



Loss of Communication 2019

After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

05/15/2019

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine to include the National Preparedness Goal and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Loss of Communication 2019
Exercise Dates	05/15-2019
Scope	This exercise is a tabletop exercise, planned for 1.5 hours at Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health. Exercise play is limited to participants and the West conference room.
Mission Area(s)	Protection and Response
Core Capabilities	Operable Communication and Interoperable Communications.
Objectives	1-Local agencies will identify when to activate the crisis communication plan. 2-Local agencies will identify the types of communication available within their facility and how they will be used in the crisis communication plan. 3-Local agencies will discuss who the stakeholders are and how to contact them and when to contact them. 4-Local agencies will develop a news release and ICS-213 communication form.
Threat or Hazard	Cyber Attack
Scenario	National News has been reporting some cyber activity across the nation and several states have had loss of communication and power. In ND we did receive an attack on our power providers but their cyber security was effective and we continue to have power. The cyber-attacks continue all morning with Montana, South Dakota and Minnesota all losing power and communications.
Sponsor	Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health SWC Regional Emergency Preparedness and Response
Participating Organizations	LTC, Hospitals, Home Health, Private Health agencies and LPHU please see Appendix B for a complete list
Point of Contact	Crystalynn Kuntz, BSN, RN Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health, 500 E. Front Ave., Bismarck, ND 58503, 701-220-5851 cell & 701-355-1546 office ckuntz@bismarcknd.gov



ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and core capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned core capabilities, and performance ratings for each core capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Core Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
1-Local agencies will identify when to activate the crisis communication plan.	Operable and Interoperable Communication	P			
2-Local agencies will identify the types of communication available within their facility and how they will be used in the crisis communication plan	Operable Communication	P			
3-Local agencies will discuss who the stakeholders are and how to contact them and when to contact them.	Interoperable Communication	P			

Objective	Core Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
4-Local agencies will develop a news release and ICS-213 communication form	Interoperable Communication	P			
<p>Ratings Definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed without Challenges (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. • Performed with Some Challenges (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified. • Performed with Major Challenges (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. • Unable to be Performed (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s). 					

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance



The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Objective 1: Local agencies will identify when to activate the crisis communication plan.

Operable and Interoperable Communication

Strengths

The full capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1:

When do you activate the crisis communication plan: All participants were able to recognize the need to activate the Crisis Communication plan in the EOC before the loss of communication even occurred. All participants were able to identify that they have a plan and would utilize it during an incident related to cyber-attack.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Having staff preassigned to the lead role of the PIO to utilize the crisis communication plan.

Reference: CMS emergency preparedness rules and guidelines and Homeland Security National Preparedness Goals

Analysis: This objective was fully meet because facilities were able to identify when to utilize the Crisis Communication Plan and how they would activate the plan.

Objective 2: Local agencies will identify the types of communication available within their facility and how they will be used in the crisis communication plan

Operable Communication

Strengths

The full capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1:

What types of communication are available in your facility: All participants were able to identify different types of communication options. Things listed included cell phones, email, land lines, intercoms and radios. They all have the ability to communicate within their building using radios or walkie-talkies. Participants felt that normal operations and communication would continue within the facility even with the loss of outside communication.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Maintaining weekly checks on internal communication assets and making sure they work without internet/land line capability and are supported by the generator.

Reference: CMS emergency preparedness rules and guidelines and Homeland Security National Preparedness Goals.

Analysis: This objective was fully met because agencies were able to identify how they would utilize their existing internal communication means to maintain communication.

Objective 3: Local agencies will discuss who the stakeholders are and how to contact them and when to contact them.

Interoperable Communication

Strengths

The full capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1:

Who are the stakeholders: Participants were able to identify who their stakeholders are. They also included suppliers and resource providers in this list. Participants have a contact list developed that includes internal staff but also: power provider, internet provider, phone provider, gas provider, electric provider, generator manufacturer and so on.

Strength 2:

How to contact them: During the event the use of runner's using the ICS-213 form would be utilized, news release sent to local radio and TV providers, radios that have the capability of reaching state radio and HAM operators if available.

Strength 3:

When to contact them: Participants planned on pre-contacting most stakeholder before communication was lost and providing them an update when able.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Having the ability to reach state radio to talk to law enforcement, EMS, NDDoH and other healthcare providers. LTC facilities do have the ability to have a P25 radio that has Bank 5 on it.

Reference: CMS emergency preparedness rules and guidelines and Homeland Security National Preparedness Goals

Analysis: The objective was fully meet because facilities were able to identify who, when and how to communicate to stakeholders. ICS form 213 was discussed.

