



Crisis Response Planning: A Guide for Conducting Tabletop Exercises



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Facilitator's Guide

A tabletop exercise is an effective and inexpensive way to prepare your institution to respond to a variety of campus crises ranging from fire to a student death. Such exercises can be used by administrators interested in testing and improving an institution's emergency response procedures, such as a crisis response team reacting to a natural disaster or a threat assessment team intervening with a student who poses a risk of harm. The steps below provide guidelines for planning and executing an effective tabletop exercise.

Step 1: Set Objectives

Start with the end in mind by determining what institution plans, policies, or practices the exercise will test. Objectives set standards for measuring the exercise's success and should answer the question: "Why is the institution conducting the tabletop?" An average tabletop exercise will cite between three and eight objectives, such as:

- ▶ Determine the effectiveness of institution plans, policies, and procedures for responding to a particular crisis
- ▶ Identify the level of cooperation between departments in responding to a crisis
- ▶ Determine the institution's ability to provide timely and accurate information to different audiences
- ▶ Evaluate the adequacy of resources, such as facilities, equipment, and other materials to support crisis response
- ▶ Increase awareness of crisis procedures and identify training needs

Step 2: Select a Scenario

An effective tabletop scenario should be realistic, engage participants, and meet the exercise's objectives. To ensure a scenario meets these goals, consider the following factors:

- ▶ Identify a likely crisis. In selecting a potential crisis, consider:
 - ▶ Geographic-specific risks that directly or indirectly affect the institution, such as a public transportation shutdown, hurricane, or earthquake
 - ▶ Issues that often generate negative publicity for educational institutions
 - ▶ Common causes of high-profile claims at United Educators, such as:
 - Athletics-related injuries or deaths
 - Transportation accidents on trips sponsored by the institution
 - Sexual misconduct by employees or students
 - Campus crimes such as hazing, sexual assault, and physical assault
 - Student suicide
- ▶ Determine which campus locations are affected. Be specific in identifying which on- and off-campus locations are affected by the scenario.
- ▶ Specify timing and weather conditions. Specify when in the day, year, and academic calendar the scenario occurs and the weather or other factors that can affect the severity of the crisis and the institution's response.
- ▶ Identify which departments are affected. Consider which functions should participate in the scenario and whether enough departments are involved to meet the exercise's objectives.

United Educators has collected sample [tabletop scenarios](#) used by member institutions. Feel free to use these scenarios as a resource in the selection and development of your own.

Step 3: Select People to Facilitate, Participate, and Observe

Facilitator

As the person charged with leading the exercise, the facilitator can greatly contribute to its success. The facilitator is responsible for setting the ground rules and tone, leading and moderating the discussion, helping to answer participant questions, and resolving problems. When selecting a facilitator, look for someone who is well organized, knowledgeable about the topic of the exercise, and has good interpersonal skills.

Participants

Invite people or departments that are likely to respond to or be heavily influenced by the scenario.

Depending upon the goals of the exercise, the number of participants can range from five to 50. When inviting a large number, think about how the group size will affect room setup, the facilitator's ability to moderate, participant ability to discuss and provide feedback, and the number of observers.

Observer

To ensure participant feedback is accurately and completely recorded, require one or more people to observe the exercise, take notes, and recount observations during the review process. Observers should not participate in the scenario's discussion, but should provide input during the exercise's debriefing. Consider using at least one observer for every 10-15 participants.

Step 4: Create an Environment Conducive to Participation

To encourage participant discussion, consider the following:

Room Setup

- ▶ Ensure that all participants can easily see each other, the facilitator, and viewing screen (if applicable) by seating people at a large conference table, in a circle, or in a U-shaped configuration with the facilitator and screen at the front.

- ▶ Divide participants by specialty and use break-out rooms if a single location does not realistically simulate how the key personnel involved would handle a crisis.
- ▶ Seat observers around the perimeter of the room.
- ▶ Provide beverages and snacks to promote a relaxed and comfortable environment.

Timing

- ▶ Determine and adhere to time frames for discussing each scenario module.
- ▶ Provide breaks to allow for cross-discipline interaction and relationship building.

