

Tabletop Exercise #1

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How to Use This Document

This document provides exercise Facilitators with all information and materials needed to plan, conduct, and evaluate an exercise. Do the following:

1. Read through the entire exercise and supporting materials.
2. Decide how to localize the scenario in a way that reflects likely challenges in your community and tests your CERT members' skills and techniques.
3. Familiarize yourself with the flow of the exercise by thoroughly reviewing the Facilitator Guidelines. Use these guidelines to conduct the exercise.
4. Make copies of the supporting documents for participants. See the Appendix index for instructions.
5. Make copies of the *Participant Feedback Form* and ask participants to complete it after the exercise.
6. Complete the *Facilitator/Evaluator Feedback Form* after the exercise.

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CERT Drills and Exercises

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates ordinary people from all walks of life about disaster preparedness and weapons of mass destruction and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operation. Using the training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their community.

The National CERT Program has developed a library of drills and exercises. These exercises have been designed in a ready-for-use format and include complete instructions, detailed lists of materials, and all supporting forms.

This document is used by the Facilitator(s) and supports the delivery of a tabletop exercise that can be customized to meet local needs.

What Is a Tabletop Exercise?

Tabletop exercises are table-based activities typically held in an informal setting and presented by the Facilitator. There is no hands-on practice or field work. This type of exercise is intended to generate discussion of various issues regarding a hypothetical, simulated emergency. Tabletops can be used to enhance general awareness, validate plans and procedures, rehearse concepts, and/or assess the types of systems needed to guide the prevention of, protection from, mitigation of, response to, and recovery from a defined incident.

Delivered in a low-stress environment, the tabletop exercise offers participants the opportunity to explore different ideas in the context of a real-world scenario. All participants should be encouraged to contribute to the discussion and be reminded they are making decisions in a “no-fault” environment.

Effective facilitation is critical to keeping participants focused on exercise objectives. The Facilitator may ask about the decisions made, including how a decision was reached or what implications a decision might have. The exercise ends either when all actions have been discussed or when the time limit is reached. Participant learning is reinforced and feedback is provided through a hot wash at the conclusion of the exercise.

For descriptions and other types of exercises for CERTs, please visit www.fema.gov/cert and click on CERT Exercises.

Exercise Overview

“Tabletop Exercise #1”

Hazard: Earthquake

Location: Local neighborhood

Duration: 40-60 minutes

Capabilities Exercised:

- Incident Command
- Medical treatment area setup
- Sizeup

Exercise Objectives:

- Validate the decision-making process to prioritize incidents.
- Evaluate procedures for locating a medical treatment area.
- Validate CERT sizeup procedures.

Scenario:

A major earthquake has struck at 1:00 p.m. on a mid-week afternoon. The day is cool and cloudy. It has been raining lightly all day, and the temperature is expected to fall quickly by 5:30 p.m.

The local CERT has been activated to assess damage in its neighborhood. CERT members have just arrived at the pre-designated meeting point.

For Exercise Staff

Exercise Synopsis:

This tabletop exercise gives the team the opportunity to:

- Discuss the process it would use to set up a Command Post and medical treatment area.
- Prioritize how to respond to a variety of damaged buildings and survivors.

The focus of the exercise is on prioritizing actions based on what is known of the situation and the capabilities of the team.

These activities are performed in the context of a scenario where buildings have been damaged and people injured as the result of an earthquake. This scenario could be changed to any event that would result in building damage and injured survivors.

The team first discusses the process for setting up the Command Post and medical treatment area. Then the team develops an initial plan to respond to the situation. Once the initial plan is developed, the Facilitator pauses the exercise to discuss the plan.

After the discussion, the Facilitator passes out *Damage Assessment Forms* with information on the condition of the buildings and survivors. Using this new information, the team then develops a plan for responding to the scenario.

The exercise ends either when all actions have been discussed or the time limit is reached. At the conclusion of the exercise, a hot wash helps participants review what they have learned and provides feedback on the exercise.

Exercise Materials and Staff:

- Facilitator (1 for each group of 7-10)
- Forms:
 - Local map, used during the exercise
 - *Damage Assessment Forms*, used during the exercise
 - *Events and Evaluation Form for Facilitator(s) and Evaluator(s)*, used by the Facilitator(s) and Evaluator(s) during the exercise
 - *Facilitator/Evaluator Feedback Form*, completed after the exercise
 - *Participant Feedback Form*, completed after the exercise

Exercise Staff Roles:

1. *Facilitator*

The Facilitator will play three roles for this exercise.