Objective 4: Local agencies will develop a news release and ICS-213 communication form.

Interoperable Communication

Strengths

The full capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1:

Development of a News Release and ICS-213: Participants were able to complete the ICS-213 without any concerns and were able to identify what information it should contain. Participants were able to identify that they have a plan for “downtime” when they do not have access to electronic charting and would activate that process.

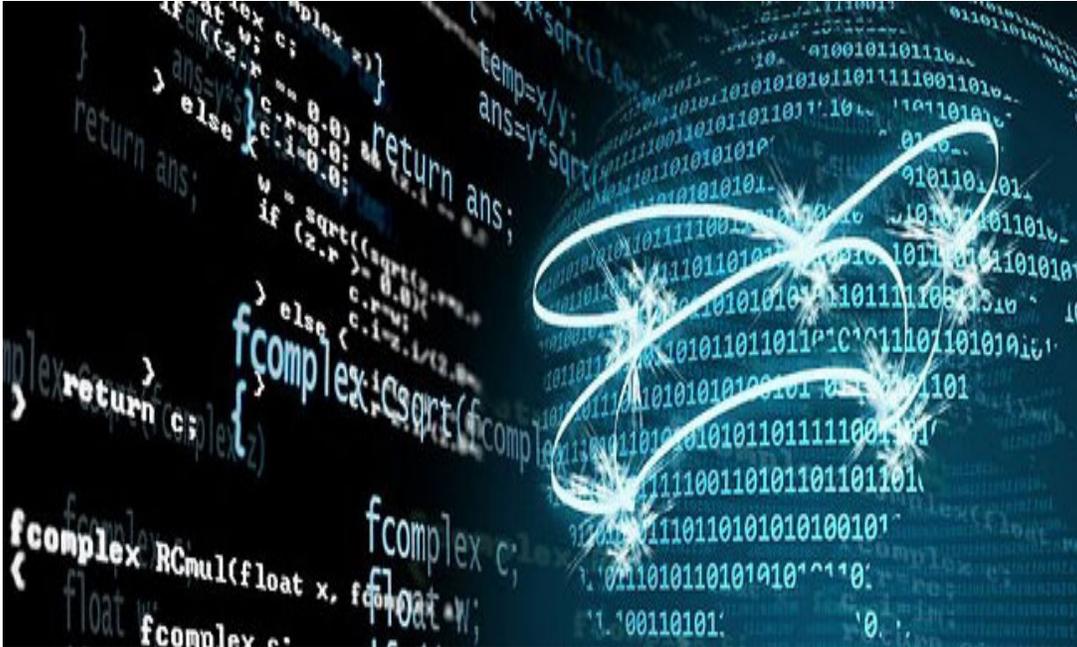
Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Development of sample/template news releases specific for their facilities that will be completed prior to an event and then utilized during an event.

Reference: CMS emergency preparedness rules and guidelines and Homeland Security National Preparedness Goals

Analysis: The objective was fully meet because participants were able to complete a News Release and the ICS-213 form.



Action Notes

6 am

1-Would you be aware of this coming to work? Yes, via news coverage, text, state emergency weather radio or press release. No, if their phone was still on silent mode, and TV/Radio not on in the am they wouldn't be aware before arriving to work.

2-Would you do any prepping at this time? ICS setup, go through plans, policies, procedures, communication plan, issue radios, calling tree to staff and families. Make contact with the State. Print eMars and other information needed from EHR for care plans. Food inventory.

9:05

1-How are you preparing at your facility? Initiate runners to send message to radio station with news message. Get messages to families to know everything is OK and your plans. Use downtime procedures and consider lockdown to control traffic in and out of facility. Staff meetings look at short and long term plans.

9:15

1-How are you going to treat and transport Heart attack individual? Do you still send 3 dialysis individuals?

Assess if patient can be stabilized, assess and take by Van since unable to contact ambulance. Triage dialysis patients and send heart attack first, runner to see if dialysis is up and running.

9:20

1-How do you reach family to ask? Implement code search, notify law enforcement via radio, contact family if patient went home. If unable to contact police send runner to family home. Note if phone lines are down the fire alarm system won't work and could falsely alarm

9:22

1-How are you going to treat and transport this individual (broken hip)? Treat, assess, transport if van is back, stabilize, and make comfortable if van is not available.

9:30

1-Medical Transport appointments? Cancel routine checkup exams, and others if timing is flexible. Runner to family if they could take patient to appointment.