Materials

Provide participants with the following materials:

- ▶ An agenda
- ▶ A copy of the scenario (particularly if you are not using a PowerPoint presentation)
- ▶ A detailed map of the campus or locations important to the scenario
- ▶ Relevant policies or plans
- ▶ Pens and notepads
- ▶ A list of participants with their contact information
- ▶ Evaluations of the exercise and institution plans (see next step)

Ground Rules

Set ground rules that encourage feedback. For example, when introducing the exercise, consider using these ground rules:

- ▶ Participants should tolerate varying viewpoints, including those with which they disagree.
- ▶ Participants should be aware that there is no single accepted solution.

- ▶ The tabletop exercise is an open, “no fault, no blame” venue.
- ▶ Participants should assume the scenario is plausible and events occur as they are presented.

Step 5: Conduct a Debriefing and Evaluation

Immediately following the exercise, the facilitator should conduct a debriefing allowing participants and observers to share their thoughts on the exercise’s discussions. Provide every participant and observer with an opportunity to comment on what worked well, what did not work well, and areas for improvement. Have someone take notes during the debriefing.

After the debriefing, ask participants to complete evaluations of the exercise and the institution’s plans that were tested. For a sample participant evaluation, please see [page 6](#).

Step 6: Write an After-Action Report

The After-Action Report (AAR) records the results of the tabletop by synthesizing the information from the debriefing, evaluations, and exercise notes. Generally, the AAR contains:

1. **Executive Summary:** A brief description of objectives, recommendations, and areas identified as strengths or needing improvement.
2. **Exercise Overview:** The agenda, which departments or individuals participated in the exercise, and how it was conducted.
3. **Exercise Events Synopsis:** A summary of the scenario modules and participant responses.
4. **Analysis of Capabilities:** A list of each task discussed in response to the scenario modules and any that were not discussed as expected. The report should provide an explanation for the tasks that were not addressed. Any recommendations from the evaluations and debriefing should be noted in this section.
5. **Conclusion:** This section provides a summary of all AAR sections, including action steps for using the exercise’s findings to improve the handling of future crises.

For more information on how to write an AAR, please see the resources section.

Step 7: Meet to Discuss Follow-Up Actions

Once the AAR is complete, schedule a meeting with the exercise participants to:

- ▶ Review the AAR and its recommendations
- ▶ Field participant questions
- ▶ Determine what actions are necessary to address the AAR's recommendations
- ▶ Identify the departments or staff responsible for executing the recommendations
- ▶ Develop a plan with timelines for completing recommendations



Resources

- “Emergency Planning Exercises,” Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2015
- “Whole Community: Planning for the Unthinkable Tabletop Exercises,” Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 2013
- “Guidelines for Conducting Tabletop Exercises,” University of Pennsylvania
- Training, Drilling, and Exercising Toolkit,” Texas School Safety Center
- “Testing Your Crisis Management Plan,” *Risk Research Bulletin*, EduRisk



Participant Feedback on Tabletop Exercise

Participant Name:	
Title:	Department:
I. Recommendations and Action Steps	
1. Based on discussions today and the issues identified, list the top three issues and/or areas that need improvement.	
2. Identify corrective steps that should be taken to address the issues identified above. For each corrective step, indicate if it is a high, medium, or low priority.	
3. Who should be assigned responsibility for each action item listed in question #2?	
4. List the procedures that should be reviewed, revised, or developed. Indicate the priority level for each.	



II. Exercise Design and Implementation

Please rate and circle, 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.

The exercise was well structured and organized. 1 2 3 4 5

The scenario was plausible and realistic. 1 2 3 4 5

Facilitators were knowledgeable. 1 2 3 4 5

Facilitators kept the exercise focused and on target. 1 2 3 4 5

Facilitators were sensitive to the group dynamics. 1 2 3 4 5

My participation in the exercise was appropriate and beneficial. 1 2 3 4 5

The groups were organized according to level of authority and included a mix of disciplines. 1 2 3 4 5

The exercise provided a good test of knowledge on the effectiveness of our plan. 1 2 3 4 5

The exercise enhanced my ability to perform under similar circumstances. 1 2 3 4 5

What changes would you make to improve the next exercise?

