### Sample Observation Form

**OBJECTIVE #1:** To activate the emergency operations plan and initiate immediate life saving actions using RACE guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>TASK COMPLETED: (Circle Response)</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>NOTES and PROBLEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Within 30 seconds, the staff member who discovers the fire activates the fire alarm and closes the door to the room to contain the fire and smoke.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Immediately upon hearing the alarm, staff start evacuating residents.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Within 30 seconds of hearing the alarm, the incident commander assumes responsibility and phones the fire department.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The incident commander designates a staff member to meet the fire department and provide them with information as detailed in all-hazard response guide.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Etc….</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### OBJECTIVE #2: To evacuate the facility within 3 minutes of hearing the alarm following the Evacuation Guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>NOTES and PROBLEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Staff evacuate residents using the alternate escape routes (because the primary route is blocked by fire and smoke.)</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Staff evacuate residents to the designated meeting place.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Within 3 minutes of hearing the alarm, the entire facility is evacuated. (Remember that Stephanie’s facility is small and they evacuate when they hear the fire alarm; they don’t defend in place. A larger facility would modify this objective.)</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Etc….</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OBJECTIVE #3: To ensure resident safety and accountability during the emergency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>TIME</th>
<th>NOTES and PROBLEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. As staff evacuate, they inspect each resident’s room and close the door behind them.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The operations chief performs a roll call to be sure all staff, residents, and guests are accounted for.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Residents and staff do not return to the building until the all-clear is given by the fire department.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. A staff member stays with evacuated residents to be sure</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
they don’t try to return to the building

| 14. Etc…. | Partially | Not at all |

**OBJECTIVE #4:** To continue safe operation until power is restored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASKS:</th>
<th>TASK COMPLETED: (Circle Response)</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>NOTES and PROBLEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. The incident commander meets with the incident response team to discuss the power outage.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The logistics chief coordinates with facility maintenance to get the emergency generator running and verify fuel supply.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The operations chief confirms that sufficient resident meals and care can be provided without power.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Etc….</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER OBSERVATIONS:**

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Exercise Planning Guide

To develop a successful exercise, you must:

- **STEP ONE:** Design the Exercise;
- **STEP TWO:** Conduct the Exercise;
- **STEP THREE:** Evaluate the Exercise
- **STEP FOUR:** Improve your Plan
- AND then repeat this cycle.

This is referred to as an exercise cycle. Once you make improvements to your plan, you’ll return to Step One and your next exercise or drill will build upon the previous one and test the improvements you’ve made to your plan.

It’s important to have someone in charge of developing your Exercise Program. This person is referred to as your Exercise Leader.

Most likely, the Exercise Leader will be a member of your Emergency Planning Team. If your facility is very large, you might consider having a few people help the Exercise Leader.

**STEP ONE: Design the Exercise**

To complete Step One, you will need to:
- **Review Existing Documents**;
- **Decide the Type of Emergency and Functions to Test**;
- **Decide the Type of Exercise and Who will Participate**;
- **Write Exercise Objectives**;
- **Write the Detailed Scenario, Narrative, and Messages**; and
- **Develop the Evaluation Plan**

**REVIEW EXISTING DOCUMENTS:**

Review existing documents, such as your Emergency Operations Plan, most recent Hazard and Vulnerability Assessment, after-action reports from other emergency exercises, after-action reports from real emergencies, and licensing and/or accreditation requirements.
These documents will help you define the scope of the emergency exercise. As you read the documents, think about:

- What hazards and vulnerabilities have the highest risk according to our HVA?
- What do our regulations/accreditation standards require us to do?
- Were there any weaknesses in our plan identified from previous exercises or real emergencies?
- And what does our staff need to practice the most?

**DECIDE THE TYPE OF EMERGENCY AND FUNCTIONS TO TEST**

Using the information you’ve gathered from the document review, decide what type of emergency and what emergency functions to test.

For example, will the exercise involve a fire, tornado, earthquake, or other type of disaster?

What functions in the plan do you want to evaluate, such as sheltering-in-place or evacuation?

How about emergency communications and power loss?

Makes a list of all the functions you plan to test in your exercise.

**DECIDE THE TYPE OF EXERCISE AND WHO WILL PARTICIPATE**

Next, decide what type of exercise to have and who will participate.

For example, will you have a table-top exercise, drill, or full-scale exercise?

You’ll recall that a full-scale exercise tests several functions; a drill tests just a single function; and a table-top exercise is a discussion that doesn’t involve taking action.

Be sure to check your regulations for specific requirements on the types of exercises you are required to have.

**WRITE EXERCISE OBJECTIVES**

Now that you’ve decided what type of emergency to test, write the exercise objectives.

Objectives are the goals of an exercise. They are used as performance measures.

Remember, you don’t just want to HAVE an exercise; you want to LEARN from it.

To learn from an exercise, you must have objectives and use them to measure staff performance.
Objectives should be SMART.

SMART stands for:
- **Simple** – The objective must be brief and easy to understand.
- **Measurable** – You need to be able to measure the objective so you know whether it is met.
- **Achievable** – The objective should not be too difficult to achieve.
- **Realistic** - The objective should present a realistic expectation for the situation.
- and **Task oriented** – The objective needs to focus on a behavior or procedure.

Use your emergency operations plan to help write objectives.

Remember, a well-written emergency plan describes the ideal performance. That is what you want to measure your staff’s performance against.

