



Department and Agency Continuity Telework Exercise Exercise Plan (EXPLAN) Template

May 2013

TEMPLATE INSTRUCTIONS

This Exercise Plan (EXPLAN) template provides exercise planners with the information necessary for their participation in the [D/A Name] Headquarters (HQ) Continuity of Operations (COOP) Telework Exercise, referred to as **DETERMINED SENTRY XX**. This EXPLAN Template is a tool to assist agencies to conduct a telework exercise to determine current capabilities to operate in a telework or socially-distanced environment and to determine what needs to be done to enhance your current capabilities and to better prepare for a pandemic influenza or continuity event.

Use of this template is not mandatory. Organizations are encouraged to tailor their exercise documents to meet their specific Continuity planning and operational needs.

This template is set up to provide an example of an exercise plan for conducting a telework exercise. Sample text and instructions have been provided throughout the template, in *blue italics* and **bold text** inside of brackets. Once organization-specific information is entered in the brackets, please **delete italicized** instructions and replace bracketed instructions with applicable information (e.g., for FEMA, the instruction [D/A Name] would be replaced with FEMA).

This template is unclassified in its current form. When the template is completed each organization should classify the document to meet their internal program guidance. Organizations should consider their plan as For Official Use Only (FOUO), if it contains sensitive information. An electronic version of this document, in portable document format is available on the FEMA website (<http://www.fema.gov/about/org/ncp/coop/templates.shtm>). To request a Microsoft® Word version please contact the National Continuity Programs, Continuity of Operations Division via e-mail (FEMA-NCP-Federal-Continuity@dhs.gov).

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PREFACE

This Planning Guide was produced with input, advice, and assistance from the **Determined Sentry [Year] (DS [Year])** planning team, which followed the guidance set forth in the FEMA, Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

The Planning Guide gives officials and players from FEMA the information necessary to participate in an operations-based exercise focusing on participants' telework agreements, policies, and procedures as may be required to support an all hazards no-notice environment. The information in this document is current as of the date of publication and is subject to change as dictated by the exercise planning team.

Determined Sentry [Year] is an *unclassified* exercise. The control of information is based more on public sensitivity regarding the nature of the exercise than on the actual exercise content. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, but players may view other materials as deemed necessary in the performance of their duties. The Planning Guide may be made available to all exercise planners.

All exercise planners should use appropriate guidelines to ensure the proper control of information within their areas of expertise and to protect this material in accordance with current jurisdictional directives. Public release of exercise materials to third parties is at the discretion of [D/A Name] and the exercise planning team.

HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

1. The title of this document is *Determined Sentry [Year] Exercise Plan*.
2. The information gathered in this document should be handled as sensitive information not to be disclosed. This document should be safeguarded, handled, transmitted, and stored in accordance with appropriate security directives. Reproduction of this document, in whole or in part, without prior approval from [D/A Name] is prohibited.
3. At a minimum, the attached materials will be disseminated only on a need-to-know basis and when unattended, will be stored in area offering sufficient protection against theft, compromise, inadvertent access, and unauthorized disclosure.
4. For more information, please consult the following point of contact (POC):

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NAME

Title

[D/A Name]

Address

Office: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

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Exercise Director:

NAME

Title

[D/A Name]

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CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Introduction

[D/A Name] will conduct a no-notice 'No Fault' telework exercise Determined Sentry during the month of [Date]. The exercise will test our current capabilities to operate in a telework environment, test the alert and notification system, connectivity to the [D/A Name] network through the Virtual Private Network (VPN) dual factor authentication, remote access to component essential/vital records, and communications capabilities.

Determined Sentry is a one-day, no-notice exercise for the [D/A Name] personnel, to telework from their designated telework site. All [D/A Name] personnel with current telework agreements in place are encouraged to participate in this exercise. It is important that managers and supervisors ensure telework agreements are current and in place for employees who support [D/A Name] Mission Essential Functions (MEF), as employees in this category will ensure continuity readiness for any local, regional, or nation-wide event.

