



Operation Noah's Ark

Situation Manual

May 8, 2024

This Situation Manual (SitMan) provides exercise participants with all the necessary tools for their roles in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, facilitators, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the SitMan.

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EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Operation Noah’s ark
Exercise Dates	May 8, 2024
Scope	This exercise is a tabletop event, planned for the North Dakota Long Term Care Association Conference and its attendees.
Mission Area(s)	Preparedness
Core Capabilities	Community Preparedness, Emergency Operations Coordination, Mass Care, Information Sharing, Medical Surge, Responder Safety and Health, Continuity of Health Care Delivery, Foundation for Health Care and Medical Readiness, Healthcare and Medical Response Coordination,
Objectives	<p>The attendees will identify when to contact the NDHHS Department Operation Center for an evacuation situation during an emergency.</p> <p>The attendees will discover how a facility will be contacted by the NDHHS DOC to accept residents/patients during an evacuation affecting another facility in the state.</p> <p>The attendees will understand how patients are tracked from a sending facility to a receiving facility.</p> <p>Once completed, the attendees will be able to take this tabletop exercise, modify it for their facility, and present it to their facility and staff for future training.</p>
Threat or Hazard	Natural, Flooding
Scenario	Evacuation of long-term care residents in a region, effecting facilities throughout the entire state.
Sponsor	North Dakota Long Term Care Association
Participating Organizations	North Dakota Health and Human Services EPR Unit, Local Public Health EPR Statewide Response Team, North Dakota Long Term Care Association
Point of Contact	Duane Ell, Training Coordinator, NDHHS EPR Unit 701-328-8646

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned core capabilities are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
The attendees will identify when to contact the NDHHS Department Operation Center for an evacuation situation during an emergency	Emergency Operations Coordination, Responder Safety and Health, Healthcare and Medical Response Coordination,
The attendees will discover how a facility will be contacted by the NDHHS DOC to accept residents/patients during an evacuation affecting another facility in the state.	Information Sharing, Medical Surge, Continuity of Health Care Delivery
The attendees will understand how patients are tracked from a sending facility to a receiving facility.	Mass Care, Information Sharing, Medical Surge
Once completed, the attendees will be able to take this tabletop exercise, modify it for their facility, and present it to their facility and staff for future training.	Community Preparedness, Foundation for Health Care and Medical Readiness

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Observers.** Observers do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development of player responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.
- **Facilitators.** Facilitators provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required. Key Exercise Planning Team members also may assist with facilitation as subject matter experts (SMEs) during the exercise.
- **Evaluators.** Evaluators are assigned to observe and document certain objectives during the exercise. Their primary role is to document player discussions, including how and if those discussions conform to plans, policies, and procedures.

Exercise Structure

This exercise will be a multimedia, facilitated exercise. Players will participate in the following 3 modules:

- Module 1: The Flood is Coming
- Module 2: It's Here
- Module 3: Now What?

Each module begins with a multimedia update that summarizes key events occurring within that time. After the updates, participants review the situation and engage in functional group discussions of appropriate response/recovery issues. For this exercise, the functional groups are as follows:

Exercise Guidelines

- This exercise will be held in an open, low-stress, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
- Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., you may use only existing assets) and insights derived from your training.
- Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your organization's final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.
- Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve response efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus.

Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation. During this exercise, the following apply:

- The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.
- The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.
- All players receive information at the same time.

Exercise Evaluation

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the exercise objectives and aligned capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks, which are documented in Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs). Evaluators have EEGs for each of their assigned areas. Additionally, players will be asked to complete participant feedback forms. These documents, coupled with facilitator observations and notes, will be used to evaluate the exercise and compile the After-Action Report (AAR).

MODULE 1: THE FLOOD IS COMING

Early March 2025

Due to late fall rainfall, colder than normal temperatures throughout early winter, and higher than average snowfall this year the NWS in Grand Forks ND has issued flood watches for Eastern ND the last week in of April throughout the Red River and all its tributaries. The Sheyenne, James, and Red River are projected to crest at record levels not seen since 1997. All cities along these rivers are currently preparing for major flooding.

Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 1. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

What processes can your facility do to prepare for such an event?

- Are you currently preparing to evacuate?
- Are you preparing to accept patients/residents?
- Will your staff be prepared at home?
- Who are you in contact with for assistance?
- Are you and your staff familiar with the state's Mass Transportation and Evacuation Plan?
- Is your patient tracking database data up to date with current resident information?

MODULE 2: IT'S HERE

April 5, 2025

In the next few days, The Red River is projected to crest 4 feet above major flood stage at Whapeton ND, 60 residents need to be evacuated from the care center. The James River at LaMoure is expected to crest 4 feet above flood stage. LaMoure care center has chosen to evacuate needing space for 32 more residents. The Lisbon Veterans Home has decided that since access will become an issue, they will evacuate needing space for 60 residents. Lisbon Hospital is also watching closely and may need to evacuate in short notice. Fargo is expected to have minor flooding, although no flooding of buildings is expected 3 medium sized facilities will not be accessible due to flooded roadways, 165 patients will need to be moved. Valley City although the LTC facilities are safe from flooding the hospital in Valley City may need to evacuate on short notice.

Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 2. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

Who are you working with to make the decision of whether to stay or evacuate?

If you decide to stay, what provisions will you need to assure you will be able to maintain operations for an extended period? (Food, Supply, Staff, Water, Wastewater, etc.)?

Is your staff prepared at home for extended shifts perhaps days at a time?

Who is working on placing the residents in new facilities?

What can your facility do to prepare for more residents than normal?

Is your staff familiar with the patient tracking system to send and receive residents on mobile devices and in the patient tracking database?

MODULE 3: NOW WHAT?

May 15, 2025

The rivers have receded and only 2 facilities received flood damage not allowing patients to return. Of the roughly 320 patients evacuated all but 60 will be repatriated back to their facility.

Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 3. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

Who are you working with to repatriate residents?

Are the residents prepared to return?

Do the residents and their families want/have to return?

Is the patient information updated in the patient tracking database?

The residents are transferred what next?

APPENDIX A: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations	
Federal	
State	
North Dakota Health and Human Services EPR Unit	
Local Public Health	
Facilities	

Total Number of Participants:

APPENDIX B: RELEVANT PLANS

North Dakota Health and Human Services Health Response and Licensure Section Emergency Preparedness and Response Base Plan

North Dakota Health and Human Services, Health Response and Licensure Section, Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Disaster Transportation of Vulnerable Populations

APPENDIX C: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
EEG	Exercise Evaluation Guide
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
FOUO	For Official Use Only
HIRA	Hazard Identification Risk Assessment
SME	Subject Matter Expert
NDLTCA	North Dakota Long Term Care Association
NDHHS	North Dakota Health and Human Services
DOC	Department Operation Center
EPR	Emergency Preparedness and Response
NWS	National Weather Service

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