First, the Facilitator will lead and guide the exercise by presenting information. This will keep the exercise moving forward and make sure the key decision points in the exercise are reached.

Second, the Facilitator will observe and coach. In this role, he or she will observe the group process and discussion. As the exercise unfolds, he or she may need to step in and help the team members clarify their decision making by asking questions about their thought process and the factors they considered in making choices. For example, if they placed a high priority on helping a victim who was probably dying, or if they decided to enter a building that was clearly too dangerous, work through their decision-making process so they realize the potential negative results of their decision.

The Facilitator may want to take notes on decisions made and actions taken so he or she can refer to them later. Use the *Events and Evaluation Form for Facilitator(s) and Evaluator(s)* to record notes.

Third, the Facilitator will conduct a hot wash (debrief). The purpose of the hot wash is to reinforce learning by helping participants evaluate their own decision making. It is a balance between:

- Asking participants why they made the choices they did and what they learned.
- Providing additional information and coaching.

Bear in mind that, although the Facilitator may have more experience and knowledge, participants will likely learn more if coached through their decision-making process than if they are told what they should have done.

During the hot wash and after the exercise, the Facilitator has additional responsibilities including collecting feedback on the exercise and how beneficial it was for CERT participants, and providing input to improve future CERT exercises.

2. *Evaluator*

The role of Evaluator is typically assumed by the Facilitator in a tabletop exercise. The primary responsibility of the Evaluator is to assess the exercise based on the events and expected actions listed on the *Events and Evaluation Form for Facilitator(s) and Evaluator(s)*. The Evaluator typically has a passive role and does not interfere with the exercise unless he or she is also playing the role of Facilitator.

Facilitator Guidelines

Step	Action	What to Say/Do
1	Prepare for the exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make copies of the handouts in the Appendix. The Appendix index indicates how many copies are needed. • Make copies of the one-page Exercise Overview for each participant.
2	If necessary, organize the group into groups of 7-10.	Explain that each small group will go through the exercise together.
3	Introduce the exercise to all participants.	<p>Distribute the one-page Exercise Overview to all participants.</p> <p>Explain that the purpose of the exercise is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an opportunity to talk through the procedures the team would implement in response to a given scenario. • To improve CERT's operational performance by practicing and validating policies, plans, procedures, and training in the risk-free environment of an exercise.
4	Review the goals of the exercise with all participants.	<p>Explain the goals of the exercise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate the decision-making process to prioritize incidents. • Evaluate procedures for locating a medical treatment area. • Validate CERT sizeup procedures.

CERT DRILLS AND EXERCISES: TABLETOP EXERCISE #1

Step	Action	What to Say/Do
5	Present the scenario to all participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major earthquake has struck at 1:00 p.m. on a mid-week afternoon. The day is cool and cloudy. It has been raining lightly all day, and the temperature is expected to fall quickly by 5:30 p.m. • The local CERT has been activated to assess damage in its neighborhood. CERT members have just arrived at the pre-designated meeting point.
6	Hand out copies of the map to each participant.	
7	Provide initial instructions.	<p>Ask the group how they would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an Incident Command. • Choose the location for the medical treatment area. • Develop a plan to respond to the situation, including defined roles and assigned tasks. <p>Emphasize that all members of each small group will participate in the decision-making process. Each member should be prepared to make decisions as if he or she is the Incident Commander (IC), Team Leader, or another role of the Command Post Team.</p>
8	Pause. Discuss the roles and tasks and provide feedback about the group's decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the roles and tasks address the situation in the best way possible? • Are the Command Post and medical treatment area located appropriately?

CERT DRILLS AND EXERCISES: TABLETOP EXERCISE #1

Step	Action	What to Say/Do
9	Review the prioritization process if appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A HIGH-priority incident: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can be handled by the team with its level of training and available equipment ○ When handled appropriately, prevents the situation from escalating • A LOW-priority incident: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires advanced training skills and resources above the team’s capabilities ○ Is one that team members have little or no control over ○ Is one that a CERT could handle but ranks as less important because no lives are at risk
10	Resume the exercise by distributing the <i>Damage Assessment Forms</i> to each group.	Instruct the group to review the <i>Damage Assessment Forms</i> and assign a priority (high or low) to each.
11	Ask the group to develop a plan of action.	Explain that the plan of action should address the situation as they now understand it. An IC should be designated and he or she should ask for input from the team as if everyone has a role on the Command Post Team. NOTE: Coaching points are provided in Step 16.
12	Observe the discussion and decision-making process.	
13	Discuss the implications of their decisions as appropriate.	Review the decisions made by the team and discuss if the team’s priorities are based on the needs of the situation and if the team has the capability to achieve its action plan.

