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#

# ***DRILLS AND EXERCISES GUIDANCE FOR INCLUSIVE EMERGENCY PLANNING***



**Drills and Exercises Guidance for Inclusive Emergency Planning  
Version 1 May 2014**



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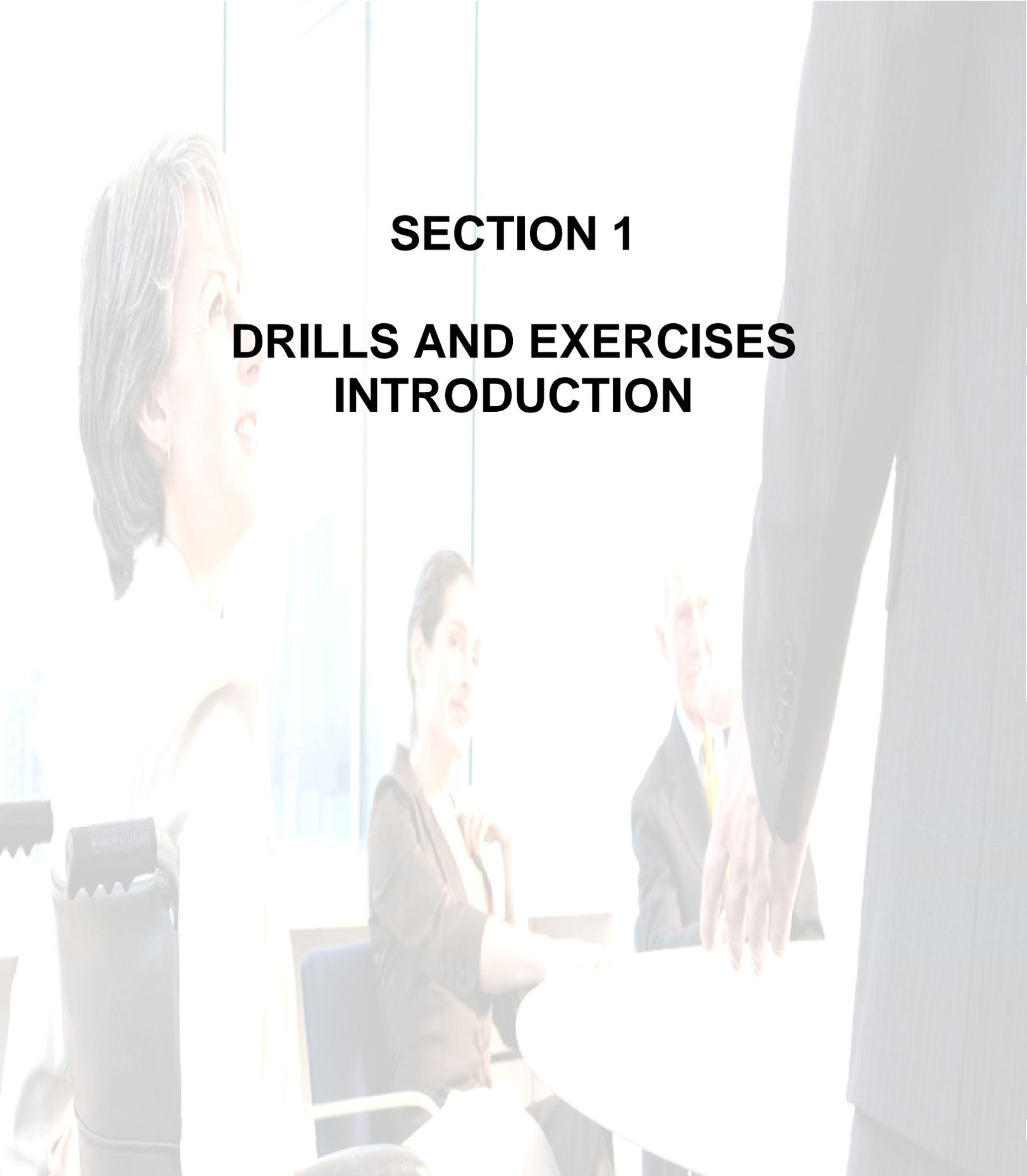


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A woman with short brown hair, wearing a white sleeveless top, is standing and speaking to a group of people seated around a table in a meeting room. The room has large windows in the background. The text "SECTION 1 DRILLS AND EXERCISES INTRODUCTION" is overlaid on the image.

**SECTION 1**  
**DRILLS AND EXERCISES**  
**INTRODUCTION**



## GUIDE FOR DRILLS AND EXERCISES INTRODUCTION

This Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Drills and Exercises Guide focuses on the inclusion of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs (AFN) in emergency exercises and drills. This guidance information is provided so cities and county personnel can put into practice the principles of inclusive emergency planning when organizing drills and exercises.

Tips, strategies, and resources for including people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs in exercises and drills are contained in this guide. The Guide looks at how to accomplish inclusiveness throughout the full exercise planning cycle: early planning, scenario development, logistics, communications, exercise activities, post-exercise/evaluation activities, debriefings, and After Action Reports (AAR).

Conducting *inclusive* drills and exercises is considered a best practice to better meet the needs of our whole community. Inclusive planning allows emergency managers to test plans and identify planning gaps in a way that demonstrates how existing plans will meet the needs of people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs. Inclusive planning also fosters important relationships between emergency managers and



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governmental and non-governmental stakeholders by establishing a collaborative process for exercise design, conduct and evaluation.

Finally, conducting of inclusive emergency drills and exercises is consistent with the County's Chief Executive Office (CEO) Directive issued in 2013. This directive states the County shall integrate people with disabilities and other with access and functional needs into all emergency planning efforts.



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## **Policy Statement**

The County will consider the feasibility of inclusion of people with disabilities and others with AFN for every drill or exercise that is developed. The majority of the County's drills and exercise will include people with disabilities and access and functional needs. However, it is important to recognize that some exercises and drills will not have specific disability or AFN components.

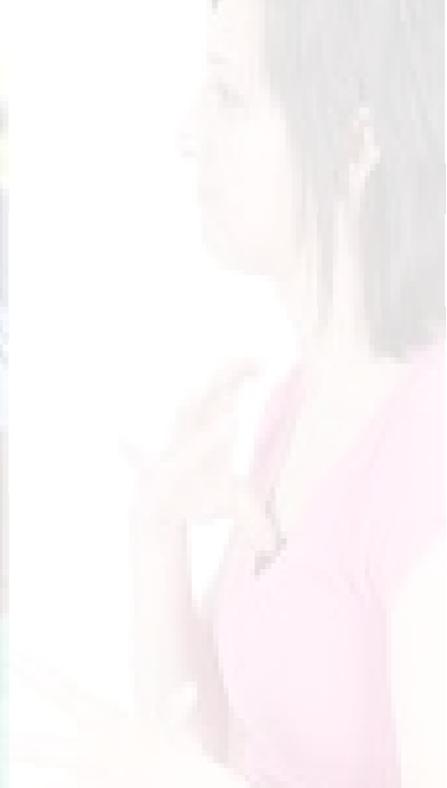
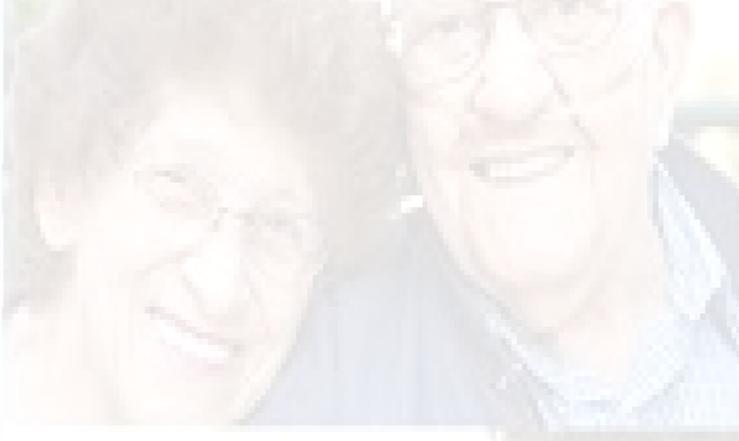


