

ERTS

Preparedness Exercises

Emergency Response Training Systems



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Simulations for Life

*F*or organizations that must protect vital at-risk assets, ERTS provides the ability to develop and verify response plans through interactive, computer-based simulations like those used during and since the Cold War by United States military forces.

Unlike roundtable planning sessions, ERTS simulations allow multiple personnel to experience in real-time the dynamic effects their decisions have during the crisis and consequences of an unfolding scenario. Our simulation removes technical considerations and allows personnel to focus on the decision-making process.

Benefits: ERTS will:

- Engage decision makers from multiple agencies in real-time problem solving
- Test preparedness plans, leadership and responses to evolving situations
- Highlight jurisdictional responsibilities and authority
- Identify weaknesses in response plans
- Expose weaknesses in intra- and inter-agency communications
- Reveal strengths and weaknesses in intra- and inter-agency teamwork
- Identify gaps and overlapping areas of responsibilities
- Test shifts from crisis intervention to consequence management
- Provide ideas and action plans for developing stronger intra- and inter-agency preparedness
- Enhance abilities to inventory available resources to quickly and effectively to meet a crisis, and identifies desirable resources that would enhance preparedness
- Increase confidence in real-time decision making under pressure
- Encourage collaboration to solve complex problems
- Strengthen resolve across agencies to improve and re-evaluate

Services.

ERTS will provide the complete array of services for a successful simulation exercise. Following is a list of services and deliverables that will be provided. All deliverables will be branded to establish your sponsorship of the exercise. The exercise will be conducted to involve your guest agencies in such a way to meet your preparedness goals.

Equipment. All computer systems, networks, servers, monitors and communications equipment will be supplied and configured into functional workstations.

Exercise planning. Our Exercise Coordinator will meet with you as needed to help you determine goals for your exercise and plan two days of simulations and review sessions to best achieve those goals.

Data Base. Our technicians will create the landscape and structures that will be used in your exercise in the simulation.

Technicians. The simulation should be a learning experience for decision makers—not a computer gaming session. A technician with subject matter expertise will be provided at each participating agency

workstation to interact with the computer. Agency participants, therefore, are free to concentrate on the challenges and decisions at hand.

Threats. ERTS will provide the team that will introduce the threats and problems into your exercise. Once a simulation begins, it continues to a conclusion event and, thus, engages participants to make real-time decisions about preventing catastrophes as they unfold and minimizing consequences resulting from both threats and decisions by participants.

Pre-exercise information packets. You will be provided information packages, branded for your company and exercise, as a pre-exercise deliverable for each agency you are inviting. These packages are designed to allay concerns about competence and job security while providing a “*what to expect*” introduction to the exercise. To have the most successful exercise, it is important that it be framed and conducted as a training event—not as a test of competence. We will provide sample cover letters you may use for confirming your invitations and introducing the exercise to participating agencies as a training event for increasing the overall preparedness of the community’s emergency responders.

Post-exercise deliverables. We will work with you to develop a packet to be delivered to each participant after the exercise to summarize the event and re-affirm your message about preparedness. We will also assist you in developing an after action report that will define specific requirements identified during the simulation that need to be addressed by the various participating agencies.

Participants.

Your simulation should include those agencies that may have an impact on the assets you want threatened during the exercise. Typically, those would include police department (to include SWAT), sheriffs department, fire department, hazardous materials teams, emergency management agency, hospital and medical response teams, utility authorities, vendors, maintenance contractors, and others.

The exercise you plan will, of course, determine the list of participants. To maximize the benefit to your organization, we encourage you to consider simulation scenarios that will include not only those upon whom you depend to respond in a crisis to help you protect your assets, your areas of responsibility and your employees, but also include representatives of those assets that you are protecting.

Available Exercises.

Within your exercise goals, our technicians will provide you with an imaginative array of threats and damages designed to challenge even the most seasoned emergency management thinkers and planners.

The goal of an appropriate and beneficial day of simulation exercises is to provide practical, actionable conclusions that can be used to develop stronger response scenarios, tighter security, and smarter decision-making among disparate agencies. Our threats are developed, with your inputs, to achieve this goal. Below is a partial list of threat and problem categories that can be used separately or together:

- Internal threats; employee, infiltrators, sabotage, accidents
- External threats; disgruntled former employees, accidents, vandalism
- Combined threats; random or coordinated
- Acts of God, weather
- Terrorist, hostage
- Decoy events
- War and invasion
- Nuclear
- Chemical and biological
- Fire, hazardous materials
- Agroterrorism

Implementation.

Your simulation exercise will be hosted by an Exercise Coordinator. This will be the individual with whom you worked to plan your exercises. Participants will be introduced and briefed on the morning's exercise. The exercise will begin with participants at their agency workstations and will proceed through the exercise with their technician. Communications between agencies will be facilitated in such a way as to reflect real-world problems within the exercise scenario.

At the conclusion of each exercise, participants will be gathered to go over the exercise and discuss decisions made and explore new and different ways to work together for better outcomes. The events of the exercise can be replayed on a large screen to aid in the analysis and learning.

Subsequent runs of the exercise give participants an opportunity to put their learning to use in another series of threats and crisis events. Each run is begun with a briefing and ends with another review and analysis session. Typically, there is a great deal of improvement in each subsequent simulations which can be seen in on-the-fly decision-making, communications, and coordination across agencies.

Each workstation will be comprised of a large-screen monitor, computer, technician, and the agency participants. The agency at a particular workstation will be able to see only the simulation images that would be available to them in real-time and within line of sight. Each agency must rely on communications with others—or a media participant—to gather information about unfolding events. Decisions must be made within the constraints of the views available on the screen. The technician at each workstation will handle the interaction with the computer; it is imperative that participants concentrate on their making decisions and not on computer interface interactions.

Each exercise will be framed as a learning experience. These simulations very quickly expose flaws in conventional plans, shortcomings in standard procedures, and errors in applying common-sense responses to unfolding events. They also show conflicts in the plans implemented by different agencies to a common event. To maximize the benefit, Exercise Coordinators take great care to help develop scenarios and conduct simulations and analysis debriefings that are designed for learning in a spirit of cooperation—not a threatening exposure of job skills or plans.

Next steps.

Ensuring your desired results is paramount as we manage the planning and execution of your simulation exercise. The steps below will be taken to assure all events will be executed in an orderly and manageable fashion.

- Request a briefing by ERTS to the decision makers for your agency
- Request a proposal for a computer simulation exercise to include duration, training requirements, scenario, and pricing
- Refine the details, scope and price for the exercise and enter into a contractual agreement with ERTS
- Meet with ERTS Exercise Coordinator to plan goals and threats, determine terrain and structure requirements, and determine participants
- Schedule coordination and planning meetings with ERTS personnel, your planners and emergency response agencies
- Invite participants; send pre-exercise packets to participating agencies
- Meet with ERTS Simulation Software Specialist to review simulation landscape and structure details for accuracy
- Perform the simulation exercise
- Construct and distribute the post-exercise deliverables

Pricing.

ERTS will provide an exercise price based on the duration and complexity of the specific training scope and duration. The cost for the planning coordination sessions with ERTS consultants and the building of the database for the exercise will be priced separately from the cost of the exercise. By having a more extensive database built with the exercise, the time frame for conducting future exercises, as well as the cost could be reduced. ERTS will also provide information on available grants and other potential funding sources.