

Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) Guide

The EOP Guide

This EOP Guide was created to assist those who attended Midwest Hazard Solutions' EOP Workshop course. The Guide includes two parts; instructions & worksheets for inputting plan information.

If you have any questions about how to utilize the EOP Guide, contact Ron Holbeck at rholbeck@midwesthazardsolutions.com. You will receive a response within 3 business days of receipt.

Introduction

This EOP Guide is intended to walk healthcare facilities through a six-step planning process utilized for creating facility EOPs. It is recommended that prior to developing your EOP, you attend an EOP Workshop held by Midwest Hazard Solutions. You can request a workshop at rholbeck@midwesthazardsolutions.com.

Assemble a Planning Team

Lessons learned from experience tell us that planning is best performed by a team. Midwest Hazard Solutions recommends that facilities assemble an emergency planning team to work through the process of developing the EOP for your facility. An effective planning team will have multiple disciplines represented from within your facility, such as healthcare workers, cooks/dietary, facility/maintenance workers, finance, administration, and those who work outside of normal business hours. The more disciplines and individuals representing multiple shifts, the stronger your EOP will likely be.

Getting started with the planning team:

- Assemble a preliminary planning team
- Have the preliminary planning team review this EOP Guide.
- Decide how your team will utilize the EOP Guide. Because the EOP Guide allows input from a variety of team members, your team will need to determine how to record plan information into the guide. You can assign one person to record plan information, or you can have multiple people recording individual parts of the plan.
- Identify roles and responsibilities for each person on the team who is using the guide. Additionally, multiple users should coordinate their efforts so that one user does not accidentally change another user's work.

Introduction to Successful Planning

The following planning principles are critical to developing a strong EOP that addresses a range of threats and hazards:

- Planning **must** be supported by leadership.
- Planning considers all threats and hazards a facility may face.
- Planning provides for the access and functional needs of your residents, and if applicable, your staff members.
- Planning considers all seasons and all shifts.
- Creating and revising an EOP is done by following a collaborative process.

Six-step Planning Process



This guide is created around these six steps, and should help assist users in the creation of an EOP that will include a Basic Plan, Functional Annexes, and Threat and Hazard Annexes.

The first step in this process is to form a planning team. Details on how to accomplish this step begin on the next page.

Step 1: Form a Collaborative Planning Team

Planning is always best when performed by a team represented by multiple disciplines and who work varying shifts. Step 1 of the planning process will provide you with detailed guidance on how to put together a planning team that is ready to engage in the EOP process.

Identify Your Core Planning Team

Before you start planning, you should identify members of your facility who can assist with providing input to the plan. Make sure the members you identify represent a diverse section of your facility to ensure input to the plan comes from a variety of points of view. You will want to limit the size of this team to around 8 to 12 people, but will want to ensure you have a wide variety of differing careers represented. For instance, your dietary members can answer questions and provide feedback on your food and water supply, electrical needs of your generators to provide electricity to their refrigeration units, how much food the facility keeps on hand and which vendors to contact for emergency food supplies should they be needed.

Your facility and maintenance staff can share information regarding your generator, what tools or resources may be available such as flashlights, batteries, and shovels. Maintenance staff will generally know the building and its capabilities better than anyone else which provides valuable information to an EOP.

Another good practice is to include the person in your facility who has worked there the longest. These types of people may be able to provide you input on real threats and hazards that have actually occurred in the facility in the past, and can also give you an idea of what went right and what went wrong in the response to those situations.

Regardless of who you choose to be on your planning team, make sure they represent a variety of backgrounds and different perspectives of your facility.

Form Your Planning Team and Assign Roles and Responsibilities

Once you've decided who will be on the planning team, decide how you want your planning team to be organized. You will want some members to be present only to provide input, others you'll want to record ideas from the group. Finally, you'll want to identify who will actually be creating the draft of your plan. At the end of the day, the person writing the plan should have input and notes from every member of the planning team, along with information from individuals within the facility who are not on the planning team, or external partners who may be able to assist you in an emergency, such as a bus company, grocery store, or temporary shelter.

Determine the Frequency of your Meetings

You should prompt your team to establish regular meetings to facilitate input and provide feedback on the progress of the plan.