CERT DRILLS AND EXERCISES: TABLETOP EXERCISE #1

Step	Action	What to Say/Do
14	Terminate the exercise when the time has run out, or most of the small groups have developed a final plan of action.	
15	Conduct the hot wash with all participants and staff members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since documentation is a key part of every CERT response, ask specific questions during the hot wash that would likely require the group to refer to documentation for answers. Questions might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How were CERT members divided into functional teams? ○ What actions were taken and by whom? ○ Why were certain actions taken? ○ When did they do this? ○ What conditions did they find? ○ What did you do next? ○ What worked well and what did not? ○ What forms or methods would you use in a real event to document status and additional needs? • NOTE: Documentation may be done in a variety of ways – from structured forms, to notes on scrap cardboard, to writing on the back of a hand. The format isn't important, but retaining the information is.

CERT DRILLS AND EXERCISES: TABLETOP EXERCISE #1

Step	Action	What to Say/Do
<p align="center">16</p>	<p>Provide coaching to the participants as appropriate.</p>	<p>Coaching points you may want to bring up to the group if not already mentioned include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two most important goals for team members are: Protect yourself first, and then do the greatest good for the greatest number of people. All other decisions flow from these two considerations. • Command Post and medical treatment area – Did the group consider wind direction? Are they a safe distance away from the fertilizer plant? • House 1 – With a detached power line hanging down the outside of the house, this is not a safe environment. Even though the building is lightly damaged and there may be people inside, the team should not enter the building. This is a low priority. • House 2 – Since the building is only moderately damaged and there are clearly people inside, this is a high-priority site. • House 3 – This is a very emotional situation, and with a screaming mom and injured/missing kids, the desire to help can be very strong. However, because of the heavy damage to the building, it is not safe for the team to enter. This is a low-priority situation. Consider asking the players what they might do in this situation instead of entering the heavily damaged building. Depending on your local CERT program’s protocols, suggestions could include contacting the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or emergency services to report the location of the dangerous site and what the team has observed there, or trying to get the attention of people in the building to help them get themselves out, etc.

CERT DRILLS AND EXERCISES: TABLETOP EXERCISE #1

Step	Action	What to Say/Do
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church – Since it is only moderately damaged, it is okay to enter this building. But since there are probably only two people in the building, it may not be the best place to put the team’s resources. Do a quick check and move on. • Child Care Center – This building is only moderately damaged, and many of the injured can be helped within the limits of CERT training. In addition, the CERT can move these people to a safe distance from the factory. This should be the team’s top priority. • Fertilizer Plant – Clearly there are large numbers of injured people inside the plant. With moderate damage it is tempting to go in and start helping people leave the building. However, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) diamond indicates that this is a dangerous situation, and the smoke at the back of the building means there could be an explosion. Not only should the team not enter the building, the team needs to focus on moving everyone else away from the building because of the direction of the wind. Note that the IC could inform emergency services about this situation.
17	Distribute the <i>Participant Feedback Form</i> to all participants.	Ask participants to complete the form.
18	Distribute the <i>Facilitator/Evaluator Feedback Form</i> .	Ask all Facilitators/Evaluators to complete the form.

Appendix

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Index of Forms and Materials

Local map (1 page): 1 copy per participant is distributed during the exercise

Damage Assessment Forms (6 pages): 1 set per team is distributed during the exercise