Determined Sentry Objectives

(Below lists suggested exercise objectives, determine best use of objectives to drive your agencies required objectives and goals):

This exercise will focus on the following objectives:

- To increase the awareness if [D/A Name] HQ's requirement to incorporate telework into COOP Planning and to operate from various locations
- Test the ENS alert and notification system
- Test [D/A Name]'s ability to remotely access essential/vital records, files, and databases in a no-notice telework environment
- Continue [D/A Name] Components MEFs in a telework environment
- Test communications capabilities (i.e., GETS, WPS, telephone, blackberry, large scale teleconferencing, etc)
- Stress test [D/A Name] remote network access capabilities
- Test social distancing telework sites of operational capabilities
- To identify solutions or alternative actions to COOP challenges presented during a telework or socially-distanced event (i.e., pandemic influenza, weapons of mass destruction)

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CHAPTER 2: DETERMINED SENTRY LOGISTICS

Determined Sentry Summary

General

All [D/A Name] components will be responsible for providing their users with equipment to participate in this exercise. All personnel are to bring their laptops to work before the scheduled May telework exercise and connect them to the network to ensure they have the latest Anti-virus definitions and patches on their machines.

Suggest adding some specific guidance related to your D/As policies, see suggested text:

Following guidance set forth by the Chief Information Officer (CIO), this should be done at least twice monthly (if users do not follow these guidelines it is highly probable their laptop will not connect; for example, if a user hasn't used their VPN connection in 45 days the account will be suspended and the user must contact the Enterprise Service Desk (ESD) to get the account reactivated). All users should log into their VPN accounts weekly.

There will be a series of planning and preparation events for this exercise. Determined Sentry allows an opportunity to exercise all telework staff and to stress test IT systems. Additionally, telework continuity capabilities and the process of coordinating with employees utilizing continuity communications capabilities will also be tested. Finally, this exercise process will capture valuable data related to the business process support requirements/challenges associated with telework for gap analysis and mitigation strategies.

Exercise Play

Exercise play will begin at 7:30 a.m. (local time) [Date] with each participant; logging into the [D/A Name] network and sending an email to their Continuity of Operations Point of Contact (COOP POC) and their direct supervisor that they have connectivity and are operational. Play will proceed according to the events outlined in the Player Handbook. The exercise will conclude upon the completion of operations and attainment of the exercise objectives, as determined by the Exercise Director.

The exercise execution timeline is as follows: *(tailorable by D/As to meet their specific needs and schedule)*

ENS Notification – 2 p.m. EDT day prior to telework exercise

No-Notice Telework Exercise – All times adjusted to player location

- **7:30 – 7:45 a.m.:** Log into [D/A Name] network
- **7:45 – 8 a.m.:** Send exercise participant e-mail to component COOP POC and direct supervisor
- **7:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.:** Test GETS/WPS access

- **8:00 – 9 a.m.:** Manager conducts component conference call with staff
- **8:00 – 11:30 a.m.:** Exercise play and completion of Annex A located in component shared drive
- **11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.:** Lunch
- **12:30 – 4:30 p.m.:** Resume Exercise Play, complete Annex B (located in component shared drive), e-mail Annex A and B to COOP POC
- **1:00 - 3 p.m. -** COOP POC email [\[email address\]](#) to report number of component participants and any issues
- **3:30 – 4:30 p.m.:** Component Hot Wash discussion

Hot Wash – Following week

- **10 -11 a.m.:** Hot wash, **[Insert specifics on your agencies Hotwash conduct]**

Determined Sentry Participants

The following are the categories of participants involved in this exercise; note that the term “participant” refers to all categories listed below, not just those playing in the exercise:

- *Players.* Players are agency personnel who have an active role in responding to the simulated emergency requiring telework and perform their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players initiate actions that will respond to guidance provided by their supervisors
- *Support Staff.* Exercise support staff includes individuals who are assigned administrative and logistical support tasks during the exercise

Exercise Tools

Player Handbook

The Determined Sentry Player Handbook is designed to help players participate and meet the training objectives. This handbook also enables players to understand their roles and responsibilities in exercise execution and evaluation.

