

Secure Portal – Background

In early 2002, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Office for Domestic Preparedness (USDHS/ODP) recognized the need to coordinate the scheduling of training and exercises, and share exercise information and materials with States and local jurisdictions. The USDHS/ODP Secure Portal was developed to meet these needs. The portal's web address is: <https://odp.esportals.com/>

Exercise Overview

The exercise portion of USDHS/ODP's Secure Portal includes the following materials, tools and capabilities:

- Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Volumes I-IV
- Library of sample exercise materials and resources
- Exercise scheduling and reporting system
- Community forum to share ideas
- Link to the *Lessons Learned Information System* (*llis.gov*).

HSEEP Library

HSEEP is a threat and performance-based exercise program that provides doctrine and policy for planning, conducting, and evaluating exercises. It is delivered to State and local exercise planners via a series of manuals:

- *HSEEP Volume I: Overview and Doctrine (Revision 2)* provides requirements and guidance for the establishment and maintenance of a homeland security exercise and evaluation program.
- *HSEEP Volume II: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement* provides proven methodology for conducting evaluations of homeland security exercises and implementing an improvement program.
- *HSEEP Volume III: Exercise Program Management and Exercise Planning Process* assists planners in establishing an exercise program and outlines a standardized planning process adaptable to any type of exercise.

- *HSEEP Volume IV: Sample Exercise Documents and Formats* provide samples and formats of exercise documents referenced in the HSEEP manuals. The organization of Volume IV is consistent with the outline and explanations contained in Volume III.

An electronic version of each HSEEP manual and all Volume IV materials are located in the portal's library.

Exercise Scheduling and Reporting System

The Secure Portal features an Exercise Scheduling and Reporting System that aims to enhance coordination and avoid scheduling conflicts between State-level agencies and local jurisdictions and among neighboring jurisdictions, to facilitate the implementation of HSEEP, and to minimize the personnel-hours required to schedule and report on an exercise. Jurisdictions with access are responsible for logging in to the Portal and entering pertinent exercise data. The scheduling system automatically generates a calendar for each State, based on exercise data entered by participating jurisdictions, and a national overview calendar based on State schedules and Federally-sponsored activities. The system also supports the reporting functions outlined in *HSEEP Volume II: Evaluation and Improvement*, and allows the user to submit After Action Reports and Improvement Plans.

Feedback

USDHS/ODP's Exercise Division welcomes suggestions, ideas and comments on all HSEEP volumes and materials as well as the Exercise Scheduling and Reporting System. The Secure Portal offers a collaborative environment in which documents can be enhanced and updated based on new ideas or changing conditions.

Additional exercise tools will be posted, and existing materials will be updated regularly, so users should monitor the site for enhancements to the portal. If you have suggestions or ideas, please email the ODP Exercise Division organization through the Secure Messaging function on the portal.

Access/Security

ODP State Administrative Agents (SAA) are reminded to designate two to three portal administrators, who will control access to their State's private Library folder and detailed training and exercise scheduling and reporting information. The SAA or designated Training or Exercise Point of Contact (POC) must approve all requests for portal administration. Once designated and approved, the State's portal administrator will be able to invite other people within their respective State to access the materials and tools on the Portal. To designate Portal administrators for training and exercises, please email their names and email addresses to askcsd@ojp.usdoj.gov or call 1-800-368-6498.

Only USDHS/ODP Exercise Managers, select FEMA Headquarters exercise staff, and the respective State/jurisdiction representatives will have access to specific State materials and information (i.e., schedules, after action reports, etc.).

System Requirements

Secure Portal users must provide their own access to the Internet. The system does not rely heavily on graphics, so a dial-up connection partnered with Netscape 7 or higher, Internet Explorer 6 or higher, or Mozilla 1.5 or higher should provide adequate performance, however a higher-speed connection is recommended for users who download significant exercise resources.

Most firewalls do not interfere with access to the portal applications. If you have problems accessing the site, the help desk is available at (804) 744-8800 or via email at helpdesk@espgroup.net.

Portal Training

Teleconference sessions took place over a two week period in March 2004 to train State Training and Exercise POCs on the use of the portal. Comments and suggestions from the exercise sessions have been incorporated and are addressed in the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) list (attached to the Information Bulletin).

For additional information on the use of the portal, please reference the Portal Users' Guide for Exercises in the portal library for step-by-step instructions on scheduling and reporting exercises, as well as inviting others to join the portal.

For More Information

For technical questions on the use of the portal, a help desk is available at (804) 744-8800 or via email at helpdesk@espgroup.net. For substantive programmatic information and questions, please contact the Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk (CSID) at 1-800-368-6498.