



EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN DRILL

# ERP EXERCISE



## Unannounced Full Drill Scenario – Explosive Decompression

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# INFORMATION FOR THE DRILL FACILITATOR

## Exercise Details

### Personnel Involved

This exercise generally involves all emergency response team members in a normal workday setting. Using a hazard-specific scenario, supporting documentation, and injected messages simulating field-derived information, the participants perform the required actions to the maximum extent possible while in a controlled training environment. Unannounced drills need to be approved and scheduled with top level management. With a facilitator to keep the discussions focused, the outcomes derived from a full drill exercise may include new policy, plan revisions, and training requirements.

### About the Exercise

A full drill exercise is a focused practice activity that places the entire operation in a simulated situation requiring employees to function in a capacity expected of them in a real ERP event. Its purpose is to promote preparedness by exposing the entire operation to an artificial emergency situation while evaluating employee actions and company policies and plans. Participants should be able to recognize and prioritize required tasks and use the ERP effectively.

This ERP drill is a simulation of a catastrophic engine failure which results in shrapnel puncturing the fuselage causing an explosive decompression. The intent is to exercise many different aspects of the operation's ERP and may also demand some 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.

This drill format should be used for one of two purposes: as a culmination of training and building upon previous drills, or to impress upon your operation how difficult emergency response can be. If the unannounced format is used for the former, make sure your organization will benefit. Springing this drill on a flight department will have effect, for better or worse. If used for the latter, be prepared to keep things under control because it's going to be a wild ride. Remember to obtain prior approval for this drill.

Your drill should include:

- Simulation of the required phone calls with the correct, verified phone numbers.
- Assembling the Emergency Response Team.
- Coordination of support requirements.
- Completion of all action items with as much realism as practical.
- Complete paperwork details of a fictitious flight, including information about the local area where the emergency landing takes place.

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

### *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. The exercise phone line must be published as part of the exercise pre-brief. 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.

At the beginning of each phone call, remember to state "This is an emergency response drill. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. This is not an actual emergency. All events are simulated. All phone calls will be made to the exercise phone line for this simulation."

### Event Details

1. Create a realistic simulated flight manifest and flight plan including the route and weather information for the drill event. Also create a realistic emergency landing location for the simulated 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. Simulate the flight scenario as an actual event in the best possible way. Place it in the flight scheduling program or whatever your operation uses with appropriate takeoff and landing times, and make sure to clearly and boldly indicate it is a drill.
3. Utilize a flight crew member and segregate him/her from other company personnel. Provide the emergency event description. After the crew member thoroughly reviews the event description take it away; the crew member will describe the event details from memory in the reporting phone call.

## SCENARIO

NXXXX experienced a catastrophic engine failure that resulted in an explosive decompression during cruise flight while en-route to KXXX. There are five souls onboard (two passengers, one flight attendant, and two pilots). The flight crew executed their emergency procedures, declared an emergency, and are performing an emergency landing at KXXX.

4. REMEMBER TO MAKE SURE ALL PHONE CALLS ARE PREFACED WITH “THIS IS AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE DRILL.” Instruct the crew member to contact the operation via phone call to report the situation. The call should go to either to a general reception phone number or to the person the flight crew member wishes to contact. Let the flight crew member decide who to call. Go to the room where the call will come in and begin observations as they receive the phone call or message.
5. This is now the turnover to the home base operation and the beginning of the emergency response plan execution. Hopefully the call from the flight crew member 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 emergency 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 DRILL PROCEDURES

## Phase 2

### Exercise Inputs: Timed releases

At the beginning of each phone call, remember to state

*“This is an emergency response drill. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. This is not an actual emergency. All events are simulated. All phone calls will be made to (your number) for this simulation.”*

### *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 and passed to a response team member so that they can verify and confirm the details. 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.

#### Facilitator Notes:

Upon the initial report of the aircraft accident involving NXXXX 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:*

Once the initial report has been verified, the designated individual responsible for coordinating all company emergency response activities will activate the emergency response plan and will begin notifying the emergency response team. The internal notification process should be in full swing in the next few minutes and assigned members must begin assembling to coordinate with the response director. Allow another 10 minutes for members of the response team to form.

#### Goal:

Response team leader should ensure the ERP is properly activated and critical managers are alerted. They should also begin confirming reported details. It's critical at this point to document all available incoming information. All team members should review specific duties and responsibilities. The team leader should begin directing selected external notifications as required by the ERP.

Communications should be managed to ensure that facts surrounding a reported emergency are properly vetted prior to releasing any external statements. All information relative to an accident or incident or other emergency should be treated as extremely sensitive and held in the strictest confidence.

#### Facilitator Notes:

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+15 minutes:*

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

#### 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. A priority at this point is passenger & crew status information. All team members have their respective ERP sections in hand and are utilizing effectively.

#### Facilitator Notes:

Recalls may continue depending on personnel location and accessibility. Outdated phone numbers may create confusion; observe all methods of communication for effectiveness. Make sure team members document all external communications.

### *H+20 minutes:*

Have the participating flight crew member place another call to provide a status update. Have them communicate that the aircraft has safely landed at KXXX and one of the passengers is being transported to the hospital with a severe laceration to the head.

#### Goal:

The response team should be gathering their specific positional information by this time, and the procedures for NTSB notification reviewed as well as the procedures for participating as a party to the NTSB's investigation. The insurance company should also be contacted by this point to initiate any claim action but more importantly to gain their response assistance. It's also a good time for the team to contact any legal support that is required.

#### 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. Initial information about an event is usually incomplete and often incorrect. It is critical to verify information and avoid making assumptions or misstatements. 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:*

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:

All employees need to refrain from speculating or commenting on the emergency and should direct all questions to the designated spokesman. To the extent required, all public statements regarding an accident or incident will be adequately coordinated with NTSB. Only the NTSB may release factual information on an investigation. 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.

#### *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 by 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 misinformation or incorrect statements which are posted.

#### Facilitator Notes:

Observe how your team handles distractions such as a false report but make sure it does not impair the progress of the response progression. Also monitor your team for signs of stress. Events surrounding a serious accident can result in emotional distress and trauma that must not be overlooked. Some people need to remain involved and be kept active in order to cope with this type of stress; others are almost unable to function and require immediate attention by social workers who are trained to cope with these situations.

#### *H+50 minutes:*

A decision regarding dispatching someone to the site should be evaluated by now. The travel details need to be worked out (booking air travel, hotels, rental car, etc.); how effectively is this executed? Compiling a synopsis of the events and gathering all required records pertaining to the upcoming investigation will be underway. Where are the records being stored pending NTSB requests for acquisition? They must be kept in a secure location with tightly controlled access. Internal information control should also be well organized at this point. Look for individual team members to cross brief their checklist progress with other members.

#### 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. Coordination with necessary outside elements is now established.

#### Facilitator Notes:

Take a step back and ensure the drill is under control. Carefully observe coordination with other company entities. 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.

#### *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.

#### Goal:

Team members execute their responsibilities with limited direction and don't introduce confusion. Documentation of all the team activities is accurate and complete.

#### Facilitator Notes:

You can let the exercise flow on its own to the point of completion. Introduce further information to complement 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 weaknesses 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 weaknesses 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. Set goals for the next ERP drill based on lessons learned from this drill.

#### 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!**



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