



Raising the Telework Bar

Learning from the July 2007 Region 1 Telework Exercise

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Exercise Parameters

- Three day event staff played only one day each
- **Day 1:** COOP AM drill at lab, PM coop staff WAH exercise
- **goals:**
 - do a full COOP call-up
 - test COOP core IT and commo. systems
 - have COOP staff familiar with telework resources
- **participants:** 60 COOP members and 12 IT



Exercise Parameters

- **Day 2 and 3: WAH exercise for Tier 2 staff** = essential activity leads, OSC's and RICT team
- **goals:** have Tier 2 staff familiarize themselves with telework resources
- **participants:** a total of 90 essential activity lead and backups, a small number of OSC's, RICT team members



Key Pre-event Planning and Communications

- ❑ Significant effort - reviewing essential activity leads list and their IT resources
- ❑ Manager discussions with essential activity leads...a KEY success factor
- ❑ 1 hour “Telework 101” training tailored for WAH
- ❑ Use of national 3N notification day before exercise start ; 4 wk participant notice
- ❑ Post-exercise online survey with great response



Lessons Learned: IT Infrastructure

- ❑ Thumbdrive with Notes and emergency reference material was great hit
- ❑ Exercise identified many staff appl'n follow-ups
- ❑ Attention need...growing Vista home use
- ❑ RSA web token operation was slow
- ❑ Help needed re staff plugging office PC in at home
- ❑ Continued investment needed in laptops, TD's, and Citrix



Lessons Learned: Participant Readiness

- ❑ Readiness training (Telework101) with IT test material ...well received
- ❑ Got “starter” flyaway kit going with training material and Info. Resource list
- ❑ ...But a lot more flyway kit attention by management and staff is needed
- ❑ Some understand value of having phone lists etc with them, and staged in multiple locations (home, vacation spot)
- ❑ Staff need to self test assigned IT resources regularly



Lessons Learned: Participant Support and Involvement

- ❑ Post exercise survey showed participants are engaged...100+ responses in 2 days!
- ❑ Most users use or can figure out Webmail
- ❑ Most had high speed internet at home
- ❑ High value info resources: the EPA “reservation-less” conference call system and primary and backup call-in numbers for facility and status info
- ❑ I.C. handled asst. requests OK ... time consuming calls were from users who had **never** worked from home before



Lessons Learned: Exercise Structure

- ❑ The morning COOP drill, and afternoon COOP telework exercise, followed by day 2 and day 3 exercises for two waves of Tier 2 staff worked and was a good simulation of emergency event staff staging to build on
- ❑ Participants suggested drilling more often, and using a surprise call-up format
- ❑ They also wanted more inter-group work problems and routine work processing to be part of the exercise



Telework IT Resources Needing More Attention

- ❑ Putting in place net access protection for telework PC's
- ❑ Look at Microsoft Suite for home PC users when support license is renewed
- ❑ IC staff becoming competent with a tool for remote PC assistance
- ❑ Test operating IC helpdesk outside of EPA facilities



Continuous Improvement To Do's

- Aggressively share what we learn:
 - new approaches, tools, exercise elements
 - flag facilities and processes that look shaky
- Make Telework improvement a priority for agency operations research and continued investment
- Challenge our COOP and essential staff to improve their personal and team Telework game plan