Outcome of Step 1

Once Step 1 is completed, you should have a collaborative planning team that is ready to begin the work in Step 2 – Identifying and analyzing threats and hazards within and surrounding your facility.

Recommended Members of Your Planning Team

- Administration
- Head Nurse/Charge Nurse
- Maintenance/Facility Worker
- Dietary/Cook
- An employee with 20+ years at your facility (if available)
- Laundry/housekeeping
- Transportation (if available)
- Medical Tech

Community Partners

In the process of planning, you may need assistance from community partners. Here are some suggestions on who you may want to reach out too:

- Fuel company (to provide fuel for your generator)
- Red Cross (to provide information on shelters)
- Bus Company (for emergency transportation)
- Emergency Management (to review the draft of your plan, provide input, possibly assist w/exercising your plan)
- Grocery Store (to provide emergency food & water)
- Similar facilities for mutual aid (you agree to help them in emergencies if they help you during yours)
- Local Utility Companies (find out who to contact in order to expedite power or water restoration to your facility)

On the next page you will find a worksheet to utilize in order to help identify who should be on your planning team. You can modify this list at your convenience or if the need arises. You will need to add each team member into the worksheet, along with their contact information and the particular category each person represents. Repeat this process as many times as needed to add all members of the planning team into the worksheet.

***NOTE:** The planning team should be small enough to allow close collaboration, yet large enough to be representative of the entire facility, as well as the facilities partners. It should also be large enough not to place undue burden on any single person.

Step 2: Understand the Situation

Now that you've identified your planning team, it is time to begin developing your EOP. Step 2 will prompt your team to complete a group of activities to develop a comprehensive list of threats and hazards to be addressed in your EOP.

Develop a List of Threats and Hazards Using a Variety of Sources

Your community is unique; you may or may not have a railroad near you for instance. Or, you may be located near a river that floods frequently. Perhaps you are located within a block or two of a major industrial complex. Each of these can be hazards or threats, and each community has them. The job of your team is to identify these threats and hazards so you can focus on them in your plan.

TIP

Before going too far, you'll want to see if others have already done the work. Your community likely has a Hazard Mitigation Plan. Perform an online search of your county name followed by the words "hazard mitigation plan" (example: Yellow Medicine County Hazard Mitigation Plan).

Every county in Minnesota is required to have a Hazard Mitigation Plan, and they are required to make these plans public. One of the things required of a Hazard Mitigation Plan is a ranking of threats and hazards within your community. Find your local plan and see if the ranked threats and hazards in that plan are applicable to your facility. This is usually done in section/chapter 4 of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Assess the Risk Posed by the Threats and Hazards you've Identified

Once you've identified your threats and hazards, the planning team should select suitable tools to evaluate the risk posed by each threat and hazard. Evaluating risk requires an understanding of the probability that the specific risk or threat will occur, the impacts the threat will have, and how severe that impact will be to your facility. Consider the amount of time your team will have to warn residents and staff members about the threat and hazard, as well as the overall duration of the threat or hazard.

Threats refer to what caused the issue (tornado, chemical spill, active shooter, etc.). A Vulnerability refers to what may be vulnerable to the threat (building, generator, food supply, patients, communications, etc.). Assessing threats and vulnerabilities allows the planning team to prioritize which threats and vulnerabilities to focus their efforts on.

How to Prioritize Threats and Hazards

There are online tools which you can utilize to help your team prioritize Threats and Hazards, the most popular being the [Kaiser-Permanente Hazard and Vulnerability Assessment Tool](#). This tool provides a mathematical approach to rank your threats and hazards. Though there is no requirement to utilize a tool like this, it is a good way to collect input on hazards with your planning team. In the example shown on the next page, we will rank the tornado threat for most Minnesota counties. *These numbers are often based on the opinions of the group, so my numbers and your numbers may vary based on individual opinion.*

HAZARD AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOL NATURALLY OCCURRING EVENTS