## **Common Acronyms**

- Access and Functional Needs (AFN)
- Operational Area Advisory Board (OAAB)
- Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)
- Faith Based Organization (FBO)
- Community Base Organization (CBO)
- Emergency Network Of Los Angeles (ENLA)
- Department of Health Services Emergency Medical Services Contractors/Licensees (DHS EMS)
- Department Public Social Services (DPSS)
- Community Senior Services (CSS)
- Department Children Family Services (DCFS)



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**SECTION 2**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**



## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

This section provides general information on inclusive emergency drills and exercises. The first part includes the County's assumptions regarding inclusionary practices in drills and exercises. The second part lists and describes applicable laws and regulations with nexus to County, State, and Federal non-discriminatory practices and Federal exercise standards.

### **2.1 – Exercise Assumptions**

The following assumptions address the County's approach to inclusive emergency drills and exercises.

- The County will outreach to and invite participation from various stakeholder organizations that serve populations with disabilities and access and functional needs throughout the County.
- The County will engage with organizations that represent the diversity of individuals with disabilities/AFN populations.
- The County will engage stakeholder organizations to participate on a voluntary basis.



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- The County will create an inclusive environment in developing and conducting drills and exercises to facilitate stakeholder participation.
- The County will include issues related to individuals with disabilities and others with AFN in drills and exercises even if there is a low turnout of participants and will exercise internal capabilities.
- When recruiting and engaging volunteers for drills/exercise the County will include people with individuals with disabilities and others with AFN.
- When developing an exercise or drill, the County will review overall goals to determine the extent to which the inclusion of people with disabilities/AFN is accomplished. As noted in the *Introduction*, there may be instances when the plan or process tested does not warrant a specific inclusive exercise objective.

### 2-2 Exercise Authorities

The County must comply with certain authorities when conducting an exercise. The list below is a short explanation of relevant authorities:

Los Angeles

County Board Supervisors Policy # 3.060 & 3.070 states the following:



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- #3.060 – Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established a County policy of non-discrimination on the basis of disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Clearly and concisely communicates to all County employees and the community the Board’s commitment to non-discrimination on the basis of disability in employment and in admission and access to County services, programs and activities. This policy further recognizes the Department of Human Resources (DHR) as the entity having oversight for County enforcement of the ADA relative to employment and the Chief Executive Office (CEO) as the entity having oversight for County enforcement of ADA relative to access to County services, programs and activities.
- #3.070 - Ensure that persons without regard to disability can attend all County-sponsored public events, including those held at County facilities not owned by the County. It further instructs County departments and commissions to adhere to the County Policy of Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability and the State of California Unruh Civil Rights Act. It requires County departments, when holding County-sponsored public events at non-County –owned facilities, to select facilities that are accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities, as mandated by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.



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March 18, 2013, CEO Directive states that the County shall:

- Integrate people with disabilities and other with access and functional needs into all emergency planning efforts
- Incorporate accessibility criteria when seeking funds to acquire, update or improve emergency planning and response capabilities.

The following are Federal Regulated Disabilities and Disability Civil Rights Laws/Authorities:

- ✓ Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- ✓ Stafford Act of 1988
- ✓ Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006
- ✓ Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ✓ Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988
- ✓ Architectural Barriers Act of 1968
- ✓ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (EHA) of 1975
- ✓ Telecommunications Act of 1996
- ✓ Twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010
- ✓ Americans with Disabilities Act
- ✓ Telecommunications Act
- ✓ Fair Housing Act



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- ✓ Air Carrier Access Act
- ✓ Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act
- ✓ National Voter Registration Act
- ✓ Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act
- ✓ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- ✓ Rehabilitation Act
- ✓ Architectural Barriers Act
- ✓ General Sources of Disability Rights Information

Drills and exercises paid for with Homeland Security Grant Funds must be in compliance with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) which includes the following provisions:

- ✓ Provides common exercise policy and program guidance.
- ✓ Constitutes a national standard for homeland security exercise.
- ✓ Use consistent terminology that can be used by all exercise planners.



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**SECTION 3:**  
**OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION**





## **OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION**

This Section outlines key considerations for involving stakeholders in emergency exercises and drills. This includes identification of stakeholders and making efforts to engage groups who represent the diverse make-up of disability and access and functional needs communities. Once stakeholders are engaged, the next important step is to ensure that their participation is meaningful and appropriate.

Tips for how to encourage meaningful participation, and the critical steps of identifying and addressing accessibility and accommodation requests are included in this Section.

### **3-1 Identification of Stakeholders**

An Exercise Design Team is the group of stakeholders convened to establish the scope of a drill or exercise, decide on logistical matters, and obtain necessary support and tools. When selecting individuals or agencies to serve on the Exercise Design Team, it is important to include Subject Matter Experts who can help craft an exercise that is accessible to all who participate. Including stakeholder experts in the Team will help to ensure that drills and exercises are pragmatic and realistic tests of planning assumptions and components.



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It is a best practice to involve both governmental and non-governmental organizations that serve or are comprised of disability and others with AFN communities. Some local examples include, but are not limited to:

- Members of the LA County Access and Functional Needs Committee
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)
- Faith Based Organizations (FBO)
- Community Based Organizations (CBO)
- Emergency Network of Los Angeles (ENLA)
- DHS EMS Contractors/Licensees
- DPH Resiliency Project Participants
- Contracted NGOs from departments such as DPH, DPSS, CSS and DCFS, etc.
- County Commission on Disability
- Participants in public outreach programs such as The Great Shake-Out

### **3-2 Experience & Expertise**

In the course of designing and conducting drills and exercises try to involve multiple organizations or representatives who can support the needs of a broad range of populations. Given the context of the drill or exercise, focus on engaging those that are most relevant to testing and improving the plan being evaluated. No single organization or individual can represent the entire



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diversity of people with disabilities so try to include multiple organizations with differing levels of experience and expertise. The following categories may help to focus your efforts in recruiting a range of experts that will contribute to a meaningful and well-tested drill or exercise:

- Sensory Disabilities
- Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities
- Physical Disabilities
- Mental Health
- Children
- Seniors
- Non-English Speaking
- Other sub-population groups that is present in your demographic (homeless, refugee, immigrant, Non English Speaking)

### **3-3 Meaningful Participation**

Stakeholders from disability and others with AFN communities may provide valuable input through the entire process of planning for and conducting drills and exercises. Ensure that their participation is meaningful by adopting effective habits that encourage a collaborative environment. Following are some, but not all, practices that will enhance participation and promote the principles of inclusive emergency planning:

- The County Project Manager should reach out via e-mail, in-person contacts, virtual meetings, community events, direct calls, etc. Active communication is key;



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it is imperative to keep lines of communication open with potential stakeholder organizations.