Exercise Implementation

Exercise Rules

The following are the general rules that govern exercise play:

- Real-world emergency actions take priority over exercise actions
- Exercise participants will comply with real-world response procedures, unless otherwise directed by control staff or supervisors

Safety Requirements

General

Exercise participants safety takes priority over exercise events.

Although the organizations involved in the exercise will come from various [D/A Name] components, they share the basic responsibility for ensuring a safe environment for all personnel involved in the exercise. Professional health and safety ethics should guide all participants to operate in their assigned roles in the safest manner possible. The following general requirements apply to the exercise:

- Participants will be responsible for their own and each other's safety during the exercise. It is the responsibility of all persons associated with the exercise to stop play if, in their opinion, a real safety problem exists. Once the problem is corrected, exercise play can be restarted.
- All organizations will comply with their respective environmental, health, and safety plans and procedures, as well as the appropriate: Federal, State, and local environmental health and safety regulations.

Exercise Setup

Exercise setup involves prior training activities and the dispersal of exercise materials including documentation.

Exercise Communication

Exercise Start, Suspension, and Termination Instructions

The exercise is scheduled to run from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., [Date] or until the Exercise Director determines that the exercise objectives have been met.

Player Communication

Players will use routine, in-place agency communication systems.

The need to maintain the capability for a real-world response may preclude the use of certain communication channels or systems that would usually be available for an actual emergency or incident. In no instance will exercise communications interfere with real-world emergency communications.

Communications Check

Before the start of the exercise, each telework supervisor will conduct a communications check with all interfacing communication means to ensure redundancy and uninterrupted flow of control information.

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CHAPTER 3: PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

Telework Exercise Director

The Telework Exercise Director has overall responsibility for planning, coordinating, and overseeing all exercise functions, and achievement of the exercise design objectives.

Telework Exercise Lead Planner

The Telework Exercise Lead Planner for [D/A Name], responsibilities for Determined Sentry include:

- Support overall exercise development and coordination
- Develop, coordinate, and obtain approval for all supporting exercise plans and reports
- Plan, coordinate, and facilitate all exercise planning meetings/workshops
- Conduct a hot wash after the exercise to obtain perspective on the accomplishment of the overarching purpose and objectives
- Collect participant feedback and include in the After Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP)

Component Point of Contact Instructions

Before the Telework Exercise

- Schedule conference calls and obtain dial-in numbers for:
 - 8 – 8:30 a.m. – Component Conference Call
 - 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. – Component Hot wash discussion
- Disseminate Player Handbook and Tri-Fold to each participant
- Place Annex A and B from Players' Handbook in your component's shared drive for non-ERG, and for ERG place the forms in the COOP folder and email component telework participants path to folder with instructions on completing the required evaluation questionnaires

Following the Telework Exercise

- Collect evaluation questionnaires
- Conduct end of exercise component hot wash
- COOP POCs participate in overall hot wash the following week of exercise
- Contribute in the development of the AAR/IP

Manager Instructions

Before the Telework Exercise

- Ensure personnel have the capability to telework and have a current telework agreement on file.
- Know where your personnel will be teleworking from and how to contact them.
- Provide your personnel with guidelines of work to be performed during telework exercise.

During the Telework Exercise

- Establish a teleconference to conduct: roll-call, review of issues, and discuss potential recommendations for improving telework operations.
- Communicate pertinent guidance to your staff as required.
- Managers and staff communicate frequently throughout the day as performance of MEF's requires.

Following the Telework Exercise

- Conduct a hot wash with your personnel and provide feedback to your COOP POC
- Ensure participating personnel email their Telework Continuity Exercise Evaluation Questionnaire to their COOP POC.

Participant Instructions

Before the Telework Exercise

- Review the appropriate continuity and telework agreements, procedures, and support documents.
- Make sure your laptop has the current patches and software updates.
- Read Player Handbook which includes information on exercise safety.

During the Telework Exercise

- Send an e-mail confirmation to your manager and COOP POC to validate participation in the exercise.
- Perform normal duties and exercise specific requirements as if the telework exercise was real.
- Players will complete the telework continuity exercise evaluation questionnaire and email to their COOP POC.
- Players will be notified by their manager to participate in a 30 minute telework conference call, which includes: roll-call, review of issues, and potential recommendations for improving telework operations.
- Conduct a GETS card test using your GETS card (if applicable).
- Use WPS to test your WPS capability (if applicable).