EVENT	PROBABILITY	SEVERITY = (MAGNITUDE - MITIGATION)						RISK
		HUMAN IMPACT	PROPERTY IMPACT	BUSINESS IMPACT	PREPARED-NESS	INTERNAL RESPONSE	EXTERNAL RESPONSE	Relative threat*
	Likelihood this will occur	Possibility of death or injury	Physical losses and damages	Interruption of services	Preplanning	Time, effectiveness, resources	Community/ Mutual Aid staff and supplies	
SCORE	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate 3 = High	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate 3 = High	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate 3 = High	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate 3 = High	0 = N/A 1 = High 2 = Moderate 3 = Low or none	0 = N/A 1 = High 2 = Moderate 3 = Low or none	0 = N/A 1 = High 2 = Moderate 3 = Low or none	0 - 100%
Hurricane	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Tornado	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	30%
Severe Thunderstorm								0%
Snow Fall								0%
Blizzard								0%
Ice Storm								0%
Earthquake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Tidal Wave	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Temperature Extremes								0%
Drought								0%
Flood, External								0%
Wild Fire								0%
Landslide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Dam Inundation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Volcano	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Epidemic								0%
AVERAGE SCORE	0.06	0.13	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.13	0%

*Threat increases with percentage.

RISK = PROBABILITY * SEVERITY		
0.00	0.02	0.06

Tornadoes occur in MN, but the odds of one striking your facility are low. I gave this a 1.

If we were hit by a tornado, there is a small possibility of death. I score this a 2.

In the event the building were hit, property damage would likely be huge. This is a 3.

Due to property damage such as roof and window damage, it could interrupt services. This is a 3.

Help will come, but likely below the level you expect. This is a 2.

You will likely be dealing with this for a while with limited resources. This is a 3.

Despite your best efforts, staff will likely be ill prepared to deal with the impact of a large tornado. This is a 3.

Step 2 Outcome
After completing Step 2, your planning team should have a prioritized (high, medium, or low risk) list of threats and hazards based on the results of your Hazard and Vulnerability Assessment.

Step 3: Determine Goals and Objectives

Together, the planning team should decide which of the threats and hazards in Step 2 will be addressed in the EOP. The planning team may decide to address only those threats and hazards that rank “high” in risk priority, or they may decide to also address some of the threats and hazards that rank “medium.” For instance, in the example above, if you are using my scoring, a tornado may rank lower than a Severe Thunderstorm due to the probability of each. However, your facility has likely endured several severe thunderstorms in the past, you may already feel you have that threat under control while a tornado on the other hand, you are not prepared for at all. You must remain objective, despite the HVA rankings, and focus your planning efforts on your threats which are possible, but you also have your greatest weaknesses in that area.

Your EOP must also take into account the requirements of CMS. If CMS requires you to focus on a specific threat or threat(s), then do so, regardless of how they ranked on the HVA.

Develop Goals and Objectives

Goals are general statements that show the desired outcome in your response to the threat or hazard planners identified in Step 2. The goals are what your staff and the resources you have available are meant to achieve. They also help you keep track of your progress during your response to help identify when activities are completed and whether your response activities are successfully progressing during the response phase.

The planning team should develop a minimum of three goals for addressing each threat or hazard (you may find you wish to identify more). The three goals you identify should indicate the desired outcome for before, during, and after the threat or hazard. For a tornado, for instance, three possible goals include:

- Hazard Goal Example 1 (before): Ensure an effective means to receive timely weather warnings is available to all staff and residents within the facility.
- Hazard Goal Example 2 (during): Protect all persons from injury and limit or prohibit damage to property during a tornado warning.
- Hazard Goal Example 3 (after): Ensure all staff, residents and visitors are accounted for and are provided medical attention as needed.

Objectives are specific, measurable actions that are necessary to achieve your goals. Planners will often need to identify multiple objectives for each single goal.

Using the goal in Example 1 for preparing for and responding to a tornado, possible objectives include:

- Objective 1.1: Obtain weather radios for all nursing stations and areas where visitors and staff congregate such as the cafeteria or waiting rooms.
- Objective 1.2: Maintain an effective intercom communication system to send immediate emergency notifications throughout the facility.

Using the goal in Example 2 of protecting all persons from injury and limiting or prohibiting damage to property during a tornado warning, possible objectives include:

- Objective 2.1: Immediately move patients, staff, and visitors away from windows to the hallway of the lowest floor of the facility.
- Objective 2.2: Close doors of all rooms with windows.