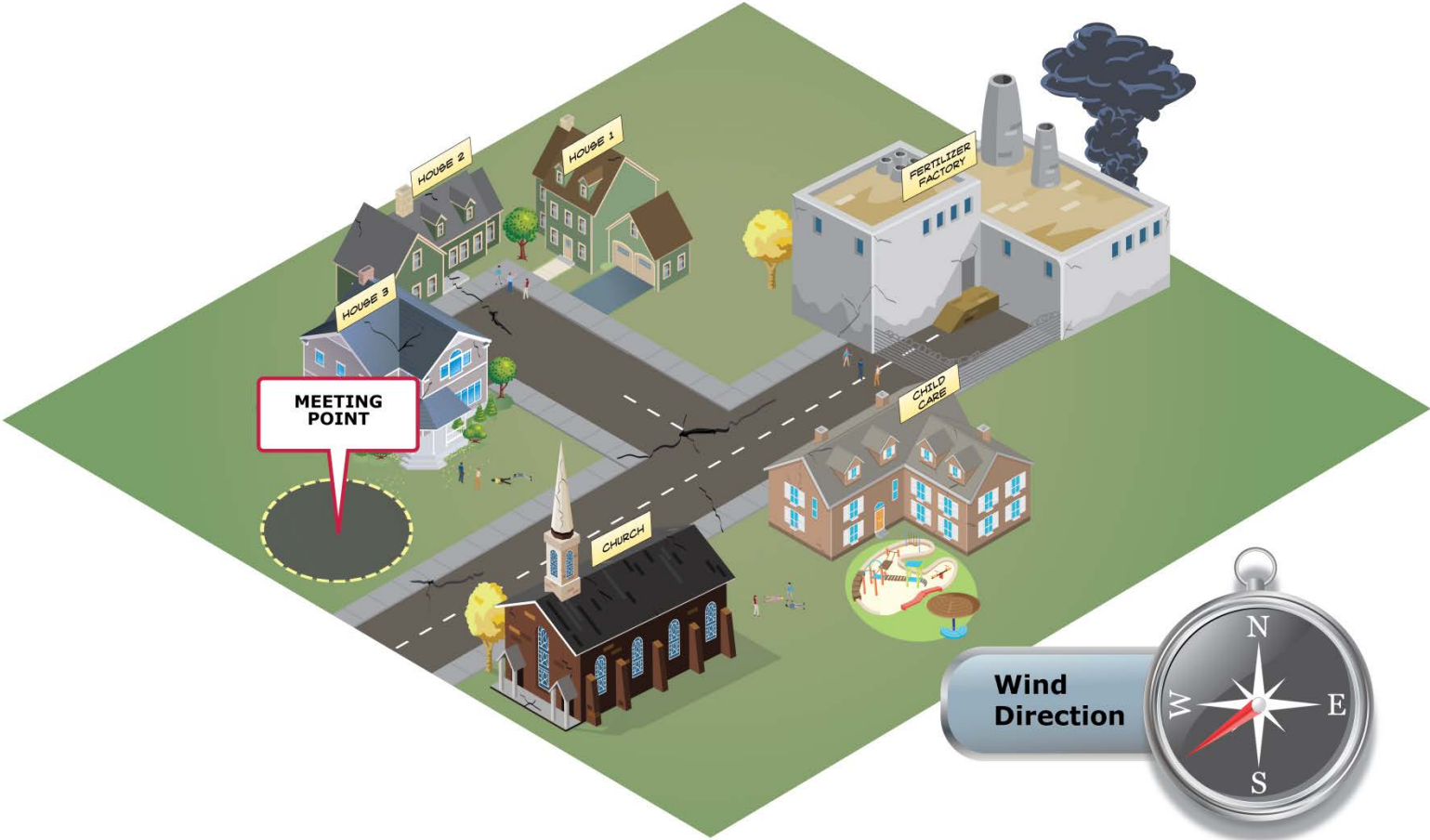
Events and Evaluation Form for Facilitator(s) and Evaluator(s) (3 pages): 1 copy per Facilitator and Evaluator is distributed before the exercise

Facilitator/Evaluator Feedback Form (1 page): 1 copy per Facilitator and Evaluator is distributed after the exercise

Participant Feedback Form (1 page): 1 copy per participant is distributed after the exercise

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Local Map



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DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM	CERT	DATE
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LOCATION
House #1

SIZE UP
(check if applicable)

FIRES		HAZARDS				STRUCTURE		PEOPLE			ROADS		ANIMALS		
BURNING	OUT	GAS LEAK	H2O LEAK	ELECTRIC	CHEMICAL	DAMAGED	COLLAPSED	INJURED	TRAPPED	DEAD	ACCESS	NO ACCESS	INJURED	TRAPPED	ROAMING
				X		X					X				

OBSERVATIONS

One car in the driveway.

Several windows are broken and there is glass on the ground around the house.

A detached power line is hanging down the side of the house.

Books have fallen off of the book shelves, pictures off walls, and there is broken glass on floor.

