise Objectives and Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to capabilities, which are the means to accomplish a mission, function, or objective based on the performance of related tasks, under specified conditions, to target levels of performance. The objectives and aligned capabilities are guided by senior leaders and selected by the Exercise Planning Team. ***Each organization should be customizing this situation manual to suit their needs, including identifying additional core capabilities that they would like to exercise.***

| **Exercise Objectives** | **Core Capability** |
| --- | --- |
| Participants will assess the situation to determine the appropriate protective actions to be taken based upon their organization’s emergency plan/EOP. | Situational Assessment |
| Participants will be able to manage the event using their existing procedures and policies or will identify areas for improvement. | Planning |
| Participants should also develop their own Objectives to be accomplished to demonstrate that they can effectively respond to the incident. | Other core capabilities identify here |

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Capabilities

## Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

* **Players:** Personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
* **Observers:** Do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development of player responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.
* **Facilitators:** Provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required. Key Exercise Planning Team members also may assist with facilitation as subject matter experts (SMEs) during the exercise.
* **Evaluators:** Are assigned to observe and document certain objectives during the exercise. Their primary role is to document player discussions, including how and if those discussions conform to plans, polices, and procedures.

## Exercise Structure

## This exercise will be a tabletop exercise in which players will participate in three modules. Each module during the TTX begins with a paragraph update that summarizes key events occurring within that timeframe. After the updates, participants should review the situation and engage in group discussions of appropriate response issues.

## After these group discussions, participants will engage in a moderated discussion in which a spokesperson from each group will present a synopsis of the group’s actions, based on the scenario.

## Exercise Guidelines

* This exercise will be held in an open, no-fault environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
* Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., you may use only existing assets) and insights derived from your training.
* Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your jurisdiction’s/ organization’s final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.
* Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve prevention/protection efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus.
* The assumption is that the exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.
* All players will receive information at the same time.

## Exercise Evaluation

Please maintain copies of any evaluations for your records.

# Module 1

## Scenario

### Monday, November xx:

After several small storms have come through the area over the weekend, there is approximately 4 inches of snow accumulation already on the ground on Monday morning with light flakes coming down during the morning commute. The local meteorologist has forecasted just another 1-2 inches for the day, mostly during the afternoon commute, and possibly another 4-6 inches overnight. The National Weather Service is calling for back-to-back storms to zip up the Atlantic Coast on Tuesday and Wednesday, bringing significant snowfall to much of the Commonwealth with lingering showers through the end of the week. So far, the plows have been able to keep up with all the roads. Most schools and daycares were open today, and there were minimal impacts to power.

## Questions

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question. Participants should consider adding additional questions as warranted. Consult your organization’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)/ emergency plan and consider these questions for discussion, based on relevance to your organization:

1. What are the key issues that need to be addressed or decisions that need to be made immediately?
2. What information do decision-makers need and where can they get that information?
3. What does your organization’s EOP contain relative to this situation, if anything, and what trigger points are in place for decisions that need to be made?
4. Do you have a contract in place to get the snow plowed prior to reporting times?
5. Due to the potential of snow during commutes in the morning and afternoon, what decisions need to be made relative to your organization’s stakeholders? Who will make that decision?
6. How do you communicate the situation and any relative information to your stakeholders?

# Module 2

## Scenario

### Tuesday, November xx:

### By 6am, the storm piled another 5 inches of snow across much of eastern PA. At local schools, phone calls are coming in for large numbers of students with absence notifications due to some areas not being cleared of snow. There are a growing number of schools and daycares that are reporting full day closures. A second storm moving in from the west is projected to hit central and eastern Pennsylvania starting this evening; it is currently a fast-moving storm, but it is expected to impact traffic and roadways and cause widespread power outages and downed trees.

## Questions

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question. Participants should consider adding additional questions as warranted. Consult your Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and consider these questions for discussion, based on relevance to your organization:

1. Based on the information provided, identify any critical issues, decisions, actions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed or taken at this time.
2. Which stakeholders are you coordinating with and how are you coordinating?
3. [If your organization has an EOC] Is the EOC activated or are you considering activating at this time? Who are you bringing in to staff the EOC?
4. What actions need to be taken based on the information you currently have?
5. What information do decision-makers need and where can they get that information?
6. How will event actions, needs, and resources requests be tracked or documented?
7. If a school or daycare, are you cancelling in-person attendance all together?
8. How do you communicate the situation to your stakeholders?
9. Are there any resources not owned or controlled by your organization that will be needed for response and recovery activities? Where are they located, who owns them, and how will you arrange to get them?
10. What steps will you take to establish and maintain a common operating picture of this incident for your stakeholders? Who will be responsible for sharing the common operating picture?