- Create opportunities for input at all phases of the exercise including, planning conferences, meetings, evaluations, briefings, and after action meetings. Evaluate suggestions from the Exercise Design Team and participants and implement feasible and reasonable recommendations.
- Make every effort to understand barriers that would limit or eliminate participation by *all* stakeholders and create an accessible environment for people with disabilities or access and functional needs. Considerations and accommodations should include both structural and programmatic accessibility.
- Reach out to key leadership among stakeholders and participants who represent a range of disability and access and functional needs populations and who are willing to commit the appropriate time and expertise to the Exercise Design Team.
- Recognizing that an Exercise Design Team must be flexible and sized appropriately, attempt to recruit a few strong participants who can represent different populations.
- Identify assignments in each phase of the exercise or drill where stakeholders will have opportunities to contribute, collaborate and participate in both design and conduct.



### **3-4 Accommodation**

To ensure that people with disabilities can effectively participate in exercises and drills, be prepared to provide accommodations at planning meetings and on the day of the event.

Things to remember when addressing accommodation needs include:

- Plan early in Exercise Design Team meetings to minimize potential obstacles that would reduce participation. Review guidance on using large type fonts, microphones, high-contrast graphics and other low and no-cost techniques for accessible communications.
- Make every attempt to identify needed accommodations prior to the day of the drill/exercise to avoid delays or restrict full participation from all stakeholders.
- Anticipate costs associated with providing needed accommodations and include in your exercise budget.
- Assess and address barriers to full participation from volunteers and other participants. However, if you are testing aspects of a plan for which accessibility is a component, do not rely on artificialities that circumvent realistic testing.



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- Consider the following carefully in Exercise Design Team meetings.

Discuss how to handle situations where a member of the Exercise Design Team or other participant feels uncomfortable or threatened by a specific aspect of the drill or exercise.

Establish a process early in the planning cycle to solicit accommodation requests. Generally, accommodation requests will fall into two categories:

1. Accommodations for those involved in exercise planning and development.
2. Accommodations for those participating in the exercise.

For both categories your process should include the following components:

- Method for soliciting accommodation requests;
- Standard format for collecting required information (including accommodation requested, name of person requestor, contact information, etc.);
- Process for follow-up with the person making the accommodation request;
- Designated contacts for person(s) receiving, reviewing and implementing accommodation requests.

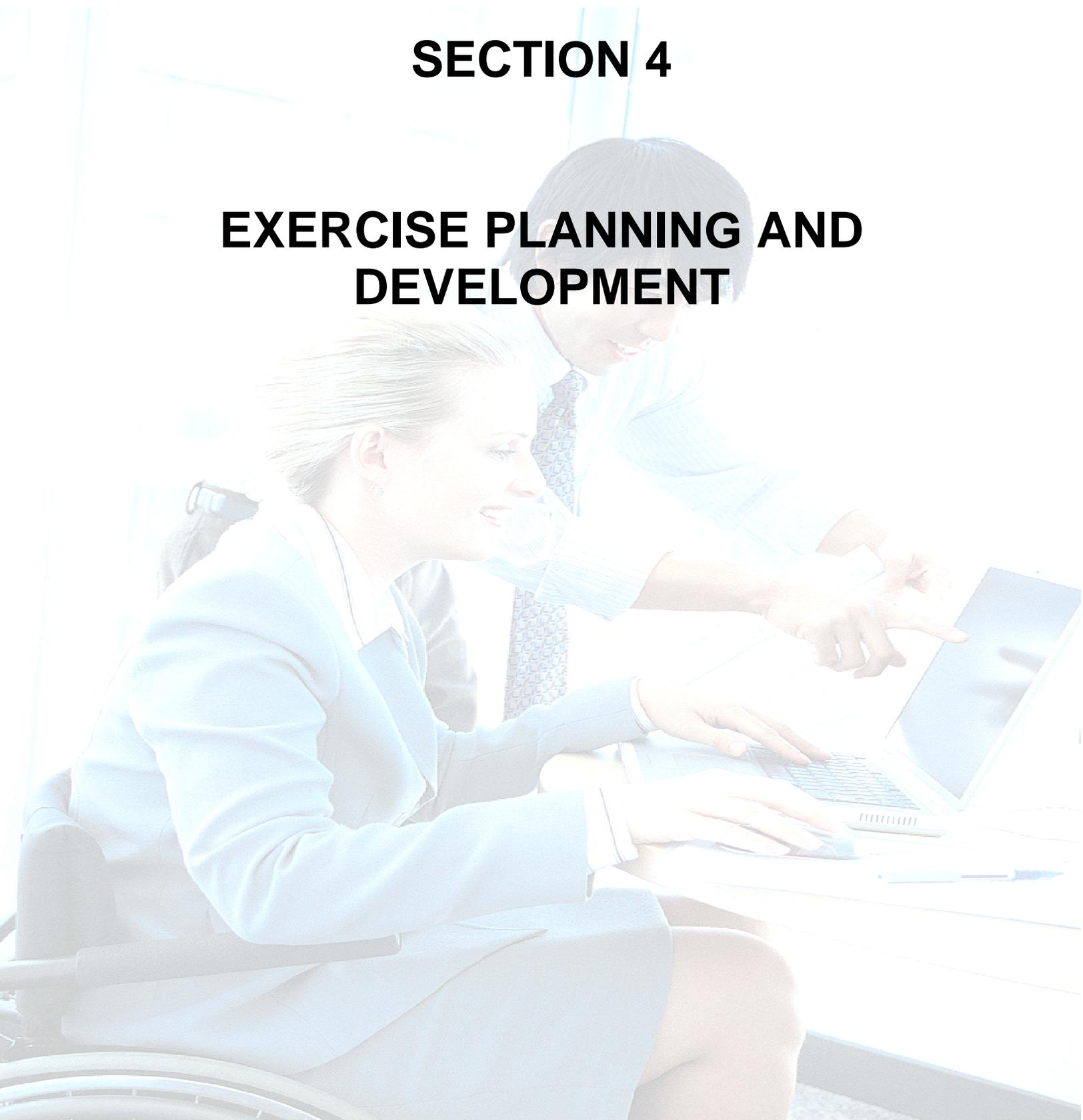


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## **SECTION 4**

# **EXERCISE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**





## **EXERCISE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

When creating the Exercise Design Team and determining the roles and responsibilities of team members, be prepared to clearly communicate expectations for the whole team. Explain the role of Subject Matter Experts and how the Team will collaborate not only to exercise the plan, but do so in a way compatible with the needs of all players and participants. An effective Team will have a balance of Subject Matter Experts from various backgrounds, disciplines, skills and experiences. However, the entire Team should have input when developing all aspects of the exercise. The following are a few examples of how inclusive planning may fit into select components of a drill or exercise:

### **Exercise Objectives & Core Capabilities**

Consider how the plan being tested will impact a player that has disability; are there plan components that should be included in the objectives? Regardless of the core capabilities being tested (e.g. coordination, communications, assessments, operations, etc.) there is likely a piece that impact people with physical, cognitive or sensory related disabilities.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

There are a number of participant groups in any exercise, Players, Controllers, Evaluators, Observers, Support Staff and in some cases, Media. Recruit Subject Matter Experts



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with expertise in disabilities to serve in as many groups as possible in order to identify and plan best practices that result in accessible exercises and improved emergency planning.

