

Cottage Grove Tabletop Exercise

After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

December 9, 2022

Presented by:

PRE-EMERGENCY PLANNING, LLC



EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Cottage Grove Tabletop Exercise 2022
Exercise Date	December 9, 2022
Scope	This exercise was a tabletop exercise conducted for 2 hours and included participants from emergency response agencies and village departments.
Mission Area	Response/Recovery
Purpose	The Cottage Grove tabletop exercise was conducted to discuss the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) response, coordination and communication capabilities associated with a natural hazard that impacts the village. Through the conduct of the exercise participants had the opportunity to further define the roles and responsibilities, response and recovery aspects of a critical incident.
Core Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Operational Coordination▪ Public Information & Warning▪ Operational Communications
Objectives	See page 4 of this document for specific objectives
Threat or Hazard	Natural Hazard
Point of Contact	Matthew Wagner, Lieutenant/Emergency Government Director Cottage Grove Police Department Phone: (608) 839-4652 Email: mwagner@cottagegovepolice.org

ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Task(s)	Core Capabilities	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Describe the process used to gather credible information and develop public information.	Public Information and Warning	P			
Explain the process for information coordination, release and dissemination to all impacted populations.		P			
Discuss the role of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to support incident response and recovery	Operational Coordination				
Define the roles and responsibilities of personnel within the Emergency Operations Center.					
Define how the Emergency Operations Center will be activated	Operational Communications				
Define the methods utilized to maintain situational awareness and a common operating picture					

Ratings Definitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s). • (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified. • (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies or procedures. • (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Core Capability 1: Public Information and Warning

Objective(s): Participants will describe the process used to develop and deliver credible messages to inform the public about protective measures, life-sustaining actions, situation updates, and facilitate the transition to recovery.

Tasks

- ✓ Describe the process used to gather credible information and develop public information.
- ✓ Explain the process for information coordination, release and dissemination to all impacted populations.

Discussion/Analysis: The Village Public Information Officer (PIO) provided an overview of the processes utilized to gather information and the methods available to disseminate information including television, newspaper, radio, social media sites and village department webpages. Although the PIO has had formal training, it was identified that attending a “refresher” course may be beneficial. Although there is a primary PIO for the village it was noted that it may be beneficial for additional personnel to be trained in the role. The following courses are available to support PIO training needs.

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) offers the G289 - Public Information Officer (PIO) Awareness Training course. The Public Information Officer Awareness Course (IS0029) is designed to familiarize participants with the concepts underlying the PIO role. This course can provide a basic understanding of the PIO function for those new to the position and as a review for those serving in the position. Additionally, it can provide those in executive level roles the necessary knowledge of PIO roles and responsibilities during an emergency. Additional information on this course can be found at:

<https://www.trainingwisconsin.org/ViewCourse.aspx?courseid=968e173a-f938-447e-87b9-50cdb13aedd4>

The Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium offers a web-based training through course AWR 209-W Working with the Media: A Course for Rural First Responders. This 6-hour course is adapted from FEMA’s IG-290 curriculum and provides first responders with skills needed to communicate with the public through the media. The course examines the roles of the media and the first responder/public information officer. Participants learn how to give print/electronic media interviews, write news releases, provide information at the scene, and how they fit into the joint information system (JIS). Additional information on this course can be found at: <https://ruraltraining.org/course/awr-209-w/>