Using the goal in Example 3 of ensuring all staff, residents, and visitors are accounted for and are provided medical attention as needed, possible objectives include:

- Objective 3.1: Account for all persons who were within the facility during the tornado.
- Objective 3.2: Immediately begin to provide first aid as needed.
- Objective 3.2: Notify 911 if anyone is injured, missing, or if you believe the tornado hit your facility.

When the planning team has finished creating objectives for each of your hazards and threats, the team will find that certain critical “functions” or responses apply to more than one threat or hazard. Examples of functions that you will find in many of your responses include evacuating, providing medical care, sheltering in place, and accounting for all patients, staff, and guests.

After identifying these functions, your planning group should develop three goals for each function. Similar to the goals you already identified for threats and hazards, your goals should identify your desired outcome for before, during, and after the function has been executed. These commonly occurring functions will be contained in your Emergency Operations Plan as “Functional Annexes.” More details of these functions will be included in the Plan Content section of this guide, including issues to consider as you develop goals and objectives for these functions.

For an evacuation function, three possible goals are:

- Function Goal Example 1 (before): Ensure all residents and staff know their evacuation route and that routes are posted throughout the facility for visitors.
- Function Goal Example 2 (during) Evacuate the facility immediately.
- Function Goal Example 3 (after): Confirm that all patients, staff, and visitors have left the building.

Once the goals for a function are identified, possible supporting objectives can also be identified. For the evacuation goals above, objectives could include:

- Objective 1.1 (before): Assess, identify, and communicate the location of rally points or staging areas to be used during an evacuation.
- Objective 1.2 (during): Evacuate all patients, staff, and visitors from the facility using assigned evacuation routes.
- Objective 1.3 (after): Safely sweep the building to ensure the facility has been vacated successfully.

Step 3 Outcome

After completing Step 3, the planning team has at least three goals (before, during, and after) for each threat or hazard and function, as well as objectives for each of these goals.

Step 4: Plan Development (Identifying Courses of Action)

In Step 4, your planning team develops courses of action for achieving each of the objectives you identified in Step 3 (for your threats, hazards, and functions). Courses of action address the what, who, when, where, why, and how for each threat, hazard, and function. Your planning team should examine each course of action to determine whether it is feasible and whether the staff members necessary to implement the courses of action find it acceptable. For additional issues you should consider as you develop courses of action for functions, make sure you refer to the Plan Content section of this guide.

Identify Courses of Action

Courses of action include a means for deciding how and when your response will be implemented under a variety of circumstances. Your planning team should develop your response policies and procedures to support these efforts.

Possible courses of action are typically developed using the following steps:

1. **Depict the scenario.** Create a potential scenario based on the threats and hazards identified and prioritized in Step 2.
2. **Determined the amount of time available to respond.** This amount of time will vary based on which threat or hazard you are working on and the particular scenario you've created for those threats and hazards. For example, in the case of a winter storm, your facility may have days or hours to begin your response before the storm actually arrives, while you may have to respond in minutes to a tornado.
3. **Identify decision points.** Decision points indicate the place in time, as threats and hazards unfold, when your staff leadership anticipate making decisions about a course of action. Walking through each scenario in detail will help identify the relevant decision points for each one, such as whether or not to evacuate or shelter in place.
4. **Develop courses of action.** The planning team develops courses of action to achieve their goals and objectives by answering the following questions:
 - a. What action do we need to take?
 - b. Who is responsible for the action?
 - c. When does the action take place?
 - d. How long does the action take and how much time is actually available?
 - e. What has to happen before the action can be taken?
 - f. What will happen once the action has taken place?
 - g. What resources do we need to successfully perform the action?
 - h. How will this action affect our staff and patients, especially those with disabilities and others who may require medication, guidance, evacuation assistance, or personal services throughout the action?

***NOTE:** Your plans should not only address those with physical and mental disabilities, they should also address the needs of those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Select Courses of Action

After developing courses of action, your planning team should compare the costs and benefits of each proposed course of action to help determine which course of action best addresses each of your goals and objectives. Plans can often include multiple courses of action for each scenario to help highlight the differing ways specific hazards may unfold.

After selecting courses of action, your planning team identifies the resources you'll need to accomplish each course of action without regard to the availability of the resources. Once the planning team identifies all of the requirements, it begins matching available resources to requirements. This step provides planners an opportunity to identify resource gaps or shortfalls that must be taken into account.