### **Injects and Challenges**

Injects that affect people with disabilities should be included in most drills and exercises. Anticipate the consequences of simple injects such as primary-communication failures, what impacts might that have on people with disabilities and their ability to receive public safety information? When testing processes and procedures include challenges that are realistic within the scenario but that affect a wide range of individuals - including those with disabilities.

### **Assumptions & Artificialities**

When deciding on exercise “artificialities” do not avoid situations that realistically test your plans, but it may be appropriate to place limits. An example of a realistic but limited exercise assumption might be *“Facility signage, including ADA signage, will only be posted inside the exercise play area. Signage that would be posted outside the exercise play area will be simulated.”*

### **Logistics and Support**

Location, participant safety, emergency procedures, parking, signage restrooms and site access are only a few of the conditions that will affect the ability of people with



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disabilities to attend and participate in a drill or exercise. Including Subject Matter Experts with expertise in disabilities on logistics and support teams can help identify barriers early and reduce potential obstacles for all participants.

### **Evaluation Strategy**

Evaluating an exercise is comprised of several parts including a hot wash, evaluation forms, participant debriefings and after action meetings. Each of these opportunities to receive feedback should include questions that specifically address exercise accessibility and conduct.

Topics to address in evaluations include:

- Registration Process
- Registration Material
- On-Site Registration
- Accommodations Process
- Promotional Materials
- Web-Site
- Meeting Site
- Hotel Rooms
- Transportation
- Parking
- Presentations
- Materials
- Receptions
- Social Activities
- Meals

*Refer to Appendix "A" for  
additional Planning and  
Development Checklists*



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**SECTION 5**

**EXERCISE LOGISTICS**





## **EXERCISE LOGISTICS**

Much of the work in assuring accessible drills and exercises falls to the logistics team. With input from Subject Matter Experts familiar in identifying common barriers to accessibility, most of these can be resolved in exercise pre-planning. This section addresses some important logistics considerations components of an exercise or drill specific to issues of accessibility for people with disabilities and others with AFN. This section also addresses safety during an exercise, facility access, and access to the exercise site.

### **Pre-Planning Activities**

#### **Safety**

Safety is a key consideration in any exercise, and development of a safety plan is a standard component for County drills and exercises. The Safety Officer is responsible for participant's safety and should work closely with disability Subject Matter Experts and stakeholders to ensure the safety plan addresses the needs of inclusive planning objectives. Key considerations include:

- Evacuation protocols;
- identification of individuals who may need some level of assistance during an evacuation;
- communication protocols;



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- identification of accessible modalities for making notifications and;
- communicating emergency information.

### **Facility**

If the exercise is taking place in one or more facilities, efforts should be made to identify a location that is structurally accessible according to local codes and the American with Disabilities Act Accessibilities Guidelines (ADAAG). To review the location and identify possible barriers, work closely with an ADA Coordinator, with experience reviewing accessibility in facilities. Key considerations include:

- Will individuals be able to enter the facility through accessible doorways?
- Will the facility have automatic doors or appropriate door handles?
- Will the facility be illuminated with external lighting during darkness?
- Is the facility large enough with unobstructed space for wheel chairs?

### **Site Access**

In addition to the accessibility of the facilities where the exercise is taking place, sites must also be accessible to participants who will attend using para-transit and public transportation. Working closely with stakeholders, review the access to the site and review any barriers or issues.



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Key considerations include:

- Ensure when developing the protocol for how individuals gain access to the location for the exercise or drill, people with disabilities are taken into consideration.
- Is the facility single story and if not, does the facility contains elevators.
- Does the site have good access to more than one major road or highway. Is the site accessible by public transit agency (MTA, LADOT, etc). If access is not ideal, is there an accommodation or work-around that can be made available to participants upon request?
- Can participants get to the site from nearest distance public bus or train stop, include information in announcements and event information materials?
- Is on-site Parking available?
- Confirm that the facility has ramps with railings at the for entrances and exits.
- Does the site have an adequate number of accessible parking spaces available?

## **Communications**

Work with Subject Matter Experts to identify best practices for accessible communications that address both the



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modality and content of information provided at the exercise.

Examples of key considerations are listed below:

- Identify ways in which you will be communicating with participants throughout the exercise. Consider alternate or redundant practices that will ensure the same information is available to all participants and there is a greater chance for all to obtain and comprehend messages.
- Ensure that invitations and announcements include ways to request accommodations within a timeframe that is achievable for your organization to respond.
- Be prepared to provide language interpreters and other accommodations if requested. It is good practice to verify how you will acquire American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and other support (e.g. materials in large-type font, Braille, audio) materials that may need to be provided.
- Obtain the tools needed to increase the likelihood that messages will be accessible for all participants. This may include microphones and amplifiers, TDD capability, video remote interpreting, written materials that provide the same information provided audibly, captioned videos or other alternatives.



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- Train staff and participants regarding communication techniques that will be used.

### **Meals**

Ensure that meals and other social functions are accessible to persons with disabilities. These networking opportunities can be as important to attendees as the substantive meetings and presentations and being ready for dietary restrictions and restrictions will increase accessibility. Pre-planning issues may range from food choices to table layout to type of seating offered. Also, remember to “count” companions when providing meals and beverages for participants.

### **Day of the Event**

#### **Safety**

The Safety Officer or designee should review the security plan with all participants and be sensitive to concerns that may be particularly pertinent to participants with disabilities. Key considerations include:

- Review the evacuation plan including procedures if assistance is needed to evacuate;
- Review of the safety plan must be communicated in a way that is accessible to all participants.

If at any time, the exercise is terminated to a real evacuation, please keep in mind that participants who self-identified prior as well as additional people, who may not



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have been identified and may need some assistance to evacuate the facility.

### **Communications**

When working directly with participants during the exercise, be prepared to repeat what you say, orally or in writing. Be patient, flexible and supportive when interacting with all participants and addressing their concerns. Take time to understand the individual and make sure the individual understands you. Before the beginning of the program, review the needs of all participants with presenters. Make sure presenters understand the need to use microphones, to describe photographs and other techniques designed to increase accessibility. See checklists in Appendix A for additional tips.

