

Exercise Your Plan

The **Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)** serves as the exercise methodology common to all levels of government. The program uses seven exercise types that represent increasing complexity.

Discussion-based exercises are facilitated discussions in an informal environment about a hypothetical emergency situation. Equipment is not used, resources are not deployed, and time pressures are not applied. Use discussion-based exercises to

- Discuss problems openly around a table
 - Evaluate procedures and plans in a stress-free environment
 - Help groups understand agency roles, actions, and limitations
 - Develop new plans, policies, agreements, procedures
1. Seminars are generally used to orient participants or provide an overview of new or current plans, resources, strategies, concepts, or ideas.
 2. Workshops focus on achieving specific goals or building a product such as an emergency operation plan.
 3. Tabletop exercises (TTX) involve key personnel and use hypothetical scenarios to drive the conversation. The hypothetical situation in a *basic* tabletop exercise remains constant, while *advanced* tabletop exercise scenarios are altered through problems introduced during the exercise.
 4. Games are simulations of operations that may involve two or more teams. The simulations use rules, data, and procedures to depict real-life situations. The goal is to explore decision-making processes and consequences of decisions.

Operations-based exercises are used to validate plans, policies, agreements, and procedures; to clarify roles; and identify resource gaps. Use field exercises to

- Build cohesion among staff and agencies under simulated conditions
 - Improve individual and team performance
 - Assess emergency operations and reception centers for practicality
 - Determine where practical improvements are needed
5. Drills are used to validate one specific operation or function in a single agency or organization. They may be used to provide training on new equipment, develop or validate new policies or procedures, or practice and maintain current skills.
 6. Functional exercises (FE) present complex and realistic problems requiring rapid and effective responses in a highly stressful, time-constrained environment. Functional exercises may be response- and recovery-focused or prevention-focused.
 7. Full-scale exercises (FSE) are multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, multi-organizational exercises. They focus on implementing and analyzing plans, policies, procedures, and cooperative agreements. These exercises require critical thinking, rapid problem solving, and effective responses in real time by trained personnel.