**WRITE THE DETAILED SCENARIO, NARRATIVE, AND MESSAGES**

Your next step is to write the detailed scenario, narrative, and messages that will be used during the exercise. Think about an exercise as a play. Your staff are the actors. You need to write the play, write the script, and set the scene so that all the actors understand what is going on and what has led up to the situation.

A scenario is a description of the actions and events that take place during the exercise.

A narrative is a brief description of the events that have occurred up to the minute the exercise begins. The narrative is given to one or more of the staff at the beginning of the exercise to set the stage, so they know what has happened leading up to that moment.

Messages are used to communicate detailed events to staff, during the course of the exercise, to prompt them to take action. Be sure that messages include: Who the messages are to; Who they are from; What has happened; The Time it Happened; and How the message is to be delivered (such as phone, paper, or facility speaker system)

**DEVELOP THE EVALUATION PLAN**

So you’ve developed a great exercise.
- But how will you know if it’s successful?
- How will you know whether the objectives have been met?
- How will you identify what needs to be done to improve your plan?

You must develop the evaluation plan.
Having observers is one of the best ways to evaluate an emergency exercise. An observer is someone who watches the exercise and documents what happens. Observers don’t actively participate in the exercise; they just watch what happens and write it down.

Observers must be familiar with:
- The facility’s emergency operations plan (They must know how staff are supposed to respond to the emergency.);
- The scenario for the exercise;
- The objectives for the exercise; and
- How they should record their observations.

It’s a good idea to give the observers pre-printed forms that they can use during the observations. The forms should include a list of the exercise objectives and associated tasks. It should allow the observer to rate staff performance on each task using a numerical scale.

The evaluators would record whether the task was completed (fully, partially, or not at all) and record the time and other notes about the task. Evaluators would also record any problems or issues that arose during the exercise. A sample observation form is included in these resource documents.

**STEP TWO: Conduct the Exercise**

Once the planning is over, it’s time to conduct the exercise. Should you tell your staff in advance that there will be an exercise? That depends on your licensing regulations and also your preference. Sometimes it’s best to have exercises be a complete surprise. A surprise exercise will truly measure everyone’s level of preparedness.

However, there are also advantages to having advance warning. If you tell staff in advance that there will be an exercise and what type of emergency will be evaluated, it gives them time to review the guidelines related to that type of emergency.

Whether or not to actively involve residents in your emergency exercises will depend upon several factors, including:
- Licensing regulations and or state/federal requirements.
- Resident capabilities (both mental and physical).
- And the type of exercise

Refer to your licensing requirements or other state/federal regulations that apply to you. Sometimes these regulations will specify whether or not residents should actively participate in emergency exercises.

If in doubt, check with the appropriate authority for your facility. In many jurisdictions, residents who are bed-ridden or who could be adversely affected by participating in an exercise are usually not required to participate.
Here are some tips for conducting the exercise:

- Be clear. Participants must have a clear understanding of what is expected.
- Sustain action: keep things moving.
- Keep it real. Try to make the exercise seem as real as possible; and
- Establish timelines – be sure you have an end in mind. When will the exercise be over? How will you decide that it is over?

**STEP THREE: Evaluate the Exercise**

After the exercise has ended, you need to evaluate what happened. What did your staff do well? What were the problems? How can you improve your plan?

Sources of information can include:

- A debriefing of all staff who participated in the drill;
- Participant feedback forms; and
- Observer evaluation forms.

Get everyone together after the drill and discuss what happened. Ask staff for their opinions and then really listen to what they have to say.

Be sure someone documents all questions and concerns brought up during the meeting.

Another way to evaluate the exercise is to pass out participant feedback forms that staff can use to let you know their thoughts about the exercise.

The observer evaluation forms will also provide valuable information on how you can improve the plan.

Once you’ve gathered all the forms, analyze the data to find out:

- If objectives were met and to what extent;
- If tasks were successfully completed;
- What key decisions were made;
- Whether participants demonstrated they were adequately trained to perform the tasks and capabilities; and
- If the actions of the players reflect the current plans, policies, and procedures.

**STEP FOUR: Improve Your Plan**

Once you’ve analyzed the data, write an after-action report. The report should include:

- a description of the exercise
• the strengths and weaknesses identified during the exercise, and
  recommendations for improving the plan.

Include timeframes or deadlines for completing the improvements. Describe who will make the improvement, and also who will be responsible for tracking the change and making sure it is done.

Recommendations might include:
• Changes needed to plans and procedures
• Changes needed to organizational structures
• Changes needed to leadership and management processes
• Training needed
• Changes to or additions to equipment; and
• Lessons learned

Share your after action report with facility management. Keep a copy of all after-action reports in a binder for you to refer to when making plan updates or planning your next exercise.

Remember that an emergency exercise can only effectively test what staff ALREADY know. Staff must be trained well in advance of an emergency exercise so they know their role in an emergency.

Exercises should not overwhelm staff, but instead teach and empower them.

Be sure to test all changes in future exercises.

**Frequency of Emergency Exercises:**

Regulations on the frequency of emergency exercises vary by state. It’s important to check your regulations to find out exactly what is required of your facility.

For example, in some states, licensing regulations require facilities to have fire drills quarterly, on every shift and to have a “disaster exercise” yearly. However, keep in mind that more frequent emergency exercises may be needed.

Emergency exercises should be done as often as necessary to keep all staff up-to-date in emergency response! So consider having more frequent exercises, especially when:

• Changes have been made to your emergency operations plan;
• A significant number of new staff are hired;
• The property or building has been changed; or
• A potential new hazard has emerged.