### **Facility & Site Access**

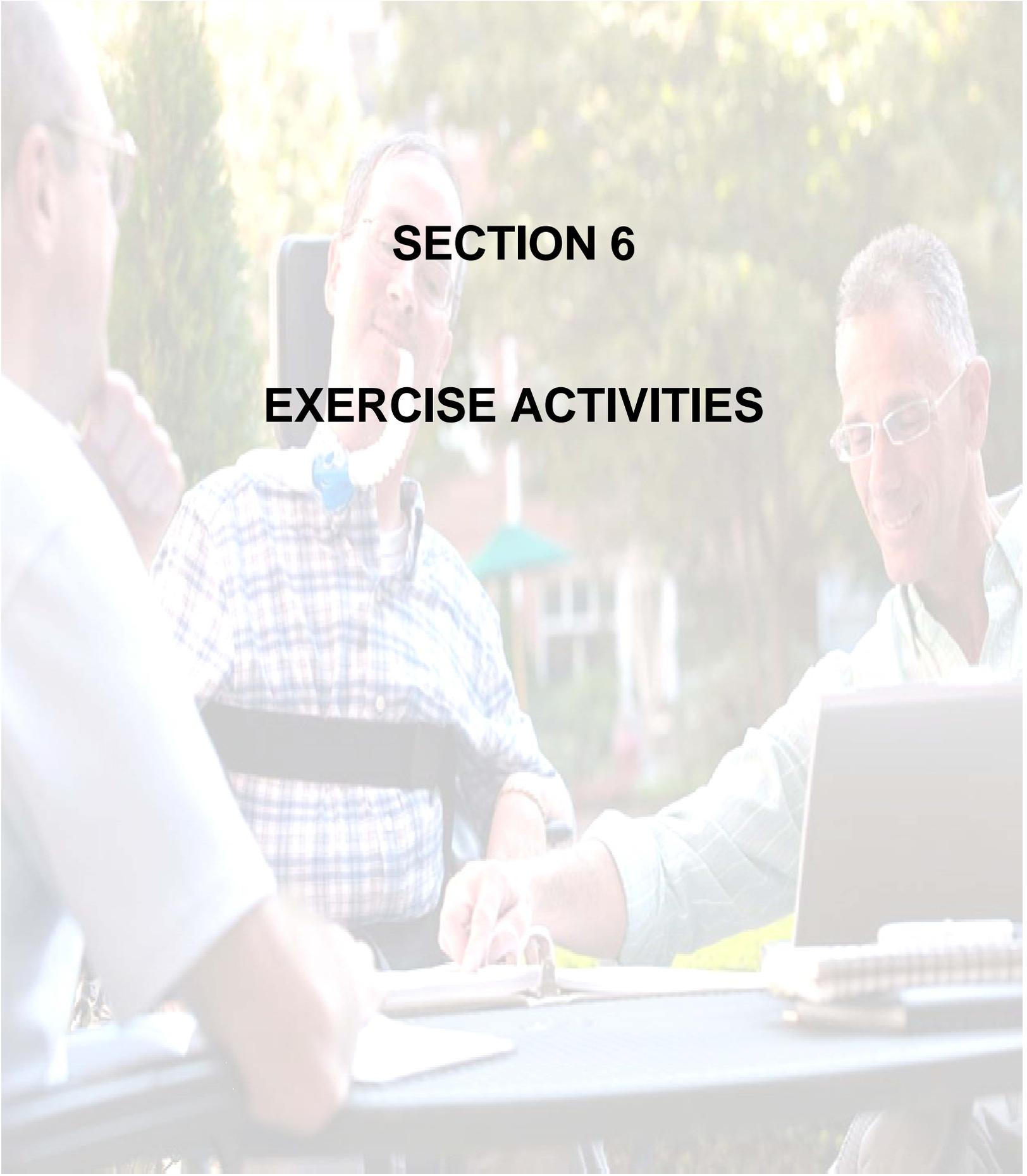
Ensure that paths of travel, parking, room layout, signage and other pre-planning decisions are in force and serve to promote accessibility and participation.

### **Meals**

Ensure that requested meal accommodations (gluten-free, sugar-free, vegan, etc.) are accounted for and clearly marked or designated for those individuals who requested special consideration. *Refer to Appendix "A" Logistic Checklist.*



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**SECTION 6**  
**EXERCISE ACTIVITIES**



## **EXERCISE ACTIVITIES**

This section addresses standard components of exercise or/drills. Work closely with stakeholders to identify strategies for making each component inclusive and accessible.

### **Pre-Planning**

#### **Controller/Evaluator Training**

Controllers plan and manage the exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site and act in the role of organizations or individuals that are not playing in the exercise. Controllers direct the pace of the exercise, provide key information to players and may prompt or initiate certain player's actions to ensure exercise continuity. When training Controllers and Evaluators, consult Subject Matter Experts on your Exercise Design Team what Controllers and Evaluators need to consider in the course of their duties. Considerations may include:

- Should include information, materials, and training for Controllers and Evaluators to be offered before the day of the exercise.
- Are there Controllers or Evaluators with disabilities who could participate if accommodations are made?



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- Have Evaluators been assigned to evaluate issues that directly impact people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs?
- Are there materials provided to controllers/evaluators that should also be made available in accessible formats?

### **Exercise Registration**

- All participants should register prior to the start of the exercise.
- Allow for pre-registration before the day of the exercise so that if there are accommodation requests, it is possible to identify and make the request prior to the day of the exercise.

### **Controller/Evaluator Briefing**

The Controller/Evaluator briefing will occur prior to the other briefings. It includes a brief review and any other changes. Consider communication or other barriers that might impact the briefing; if accommodation requests have been made, be sure in place prior to the briefing. Hold the briefing in spaces that are accessible.

### **Participant Briefing**

The participant briefing will occur just prior to the start of the exercise. Consider communication or other barriers that might impact the briefing; if accommodation requests have been made, be sure in place prior to the briefing. Hold the



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briefing in spaces that are accessible including the routes to the spaces.

### **Exercise Play**

Prior to the actual start of the exercise, all participants will be staged in their designated exercise start location. As an exercise provides opportunities to “test” components of a plan or protocol regarding accessibility. Prior to the exercise carefully consider which accommodations are fully accessible in order to conduct the exercise **and** changes and accommodations that will be necessary to the plan that is being tested. These are two distinctly different tests or approaches to testing that should be addressed separately.

### **Day of the Event**

#### **Exercise Registration**

On the day of the exercise review the layout and design to the registration process to remove barriers or obstacles to people with disabilities. Be prepared to deal with issues that may impact communication. Ask registrants if they made accommodation requests prior to today.

Ensure pathways to areas used in exercise play are free of barriers or obstacles. Be attentive and identify barriers to participants assigned identifying clothing, equipment or other props used in the exercise.



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### **Controller/Evaluator Briefing**

Reinforce the need to monitor the pace of exercise play to ensure full participation and to evaluate the exercise on accessibility as well as “tested” components.

### **Participant Briefing**

Ensure that presentations take into account any accommodation requests that have been made. Work with participants to identify if there are any barriers to using required logs and identify possible solutions such as using another format or assigning another individual to assist in recording information.

### **Exercise Play**

Ensure pathways to areas used in exercise play are free of barriers or obstacles. Be attentive and identify barriers to participants as well as assigned identifying clothing, equipment or other props used in the exercise.