Thank you!



Sample Tabletop Scenarios

The hypothetical situations presented here have been used in tabletop exercises conducted by UE member institutions. The styles and formats differ since they were developed for use by a certain school, college, or university. These examples are intended to be used as resources to help institutions develop their own scenarios tailored to their objectives and campus environments.

Before conducting a scenario, facilitators may want to develop discussion questions to focus participants on the exercise objectives.

UE wishes to thank Yale University and Rollins College for donating exercises they have used for this collection. The exercise Rollins College provided was developed by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council. If your institution is willing to share a scenario with other UE members, please contact risk@ue.org.



Active Shooter Scenario

Objectives

- 1. Alert and Notification.** Discuss the ability to alert, mobilize, and activate applicable personnel, facilities, and systems required for emergency response and provide for subsequent shift-change staffing to manage the emergency.
- 2. Incident Command and Unified Command.** Assess the ability of local public safety and other agencies to coordinate on-scene operations by establishing incident command and transitioning to a unified command structure within the framework of Incident Command System (ICS) procedures.
- 3. Public Safety.** Discuss the college's ability to manage an active shooter situation and coordinate with local fire and police departments.
- 4. Public Information and Media Coordination.** Discuss options to provide timely dissemination of information to target audiences, ensure consistent data, and minimize public fear. Assess the adequacy of local plans for interfacing with the media and using media resources.

Ground Rules

- ▶ This is an open, low-stress, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected. Respond based on your knowledge of current plans and capabilities involving existing assets as well as insights derived from training.
- ▶ Decisions do not set precedent and may not reflect your organization's final position on a given issue. This is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.
- ▶ Assume cooperation and support from other responders and agencies.
- ▶ Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve response and preparedness efforts. Focus on problem-solving.
- ▶ The scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.
- ▶ There are no hidden agendas or trick questions.
- ▶ All participants receive information at the same time.
- ▶ This exercise assumes that agencies not present will conduct their jobs properly.



Module 1

Exercise time allocation: 30 minutes

Day 1

On a Tuesday in mid-April at 10:15 a.m., a bomb threat is received involving two different buildings at Halliwell College. The call is placed to the dean’s office. The caller identifies the buildings that contain bombs as the campus library and engineering building. The caller also states that he doesn’t like “rich kids.” There is no additional information given, and the call ends quickly.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____

Module 2

Exercise time allocation: 45 minutes

Day 3 (2 days after bomb threat)

1:30 p.m.: On Thursday, two armed gunmen invade the campus library. It is believed that five people are dead, 11 are wounded, and the gunmen are on the second floor with as many as 25 hostages. An improvised explosive device attached to a door on the first floor wounded two police officers when they attempted to enter the building.

1:35 p.m.: An unidentified individual with a semiautomatic rifle fires at people on the other side of campus from the north side of the second story of the engineering building. Based on initial reports, at least five people are wounded and others are fleeing in a panic. A witness reports seeing a man with a guitar case enter the building at approximately 1:30 p.m. as the witness was leaving the building.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____



Module 3

Exercise time allocation: 45 minutes

Day 4 (the day following the shooting)

1:30 p.m.: The campus is like a ghost town. Few staff members are present and classes are canceled.

All three of the gunmen are dead. The two in the campus library take their own lives and the one in the engineering building is killed by law enforcement. The final death toll including the three gunmen is 17.

The main office line is flooded with calls from concerned parents and the news media. Some parents are looking for students. Others want to know what is going to be done to protect their students living on campus. The calls have been coming in consistently since news of the incident broke. Scores of news vans are parked near campus, and reporters are pressing for updates. The initial investigation into the lives of the gunmen produces the following information:

Two were roommates and students at the institution; the third was a friend and a student at a neighboring institution. At one gunman's off-campus apartment, police found a video of the three perpetrators expressing hatred for "rich kids" and vowing to exact revenge on the institution's student body.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____

Module 4

Wrap-up: 20-30 minutes

Comments and observations on the decisions made during the exercise and on conducting the exercise: _____



Bomb Threat and Detonation Scenario

Sample Objectives

1. Effectively notify administration and emergency team members
2. Activate and organize the emergency team in a timely manner
3. Establish and maintain effective communication between the institution's relevant emergency response bodies
4. Evaluate the ability of the emergency team to prioritize its objectives to support the institution's relevant emergency response bodies
5. Gain a clear understanding of the emergency team's role in the response

Ground Rules

- ▶ This is a learning environment and an opportunity to identify and maintain the activities we do well and improve other activities as needed.
- ▶ This is a no fault environment.
- ▶ At some points during the exercise, the facilitator may need to table some issues or make assumptions that help move the exercise forward.