# Module 3

## Scenario

### Wednesday, November xx:

The storm slowed down overnight and hit central and eastern Pennsylvania then spiraled westward bringing another 6-12 inches of heavy, wet snow to western PA. Due to the unexpected nature of this event early in the season, road crews were not adequately prepared with supplies, have crew members out due to the upcoming holiday on Thursday, and therefore are not able to keep up with salting the roads and plowing. The state is asking for private contractors and companies to assist where they can, which may have impacts on your jurisdiction or facilities. The upcoming holiday leads to many of your staff being off on leave.

### Thursday, November xx:

## As holiday traffic increased, the storm brought significant winds of 40-50mph to the region resulting in statewide reports of downed trees, blocked roadways, and nearly one million power and internet outages. Cold air has spilled in behind the system, dropping wind chills into the teens. In addition to the wind-driven cold, snow continues to produce squalls and blowing and drifting snow, resulting in transportation hazards throughout Pennsylvania. One section of the PA Turnpike was closed due to a multi-vehicle accident, causing a large trapped-queue on the highway, and numerous other roadways are in similar situations across the state.

Commerce on many of Pennsylvania’s major highways and interstates remain under a travel restriction or ban, including portions of I-80, I-84, and I-78. Hundreds of thousands are in danger due to lack of heat and limited food supply, plus burst water pipes due to the cold, many of which cannot be accessed for several days due to downed trees and power lines and snow-covered roads. Unfortunately, your facility was affected.

## Questions

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question. Participants should consider adding additional questions as warranted. Consult your organization’s EOP or emergency plan and consider these questions for discussion, based on relevance to your organization:

1. Based on the information provided, identify any critical issues, decisions, actions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed or taken at this time.
2. Which stakeholders are you now coordinating with and how are you coordinating? What changed from Module 1?
3. [If your organization has an EOC] Is the EOC activated or are you considering activating at this time? Who are you bringing in to staff the EOC?
4. What actions need to be taken based on the information you currently have?
5. What information do decision-makers need and where can they get that information?
6. If a school or daycare, what arrangements do you need to make for students until your facility has power restored and the damage from the burst pipes is cleaned up?
7. If a hospital, what arrangements do you need to make for your patients until your facility’s power is restored and any damage from burst pipes is cleaned up? How much fuel do you have for your generators? Will you be able to get more if needed, and if not, what do you do then?
8. If a county, what actions are being taken to:
   1. Assist motorists who are stranded on roadways?
   2. Stand up shelters for those with no power or water?
9. How are you ensuring redundancy with your internal systems given the power and internet outages?
   1. Are your staff trained in these alternate methods?
   2. Can you access key files or systems if needed? What do you do if you’re unable to access those files or systems?
10. How do we communicate the situation to our stakeholders, especially with internet outages, which impacts email and Voice Over Internet Phone (VOIP) systems?
    1. Do your stakeholders know of alternate ways to get information from you?
11. Are there any resources not owned or controlled by your organization that will be needed for response and recovery activities? Where are they located, who owns them, and how will you arrange to get them?
12. What are you doing to document costs and track resources used in case of a potential Presidential Declaration? Do staff know what information is needed?
13. How does your organization conduct damage assessments after the event? Do your staff know how and know what information and documentation is needed?
14. What are the next steps your organization will take as the Response phase transitions towards Recovery?

# Appendix A: Exercise Schedule

This is a suggested half-day schedule and should be modified to suit the needs of the organization participating. Times can be expanded to allow for longer and more meaningful discussions if desired.

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| Date | November xx, 2022 |
| 0830-0900 | Gathering and Registration |
| 0900-0915 | Welcome and Introductions |
| 0915-0945 | Module 1 Scenario and Discussion |
| 0945-1030 | Module 2 Scenario and Discussion |
| 1030-1045 | Break |
| 1045-1130 | Module 3 Scenario and Discussion |
| 1130-1145 | Hotwash |
| 1145-1200 | Closing Comments |

# Appendix B: Acronyms

| Acronym | Term |
| --- | --- |
| AAR | After Action Report |
| EOP | Emergency Operations Plan |
| IP | Improvement Plan |
| SitMan | Situation Manual |
| TTX | Tabletop Exercise |

**Appendix C: Participant Feedback Form**

Please enter your responses in the form field or check box after the appropriate selection.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  | | | | | **Title:** |  |
| **Agency:** | |  | | |  |  |  |
| **Role:** | Player | | Facilitator | Observer | | Evaluator | |

**Part I: Recommendations and Corrective Actions**

1. Based on the discussions today and the tasks identified, list the top three strengths and/or areas that need improvement.

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1. Identify the action steps that should be taken to address the issues identified above. For each action step, indicate if it is a high, medium, or low priority.

| **Corrective Action** | **Priority** |
| --- | --- |
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1. Describe the corrective actions that relate to your area of responsibility. Who should be assigned responsibility for each corrective action?

| **Corrective Action** | **Recommended Assignment** |
| --- | --- |
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1. List the policies, plans, and procedures that should be reviewed, revised, or developed. Indicate the priority level for each.

| **Item for Review** | **Priority** |
| --- | --- |
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**Part II: Participant Feedback**

What changes would you make to this exercise? Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.

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