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**SECTION 7**

**POST - EXERCISE AND  
EVALUATION ACTIVITIES**



## **POST – EXERCISE EVALUATION**

This section identifies key components of the post exercise and evaluation process and allows for the identification of issues, gaps, and recommendations to improve on the tested plans/procedures. In addition to testing the plan or procedure, the accessibility of the exercise should also be evaluated. It is important to include all participants in at least one form of post-exercise evaluation. Good practices in conducting accessible meetings should be used for each meeting conducted. Opportunities to provide and receive feedback typically occur in the following ways:

### **Post-Exercise Participant Debriefing (Hot Wash)**

At the conclusion of an exercise, the Director will facilitate a combine hot wash to allow players to discuss strength and areas for improvement. The Director should solicit feedback including overall impressions of the exercise and issues that arose in terms of accessibility, accommodations, specific activities, etc.

### **Participant Feedback/Evaluation Forms**

Questions should include different levels of participation, regarding specific components of the drill/exercise. Forms should also include specific questions about accommodations, room layout, materials, accessibility, etc. Use Subject Matter Experts in disabilities to ensure that the



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format of the evaluation form is accessible to a wide range of people with disabilities. Consider alternate ways that forms can be provided to ensure that all participants have an opportunity for feedback. See Appendix A for more subjects to address on evaluation forms.

### **Controller/Evaluator Debriefing**

Each briefing should take into account the various ways in which the needs of participants with disabilities were met or not met. As with the Hot Wash, the meeting facilitator should solicit specific impressions and comments that provide insight on how to address or improve inclusive planning and overall accessibility.

### **After Action Report and Improvement Plan**

After the information collected at debriefings and through the evaluation forms is gathered where the results should be compiled for inclusion in the After Action Report and Improvement Plan. Issues that specifically address people with disabilities should be specifically identified and discussed and recommendations for appropriate improvement should be included in the After Action Report. This is another opportunity to include Subject Matter Experts in disabilities; creating a realistic and achievable Improvement Plan is a critical step needed to improve inclusive planning.



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## **After Action Meetings**

After Action meeting(s) are used for the Exercise Design Team to discuss and validate comments and evaluations made by exercise participants. During this meeting the Improvement Plan is subjected to analysis by Exercise Design Team Members who develop strategies for improvement.



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# ***APPENDIX A***

## APPENDIX A

# ACCESSIBLE EXERCISE CHECKLISTS

*The following information is a modification of the Planning Accessible Meeting and Events Toolkit*





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### **Overview**

Planning fully accessible meetings and events might at first glance seem overwhelming, but with proper planning can become second nature. An effective approach begins with raising planners' awareness of disability diversity within the legal profession, as well as the barriers that limit or preclude participation by persons with disabilities. During a lifetime, most everyone is likely to experience a disability, whether due to aging, a chronic disease, illness, or an injury. Every reasonable effort must be made to ensure that no person with any type of disability is prevented or discouraged from attending—and from fully and equally participating in—the meeting or event, or any part of it, based on any accessibility issue. Planners should reach out to persons with various types of disabilities, disability organizations, independent living centers, and the ADA National Network Centers for assistance. Note that some individuals may not disclose their disability-related needs, so meeting and event planners should be proactive in addressing potential barriers to participation.

Planners must work with attendees and presenters in an interactive fashion so that the most appropriate accommodations can be identified and provided. It is helpful to have a general understanding of the various types of disabilities, including mobility, sensory, cognitive, learning, and psychiatric. Some accommodations may be unreasonable, i.e., they pose an undue hardship or change the fundamental nature of the service being provided.



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However, most barriers to participation can be removed without incurring great expense, imposing an administrative burden, compromising the nature of the activity, or raising health and safety concerns.

This toolkit is intended to assist entities in planning meetings and events that are accessible to persons with disabilities. It provides recommendations and checklists for all phases of a meeting or an event, from choosing the venue to promotion, registration, presentations, materials, social events, meals, and staff and volunteer training. Note, however, that it is impossible to anticipate every barrier that might limit or preclude participation by a valued member. Moreover, because new ideas for improving accessibility and new technologies continue to emerge, this toolkit should be viewed as a living document that is meant to evolve.



## **VENUE EXTERIOR FEATURES CHECKLIST**

Physical accessibility of a venue is essential to making a meeting or an event accessible for persons with visual, hearing, and mobility impairments.

- Clearly marked (signage), well-lit accessible main entrance at street level so that all individuals can use this entrance
- Entrance connected by an accessible route to public transportation stops, accessible parking and passenger loading zones, and public streets or sidewalks
- Main entrance/exit doorways that are wide enough (32 inches with the door open 90 degrees) to accommodate wheelchairs/scooters
- Other entrances that are at street level or accessible by ramps or lifts
- Easy-to-open (automatic/push button door openers, lever handles), light (no more than 5 pounds) doors; no revolving doors
- Glass doors with contrasting door frames, stickers, or bright signs



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- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile/raised signage), covered drop-off and pick-up points adjacent to the main entrance, with curb cuts
- Accessible transit services (private and public)
- Accessible, clearly marked (symbol of accessibility) parking spaces (1 space for every 25 spaces) located on the shortest accessible route of travel from adjacent parking to an accessible entrance
- Slip-resistant, level surfaces
- A step-free paths of travel
- Close proximity of venue from airport, train station, and public transportation
- Close proximity of venue to restaurants, theatres, shops, and other attractions
- Curb ramps/cuts so that persons who use mobility devices are not traveling in the street
- Crosswalks with visual and audible signals
- Ramps for inaccessible areas, equipped with handrails on both sides if the rise is greater than 6 inches, and level landings
- Stairs with continuous handrails on both sides; no open risers (space between steps)



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- Tactile ground surface indicators that signal stairs and ramps for people who are blind or have visual impairments
- Toileting area for service animals



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## **VENUE INTERIOR FEATURES CHECKLIST**

- Registration/concierge desks at a height accessible by wheelchair/scooter users that allows for a frontal approach and provides adequate knee clearance under the desk
- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage) elevators located on both sides of the door and along an accessible route
- Elevator call buttons with visual and audio signals, reachable by wheelchair/scooter users
- Elevator control buttons that are designated by Braille and raised characters or symbols and are reachable by wheelchair/scooter users
- Elevator interiors adequately illuminated and wide enough for wheelchairs/scooters to enter, maneuver within reach of controls, and exit
- Elevator voice and visual display two-way emergency communication
- Easy-to-open, light (no more than 5 pounds) doors with lever handles that are easy to grasp with one hand or automatic/push button openers



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- Wide (32 inches with the door open 90 degrees) doorways for wheelchairs/scooters to enter/exit  
Clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage), accessible exits
- Sufficiently wide (64 inches for two-way traffic), barrier-free hallways and corridors to allow everyone to move about freely
- Even, stable, regular, slip-resistant, non-sloped paths of travel
- Clearly marked (Braille and tactile signage) accessible restrooms located on an accessible route
- Accessible sleeping rooms (check on number available) with roll-in showers
- Accessible fitness center, including restrooms and showers
- Accessible restaurants (including ability to provide for dietary restrictions and large print/Braille menus), bars/lounges, and shopping
- Emergency procedures for persons with disabilities (audio and visual alarms in halls and sleeping rooms)
- Procedures to respond to medical issues /emergencies
- Accessible space for walking service animals