Step 4 Outcome

After completing Step 4, your planning team should have identified goals, objectives, and courses of action for before, during, and after threats and hazards, as well as for each function.

Goals, objectives, and courses of action for your threats and hazards should be included in your Threat and Hazard procedures within your EOP.

Goals, objectives, and courses of action for functions should be contained in the “Functional Annexes” section of your EOP.

Step 5: Plan Preparation, Review, and Approval

In Step 5, your planning team will develop a draft of your EOP using the courses of action developed in Step 4. In addition, your team reviews the plan, obtains official approval from your administration, and shares the plan with all of your staff members, partners, and critical stakeholders. Once approved, you should also share the plan with community partners such as your police and fire departments and your local emergency management agency.

Format the Plan

An effective EOP is presented in a manner that makes it easy for users to find the information they need quickly and is compatible with state and CMS requirements. This may include using plain language, providing photos, maps, and/or visual cues for key action steps. This guide presents a traditional format which you can format to meet the individual needs of your facility. This format has three major sections: the Basic Plan, Functional Annexes, and Threat and Hazard Specific Annexes.

The Basic Plan section of your EOP provides an overview of your facility’s approach to emergency operations. Although the Basic Plan section guides the development of the more complex annexes within the plan, its primary audiences consist of your administration, local emergency officials, and community partners (as appropriate). The content found in the Basic Plan should meet the needs of those who need to know your plan while also providing a solid foundation for the development of supporting annexes.

The Functional Annexes section details the goals, objectives, and courses of action of functions (i.e.- evacuation, communications, patient tracking) that apply across multiple threats or hazards. Functional annexes set forth how your facility manages a function before, during, and after an emergency takes place.

The Threat and Hazard Specific Annexes section specifies the goals, objectives, and courses of action your facility will follow to address a particular type of threat or hazard (like a winter storm, missing patient, or active shooter). Like your functional annexes, the Threat and Hazard Specific Annexes set forth how your facility manages a threat before, during, and after an emergency.

The following functional format can be used for the Functional Annexes as well as for the Threat and Hazard Specific Annexes sections. Using the format shown below and the work your planning team did in Step 4, each function, threat, and hazard should have at least three goals with one or more objectives for each goal and a course of action for each of the objectives.

- Title (the function, threat, or hazard)
- Goal(s)
- Objective(s)
- Courses of Action (Describe the courses of action you developed in Step 4 in the sequence in which they will occur).

This table shows some suggested components of each of the three sections shown above:

Write the Plan

As your team works through the draft of the plan, planning team members should add necessary tables, charts, maps, and other supporting graphics. The planning team should make sure the draft of the plan is reviewed by others within the facility to obtain feedback from a large group of co-workers and administration personnel. The best plans are created by utilizing the following simple rules:

1. Summarize important information with checklists and visual aids, such as maps and flowcharts.
2. Use common terminology and plain English; avoid acronyms and abbreviations if possible. Use clarity when writing your plan and avoid using vague wording as it can add to confusion during an already stressful event.
3. Utilize a logical, consistent structure that makes it easy for readers to understand the sequence of information and to scan for the key information they may need.
4. Provide enough detail to convey an easily understood plan that is actionable. For example, your reception desk or nurses' stations may only have one-page checklists, or a flip-chart, or signs giving them simple directions. Arrange the contents in a way that helps your staff quickly identify solutions and options to the issue(s) before them. Plans should provide guidance for carrying out common courses of action without getting bogged down by too much detail.

Review the Plan

The planning team should ensure the plan is compliant with all CMS requirements while also ensuring the plan is useful when needed. Commonly used criteria can help establish how effective and efficient your plan is. The following points can help you determine if your plan was developed well:

- A plan is satisfactory if the plan identifies and addresses critical courses of action effectively; the plan can accomplish your assigned functions, and the plan's assumptions are valid and reasonable.
- A plan is achievable if your staff can accomplish the assigned functions and critical tasks by using the resources you have available to you within the timeframe established in the plan.
- A plan is acceptable if it meets the requirements created by the threat or hazard, meets your cost and time limitations, and is consistent with local, state, and federal laws, and meets the CMS requirements.
- A plan is complete if it
 - Integrates all courses of action to be accomplished for all selected threats and hazards and identified functions;
 - Incorporates the needs of your entire staff as well as your residents/patients, and visitors;
 - Provides a clear picture of what actions should occur, when they should occur, and under whose direction those actions will take place;
 - Estimates time for achieving objectives while maintaining safety as the top priority;
 - Clearly measures successful outcomes and a desired end state; and
 - Conforms with the planning principles laid out in previous pages of this guide.
- **Your plan must comply with applicable state and local requirements, as well as the CMS requirements as these provide a baseline for both planning and the execution of the plan.**