- Players will be instructed to maintain a log of their activities.

Following the Telework Exercise

- Participation in component Hot Wash conference call.
- Access your component shared drive to retrieve the Telework Continuity Exercise Evaluation Questionnaire, complete the Evaluation Questionnaire. This form allows players to comment candidly on telework activities and effectiveness of the exercise. The completed form shall be e-mailed to your COOP POC. This information will be consolidated into a 3 up/3 down and briefed out at the COOP POC Hot Wash the following week.

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CHAPTER 4: EVALUATION AND POST-EXERCISE ACTIVITIES

Telework Exercise Documentation

The goal of Determined Sentry is to exercise and evaluate [D/A Name] plans and capabilities as they pertain to telework implementation, such as would be required in a no-notice event. Data collected by managers, players, and COOP POCs will be used to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the context of the exercise objectives.

Telework Hot Wash

[D/A Name] will conduct a Hot Wash [Insert specifics on your agencies Hotwash conduct]

After Action Report

The After Action Report (AAR) is a culmination of the Determined Sentry exercise. It is a written report outlining the strengths and areas for improvement identified during the exercise. The AAR will include the: timeline, executive summary, scenario description, mission outcomes, and capability analysis. The AAR will be drafted by a core of individuals from the exercise planning team.

The improvement process represents the comprehensive, continuing preparedness effort of which the exercise is a part. The lessons learned and recommendations from the AAR will be incorporated into an Improvement Plan.

Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan identifies how recommendations will be addressed, including what actions will be taken, who is responsible, and the timeline for completion. It is created by key stakeholders from participating components.

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ANNEX A - TELEWORK CONTINUITY EXERCISE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name (Last, First):			
Component:		Staff/Section:	
Telephone #:		Email Address:	
Telework Agreement Up to Date	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		

Your observations during the Telework Exercise will assist [D/A Name] in developing the After Action Report and Improvement Plan. We ask that you respond to all questions that apply to your experience in this exercise and that you provide as much detail as possible. E-mail your completed questionnaire to your Component COOP POC at the conclusion of this exercise.

1. Were you able to access and effectively use your e-mail (send and receive)?

YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

2. Were you able to open attachments in your e-mail? YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

3. Were you able to access all of the records and files required to do your work?

YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

4. Were you able to test your GETS and/or WPS? YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

5. Did you bring work materials with you to your designated telework location?

YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

6. Were you able to communicate effectively with your management? YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

7. Were you able to communicate effectively with your [D/A Name] co-workers? YES

NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

8. Were you able to communicate effectively with your external customers and stakeholders? YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

9. Did you have access to contact lists for people and organizations you needed to reach?

YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

10. Did you participate in a conference call? Do you feel the conference call was an effective communication method? YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

11. Did you use collaborative software such as Adobe Connect, Web ER or Net Meeting?

YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

12. What hours did you work from your designated telework location (e.g. 0730-1630)?

YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

13. Did you experience any technical, computer, or communications difficulties?

YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

14. Was your telework environment conducive to accomplishing critical tasks?

YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

15. Overall, were you effective in performing your job from your designated telework location? YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

16. Did you accomplish the amount of work you would have accomplished if you had been in your regular office? YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

17. What would you change to improve your telework capability; what would make you more effective or productive? YES NO

EXPLAN

Determined Sentry [Year] (DS [Year])

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

18. Did you record the telework code in your T&A record for this exercise?

YES NO

Problem Description:

Proposed/Actual Resolution:

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL CONCERNS/SUGGESTIONS?

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ANNEX B - HOT WASH FORM

Exercise Determined Sentry			
Name:		Evaluated Organization:	
Email:		Staff/Section:	
Telephone:		Role in Exercise:	
List the top three (3) organizational strengths:			
1.)			
2.)			
3.)			

List the top three (3) items requiring improvement:

1.)

2.)

3.)