9:35

1-How are you documenting EHR? What are you documenting? Down time procedures would be implemented, and document everything as you normally would.

9:45

1-What is your plan for staffing, meals, patient care and transportation needs? Staff would be asked to stay and hope others would come in. Bring kids in if a concern and possibly keep daycare open longer and could provide care for staff, using family members for assistance. Meals shouldn't be affected at this time due to 7-day supply on hand, switch to paper plates.
2- What is your plan of communicating to families and outside agencies? Runner based. Send news release that all is going well, running as normal and for staff to show up. Double check batteries are charged for radios. Setup volunteer coordinator to assign duties to some of those family members coming in.

9:50

1-What is your long term plan for communication? Prep work and have plan in place if communication goes down. Give supply order to delivery person to take back with them. If supplies coming from out of state, they do not have power/communication. May want to set up and emergency plan with suppliers so that they would continue deliveries as previously placed. Pay gas for volunteer runners.

2-What was your EOC activation? Emergency Operation Center 24/7 and keep 1 if not 2 on staff.

3-What process did you use for documentation of the event? ICS forms in addition to charting

4-What types of communication did you use? Radios, runners

Discussion regarding HAM Radios

- HAM radio contact via Local Emergency Manager, would be activated at be at the State Emergency Operations, would be able to communicate with 6 repeaters and 3 can go digital so that sensitive info could be conveyed. Recommend listening to radio stations since they would convey messages through them. Would try to activate as many people as possible to disperse between various facilities. Note most operators are volunteers and may be at their jobs and not be able to leave.
- The Department of Health in addition to DES can communicate between the HAM radio operators.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for Bismarck Burleigh Public Health/EPR Program/ABC Healthcare as a result of the Loss of Communication Tabletop Exercise conducted on May 15 2019.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Operable and Interoperable Communication	Having staff preassigned to the lead role of the PIO to utilize the crisis communication plan.	Pre assigning and orientating the ICS PIO role.	Prevention/ Protections/ Response	BBPH/ABC Healthcare	Crystalynn Kuntz	5/17/18	
Operable Communication	Maintaining weekly checks on internal communication assets and making sure they work without internet/land line capability and are supported by the generator.	Using internal communication options on a daily basis and if not then to check them weekly.	Prevention/ Protections/ Response	BBPH/ABC Healthcare	Crystalynn Kuntz	5/17/18	

¹ Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

Interoperable Communication	Having the ability to reach state radio to talk to law enforcement, EMS, NDDoH and other healthcare providers. LTC facilities do have the ability to have a P25 radio that has Bank 5 on it.	Purchasing a type of radio that has the ability to communicate to state radio.	Prevention/ Protections/ Response	BBPH/ABC Healthcare	Crystalynn Kuntz	5/17/18	
Interoperable Communication	Development of sample/template news release specific for their facilities that will be completed prior to an event and then utilized during an event.	Create sample news release on pertinent topics.	Prevention/ Protections/ Response				

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Sign in sheet from Exercise	
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PARTICIPANTS FEEDBACK

Loss of Communication Tabletop Exercise May 15, 2019

1. Did you find this exercise to enhance your knowledge? Please list key points.
 - Realized the use of radios/runners and paper. VHS Linking system.
 - Downtime procedures, communication to all of Bis/Man, check with radio capability, communication plan, lock down procedure, HAM radio.
 - In house procedure and plan implementation. Use of radios and runners.
 - Yes, great training
 - Ideas on alternate ways to contact vendors for orders, thoughts on how to arrange for emergency situations (i.e. heart attacks).
 - DES has lots of things to offer, good info on amateur radio.
 - What happens when radios don't work-how to reach out to the community. We need to think through other communications and abilities.
 - Importance for communications and having a backup plan

2. What gaps did you find today that can be action items to correct? List key points.
 - Ham Radio use – for protected information
 - Downtime procedures, communication, radio capability, Ham Radio need to be implemented or worked out.
 - P25 Radio-plan to get one right away. Department of Health -10; State 60-70
 - Can get more community and family involved.
 - Make contact with volunteer fire department to talk about needing their help to communicate with the state in this situation. Need to find out if fire alarm panel would activate if internet goes down. ICS form 213.
 - You would need to solidify all backup communications plans.
 - Proper backup plan that can be used effectively. Staff knowledge on what to do once communications are lost. How to get information to staff, patients, and public before you lose communication.

3. Additional comments.
 - Thanks, good learning points.
 - Very thought provoking exercise.
 - We could be re-evaluating several plans.
 - Great Exercise