

LAFAYETTE COUNTY HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL RELEASE

TABLETOP EXERCISE

September 10, 2009

AFTER ACTION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lafayette County Tabletop exercise was developed to test Lafayette County's policies, plans and procedures. The exercise planning team was purposefully limited in number to allow for the broadest level of player participation by key decision makers.

Based on the exercise planning team's deliberations, the following objectives were developed for Lafayette County Hazardous Chemical Release Tabletop Exercise.

- Objective 1: Evaluate the ability of the Lighthouse Christian Academy and the Lafayette County School District to implement their Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) in response to a Hazardous Chemical Release incident on their school property.
- Objective 2: Evaluate the coordinated primary response activities of the School District, Sheriff's Office, County and Town of Mayo Volunteer Fire Departments, and other response and support agencies.

The purpose of this report is to analyze exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this exercise are as follows:

Lafayette County's citizens are served by an emergency management program and system that is close knit and extremely knowledgeable about the community's vulnerabilities and capabilities. This connectivity allows for effective operation in emergency situations despite the limited personnel and resources available.

The size of the public safety response community on a day to day basis requires overlap in position responsibilities to sustain operations. This diversity of responsibilities provides the critical experience that would be needed in a scenario of this type.

Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the exercise, several opportunities for improvement in Lafayette County's ability to respond to the incident were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

Lafayette County should identify additional department personnel to receive training and serve in key roles during incidents or events.

Lafayette County should continue to offer opportunities throughout the year to test and evaluate plans and procedures through exercises.

Lafayette County should conduct additional Incident Command System and Emergency Support Function training and workshops to ensure all responding agencies are adequately trained.

Lafayette County exercise participants performed well in response to a very challenging scenario. The majority of players were knowledgeable regarding their plans, procedures and protocols. The participants recognized personnel shortfalls and resource limitations and called additional resources by implementing a variety of mutual aid agreements, both formal and informal.

Given the extent of the damages and unknown loss of key players due to the exercise scenario, exercise participants examined the need for additional documentation for key position responsibilities. Lines of succession were discussed, however it was not clear whether all parties are aware of the delegations for succession or if they grant the full complement of authorities that would be necessary in this type of environment. It is recommended that departments and agencies review their succession authorities for sufficiency in this regard. Additional tools, checklists and job aides would benefit those who were assuming additional authorities or new positions. In addition, it is evident that the lines of succession need to go deeper than what is currently on record.

In all, Lafayette County conducted a beneficial exercise. The exercise provided an opportunity to evaluate the validity of the plans and exercise findings will be incorporated into subsequent plan revisions.

SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Details

Exercise Name

Lafayette County Hazardous Chemical Release Table Top Exercise

Type of Exercise

Tabletop

Exercise Start Date

September 10, 2009

Exercise End Date

September 10, 2009

Duration

Four Hours – Two separate TTX's; Lighthouse Christian Academy and Lafayette Elementary School

Location

Lafayette County Community Center

Sponsor

Lafayette County Emergency Management

Program

State Homeland Security Grant Program

Mission

Evaluate the Plans and procedures within Lafayette County

Capabilities

Onsite Incident Management

Emergency Operations Center Management

Scenario

Hazardous Chemical Release Agent in the schools

Exercise Planning Team Leadership

Alton Scott, Emergency Management

Participating Organizations

Lafayette County Sheriff's Office

Lafayette County Health Department

Lafayette County School Board

Lafayette County Public Safety

Meridian Mental Health

Lighthouse Christian Academy

Lafayette County Fire Rescue

Lafayette County Emergency 911

Lafayette County EMS

Florida Division of Emergency Management

American Red Cross

Number of Participants

- Players: 27
- Controllers: 1
- Evaluators: 2
- Facilitators: 2

SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

Exercise Purpose and Design

The Lafayette County Hazardous Chemical Release Tabletop Exercise was designed to evaluate and validate existing Lafayette County plans and procedures for several essential functions. The scenario allowed for a plausible situation where a hazardous chemical was released inside the schools.

The exercise conduct was supported with State Homeland Security Grant funds. The exercise planning team developed the objectives to re-familiarize all agencies regarding their roles and responsibilities in a emergency situation, implement procedures and validate plans, testing the sustainability of direction and control.

Exercise Objectives, Capabilities, and Activities

Capabilities-based planning allows for exercise planning teams to develop exercise objectives and observe exercise outcomes through a framework of specific action items that were derived from the Target Capabilities List (TCL). The capabilities listed below form the foundation for the organization of all objectives and observations in this exercise. Additionally, each capability is linked to several corresponding activities and tasks to provide additional detail.

