

Emergency Plan Table Top Exercise

Exercise developed and shared by the Hampshire Solent 'Emergency Preparedness' Peer Development Group.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the table top exercise is to:

- run through potential scenarios which may affect a particular museum or organisation
- instil confidence within individual team members regarding their own role in the event of an emergency
- identify flaws or omissions within the organisation's Emergency Plan

2. Scenarios

A selection of scenarios should be devised ideally by members of staff not directly involved in the Emergency Response Team but with a good working knowledge of the organisation. Scenarios should be realistic and consist of small relatively minor incidents to a major emergency. Examples should include time, location and nature of the incident, examples:

- 0200 Police alerted to fire alarm sounding in X building but no smoke visible
- 1500 During heavy rain pools of water have been discovered on the floor of the main artefact store
- 0300 During storm force winds a local resident has alerted the local Police that part of the main roof has blown off
- 2300 Fire alarms are sounding and smoke has been seen coming from the roof. Fire brigade are en route

Once devised these should be written on paper, folded and placed in a box or hat.

3. Absentees

In any scenario the likelihood that all of the Emergency Response Team would be available to respond is unlikely. 'Availability' notes should therefore be produced in a similar manner to the scenario with each participant drawing a note from a box or hat without revealing its content to others. The proportion of available to not available must be realistic for your organisation:

- It's your lucky day you are on holiday all week!
- You have been off work sick so are unavailable to attend!
- Bad luck you are available!
- Or simply Available / Unavailable

4. Exercise

One member of the team will select a piece of paper from the 'scenarios' box and read the content to the rest of the group. The organisation's callout / cascade system should then be followed with each individual explaining what action they would take and why at each stage. If a member of the team has a valid excuse for being absent (see 3 above) the next available person on the callout should take their place.

Group discussion can take place at any stage as the aim of the exercise is not to test individuals but to assist. There may not necessarily be one correct way of dealing with an emergency but several.

During the meeting at least 3-4 scenarios should be discussed and by the end all members should be confident that they can cope with most emergencies if called upon. Issues identified should be noted and addressed as soon as practical.