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- Availability of TTY, hearing-aid compatible, and volume-control telephones reachable by wheelchair/scooter users
- Televisions with closed-captioning
- Well-lit areas; adjustable lighting



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## **VENUE MEETING/EVENT ROOM CHECKLIST**

- Signs (with Braille and tactile character, sans serif or simple serif large type, sentence case, and good contrast) that direct attendees to all rooms
- A free path to rooms
- Seating aisles that are wide enough (36 inches) to accommodate wheelchairs/scooters
- Well-lit rooms for participants with visual and hearing impairments
- Good acoustics and a functioning auxiliary sound system
- Prominent, well-lit, visible space for interpreters to stand (e.g., raised platform with a dark, solid color background)
- Assistive listening devices, hearing or induction loops, and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) for participants who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Location of all audio visual equipment in an area that does not block paths of travel



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- Clear line of sight to interpreters and real-time CART
- Roving microphones for audience questions
- Multiple sets of outlets for laptops and other electronic aids
- Well secured, covered cables, wires, cords, and microphones placed outside of paths of travel
- Doors wide enough (32 inches with door open 90 degrees) for wheelchairs/scooters to enter/exit
- Easy-to-open, light doors (no more than 5 pounds) with lever handles or automatic/push button openers
- Speaker podium at ground level or accessible via ramp or lift
- Tables for materials and food/beverage at a height (28 to 34 inches) reachable by wheelchairs/scooters and in an accessible location
- Accessible exhibit areas
- Rooms large enough to allow all persons to move about freely
- Aisles wide enough (36 inches) to permit wheelchairs/scooters to navigate
- Accessible bathrooms in close proximity to rooms



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- Elevators in close proximity to rooms and along an accessible route
- Quiet break space in close proximity to rooms
- Accessible, integrated seating throughout the room, with preferred seating for persons with visual and hearing impairments in the front rows
- Toileting space and water for service animals



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## **PROMOTIONAL / REGISTRATION MATERIALS CHECKLIST**

Promotional and registration material are a fundamental avenue for communicating about the accessibility of your meeting or event.

Be sure to include in your promotional and registration materials a statement that invites persons with disabilities to request accommodations, as well as a deadline that gives you sufficient time to respond to the requests and provide the accommodations.

- Include a statement that meeting/event is accessible
- Include a request for accommodations statement
- Designate a contact person to handle accommodation requests
- Ensure that your website is accessible
- Include an accessibility link for meeting/event on your website in a prominent place
- Identify any barrier that cannot be eliminated



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- Offer materials in alternative formats
- Provide alternative registration options (online, telephone, text phone, email)



## **PRESENTATION CHECKLIST**

It is crucial that planners communicate with all speakers/presenters well in advance to ensure that their presentations and materials will be accessible for persons with a wide range of disabilities.

- Announce when the meeting begins and ends
- At the start of the meeting, introduce the interpreter(s) and other service providers
- At the start of the meeting, orally describe the room layout and location of emergency exits, food/beverages, and restrooms
- Inform attendees in the presentation description and at the start of any writing or reading activities during the meeting so people with visual, cognitive, or motor impairments can fully and equally participate
- Keep the presentation clear, simple, concise, and organized
- Provide an overview of the presentation at the start and a summary of the key points at the end
- Avoid using gestures and visual points of reference



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- Use simple language; avoid acronyms, jargon, and idioms
- Always face the audience; never turn away
- Keep hands and other objects away from your mouth when speaking
- Be visible to everyone; stand in good light
- Use a microphone
- If interpreters are being used, do not walk while speaking
- Speak to the person for whom the interpreter is working, not the interpreter
- Speak in well-modulated tones and at a pace that allows interpreters to interpret accurately and persons with learning and cognitive impairments to process
- Describe verbally all visual materials (e.g., slides, charts, overheads, videos) in detail
- Ensure that visual aids are printed in large font and make print copies available
- Provide a written description of all images



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- Allow participants extra time to look at visual materials (for instance, individuals who use interpreters cannot look at both the interpreter and the materials simultaneously and persons with learning disabilities and cognitive impairments need time to process the information)
- Use multiple communication methods for different learning styles (verbal information, pictures and diagrams, text, auditory)
- Give people time to process information by pausing between topics
- Check in with participants to ensure that presentation is understood and clarify if needed
- Provide a verbal overview of information in textual materials
- When reading directly from text, provide an advance copy and pause slightly when interjecting information not in the text
- Provide audio descriptions (i.e., describe facial expressions, body language, actions, and costumes) and captioning or CART for all videos
- Instruct participants to wait to be called on, not to interrupt, speak one at a time, and speak clearly into the microphone)



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- Repeat questions posed by people in the audience before responding
- Allow for written questions
- Build in sufficient time for participants to get from session to session
- Prepare all materials (Papers, PowerPoints, agendas, slides) in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, audiotapes, computer disks, CD-Roms)
- Make electronic versions of materials available in plain text, rich text, or Microsoft Word
- Allow persons with visual or learning disabilities to tape meetings
- Make materials available in advance of the meeting to allow persons with learning and other cognitive impairments, as well as interpreters and other support personnel, to familiarize themselves with the materials and ask any questions
- Tab and label materials
- Make text and visuals large enough to be read from back of the room
- Reserve seats in front of presenter for persons with visual, hearing, and cognitive impairments



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- Ensure that all accessible seating is integrated within the room so as to avoid sitting all persons with disabilities together
- Allow for regular breaks (about every 45 minutes) for questions and answers; people/service animals restroom; access service providers such as interpreters, CART providers, note takers, readers



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### **MEETING MATERIALS FOR PERSONS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS CHECKLIST**

Planners must ensure that all attendees have equal access to the materials provided so they can fully participate. Accordingly, it is essential to offer all materials in alternative formats. Doing so will not only expand the pool of potential attendees, but also demonstrate your commitment to accessibility.

#### **Text Format**

- In general, use a 16-point font size
- If the document is large and bulky, then consider providing digital version upon request.
- Avoid using highly stylized typefaces
- Use easy-to-read fonts with clearly defined letters and clear spacing between the letters, such as sans-serif fonts (e.g., Helvetica, Verdana, Arial)
- Avoid using blocks of capital letters for more than a couple of words
- Avoid underlining or italicizing large volumes of text
- Spell out numbers, as persons with visual impairments often have trouble distinguishing between the numbers 3, 5, 8, and 0



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### **Layout**

- Align all text on the left, rather than centered or right justified
- Avoid centralized or justified paragraphs
- Do not hyperlink URLs because underlining reduces readability
- Do not place text directly over or wrap text around an image
- Use at least 1.5 spacing between lines of text paragraphs
- Use column lay out where practical, making sure to input space or use a vertical line to mark the end and beginning of each column

### **Contrast and Color**

- Ensure good contrast between the font and background colors
- Use black text
- Use cream instead of white paper
- Use a single solid color for documents with a colored background
- Use pastel blue or yellow, not pink, red, or green, if color paper is required



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**Paper**

- Choose a matte rather than a glossy finish
- Avoid using thin paper, which can bleed images and text from the reverse
- Print on one side



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## **MEALS / SOCIAL FUNCTION CHECKLIST**