Module 1

It is Thursday, Aug. 5, and it is hot and sunny. A heat advisory issued by the Weather Service will remain in effect until 7 p.m. The combination of temperatures of 95 to 100 degrees, and increasing humidity levels, will produce heat index values of 100 to 104 this afternoon.

A campus museum is hosting two camps today. Camp 1 is for first- through third-graders, and Camp 2 is for fourth- through sixth-graders. Each camp has about 60 kids, 10 staff, and 20 volunteers. Parents start dropping kids off at around 8:45 a.m.; camp starts at 9 a.m. and goes through 5 p.m.

At 8:45 a.m., the director of the campus museum opens an email that was sent to him at 5:48 a.m. The email is in Spanish. He knows some Spanish and quickly realizes what the email states. He calls 911 and advises dispatch that the campus museum has received a bomb threat from the Shining Path, a Peruvian terrorist organization.

English translation of email:

Title: THIS IS A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION FROM THE SHINING PATH
We have placed bombs in your institution's museum and we are watching.

At 9 a.m., a caller tells the museum's front desk personnel that a bomb has been placed in the Machu Picchu exhibit. The caller states that more detail is in the email.



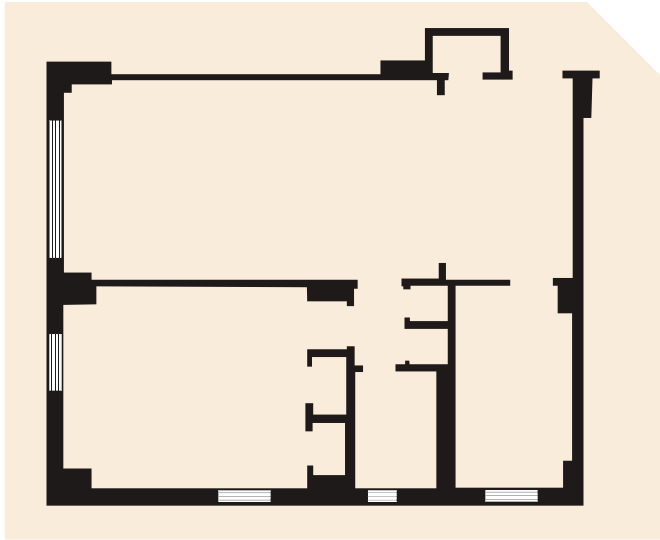
The receptionist used the emergency preparedness flip book under the phone to collect some information about the caller.

Questions to Ask	Exact Wording
1. When is bomb going to explode?	10 a.m.
2. Where is it right now?	Machu Picchu exhibit
3. What does it look like?	A bomb
4. What kind of bomb is it?	I guess you will find out soon enough
5. What will cause it to explode?	Me
6. Did you place the bomb?	Not at liberty to tell you
7. Why?	
8. What is your name?	The Shining Path