Recommendation

1. Identify additional Village and/or agency/department PIO’s. Provide appropriate training.

Core Capability 2: Operational Coordination

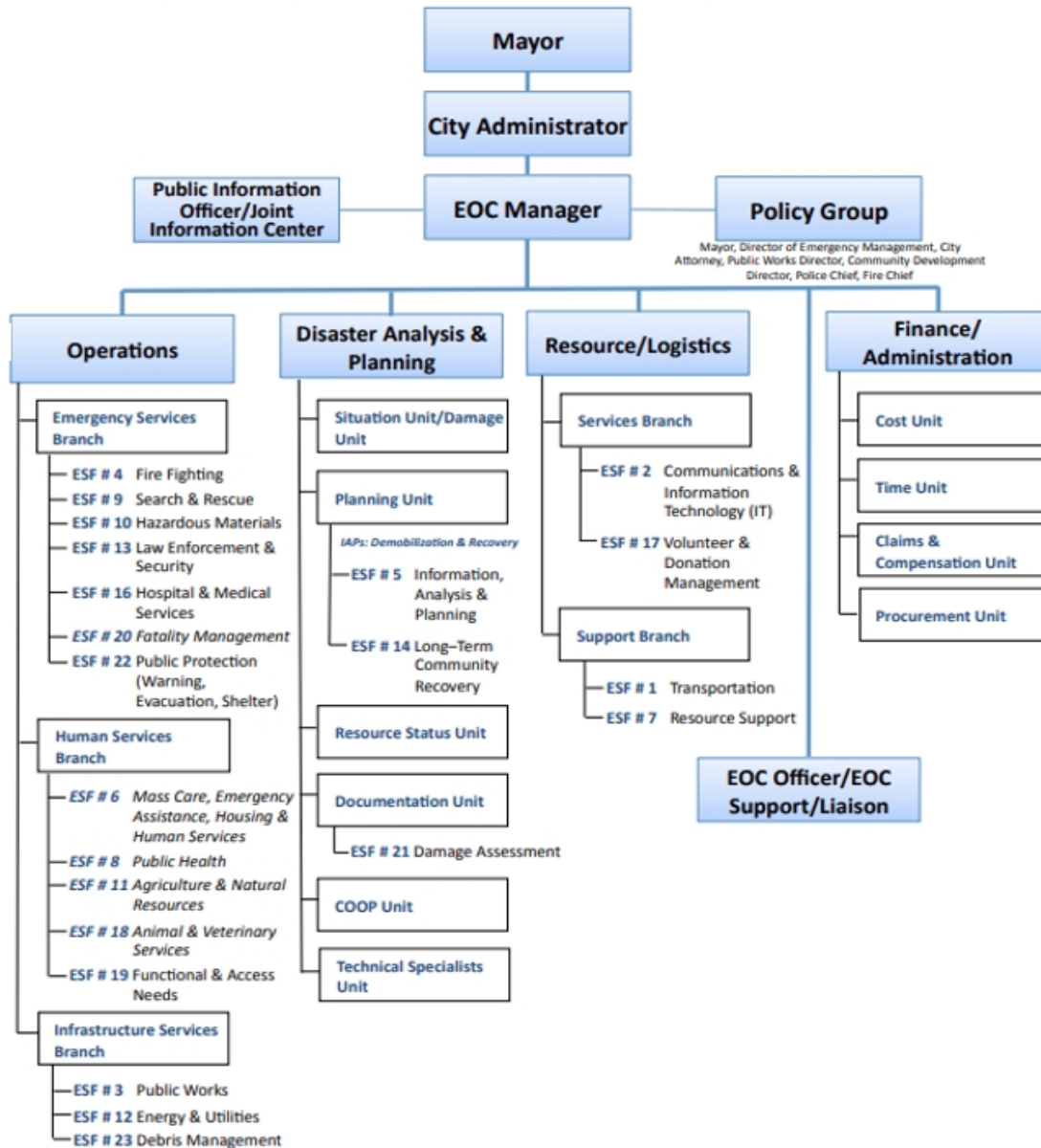
Objective: Explain the structures and processes used to manage a critical incident.

Tasks

- ✓ Discuss the role of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to support incident response and recovery
- ✓ Define the roles and responsibilities of personnel within the Emergency Operations Center.

Discussion/Analysis: There was lack of awareness regarding roles and responsibilities within the EOC when activated. There was uncertainty of who would be requested to support EOC operations and what their role would be within the EOC. As the emergency operations plan is updated to include Emergency Support Functions (ESF) consideration should be given to identifying an EOC structure that supports ICS and organizes ESF's under appropriate ICS positions, as the example illustrates below.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Organizational Chart



Additionally, consideration should be given to developing Job Action Sheets (JAS) for EOC positions. The JAS serve as a quick checklist tool that outlines the primary responsibilities of each position within the EOC.

A focus of the exercise discussion was the concept of the EOC's role in response and recovery versus the Incident Command Post (ICP). Participants identified that additional training may be beneficial in not only EOC operations but also how the EOC interfaces with the ICP. WEM offers the following training courses to support this need:

G-191 EOC / ICS Interface: The goal of the course is to provide state and local emergency management officials with the knowledge and skills they need to operate an Emergency Operating Center (EOC) and interface it with an Incident Command System (ICS) field operation. The course provides an opportunity for participants to begin developing an ICS/EOC interface for their community. The course reviews ICS and EOC responsibilities and functions and depends heavily on exercise and group discussions to formulate the interface.

G-775 EOC Operations: This course examines the role, design, and functions of Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) and their relationships as components of a multi-agency coordination system. The course provides training about staffing and organization, information, systems, communications and equipment needs at the EOC; activating and deactivating the EOC operations; and EOC testing training and exercising. It uses activities and case studies about EOCs and multi-agency coordination systems at the local, State and Federal levels of government.

