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Title: COOP Exercises: Implementation, Challenges, and Awareness

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“COOP Exercises: Implementation, Challenges, and Awareness”

ABSTRACT

This presentation focuses on how the Los Alamos National Laboratory's Exercise Program incorporated Continuity of Operations (COOP) into its FY11 schedule. This presentation discusses the requirements for conducting COOP exercises, the challenges of planning and responding to COOP scenarios, and how COOP exercises help boost awareness of this still yet developing program.

COOP Exercise: Implementation, Challenges, and Awareness

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Overview

- Implementing COOP into the existing Laboratory exercise program.
- Challenges planning and responding to COOP exercises.
- Going for gold—boosting awareness of COOP through exercises.

Implementing COOP

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- **Laboratory COOP documents state a formal training, testing, and exercise (TT&E) program will be developed to assess the Laboratory's ability to respond to a COOP event.**
 - “The TT&E program should be as integrated as much as possible with the LANL exercise program...”

Implementing COOP (cont.)

- **Current Laboratory exercise schedule consists of:**
 - 17 operations-based facility exercises;
 - three functional exercises; and,
 - one site-wide, full-scale exercise.
- **Incorporated COOP into two functional exercises (transportation and seismic scenarios).**

Implementing COOP (cont.)

- Added three COOP tabletops (one weather, two epidemic) and one COOP functional (epidemic) to the existing Laboratory exercise schedule.

Challenges

Challenges

- “Response blinders.”
- Majority of emergency planning efforts are focused on protecting people.
- How do we best incorporate and exercise COOP?

Challenges (cont.)

- Started planning a combined transportation/COOP event exercise.
- Identified the following overarching objectives for the Exercise Program:
 - Exercise an alternate EOC;
 - notifications; and,
 - response to a transportation event.
- Identified the following overarching objectives for the COOP Program:
 - Test the adequacy of an alternate EOC and
 - test the interaction between the COOP Emergency Management Team (CEMT) and the Emergency Response Organization (ERO).

Challenges (cont.)

- **Scenario development—think how we can fully exercise our overarching objectives.**
 - Begin with a local event (not a disaster), taking our primary EOC out of play.
- **COOP exercise planning may require one to develop the scenario far in advance of and/or well after the initiating event.**

Challenges (cont.)

- How aware of COOP are Laboratory response personnel?
- How familiar are responders with their role in COOP?
- These questions were raised even before conducting the exercise.

Challenges (cont.)

- **Need for simulation of major events to drive COOP exercise elements.**
 - Lack of alternate facility contingency planning and simulation of pre-existing condition led to confusion among players.
- **Incorporation of CEMT into ERO raised awareness of how the two groups work with each other.**

Going for Gold

- Exercises provide the opportunity to do.
- December COOP/functional exercise allowed majority of Emergency Operations Division the opportunity to actively engage in a COOP event.
 - Exercised COOP at local level.
- Change of pace from “normal” exercises that at the response or recovery phase.
 - COOP exists beyond the emergency.

Going for Gold (cont.)

- COOP Program awareness is important.
- Emergency Management Program must embrace COOP.
- Although different response aspects, both programs feed into each other.

Questions?