Caller Was:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult	<input type="checkbox"/> Child	
Estimated Age:	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-teen	<input type="checkbox"/> Teenage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 40-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 50
Caller's Speech:	Accent: <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Slight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heavy (pronounced)	American: <input type="checkbox"/> New York <input type="checkbox"/> New England <input type="checkbox"/> Southern <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Foreign: <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
Caller's Voice:	<input type="checkbox"/> Distinct <input type="checkbox"/> Slurred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disguised	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Soft <input type="checkbox"/> Loud	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deep <input type="checkbox"/> High-Pitched	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <i>If familiar, whom does it sound like?</i> _____ _____ _____ _____
	Tone: <input type="checkbox"/> Angry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Calm <input type="checkbox"/> Excited	<input type="checkbox"/> Laughing <input type="checkbox"/> Crying <input type="checkbox"/> Normal	Characteristics: <input type="checkbox"/> Lisp <input type="checkbox"/> Raspy <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal <input type="checkbox"/> Stutter		
Background Sounds:	Telephone Connection: <input type="checkbox"/> Clear <input type="checkbox"/> Static <input type="checkbox"/> Long Distance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local	Background Noises: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traffic—some beeping <input type="checkbox"/> Bus <input type="checkbox"/> Train	<input type="checkbox"/> Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Noises <input type="checkbox"/> Voices <input type="checkbox"/> Office Noises	<input type="checkbox"/> Factory Noises <input type="checkbox"/> PA System <input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____
Threat Language:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Well Spoken (educated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Foul <input type="checkbox"/> Irrational	<input type="checkbox"/> Incoherent <input type="checkbox"/> Taped	<input type="checkbox"/> Message Read by Threat Maker	



Museum Map



Background on The Shining Path

Peru regards the Shining Path as a terrorist organization. The group is on the U.S. Department of State’s list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations; the European Union and Canada likewise regard it as a terrorist organization and prohibit providing funding or other financial support. The Shining Path considers the United States to be the greatest risk to its ideals and, most notably, it’s incensed that your institution has the most precious Peruvian artifacts.

Although the organization’s numbers have lessened by 2003, a militant faction of the Shining Path called Proseguir (or “Onward”) continues to be active. On March 21, 2002, a car bomb exploded outside the U.S. embassy in Lima just before a visit by President George W. Bush. Nine people were killed and 30 were injured; the attack was blamed on the Shining Path.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____

Module 2:

Time: 9:40 a.m.

Conditions: Bomb threat has been confirmed as credible.

Conditions: Conference call with emergency team.

Actions: This update is provided for the team:

- ▶ At 8:45 a.m. a bomb threat was emailed and at 9 a.m. was called into the museum. The threat is being made by the Shining Path, an international terrorist organization.
- ▶ At 9:20 a.m. the campus police confirmed the threat as being credible.



- ▶ The museum and other affected buildings are being evacuated, and the police have set a perimeter around the buildings.
- ▶ An alert has been sent to the general population asking people to stay away from the area and people at nearby buildings are being asked to shelter in place.
- ▶ The museum is hosting two camps today. Each camp has about 60 kids, 10 staff, and 20 volunteers. Parents will need to be notified to pick up their kids.
- ▶ Because of today’s heat advisory issued by the Weather Service, we are evacuating people to the campus library and athletic arena.
- ▶ You are on stand-by at this time. If this event escalates, we will advise you of the next steps via an alert.
- ▶ We have a report of six people with minor injuries who are en route to the campus hospital.
- ▶ Types of injuries:
 - Asian-speaking individual with ankle injury
 - Pregnant female complaining of dizziness, nausea, and feeling faint
 - Summer camp student with eye injury
 - Handicapped professor in motorized wheelchair complaining of chest pain
 - Child with skin injury to arm and hand
 - Hysterical patient with no obvious signs of injury

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____

Module 3:

Time: 10 a.m.

Conditions: Detonation of bomb in the museum at the Machu Picchu exhibit on the first floor. All evacuations were completed before the bomb detonated.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____



Module 4:

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Conditions:

- ▶ Emergency Operations Center is opening at 10:30 a.m.
- ▶ Media are on the scene. They are demanding an interview and answers. They have heard a rumor and are planning to report that additional bombs have been placed on campus. In addition, the press is stating that the air is contaminated due to the explosion. They are fueling rumors that it was a dirty bomb.
- ▶ The preliminary damage assessment conducted by the fire department indicates that the bomb severely damaged the Machu Picchu exhibit and has also damaged the museum store across the hall. There is also some smoke and fire damage to the museum’s lobby. The explosion destroyed most of the glass cases on the first and second floors and some of the windows near the blast.
- ▶ The offices at the student union are reporting that people asked to shelter in place in other buildings are very distressed.
- ▶ Traffic is starting to become congested because of the street closures.
- ▶ Parents are flocking to the scene to get their children.
- ▶ Off-duty police officers are calling in to get information about the bomb and offer their assistance. Officers not onsite are asking about the activities on scene.
- ▶ Other response agencies on scene include:
 - City police and fire departments
 - State police
 - FBI
 - ATF
- ▶ News Agencies
 - Onsite: local ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox affiliates
 - En route: The Associated Press, CNN, Reuters, and national NBC, CBS, ABC, and Fox correspondents

