



## TRAINING BRIEF

### Training Topic:

# ERP DRILL TABLETOP EXERCISE— MID-AIR COLLISION WITH A UAV

### Information for the ERP Drill Facilitator

#### Tabletop Exercises

This exercise usually involves all emergency response team members in a conference room setting. Using an event-specific scenario, supporting documentation, and injected messages simulating field-derived information, the participants discuss required actions while in a controlled training environment. With a facilitator to keep the discussions focused, the outcomes derived from a tabletop exercise may include new policy, plan revisions, and training requirements.

A tabletop exercise is a focused practice activity that places the participants together in a common area, and enacting a simulated situation requiring them to function in the capacity expected in a real event. Its purpose is to promote preparedness by acting on policies and plans and thereby training ERP team members. Participants should be able to recognize and prioritize required tasks, and use the ERP and associated forms correctly.

This ERP drill event is a simulation of a mid-air collision between your company aircraft and a unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). While on final approach to landing, a UAV collides with aircraft NXXX and is ingested into the right engine, causing an engine flame-out. The crew is able to shutdown the engine and declare an emergency. They continue the landing uneventfully but as a precaution, emergency vehicles are rolled and an emergency evacuation ensues.

The intent is to exercise many different aspects of the operation's ERP, and may also demand enacting other company procedures as the drill progresses. As facilitator, you are the referee for this exercise, so ensure you adequately control the release of information to the participants and take detailed notes to aid in debriefing the results and correcting any plan deficiencies. Schedule this exercise on a day when managers are willing to devote a few hours to fully participate.

This drill is designed to be a table top exercise that will evaluate the preparation and response of participating personnel throughout a limited portion of the operation, and may also include corporation entities if applicable. It is critical that each interacting member accurately and completely perform or describe their required actions during the tabletop exercise. As facilitator, observe participants carefully and ensure they are documenting and executing as intended in the ERP.

Drill Phone Calls: If possible set up an exercise phone number (either a cell phone or land line) that you as the facilitator will use to simulate some of the external communication. When a response team member or other individual is required to make a phone call, ensure the number they are calling is vocalized to verify it's correct, then utilize the exercise phone line. All phone conversations should be documented with detailed descriptions of who was called and a brief written summary of the call. If it is necessary for that individual to leave the exercise room to make the call, encourage them to do so.

Make sure you as facilitator keep a log; your notes will be used to debrief the exercise, identify problems and evaluate the need for changes in the ERP. Also ensure response team members are documenting all of their actions and external conversations.

Remember the intent of the drill is to train and increase the proficiency of the emergency response team members and also discover any deficiencies in the ERP itself. The end product should be a better prepared team and an improved or validated ERP.

### Preparation (Phase 1: Event Details)

1. Create a realistic simulated flight manifest and flight plan including the route and weather information for the drill event. Use standard company forms and fill in with realistic info and remember to label "ERP DRILL." make sure these forms are available to the team members when they need to retrieve them.
2. Gather the response team into the tabletop exercise area or room. Ensure each team member has a copy of the appropriate ERP folders/forms. Provide a brief overview of the purpose of the exercise and answer any questions team members may have. Set the right tone by ensuring team members understand they will be acting through all applicable parts of the ERP. Emphasize that any communication external to the exercise space must be prefaced with "This is an emergency response drill."
3. Utilize a company employee and segregate him/her from other company personnel. Provide the following tear out event description. After the employee thoroughly reviews the event description the employee will call in to notify ops of the accident. The employee will describe the event details in the reporting phone call.

**Scenario:** A company employee was listening to ATC and heard company aircraft NXXX declare an emergency while on approach to landing at the home base airport. The employee says the PIC told ATC they collided with a UAV which was ingested into the right engine causing an engine flame-out.