Based upon the identified exercise objectives below, the exercise planning team has decided to demonstrate the following capabilities during this exercise:

Onsite Incident Management Emergency Operations Center Management

- Objective 1: Evaluate the ability of the Lighthouse Christian Academy and the Lafayette County School District to implement their Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) in response to a Hazardous Chemical Release incident on their school property.
- On-site Incident Management
- Objective 2: Evaluate the coordinated primary response activities of the School District, Sheriff's Office, County and Town of Mayo Volunteer Fire Departments, and other response and support agencies.
-Emergency Operations Center Management

Scenario Summary

Narrative – Part I

At 8:30 am, the office of the Lighthouse Christian Academy (Lafayette County Elementary School) is filled with numerous staff as they begin the school day. The students are in the hallways and proceeding to their assigned classrooms. It is a sunny day in the high 70's with wind from the east at 4 miles per hour.

At 8:45 am, 911 receives a call from the school's office manager. She reports that she feels sick and four (4) of the school staff inside the office are gasping for air and convulsing. Several more teachers are collapsing in the hallway and classrooms. She is evacuating the school and needs help.

Discussion Questions for Emergency Response Agencies:

- ❖ What is the make up of the initial response for your agency?
- ❖ What procedures will your agency follow when they arrive on scene?
- ❖ What additional resources would your agency request?
- ❖ Who is in charge?
- ❖ Where is s/he located?

Discussion Questions for the School(s):

- ❖ What procedures would your staff be following?
- ❖ What resource requests would your staff be considering?
- ❖ What notifications would your staff be making? What information would you be providing?
- ❖ Who is in charge?
- ❖ Where is s/he located?

Narrative Part – II

A representative from (WCTV-6 news) contacts Lafayette County officials to report that an unidentified caller claims to have released a nerve agent at Lighthouse Christian Academy (Lafayette County Elementary School) this morning as a part of a coordinated terrorist attack to raise awareness of the economic suffering of the agricultural community caused by American businesses that import produce from foreign farmers.

National television broadcasts, linking with the local affiliates, show live pictures of the incapacitated and dead being removed from the school(s). Reporters request information regarding the county's response to and preparedness for this type of incident. CNN requests an interview with a representative from the county.

Discussion Questions for Emergency Response Agencies:

- ❖ Who will be responsible for formulating a message from your agency?
- ❖ Who will represent your agency?
- ❖ What information would your agency provide?

Discussion Questions for the School(s):

- ❖ Who will be responsible for formulating a message from your school?
- ❖ Who will represent your school?
- ❖ What information would your school provide?

Narrative Part – III

Shands-Live Oak, Doctors Memorial Hospital (Perry) activated their mass casualty disaster plan, and they are unable to care for additional victims. The designated trauma center (Shands-UF) requests technical information from the EOC regarding the agent used in the terrorist attack. Residents within two miles of the school spontaneously evacuate their homes, frightened by the images on television. Traffic bottlenecks form in front of the schools, caused by parents wanting to pick up children, which further complicates response activities. Residents in the vicinity request directions on what they should do and if they should evacuate.

Discussion Questions for all participants:

- ❖ How does the closing of the hospitals affect your agency, or school(s)?
- ❖ What is your agency's role in reunifying children with responsible adults?
- ❖ Will your agency's message change with the additional information demands of residents? If so, how?

Exercise Process

The tabletop exercise utilized a multi-media facilitated discussion format. Participants represented their functional areas of responsibilities. A media presentation of the background leading up to the emergency incident was complemented by written narrative. The written narrative provided the facts of the incident that was unfolding as well as pertinent questions to elicit effective discussion as well as to evaluate and verify existing plans, protocols and procedures. After each scenario and discussion question module was presented, participants were allowed to confer to share knowledge and information to develop responses. The exercise setting allowed for an informal exchange of information and decision making across and among functional groups. This interaction was encouraged. Evaluators were present to stimulate and record discussions as well as to capture the findings and recommendations of each functional group.

Evaluation Process

As indicated above, evaluators served to facilitate and record both the informal discussions and the more formal findings and conclusions of each functional area. This after action report and improvement plan document presents the findings and recommendations and observations of the evaluators.

SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

This section of the report reviews the performance of the exercised capabilities, activities, and tasks. In this section, observations are organized by capability and associated activities. The capabilities linked to the exercise objectives of the Lafayette County Hazardous Chemical Release exercise are listed below, followed by corresponding activities. Each activity is followed by related observations, which include references, analysis, and recommendations.

- **CAPABILITY 1: Onsite Incident Management**
- **CAPABILITY 2: Emergency Operations Center Management**

Objective 1: Evaluate the Christian Lighthouse Academy and the Lafayette School District to implement their Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) in response to a Hazardous Chemical Release incident on their school property

Activity 1.1 – Upon receiving information, assess and identify current and anticipated resource shortages, technical support issues, community/public affairs, and key policy decisions needed across all capabilities and provide to the applicable agency, function, jurisdiction or multi-agency coordination entity for resolution

Observation 1.1: Given the extreme consequences of the scenario, participants performed well and quickly realized the need to activate their emergency response plans and procedures to support operations.