CERT MEMBER: <i>John</i>	PAGE <u>1</u> OF <u>1</u>
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DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM	CERT	DATE
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LOCATION
House #2

SIZE UP
(check if applicable)

FIRES		HAZARDS				STRUCTURE		PEOPLE			ROADS		ANIMALS		
BURNING	OUT	GAS LEAK	H2O LEAK	ELECTRIC	CHEMICAL	DAMAGED	COLLAPSED	INJURED	TRAPPED	DEAD	ACCESS	NO ACCESS	INJURED	TRAPPED	ROAMING
						X		X			X				

OBSERVATIONS

Two cars in driveway and toys in front yard.

Chimney has collapsed and bricks on roof and ground.

wallboard has come off the walls, there are fallen shelves, and suspended ceiling has collapsed.

Yelling from someone inside the house.

CERT MEMBER: <i>Sarah</i>	PAGE <u>1</u> OF <u>1</u>
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DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM	CERT	DATE
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LOCATION
House #3

SIZE UP
(check if applicable)

FIRES		HAZARDS				STRUCTURE		PEOPLE			ROADS		ANIMALS		
BURNING	OUT	GAS LEAK	H2O LEAK	ELECTRIC	CHEMICAL	DAMAGED	COLLAPSED	INJURED	TRAPPED	DEAD	ACCESS	NO ACCESS	INJURED	TRAPPED	ROAMING
						X		X	X		X				

OBSERVATIONS

House is tilted to one side and roof has partially fallen into house.

Woman outside house is screaming that her son is trapped under debris in house and she can't find her 3-year-old daughter.

CERT MEMBER: <i>Micah</i>	PAGE <u>1</u> OF <u>1</u>
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DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM	CERT	DATE
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LOCATION
Church

SIZE UP
(check if applicable)

FIRES		HAZARDS				STRUCTURE		PEOPLE			ROADS		ANIMALS		
BURNING	OUT	GAS LEAK	H2O LEAK	ELECTRIC	CHEMICAL	DAMAGED	COLLAPSED	INJURED	TRAPPED	DEAD	ACCESS	NO ACCESS	INJURED	TRAPPED	ROAMING
						X		?	?		X				

OBSERVATIONS

Steeple is broken off roof.

Decorative pieces have fallen off roof edges.

Bystanders report that the minister and his assistant are always in church at this time of day preparing for event.

CERT MEMBER: *Debbie*

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DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM	CERT	DATE
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LOCATION
Child Care Center

SIZE UP
(check if applicable)

FIRES		HAZARDS				STRUCTURE		PEOPLE			ROADS		ANIMALS		
BURNING	OUT	GAS LEAK	H2O LEAK	ELECTRIC	CHEMICAL	DAMAGED	COLLAPSED	INJURED	TRAPPED	DEAD	ACCESS	NO ACCESS	INJURED	TRAPPED	ROAMING
			X			X		X	X						

OBSERVATIONS

All of the windows have broken. The roof is intact, but many items have been knocked from the walls. Shelves of supplies have fallen over. The hot water heater has fallen over and is leaking hot water.

There are two teachers and 10 children.

- One teacher with burns has burns and is disoriented.*
- One teacher can't stand and has pain in right leg.*
- One child is unconscious.*
- One child has arm pain and is disoriented/crying.*
- One child is trapped under fallen bookcase.*
- Four children have cuts and bruises.*
- Three children are uninjured, but are frightened and upset.*

CERT MEMBER: <i>Steve</i>	PAGE <u>1</u> OF <u>1</u>
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DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORM	CERT	DATE
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LOCATION
Fertilizer Plant

SIZE UP
(check if applicable)

FIRES		HAZARDS				STRUCTURE		PEOPLE			ROADS		ANIMALS		
BURNING	OUT	GAS LEAK	H2O LEAK	ELECTRIC	CHEMICAL	DAMAGED	COLLAPSED	INJURED	TRAPPED	DEAD	ACCESS	NO ACCESS	INJURED	TRAPPED	ROAMING
X					X			X	X		X				

OBSERVATIONS

Sheet metal building appears intact.

Smoke coming from the rear of building.

NFPA diamond on the front of building: Blue - 3, Red - 4, Yellow - 1, White - 0X.

Parking lot is full of cars.

Several wandering around outside the plant with a variety of injuries, shouting for help and saying that there are people trapped inside.

Appears some have already been removed from building or assisted in evacuation.

Plant foreman wants help, says there are about 30 people still unaccounted for.