4. REMEMBER TO MAKE SURE ALL PHONE CALLS ARE PREFACED WITH “THIS IS AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE DRILL.” Instruct the employee to contact the operation via phone call to report the situation. The call should go to either a general reception phone number or to a published phone number. The call may be transferred to a logical point of contact in your operation or the info may be recorded by the initial company contact and passed on. Go to the room where the ERP team is gathered and begin observations as they receive the phone call or message.
5. This is now the beginning of the emergency response plan execution. Hopefully the call from the employee was recorded on an initial notification form of some kind. When the event information is received the primary decision maker should be informed and activation of the ERP should follow.
6. Release the exercise inputs (H+ minutes) at the elapsed time intervals indicated for each one. Controlling the release of information not only improves realism, but allows the entire response team to participate as necessary. Avoid providing more information than would be available in a real accident situation.
7. As facilitator make sure you take thorough notes and document significant observations. At the conclusion of the exercise you will use those notes to evaluate the response team’s actions and the ERP itself. Record any stated concerns by the participants which may require revision of the ERP. If appropriate you may want to schedule a follow-on meeting and present the team with a finished summary of the exercise, open items, problems that were identified, and other suggestions.



**ERP Exercise– Phase 2 (Timeline)****Exercise Inputs: Timed releases**

**H Hour:** The event information is passed to the participating employee who then places the phone call previously described in the preparation section (Phase 1).

**Goal:** It is imperative that the information passed from the reporting employee be documented by someone in your operation and passed to a response team member. The person taking the call should use a standard ERP form and record all applicable details. No comments regarding the accident should be made until the information is verified. A member of the response team activates or acquires permission to activate the ERP.

**Facilitator Notes:** *Upon the initial report of a drone colliding with NXXXXX the potential is high for distractions and misinformation at this point in the timeline. Are there injuries, are emergency responders on scene, who is involved at this time? All of these details are important but at this point it's important that the employees involved focus on confirming and organizing the initial information.*

**H+10 minutes:** The response team is now fully aware of all available information and should be actively discussing what other information they can obtain and validate. Operations should obtain the exercise manifest, verify the original flight profile and provide the flight manifest to the response team.

**Goal:** Response team leader should ensure the ERP is properly activated, critical managers are alerted and recalled to the office, and begin confirming reported details. Verify flight schedule and passenger manifest information. All team members review specific duties and responsibilities. The team leader should begin directing selected external notifications as required by the ERP.

**Facilitator Notes:** *There is a tendency to want to go directly to the aircraft when accidents occur at home base; however, it is important employees follow ERP procedures. The call list should be activated. Calls should be made to verify the phone numbers are accurate. This is where you might discover what phone numbers have not been updated, and who is difficult to reach, for example: Mrs. Smith is on vacation, who is doing her job? Make sure team members document all external communications.*

**H+25 minutes:** Have the participating employee call in again as the flight's PIC to report that two of the passengers are being transported to a local hospital with minor injuries that were a result of the emergency evacuation.

**Goal:** The team leader should be organizing the response members, compiling available information, and conducting a status brief by this point. The leader now begins to send team members out to execute their specific duties and report back. For a tabletop format this can be acted out or discussed. A priority at this point is passenger & crew status information. A passenger has already tweeted about the event and another

passenger has posted photos of the damage on Instagram. With the news of the accident already spreading on social media a first acknowledgement of the event (or that it is aware of emerging reports) should be issued within 15 minutes of notification. This first brief message would ideally be posted on one or more of the company's social media platforms such as Twitter or Facebook and also appear as a link on the main website.

**Facilitator Notes:** *Communication of the circumstances from event site to the response team is crucial in all emergencies. Carefully monitor the accuracy of information as it is assembled and communicated. Monitoring online conversations ("social listening") about the company is an essential form of intelligence, particularly during a crisis, and will allow the company to adapt its communication strategy and engage more effectively with key influencers as the story develops.*

**H+30 minutes:** The response team should be gathering their specific positional information by this time, and the procedures for NTSB notification reviewed. Place a phone call simulating a call from a local TV station asking for information. Be persistent, a pain in the neck. Observe your team as they make decisions concerning the status of the crew and passengers. Accurate accident information should be passed to other company employees to prevent rumor overload.