Additional information regarding these courses can be found at:

<https://www.trainingwisconsin.org/ViewCourse.aspx?courseid=38a6b152-ee91-42fd-be23-23949b3d0564>

Most of the exercise participants have taken appropriate incident command system courses. This was identified as a strength. Although general ICS courses (100, 200, 700 and 800) provide basics for ICS, there are ICS and emergency management courses designed for specific entities. Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) offers a G402 - National Incident Management System Overview for Senior Officials (Executives, Elected, & Appointed). The purpose of this course is to familiarize Senior Officials (executives, elected and appointed officials, city/county managers, agency administrators, etc.) with their role in supporting incident management within the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Additional information regarding this course can be found at: <https://www.trainingwisconsin.org/ViewCourse.aspx?courseid=26b07d31-a749-4071-a303-4b08ceded23a>

Additionally, FEMA offers IS-552: The Public Works Role in Emergency Management which focuses on the role of Public Works departments in community emergency management. The training is intended to help communities improve their emergency management efforts regarding the functions of public works agencies prior to, during, and after disasters. Additional information can be found at: <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-552&lang=en>

The exercise included discussion on demobilization of the EOC following activation at any level. Many participants were not familiar with the process of demobilization. It was identified that information on demobilization should be included in the revised emergency operations plan.

Recommendations

1. Update the EOC organizational setup to support ICS and ESF's.

2. Offer appropriate ICS/EOC training.
3. Include demobilization guidance in the EOP.

Core Capability 3: Operational Communications

Objective: Establish and maintain adequate internal, external and interoperable communications to support information sharing and alert and notification processes.

Tasks

- ✓ Discuss how information sharing will occur between all involved agencies/departments
- ✓ Define how the Emergency Operations Center will be activated

Discussion/Analysis: Participants discussed the current notification and warning systems including the situational briefings provided by the National Weather Service (NWS) when significant weather hazards are threatening the area. Many village agencies/departments are proactive in sharing notifications and warnings both internally within village agencies and departments and externally with the community as appropriate.

During the exercise discussion there were questions on how the EOC would be activated. Although there are processes in place to identify when and who can request the EOC there is limited information on how actual EOC notification will occur. Currently, activation notification may occur through a phone tree type notification, but this process is not well defined. Participants discussed the use of a “texting system” or other application to build an EOC group that would include primary EOC staff and allow for quick notification during critical incidents. As a process is defined it should be included in the EOP and consideration should be given to including redundant forms of notification in the event the primary method is unavailable.

Maintaining a common operating picture and situational awareness within the EOC can be difficult at times, especially when there is not a typical incident command post established in the field. The communication between the EOC and field response (i.e., Unified Command) should continue to be planned for and validated in future exercises.

Recommendations

1. Establish a process for EOC activation, include redundancies.
2. Continue to plan for and exercise on information sharing within the EOC.

Exercise Participants

Total Participants - 20

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Cottage Grove Tabletop Exercise 2022 Registration

Date: Friday, December 9, 2022

Time: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Location: Cottage Grove Fire/DeerGrove EMS Conference Room

	Name	Department/Agency Name
1.	Melissa Waller	Pre Emergency Planning
2.	Matt Wagner	CGPD / EM
3.	Nick Archibald	CGFD / Fire Chief
4.	Ariel Hammond	CGPD / ASST CHIEF
5.	Josh Bennett	Parks & Rec Cottage Grove
6.	Brian Peterson	Cottage Grove Public Works
7.	ERIC LANG	DeerGrove EMS - CHIEF
8.	James Blodgett	MG Schools
9.	John Keelate	Village of Cottage Grove
10.	Gabe Altenbernd	Village of Cottage Grove
11.	FRID PUTH	V. of Cottage Grove
12.	Sean Brueger	VCG
13.	John Williams	VCG
14.	Matt Giese	VCG

	Name	Department/Agency Name
15.	Melissa Ratcliff	Village Trustee
16.	James Kamoke	AP Monona Grove
17.	J. M ^o LEZUN	DC EMER MNGR
18.	DAVE VOLENBERG	HYDRITE CHEMICAL Co.
19.	Marlene Pantano	None Co EM -
20.	Jess Helgelana	Cottage Grove PD
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APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN (IP)

This IP has been developed specifically for the Village of Cottage Grove as an outcome of the Tabletop Exercise conducted on December 9, 2022

Core Capability	Recommendations	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Completion Date
Public Information and Warning	Identify additional Village and/or agency/department PIO's. Provide appropriate training.	Planning/ Training	Village of Cottage Grove Emergency Government	03/24
Operational Coordination	Update the EOC organizational setup to support ICS and ESF's.	Planning	Village of Cottage Grove Emergency Government	12/23
	Offer appropriate ICS/EOC training.	Training	Village of Cottage Grove Emergency Government	06/24
	Include demobilization guidance in the EOP.	Planning	Village of Cottage Grove Emergency Government	12/23
Operational Communications	Establish a process for EOC activation, include redundancies.	Planning	Village of Cottage Grove Emergency Government	12/23
	Continue to plan for and exercise on information sharing within the EOC.	Planning	Village of Cottage Grove Emergency Government	Ongoing

¹ Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.