CERT MEMBER Delicia	PAGE <u>1</u> OF <u>1</u>
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Events and Evaluation Form for Facilitator(s) and Evaluator(s)

Message/Event	Expected Action	Actual Observed (To be filled in by Evaluators during the exercise)
<p>House 1: Building damaged, may be people inside, detached power line hanging down outside house.</p> <p>[Prioritizing]</p>	<p>Not safe environment. Team should not enter building.</p> <p>Low priority</p>	<p>Time action completed: _____</p> <p>Completion:</p> <p>No ____ Yes ____ Partial ____</p> <p>Notes:</p>
<p>House 2: Building only moderately damaged; clearly people inside.</p> <p>[Prioritizing]</p>	<p>Search and rescue.</p> <p>High priority</p>	<p>Time action completed: _____</p> <p>Completion:</p> <p>No ____ Yes ____ Partial ____</p> <p>Notes:</p>
<p>House 3: Heavy damage to building; screaming mother; injured/missing children.</p> <p>[Prioritizing]</p>	<p>Not safe for team to enter.</p> <p>Low priority</p>	<p>Time action completed: _____</p> <p>Completion:</p> <p>No ____ Yes ____ Partial ____</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Message/Event	Expected Action	Actual Observed (To be filled in by Evaluators during the exercise)
<p>Church: Moderate damage; probably only two people in building.</p> <p>[Prioritizing]</p>	<p>Do quick check and move on.</p> <p>Medium priority</p>	<p>Time action completed: _____</p> <p>Completion:</p> <p>No ____ Yes ____ Partial ____</p> <p>Notes:</p>
<p>Child Care Center: Moderate damage; 12 people with various injuries and levels of upset.</p> <p>[Prioritizing]</p>	<p>Many of injured can be helped by CERT; team can move people to safe distance from factory.</p> <p>Top priority</p>	<p>Time action completed: _____</p> <p>Completion:</p> <p>No ____ Yes ____ Partial ____</p> <p>Notes:</p>
<p>Fertilizer plant: Moderate damage; large numbers injured inside plant; NFPA diamond and smoke at back of building indicates dangerous situation.</p> <p>[Prioritizing]</p>	<p>Not safe to enter building. Focus on moving everyone else away from building because of direction of wind.</p> <p>IC should notify emergency services.</p> <p>Medium priority</p>	<p>Time action completed: _____</p> <p>Completion:</p> <p>No ____ Yes ____ Partial ____</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Message/Event	Expected Action	Actual Observed (To be filled in by Evaluators during the exercise)
(General) Incident Command established. [ICS]	IC identified. Other command positions assigned. SAR groups established and assigned.	Time action completed: _____ Completion: No ____ Yes ____ Partial ____ Notes:
(General) Medical treatment area established. [Medical Treatment Area Setup]	Per <i>CERT Basic Training</i>	Time action completed: _____ Completion: No ____ Yes ____ Partial ____ Notes:
(General) Sizeup procedures are followed. [Sizeup]	Per <i>CERT Basic Training</i>	Time action completed: _____ Completion: No ____ Yes ____ Partial ____ Notes:

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Facilitator/Evaluator Feedback Form

Exercise Name:

Exercise Date:

Name (Optional):

Role (Optional):

CERT/Organization:

- Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the following statements, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

Assessment Factor	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
The exercise was well structured and organized.	1	2	3	4	5
The exercise scenario(s) was plausible and realistic.	1	2	3	4	5
The Facilitator(s) was knowledgeable about the area of play and kept the exercise on target.	1	2	3	4	5
The exercise documentation provided to assist in preparing for and participating in the exercise was useful.	1	2	3	4	5
This exercise allowed the CERT to practice and improve priority capabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
This exercise helped the CERT identify strengths and weaknesses in the execution of plans, protocols, and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5

- Based on today's exercise, list observed key strengths and/or areas that need improvement.

Strengths: _____

Areas for improvement: _____

- Please provide recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.

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Participant Feedback Form

Exercise Name:

Exercise Date:

Name (Optional):

CERT/Organization:

1. Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided below, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

Assessment Factor	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
The exercise was well structured and organized.	1	2	3	4	5
The exercise scenario(s) was plausible and realistic.	1	2	3	4	5
The exercise documentation provided to assist in preparing for and participating in the exercise was useful.	1	2	3	4	5
This exercise allowed me to practice and improve priority capabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
This exercise helped my CERT identify strengths and weaknesses in the execution of plans, protocols, and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
After this exercise, I believe my CERT is better prepared to deal successfully with the scenario(s) that was exercised.	1	2	3	4	5

2. Based on today's exercise, list observed key strengths and/or areas that need improvement.

Strengths: _____

Areas for improvement: _____

3. Please provide recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.

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