**Goal:** Once the first statement has been issued, it is essential that a regular flow of information is maintained. A more formal statement with a summary of the known facts should be formulated and issued to the media. The statement should also be posted on the company website and social media platforms. The ERP itself should contain some type of preformatted response for employees indicating the response is being executed and they have no other details or comments. Individuals within the management team who use social media personally should also be persuaded to limit their comments to the approved messaging, which must remain authentic. Other employees should also be reminded of the company's social media policy.

**Facilitator Notes:** *The information disseminated to others must be clear, factual and completely absent conjecture about the event. Observe the team member's communication carefully, and determine if they are creating any ambiguity about the event. You should observe the team with a clear, coherent picture of the event by this point; not everything will be known, but team coordination should be smooth and strategy clear. Carefully observe coordination with other company entities outside the tabletop exercise area.*

**H+45 minutes:** Multiple comments have been posted on social media about the accident. Some of the comments include incorrect statements. Observe how the team reacts to this false information. Evaluate how internal communication has progressed. Are all of the appropriate personnel in your company apprised of the events? The details of the accident should be consistent throughout the company by now.

**Goal:** The team shouldn't become distracted the false statements or negative comments. They should remain focused on the ERP duties and assignments. A policy should be established for responding to comments, or for correcting any misinfor-

mation or incorrect statements which are posted.

**Facilitator Notes:** *Take a step back and ensure the drill is under control. Observe how your team handles distractions such as a false report but make sure it does not impair the progress of the response progression. Monitor your team for signs of stress.*

**H+55 minutes:** An accurate picture of the accident is crucial by this point and all or most of the functions and assignments should be ongoing, with each team member following their respective checklists or direction from the team leader. Introduce any additional information as necessary based on the exercise direction to this point in time. The insurance company should also be contacted by this point to initiate any claim action but more importantly to gain their response assistance.

**Goal:** The physical status of the aircraft may have been discussed or resolved previously; if not it should be addressed now to ensure it is secure and nothing is touched pending NTSB investigation. Team members execute their responsibilities with limited direction and don't introduce confusion. Documentation of all the team activities is accurate and complete. Coordination with necessary outside elements is now established.

**Facilitator Notes:** *You can let the exercise flow on its own to the point of completion. Introduce further information to compliment existing details as necessary, but avoid injecting new circumstances at this point in the exercise. Use judgment to decide when enough is enough and the participants have gained all they can from the training.*

**H Complete:** When at a logical stop point, end the exercise. Ask team members to complete any notes and other documentation and then collect all of the papers, folders, etc. Give the participants a 15 minute break and then gather back into the space for a debrief of the exercise.

**Goal:** All of the documentation that occurred during the exercise is valuable history that can be used to evaluate team performance and the ERP itself. Ensure all documentation is organized for post exercise evaluation.

**Facilitator Notes:** *This is not the time for a full analysis of the drill, but it is important to provide some interesting feedback on the observations. Review your facilitator notes and prepare some highlighted and important observations for the debrief.*

**Team Debrief:** Good job to the response team! They dedicated their time and worked through the exercise. Use the debrief to review the exercise scenario, answer questions and discuss strengths and weakness identified in the initial review. Encourage interaction and discussion during the debrief, and be careful not to criticize individuals directly. Develop some simple takeaways and action items for the team to improve the ERP.

Performance weakness should be examined from a process and training perspective; if there are individual performance problems they should be presented to the team leader or applicable manager with discretion.

**Post Drill Report:** Create a detailed summary write-up of the exercise, with particular focus on team training recommendations. The strengths and weaknesses of the ERP should also be described. Make sure to use all of the documentation from the exercise to highlight and support conclusions and observations.

**Document:** Ensure the training is documented for the response team members and assist in any necessary changes to the ERP.

**It could happen on any given day. Be prepared!**