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____



Facilitator Inject

(An “inject” is a new piece of information about a module introduced by the facilitator to expand discussion.)

Time: 11 a.m.

Representatives from offices below are all on scene. How would you like to coordinate with these groups?

- ▶ Mayor’s office
- ▶ Governor’s office
- ▶ City police and fire
- ▶ City office of emergency management
- ▶ State police
- ▶ State Department of Homeland Security
- ▶ ATF
- ▶ FBI

Module 5

Review of Scenario

Goal	Met?
1. Effective notification of the administration and emergency operations center (EOC) has occurred.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Explain: _____ _____ _____
2. The EOC was activated and organized on a timely basis.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Explain: _____ _____ _____
3. Effective communication has been established and maintained between relevant parties.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Explain: _____ _____ _____
4. The EOC was able to organize objectives and support relevant parties.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Explain: _____ _____ _____
5. A clear understanding of EOC role in the response was gained.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Explain: _____ _____ _____



Campus Fire Scenario

Objectives

1. To test the soundness of the emergency preparedness plan from the perspective of organizational structure and process
2. To allow plan leaders to utilize their administrative expertise and knowledge of the document in working through an emergency scenario

Ground Rules

- ▶ Timing: Because of the nature of a tabletop, the event will occur much faster than in real life. Also, at some points during the exercise, the facilitator may table some issues or make assumptions that help move the exercise forward.
- ▶ This is a learning environment and an opportunity to identify and maintain the activities we do well and improve other activities as needed.
- ▶ This is a no fault environment.

Module 1

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 8. It is 11 a.m. the week before final exams. The weather is very cold with gusty winds.

You receive the following alert message:

“This is an alert message for the institution’s emergency operations team. Today is December 8, 2011, at 11 a.m. There is a fire at the Collegiate Residence Hall. We are activating the emergency operations team. Please report to the student union as soon as possible. Be advised that there is heavy traffic on Main and Center Streets.”

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____

Module 2

Time: 11:15 a.m.

Overview of the situation for the institution’s emergency operations team:

At 10:45 a.m. campus police received a call that smoke was billowing from the second floor of the Collegiate Residence Hall, in which 458 students reside. The local fire department was notified.

At 11:00 a.m. the building was evacuated and those evacuated were sent to the student union. According to the fire department, the sprinkler system was shut down due to construction at a nearby building. In addition, the water main that feeds the fire hydrants is also shut down, which is affecting fire suppression. The fire department is seeking a pressurized system to extinguish the fire. The local news station has just arrived.

An alert was sent to the entire campus community advising them of the situation and asking them to avoid the area.



Other notable activities on campus:

- ▶ Corporation meeting at the business administration building
- ▶ Campus library: A conversation and book signing with a famous author from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- ▶ Visit by a foreign dignitary for graduate class

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____

Facilitator Inject

(An “inject” is a new piece of information about a module introduced by the facilitator to expand discussion.)

Order	Injects for Tabletop Facilitator	Additional Information
1	How do we or can we account for all students?	458 students at the affected building 18 students still missing Student update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 456 accounted for ■ 2 students missing ■ 1 suspected to have died in the fire ■ Others transported to hospital but not yet identified
2	911 Dispatch calling: “EMS has been requested for several injured students and employees.”	4 people were transported to the hospital 2 students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Jane Doe, sophomore from Cincinnati. Twisted her ankle while evacuating. Will be released this afternoon. ■ John Doe, senior, Oklahoma City. Smoke inhalation; he is being monitored and kept at the hospital overnight.
3	Many students are hysterical because their final exams, papers, and computers are in the building. What can be done?	Students whose rooms were affected will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The dean will work with the students and their professors.
4	A pump truck is on scene and a hose connection was found in front of the gym.	