In addition, when reviewing the plan, your team does not need to provide all of the resources required to execute a course of action or meet a requirement established during the planning

effort. However, your plan should explain where or how your facility will obtain critical resources to support the requirements of your plan (i.e.- if your plans require a bus, but your facility does not own a bus, show in your plan where your facility plans to get a bus during an emergency).

Step 5 Outcome

Good news, if you have completed Step 5, you should have an Emergency Operations Plan for your facility!

But, you aren't done; with planning you are never done as there is always Step 6.

Step 6: Plan Implementation and Maintenance

Train staff members on the Plan and Ensure they Understand Their Roles

Everyone on your staff should know their role in an emergency, including those who are just starting their careers, temporary employees, interns, etc. You never know when an emergency will strike, so ensure your plan is known by all members of your staff on all shifts.

Staff need to know their roles and responsibilities before, during, and after an emergency. This will require a lot of training, including:

Holding a Meeting. At a minimum, your planning team should hold a meeting to educate all staff members on the emergency plan. Go through the plan step by step to ensure every one of your coworkers is familiar with the contents of the plan.

Visit Your Evacuation Sites. Show your co-workers not only where your evacuation sites are located, but also where plan specific areas such as staging areas, media areas, triage areas, and casualty collection points are located.

Give all stakeholders copies of the plan, policies, and procedures. All members of your staff should know the location of your plan, policies and procedures. You should also consider putting quick reference guides in common employee areas within your facility that remind staff members of key courses of action.

Post key information throughout your facility. Some of the information within your plan can be posted where all staff, residents/patients, and guests can see. An example would be your evacuation routes or the steps to take during a tornado warning. Make sure anyone who enters your facility has the information they may need to take emergency actions readily visible and available to them.

Ensure community partners are familiar with your plan. As an emergency manager who sits alone at his computer on most business days, I can tell you that your local emergency manager would likely welcome a meeting with you to discuss your plan. Others you should share your

plan with include your local police and fire departments and EMS officials. Not only should you share your plan with them, you should discuss their role(s) in response to an emergency at your location and willingly accept their feedback on the plan if they provide you with any.

Train your staff on any skills necessary to fulfill their specific roles. Examples of this would be training your staff on the Incident Command System (ICS) or how to triage, how to properly lift wheelchair bound residents/patients down stairs or onto a bus, how to utilize a mass notification system if your facility has one, how to deal with the media if they show up to your facility during a disaster, and teach non-medical staff some basic first aid. Think of every critical task identified in your plan and make sure you are taking measures to limit damages, injuries, and misunderstandings before a disaster occurs.

Exercise the Plan

Your team has worked too hard to simply let the plan sit on a shelf. You have to test the plan to ensure the plan works as well in practice as it does in theory. The more the plan is practiced and the more staff members are trained on the plan, the better the plan will become. Exercising the plan gives your staff a better idea of the actions they will take before, during, and after an emergency to lessen the impact of the emergency on life and property.

Exercises also give your facility an opportunity to practice with community partners (first responders and local emergency management personnel) to better understand their roles in an emergency. Exercises also provide your facility with a means to identify gaps and weaknesses in your plan.

There are many different types of exercises, and each requires a different amount of planning, time, and resources. Ideally your facility will create an exercise program building from a tabletop exercise up to more advanced exercises, like a full-scale exercise.

NOTE: CMS requires facilities to take part in one tabletop exercise and one full-scale exercise each year. This does not mean you have to develop the exercise, it only means you must take part in an exercise.

