

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE **GUIDELINES ON TABLE-TOP EXERCISE**

OBJECTIVE

The table-top exercise is intended to assist the owners/management and Fire Safety Managers (FSMs) of buildings to address the needs of their buildings and building occupants in terms of coping with an emergency such as those that may arise from a security or terrorist threat. Through the exercise, the issues or problems faced by the building management and occupants pertaining to such an emergency will be surfaced, run through on paper and in discussion, assessed and finally addressed with solutions drawn up to ensure that all efforts towards preparation and readiness for the emergency will be well co-ordinated and workable.

APPROACH

2 The table-top exercise is to allow the building management, FSMs and members of Fire Safety Committee established under the structure of a Fire Emergency Plan (FEP) to walk through the FEP by introducing different scenarios of emergency and to review and update the FEP where appropriate. It is essentially a sit-down, planning exercise for the FSM and Fire Safety Committee to run through the actions and procedures that need to be taken and for working out solutions to problems that are likely to arise based on a given emergency situation or scenario. During the exercise, the building management, FSM and Fire Safety Committee will be solving perceived or anticipated problems in a given situation or scenario without the participation of the building occupants. The emphasis in this type of exercise is on the adoption of correct solutions and procedures. This is to enable the building management, FSM and the Fire Safety Committee to be prepared to undertake planned procedures and measures, and to be able to respond adequately under different emergency situations.

PLANNING & PREPARATION

3 The FSM is responsible to assist building owners/management for the planning and conduct of the exercise. In the planning and preparation for the exercise, the following should be noted :

- a. Development of Emergency Scenarios. Develop one or more emergency scenarios with information and data specific to the building. The emergency scenario could include a fire situation near to high hazard areas of the building or a bomb threat situation etc.
- b. Identification Of Anticipated Problems. Identify anticipated problems that may arise from the scenarios to inject for exercise play. Examples of these could include :
 - (1) What measures or steps to take to safe guard the building's fire safety systems against suspicious persons or possible activities of destruction or sabotage ?
 - (2) How to better manage fire hazards in the building in such situation ?
 - (3) How to identify and reduce possible sources of ignition and flammable or combustible materials, including waste etc.
- c. Issuance Of General Instructions File. Provide ample notice and information to all involved in the exercise through issuing a General Instructions File covering :
 - (1) Aim, date and venue of the exercise
 - (2) Stages and timing of the exercise
 - (3) Structure of the exercise body which will comprise members of the Fire Safety Committee and other nominated participants
 - (4) Roles and duties of everyone involved

The General Instructions File should be issued to the exercise participants at least a month prior to the conduct of the exercise to allow ample time for the necessary preparation.
- d. Updating Of FEP. Ensure that the FEP is updated and all exercise participants are familiar with it.
- e. Preparation Of Staff Aids. Prepare and make available the necessary information and staff aids for the conduct of the exercise, eg. FEP, layout plan of the building, information on building occupants etc.
- f. Preparation Of Admin And Logistics. Make the necessary administrative and logistical arrangements eg. rooms and communication systems etc for the exercise.

BRIEFING

4 A briefing must be conducted by the FSM to all the exercise participants prior to the exercise proper. The briefing is aimed at ensuring that all the exercise participants are clear about the exercise scope and the roles expected of them. The briefing should encompass the concept and scope of the exercise and all the necessary administrative and logistical arrangements required for the smooth conduct of the exercise. The briefing should provide details on the following:

- a. The overall timeframe for the conduct of the exercise.
- b. The time-table for main activities of each stage of the exercise.
- c. The main scenarios being played.
- d. The process of injecting the anticipated problems.
- e. Location map or layout plan for specific incidents or problems being played.
- f. Roles of exercise participants.
- g. Admin and logistical support and arrangements.

CONDUCT OF EXERCISE PROPER

5 The FSM should oversee and direct the conduct of the exercise and supervise the exercise activities. The tasks to be carried out will include :

- a. To lay down the scenario that is being played at the start of the exercise.
- b. To guide the Fire Safety Committee members and other participants in deliberating and co-ordinating on their roles and actions to be taken in such a scenario.
- c. To inject simulated incidents or anticipated problems relating to the scenario.
- d. To work with the exercise participants in coming out with solutions best suited to tackle the simulated incidents or problems.

DEBRIEF

6 Immediately after the conclusion of the exercise proper, a debrief on the exercise has be conducted and documented. The aim of the debrief is :

- a. To document the observations and findings arising from the exercise.
- b. To bring up lessons learnt and recommend measures for improvement and implementation.
- c. To allow participants to clarify doubts and uncertainties that they may have with regards to their roles or the procedures to be adopted.
- d. To identify solutions to anticipated problems and recommendations for changes or additions to be made to the Fire Emergency Plan.

7 A simple debrief report should be put up thereafter capturing the above areas.

CONCLUSION

8 The table-top exercise will only achieve its intended objective if both the FSM and Fire Safety Committee adopt a positive attitude and be fully committed in discharging their respective roles and functions. The guidelines above are meant to help building owners/management, FSMs and the Fire Safety Committee to plan, prepare and conduct the table-top exercises so as to derive more effective and fruitful results in getting themselves ready for handling the consequences of the emergency if it does happen.