

Evaluation: Post Exercise or Plan Activation

Evaluating the effectiveness of plans involves a combination of training events, exercise, and real-world incidents to determine whether your goals, objectives, decisions, actions, and timing you outlined in the plan led to a successful response. Use the Lessons Learned Information Sharing website (<http://www.llis.dhs.gov>) as a forum for evaluating your concepts against the experience of others.

Exercise programs are integral to the planning process. Create an exercise program using the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (www.hseep.dhs.gov). This program is based on a multi-year training and exercise plan.

An evaluation of any type of exercise or plan activation will capture information that may identify problems to be addressed when you revise the Emergency Operations Plan. Three tools are available for capturing this information:

1. A **hot wash** provides immediate, informal feedback following the activity. It allows evaluators to capture events while they're still fresh. Following an exercise or incident, a hot wash allows evaluators to collect information on players' or responders' level of satisfaction with the exercise or incident and it identifies issues, concerns, and proposed improvements of the exercise or Emergency Operations Plan.
2. A **debrief** is a more formal facilitated discussion. It allows planners, exercise facilitators, and evaluators to review and provide feedback on the exercise. Each person can provide an overview of the functional area observed. Discussions are recorded. Identified strengths and areas for improvement are analyzed for inclusion in the after action report/improvement plan (AAR/IP).
3. The **after action report/improvement plan** summarizes the exercise or event and analyzes performance of the tasks identified as important. It includes corrective actions for improvement, timelines for implementation, and assignment to responsible parties.