- **Tabletop Exercises:** Tabletop exercises are discussion-based exercises that walk through a scenario and the courses of action your facility will need to take before, during, and after an emergency. The tabletop exercise helps assess the plan and resources and facilitates an understanding of your emergency response and planning concepts.
- **Drills:** During drills, your staff and possibly some residents/patients and their visitors will practice responding to a scenario. The most common drills are fire drills and tornado drills, but a quick drill can be done to test a response to any scenario.
- **Functional exercises:** Functional exercises are similar to drills but involve multiple partners and may be conducted facility-wide. Participants in the exercise react to

realistic simulated events (like a bomb-scare, a missing resident, or an evacuation) and implement the plan and procedures using the Incident Command System (ICS).

- **Full-scale exercises:** These exercises are the most time-consuming and are often done concurrently with other facilities and multiple responding agencies. This type of exercise tests collaboration among the agencies, participants, public information/media coordinators, guests/family members, and equipment. An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is almost always established in a full-scale exercise and the ICS is activated.

While the CMS requirements currently only require you to do be involved in a tabletop or full-scale exercise, your facility should consider other types of exercises as well as they may fit their specific needs for certain scenarios.

When choosing which types of exercises to do and what functions you wish to exercise, it is always a good practice to exercise a function that was recently trained upon, or to identify functions in which you feel your facility is weak on so you can go through the motions and hopefully find solutions that will enhance or hopefully eliminate your weakness. An exercise is your chance to go through the motions and identify any weaknesses in your plan before an emergency may identify those weaknesses for you. Make sure you take exercising the plan seriously and work to ensure your exercises are of high quality.

To effectively execute an exercise:

- Include community partners such as first responders and local emergency management staff;
- Communicate relevant information to your exercise participants first to avoid confusion and concern;
- Exercise under different and non-ideal conditions (during different times of day, through differing weather conditions, while there are several staff members absent, etc.). Emergencies seldom occur when you are well-staffed and the sun is shining; make sure you know how to respond regardless of your staffing levels or what time of the day/night it happens to be.
- Debrief participants and develop an after-action report that evaluates the results of your exercise, identifies gaps and shortfalls, and documents the lessons learned; and
- Discuss how your EOP and procedures may need to be modified as a result of the exercise and identify who has the responsibility to modify the plan or procedures.

TIP: An excellent resource for exercise development can be found at <https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/hseep-resources>

Plan Activation

While anyone can be on the planning team, not everyone can activate the plan. Plan activation should be limited to those with authority to act on behalf of the facility. Positions such as your Facility Administrator, the owner of your Facility, or the Head/Chief Nurse of the facility usually have the authority to make emergency decisions on their own, and the activation of your emergency plan IS an emergency decision.

Regardless of who has the authority to activate, your staff needs to know who they are and how to contact them on a moment's notice. Like every resource in your plan, make sure you go three deep on who has the authority for plan activation. Use the chart below to help identify who can activate the Emergency Operations Plan in your facility. A completed version of this type of chart should be found in the Basic Plan portion of your Emergency Operations Plan.

Individuals Responsible for Emergency Operations Plan Activation		
	Name	Contact Number
Primary		
Backup 1		
Backup 2		

Essential Services

There are essential services your facility needs in order to maintain minimal operations under any conditions. Each facility is different, so this list may not be complete for your specific place of work, but this list should show the core functions which can be found in almost any type of facility. A list like this should be found in your Basic Plan, your Communications Plan, and in your Continuity of Operations Plan. Make sure you update the list frequently as names and positions can often change.

Roles and Responsibilities for essential services should be clearly stated, and individuals providing these services should be aware of their responsibilities.

Essential Services	Roles and Responsibilities	Point of Contact	Secondary Point of Contact
Administration			
Dietary			
Housekeeping			
Maintenance			
Nursing			
Pharmacy			
Safety and Security			
Additional Services (if needed)			

Community Partners

The grid below can be filled out to help identify community partners who may be able to assist your team with planning, exercises, and training. These contact are not only great resources for the planning phase of your preparedness efforts, they can also be critical resources to contact *during* a disaster. They may be able to offer your staff advice, resources, or alternative courses of action when these options may be needed most.

This list is not all encompassing and applicable to every jurisdiction; you should try to contact all relevant partners to assist with the plan, and you should know which of these partners will be the best resources in disaster events. You should also keep in mind that some of these contacts may already be busy working on different aspects of the emergency which your staff may not realize is occurring simultaneously to your own emergency.

