*One of the best ways to evaluate the effectiveness of your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is by conducting an exercise which puts all, or parts, of the plan into action and then evaluates the response.*

*The following checklist can help you create a successful exercise.*

**Pre-Exercise Planning**

* Have you reviewed past exercises for suggestions on how to make the next exercise more effective?
* If you plan to ask for assistance from the local fire department, research upcoming community events to avoid conflict, or look for opportunities to collaborate with community partners on larger-scale exercises.
* Schedule a meeting of impacted stakeholders to identify a scenario and timeframe for the exercise.
* Establish goals, objections, and performance metrics for the exercise.
* Submit a briefing memo to school administrators summarizing the plan including goals, benefits, timetable, and anticipated costs of the event.

**Design and Development**

* Select a theme/hazard for the exercise.
* Assign responsibility to specific personnel for developing or purchasing exercise materials.
* Decide who should provide input into the exercise scenario.
* Create a pre-exercise notification list (police, fire, personnel, etc.).
* Determine the timing of the exercise (date, hour, duration).
* Decide if the exercise will involve an actual evacuation or sheltering component.
* Select one to three operational areas to test in the exercise. For example, communications, command and control, medical emergency response, or staff and student safety.
* Decide how to monitor and measure performance.
* Publish the stated goals and objectives to key personnel.
* Schedule and conduct any required personnel training well in advance of the exercise.
* Determine who will be invited to observe the exercise, for example, the local fire department, police, supply/service chain partners, or external consultants.
* Hold a safety review of the plan to identify any risks that could arise during the exercise.
* Allocate time for a post-exercise debrief.

**Prepare for the Exercise**

* Gather or develop any material/handouts for the exercise (e.g. props, maps, write-ups, etc.).
* If you plan to use evaluators, arrange to brief them.
* If it’s an announced event, consider having a lunch and learn to brief personnel and announce plans to staff and students.
* If it’s an announced event, place reminders around campus and adjoining facilities.
* If it’s an unannounced event, confirm the exercise plan with administrators and personnel to minimize school day disruption.

**Running the Exercise**

* Monitor the timing (start and stop) and general flow of unfolding events.
* Begin the exercise by reviewing goals and objectives.
* Record any confusion, questions, or concerns raised by participants during the exercise.
* Provide advice to participants on how to measure success.
* At the end of the exercise ask for immediate feedback either verbally or in writing via a short survey.

**Post-Exercise Review**

* Collect and summarize feedback, especially on the effectiveness of the proposed management structure, strategy, and tactics used to deal with the emergency scenario.
* Evaluate feedback, suggestions, and general reaction to the exercise.
* Prepare a report for school administration, including participants’ recommendations.
* Follow up with participants by providing feedback and soliciting suggestions.
* Set a timeframe for the next exercise.

**Issues Needing Special Attention**

* Monitor to see if your communication plan was effective.
* Did personnel know how to act/react to all elements of the exercise?
* Was a clear chain of command maintained throughout the exercise?
* Were any resources needed that weren’t available?

**Other Comments or Observations:**