Order	Injects for Tabletop Facilitator	Additional Information
5	The dining hall was in the middle of preparing and serving lunch. Several of the ovens are on with food still in them.	Water and smoke damage have been reported on the eastern side of the dining hall close to where the fire was located.
6	Students did not evacuate with their jackets and it is very cold.	Message came in from an emergency responder on the ground.
7	Traffic on Main Street is backed up and becoming a problem.	Campus and local police have set up a barricade on the corners of Main and Center Streets. Preferred alternate route is via Broad Street.
8	Some evacuated students have started leaving the student union.	
9	Explosion is heard in the area of Freshman Residence Hall.	The explosion was in the dining hall.
10	A student has passed out at the student union; emergency response is transporting the student to the hospital.	The student transported to the hospital is diabetic and passed out because of low blood sugar; she is OK and will be released from the hospital by this afternoon. Her parents have been notified.
11	Local news station is reporting several students trapped and/or missing.	This is a rumor. They listened in on a conversation about tracking students.
12	Traffic post at Broad Street is reporting several news crews with vehicles asking where they can set up.	News media have been asked to set up their trucks at York Square Place.
13	Numerous occupants of the Freshman Residence Hall are complaining of nausea, dizziness, respiratory distress.	
14	Staff are complaining about low water pressure; they are unable to flush toilets and run showers.	
15	Several media outlets have shown up requesting a statement; they are asking for the names of the dead employees and students.	This is a rumor. At this time, there are no confirmed deaths.
16	The public communications office has just called; they are getting inundated with calls from concerned parents.	
17	Families are calling and requesting information on loved ones that they are unable to contact.	



Module 3

Time 12:15 p.m.

- ▶ The fire is under control.
- ▶ Local fire and campus police report that one body was discovered on the second floor and the death is apparently from smoke inhalation. We do not know who it is.
- ▶ A press conference has been scheduled for 1:30 p.m. A briefing needs to be put together before then.
- ▶ The fire department damage assessment shows that the fire started on the second floor, and the room where it began is destroyed. The cause is under investigation. First floor damage assessment:
 - Heavy water and smoke damage in rooms 112 and 113
 - Minor explosion in the kitchen also caused significant damage to equipment
- ▶ Second floor damage assessment:
 - Destroyed rooms 203-213
 - Heavy fire damage in rooms 214 and 215
 - Heavy water and smoke damage in rooms 215-225
- ▶ Total students affected by room damage:
 - First floor: 39
 - Second floor: 57
- ▶ The fire department has deemed the first and second floors uninhabitable.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____





Facilitator Inject

Order	Injects for Tabletop Facilitator	Additional Information
18	Phone call to (555) 555-5555 from frantic student reporting her friend was walking to her room around the time that the fire started and now she isn't answering her cell phone or text messages.	This student was confirmed deceased due to smoke inhalation. The fire department found her in her bed.
19	Fire department is reporting they have identified 10 injured students who have been transported to local hospitals.	
20	Local news station is looking for more information about the students rumored to have been killed in the fire.	Student has been identified.
21	Police request a tow truck to remove vehicles parked near the south end of the building near the fire scene.	
22	Professor in the biology department calls to report his car was crushed by the fire department. It is badly damaged and he wants the school to pay for it today.	
23	Student calls: Have any decisions been made for housing students who have been displaced? Hotels have limited occupancy due to a convention.	A total of only 27 beds are available in local hotels.
24	Mayor's office requests an update on the incident. Also, the mayor would like to come to the scene.	
25	Media calls to inquire about bystander reports that there has been a murder at the school. What can you tell us about this rumor?	This was another rumor.
26	The emergency operations center will probably be open for at least the next 48 hours. What will be the overnight staffing levels? Who is your backup?	
27	Local fire department is requesting temporary fencing around the building damaged by the fire. Building is structurally unsound.	
28	Gas company on scene and is shutting down all gas feeds and temporarily shuts down feeds to the power plant.	