Analysis: The exercise scenario was designed to create a significant challenge to the county agencies. The scenario allowed for a frank discussion of the specific challenges to a jurisdiction with limited personnel. Although not all participants were expert in the specific protocols and procedures, they were skilled in the concepts of the need to declare a local state of emergency and the priority for establishing a clear line of command and control.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Lafayette County Emergency Management continue to offer various forums (drills, table top exercises, functional exercises) throughout the year for discussion, education and training amongst the various disciplines.

Activity 1.2 – Once requested, provide resource, technical and policy support to the Incident Command by coordinating the actions of off-site agencies, organizations and jurisdictions, implementing mutual aid agreements (MAA's) and requesting higher-level assistance

Observation 1.2: The size of the jurisdiction and its limited staff present challenges for

establishing personnel to “man” their emergency support function at the emergency operations center, therefore creating a break in communication for implementing MAA’s and requesting additional assistance through the proper channel of communications.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that departments and agencies continue to refine their individual lines of succession and associated collateral responsibilities.

It is recommended that key officials within all departments and agencies develop job aides and checklists for personnel that may be serving in their capacity at the emergency operations center.

It is recommended that all departments are aware of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and the function and responsibility of the primary and support agencies that make up the Emergency Support Functions for Lafayette County. Updates to the CEMP may need to be made to clarify all county agencies roles during an emergency event in the field and in the emergency operations center.

Objective 2: Evaluate the coordinated primary response activities of the School District, Sheriff’s Office, County and Town of Mayo Volunteer Fire Departments and the other response and support agencies

Activity 2.1 – In response to activation, perform incident notifications, recall essential personnel and stand-up Emergency Management systems to provide a appropriately staffed and operational Emergency Operations Center

Observation 2.1: The scenario presented an extremely challenging situation; it is not clear who should be responding to the actual event and who should report to the emergency operations center.

Analysis: With the limited number of personnel within Lafayette County, the emergency response agencies do not have the resources to respond to an event this size and “man” their ESF in the emergency operations center.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the jurisdiction continue to support training and exercise opportunities to reinforce EOC concepts and operations.

It is recommended that departments and agencies review staffing levels to determine potential shortfalls.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

As noted several times during the analysis sections of this report, exercise participants performed well under the extreme scenario presented to them. Consistent with the recommendations, several areas could benefit from additional documentation of authorities and responsibilities that would result in the implementation of multiple essential functions.

From an evaluator's perspective it was clear that the exercise participants work well together on a day to day basis. All areas were willing to share information and knowledge, offer assets and personnel where appropriate and available and quickly reach consensus on prioritization of essential services.

Lafayette County Emergency Management should be commended for its past efforts and should continue to coordinate opportunities throughout the year for additional training and exercises.

Lafayette County Participant Comment Form Analysis
Lafayette County
Table Top Exercise – Participants Forms
September 10, 2009

Assessment of the exercise design & conduct:

a. Exercise was well structured & organized

- (1)
- (2)
- (3) – 14%
- (4) – 38%
- (5) – 48%

b. Facilitators were knowledgeable about the material, kept the exercise on target and was sensitive to group dynamics

- (1)
- (2) – 5%
- (3) – 14%
- (4) – 29%
- (5) – 52%

c. Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position

- (1)
- (2)
- (3) – 5%
- (4) – 43%
- (5) – 52%

d. Participants included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines

- (1)
- (2)
- (3) – 5%
- (4) – 43%
- (5) – 52%

**(1) – strongly disagree...(5) – strongly agree*

- Lengthen the time – just a little short
- Good discussion – can always use more time. Perhaps have agencies in the spotlight (ie: schools) bring their plan to follow and evaluate on the spot
- Need to look at small counties and resources that are available at the beginning
- More time. Both schools together they would benefit together
- Give more consideration to locals, department size and local assets
- At the beginning of the meeting. I was not clear on the format of how we were going to conduct the meeting. However, the discussion was very good. From my standpoint, I would have liked to be more specific with issue pertinent to our school and the layout of the building, etc, but I am headed in the right direction

**Lafayette County Table Top Exercise
Participants List
September 10, 2009**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Alton Scott	LCEM
Donnie Land	LCPS
Robin Smith	LCSB
Casey Schmeltz	Red Cross
Ian Dyar	ARC
Joy Landen	LCA
John Whittington	LCA
Lt Lonny Hempston	LCSO
Chief William Robinson	LCFD
Deputy Jacquelyn Tysall	LCSO
Chris Land	LC-EMS
JC Lawson	LC-EMS
Jerry Combass	LCHD
Emily Smoak	LCSO
Jr Smoak	LCSO
Rebecca Sharpe	LCSB/SSHS
Bryan Lowe	FDEM
Al Terry Sullivan	LES
Joey Pearson	LCSB
Cecelia Kelley	LES
Maggie Evans	LES
Debbie Singletary	LES/LHS
Jamie Fike	LES
Alicia Poole	LES
Janna Walker	LES
Gina Hart	LES
Tom Lashley	LCSB