Emergency Preparedness Contacts				
Office	Description	Contact Name	Phone	Email
County Emergency Management	Emergency Management Director for our County			
City Police	Assigned contact from city police to your facility			
Fire Department	Assigned contact member from City FD to your facility			
Healthcare Coalition	Emergency contact from SW Healthcare Preparedness Coalition			
MDH	Contact at MDH			
Local Public Health	Local Public Health Contact			
Sheriff				
Mayor				
Sister Facilities				

Sharing

Once you have your plan in place, you still have a few key decisions your facility will need to make in regards to the plan. Here are some questions you should keep in mind when deciding how to share your plan.

- What information from the emergency plan will be share with residents?
- What information from the emergency plan can be shared with families/loved ones?
- Who will make the decision about the type of information provided?
- In what format will the information in your plan be provided (fact sheets, brochures, your website, etc.)?
- Will you review the information in your plan with residents and family members/loved ones?
- How will you reissue the information from your plan to residents and family members/loved ones when the plan is updated?

Resources

There are countless resources available to assist your team with preparing your Emergency Operations Plan, all of them are free and available online. Here are some of the best ones we've found at Midwest Hazard Solutions, LLC. There are likely many more out there. A good planner will utilize as many resources as they can find to ensure their plan meets the needs of their organization, make sure your team does the same.

- **Contact your peers-** You are likely not the only facility of your type in the area; your sister facilities have the same requirements as you do. Invite them to see your plan and ask if you can view theirs. Exchanging plans with multiple facilities helps you identify best practices in planning and will eventually not only improve your plan, it will likely improve your planning efficiency as well as the relationship you have with your sister facilities.
- **TRACIE** (<https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/>): This site will give you a collection of preparedness materials to assist you with the development of your own plan. There are also several resources to assist with creating exercises/evaluations for your plan.
- **Homeland Security Exercise & Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Toolkit** (<https://preptoolkit.fema.gov/web/hseep-resources>): This FEMA site is the go-to site for developing a large exercise. HSEEP will provide you with templates, tips, and timelines for developing your full-scale exercise.

- **Wisconsin Department of Health Services CMS Emergency Preparedness Rule Toolkits** (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/preparedness/toolkits/htm>): Say what you will about our neighbors to the east, but when it comes to meeting the CMS Preparedness Rule, the cheeseheads are way ahead of us. This website will give you access to planning templates & workbooks that are specific to the type of facility you work for. The templates should be very useful in the development of your Emergency Operations Plan.
- **California Association of Health Facilities (CAHF) Disaster Preparedness Program:** (<https://www.cahfdisasterprep.com/>): This is a favorite site of Midwest Hazard Solutions, the site provides a wide variety of resources, including checklists for your hazard procedures, EOP templates, and tabletop exercise templates.
- **Florida Health Care Association Emergency Preparedness** (<https://www.ltcprepare.org/>): This is another great site. Like California, Florida is no stranger to disasters. As a state, they have come together to provide resources to improve the preparedness capabilities of their Long-Term Care Facilities.
- **CMS.gov** (<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/SurveyCertEmergPrep/Emergency-Prep-Rule.html>): Go to the source of the Preparedness Rule. The CMS wants you to succeed in your planning efforts. This site offers Templates, FAQ's, Trainings, & Guidance as well as any updates to the CMS Preparedness Rules.
- **Missouri Hospital Association Emergency Preparedness** (<https://web.mhanet.com/emergency-preparedness.aspx>): This site offers recordings on presentations where the CMS preparedness rules have been a topic, on-demand education, and hazard-specific resources.
- **Kansas Hospital Association Hospital Preparedness Program** (<http://www.khanet.org/criticalissues/hospitalpreparednessprogram/>): Yet another site with multiple resources to assist with your planning efforts.

Finally, please consider Midwest Hazard Solutions, LLC as a resource for your facility. If you contact us and tell us you were in our EOP Workshop course, we'll be happy to share free advice to you if you need it. Contact Ron by e-mail at rolbeck@midwesthazardsolutions.com with any questions and you can expect a reply within 72-hours. If it is an emergency and you need a reply sooner than 72-hours, a small fee may apply.

Visit us at www.midwesthazardsolutions.com. We hope you learned a lot in our class. PI