Arson Scenario

Objectives

1. To test the soundness of the emergency preparedness plan from the perspective of organizational structure and process
2. To allow plan leaders to utilize their administrative expertise and knowledge of the document by working through a potential emergency scenario

Ground Rules

- ▶ Participants should avoid in-depth conversations concerning miscommunication issues. When such issues arise, the team leader should ask the group to move on after proposing a temporary solution to keep the tabletop exercise moving forward.
- ▶ Participants should tolerate varying viewpoints, including those with which they disagree.
- ▶ Participants should be aware that there is no single accepted solution.
- ▶ The tabletop exercise is an open, “no fault, no blame” venue.
- ▶ Since real-life scenarios are time-driven, be sure to consolidate discussion and prioritize or rank which issues have the most severe impact on the institution.
- ▶ Use your specialty to enhance the discussion to reach joint solutions. Do not prioritize your personal position over the welfare of the entire institution.
- ▶ Consider the scenario to be plausible with events occurring as they are presented.
- ▶ The scenario takes place as the facilitator presents it.
- ▶ There are no trick questions or hidden agendas.

Module 1

Mid-February, overcast, 29 degrees, early morning

A small fire begins in the bathroom on the seventh floor of a residence hall on the campus of Halliwell College. The fire alarm system activates, and smoke engulfs only the seventh floor. By the time the fire department arrives through morning traffic, the fire has been extinguished by the sprinkler system but the building has been evacuated. Several rooms sustain smoke and water damage. Many of the students were on their way to class and quickly return when they learned of the fire. Students who were evacuated are confused, and some are asking when they can get their belongings and where they'll be sleeping that night.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____



Module 2

Same day, hours later

People begin to re-enter the residence hall when a student who lives on the third floor discovers a note that states “this is only the beginning, this is what happens when you are not nice to people.” The student who finds the note immediately gives it to a resident assistant (RA) and tells him he will provide additional information if he can remain anonymous. The RA is able to locate the director of student housing and hands her the note. He informs the director that the anonymous student had observed Robert Jones, a freshman, pacing the residence hallway all night talking to himself and appearing extremely distraught. The anonymous student said Jones had recently lost his mother to a long and painful battle with cancer and that Jones’ girlfriend (a fellow university student in the residence hall) had just ended their relationship a few days prior to the fire. Robert Jones’ roommate has not seen him since dinner the evening before. In the interim, fire officials have launched an investigation to determine the cause of the fire.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____

Module 3

One day later, sunny, 34 degrees, mid-morning

Rumors begin to spread across campus of an arsonist on the loose. A sense of anxiety develops within the student population, and some parents are calling the school inquiring about the safety of their children. Robert Jones has not returned to his residence hall and the college has tried to locate him by calling his parents and questioning the ex-girlfriend. The college has turned its findings over to the local police.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____





Module 4

Later that same day

A second fire erupts in the journalism building while classes are in session. This building is also evacuated and the fire is quickly extinguished with minimal damage to the building. Most classes resume. However, fire investigators remain on the scene to inspect the area of origin. The police investigation is ongoing and nothing conclusive has been determined. A television news reporter is outside interviewing students to learn about the college’s response to a possible arsonist on campus. The executive assistant to the president receives an urgent email from a nondescript Gmail account that simply says, “This isn’t over yet.”

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____

Module 5

One day later, mix of snow and ice fall overnight, 29 degrees, morning

Fears are heightened throughout the campus community and parents are demanding to know how the college will protect their children.

A woman claiming to be the wife of a college employee calls local police after watching a news story about the fires. She states that in one of the trash cans at her home she discovered several handwritten notes by her husband, a former Halliwell College employee named Sam Smith. The notes indicate hatred for the school. The police contact the college’s human resources department asking for the employee records of Mr. Smith, who had worked at the college for 14 years before being laid off due to budget cutbacks. Mr. Smith is taken in for questioning by the police as a person of interest and later released without further information being publicly stated. The television news reporter learns of this new development and reports that Mr. Smith had been convicted of criminal mischief and assault almost 20 years ago. At the time Mr. Smith was hired, the college did not conduct background checks.

Participant Discussion of Scenario: _____



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