



EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN DRILL

# ERP EXERCISE



## TABLETOP EXERCISE – Aircraft ramp accident

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# INFORMATION FOR THE DRILL FACILITATOR

## Tabletop Exercises

### Personnel Involved

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.

### About the Exercise

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 an aircraft ramp accident.

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 tabletop 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.

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. 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/room or through a video communications platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. 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 act as the FBO representative calling Flight Ops to notify them of the accident. The employee will describe the event details in the reporting phone call.

## SCENARIO

An FBO representative calls Flight Ops to notify them that NXXX was in an accident on the ramp. The company aircraft, NXXX, struck an unoccupied parked aircraft on the ramp causing severe damage to both aircraft. Neither aircraft went on fire and no known injuries at this time.

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 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.

#### Additional Notes/Lessons Learned

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### 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. Simulation of the internal notification process should be in full swing and all contact information for the emergency response team should be checked and verified.

#### Goal:

The 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 review specific duties and responsibilities. The team leader should begin directing selected external notifications as required by the ERP.

**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?

**Additional Notes/Lessons Learned**

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***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. For a tabletop format this can be acted out or discussed. 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 communications.

**Additional Notes/Lessons Learned**

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*H+20 minutes:*

Have a participating flight crew member place a call to Flight Ops to provide a status update. Have them communicate that the flight crew are feeling ill due to inhalation of fuel vapor. Also, some of the passengers are feeling pain in their backs and neck. All are being transported to the local hospital.

**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.

**Additional Notes/Lessons Learned**

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*H+30 minutes:*

Place a phone call simulating a call from a media outlet 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:**

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.

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. Coordinate media releases and press conferences with the NTSB public affairs officer. 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.

**Additional Notes/Lessons Learned**

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***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:**

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.

**Additional Notes/Lessons Learned**

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***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:**

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.

**Additional Notes/Lessons Learned**

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***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.

**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.

**Additional Notes/Lessons Learned**

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***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.



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**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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