### **Meals/Social Functions**

Planners must ensure that meals and social functions, such as receptions, are accessible to persons with disabilities. These networking opportunities can be as important to attendees as the substantive meetings and presentations. Provide chairs with arms

- Make tables available
- Ensure that tables and bars are at a correct height (28 to 34 inches) for persons using mobility devices
- Avoid fixed seating attached to tables
- Avoid counter-top high tables and chairs
- Ensure adequate room under dining tables for wheelchairs/scooters to roll under
- Ensure sufficient space between seating areas for wheelchairs/scooters
- Ensure sufficient room for everyone to maneuver safely and independently



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- Ensure that there is an accessible route of travel to the food and entertainment and between tables
- Avoid seating persons with disabilities in one area or on the fringes of the venue
- Ensure that any entertainment is accessible
- Arrange for accessible transportation
- Avoid self-serve meals or buffets; otherwise, have personal assistants on hand
- Include finger foods that do not require persons to use utensils or hold plates
- Set up more than one food and beverage area
- Account for special dietary needs (gluten-free, sugar-free, vegan, etc.) and clearly mark and place food/beverages on separate platters
- Provide a choice of cutlery and crockery (e.g., straws, lightweight plastic cups and plates)
- Avoid long, billowy tablecloths
- Have personal assistants and interpreters on hand
- Include personal assistants and interpreters in the estimated number of participants



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## **STAFF / VOLUNTEER TRAINING CHECKLIST**

Staff (both event and venue) and volunteers (e.g., readers, note takers, guides, and personal assistants) are critical to holding an accessible meeting. ABA entities often sponsor programs using volunteer organizers and limited budgets. Thus, planning accessible meetings and events will require the commitment of volunteer organizers, members, and staff to identify and remove barriers to full participation.

- Appoint a point person for accessibility issues and list as contact on all materials
- Contact regional ADA Network Centers for assistance with training
- Train staff/volunteers about accommodations, use of assistive devices, emergency procedures, and accessibility features of the venue and meeting/event
- Hold orientations for staff/volunteers on types of disabilities and disability etiquette
- Hold orientation for attendees with disabilities to review accessibility features, location of meetings/events, and accommodations



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- Do a walk-through of the venue a few days before and the day of the meeting/event
- Test all technical equipment when it arrives and the day of the meeting/event



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### **EFFECTIVE & RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST**

Communicating with individuals with disabilities should be no different than the same respectful, clear communication deserved by everyone. This is especially important to remember, given that the majority of disabilities are “hidden” or “invisible,” i.e., not obvious. Here are some general guidelines

#### **Every Person**

- Treat the person with the same respect that you extend to every person
- Focus on the person, not his or her disability
- Ask each person what will make him or her most comfortable
- Always ask the person if he or she needs assistance and how you can assist; do not assume he or she needs help
- Do not make decisions for the person
- Address the person directly rather than the sign language interpreter, reader, or other access provider



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### **Persons Who Use Wheelchairs/Scooters**

- When speaking for more than a few minutes, bend to eye level or pull up a chair
- Never lean on, push, move, or touch the mobility device

### **Persons Who Are Blind or Have Visual Impairments**

- Introduce yourself and others if present
- Ask the person his or her name
- Identify your job or role
- Be descriptive when giving directions
- Avoid using visually-oriented references
- Do not pet or distract service animals
- Walk on the opposite side of the service animal
- Offer your arm if person needs to be guided
- Describe where you are going and any obstacles if you are serving as a guide
- With permission, guide the person's hand to the back of a chair if you offer someone a seat
- Let the person know when you are leaving
- Find a place with good lighting, but not too bright



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### **Persons Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

- Ask the person how he or she prefers to communicate (e.g., sign language, gesturing, writing, or speaking)
- Advise the person if you have trouble understanding the person
- Face the person when talking
- Find a well-lit room, but avoid glare
- Speak clearly, avoiding gum chewing or obscuring your mouth with your hand
- Use your normal tone of voice and volume
- Avoid spaces with background noise
- Have pen or paper or device to text on hand as alternative communication method
- In groups, request that people speak one at a time
- Address the person rather than his or her interpreter
- When communicating with a person who reads lips, speak clearly in a normal way that does not over exaggerate words, use short and simple sentences, avoid blocking your face, and stand in a well-lit place



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- Ensure that the venue has an induction loop that stops background noise interfering if the person is wearing a hearing aid
- Ask, if you have any doubts, if the person understood you
- Do not pretend to understand when you do not
- Be aware of situations involving announcements or calling out names so you can notify persons who are deaf or have other hearing impairments

### **Persons with Speech Difficulties**

- Ask each person what will make him or her most comfortable
- Listen carefully
- Do not pretend to understand when you do not
- Give the person your full attention
- Find a quiet space
- If you do not understand, ask the person to repeat; if you still are unable to understand, ask the person to write the information or to recommend an alternative method of communicating
- Do not finish sentences for the person or interrupt
- Consider writing as an alternative means of communicating



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### **Persons with Learning/Cognitive Difficulties**

- Ask each person what will make him or her most comfortable
- Listen carefully
- Speak clearly
- Check for understanding
- Use clear, concrete language, avoiding abstractions
- Allow the person extra time to process the information and ask questions
- Ask the person how he or she prefers to communicate (e.g., written or verbal)
- Don't overload the person with too much information
- Find a quiet place without distractions

### **Persons with Developmental Disabilities**

- Ask each person what will make him or her most comfortable
- Speak clearly
- Use simple words and concrete, not abstract, concepts
- Break down complex concepts into small parts



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- Do not use “baby” talk
- Ask neutral questions
- Verify responses by repeating questions in a different way
- Allow time for decision-making
- Keep to the person’s schedule and routine
- Model your pace of speech and vocabulary on that of the person
- If you are not sure if the person understood you, ask him or her to repeat the information for your benefit

### **Persons with Psychosocial Conditions**

- Ask if there is a preferred time to communicate
- Schedule communications in the late morning or early afternoon
- Keep the pressure of the situation to a minimum
- Use automated reminders to highlight times and locations of meetings.
- Provide written instructions and allow breaks



## **Post-Meeting/Event Survey**

All meetings and events should include a survey for attendees to provide their feedback. To determine how you did in terms of accessibilities. You should include an accessibility question in the survey. For instance, how would you rate the accessibility in the following process:

### **1. How would you rate the Registration Process.**

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A

### **2. How would you rate the Registration Materials**

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A



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3. How would you rate the On-Site Registration

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A

4. How would you rate the Accommodation Process

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A

5. How would you rate the Promotional Materials

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A



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6. How would you rate the Web-Site

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A

7. How would you rate the Meeting Site

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A

8. How would you rate the Hotel Rooms

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A



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9. How would you rate the Transportation

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A

10. How would you rate the Parking

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A

11. How would you rate the Presentation

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A



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12. How Would you rate the Presentation Materials

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A

13. How would you rate the Social Activities

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A

14. How would you rate the Meals

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not Good
- Inaccessible
- N/A



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Please provide additional information (Optional).

These questions will allow planners to examine ways to both increase and improve the accessibility of your future meetings and events.

## **Conclusion**

The information contained within this guidance are tips and suggestions on how to include people with disabilities and other with access and functional needs.

For further assistance please contact OEM at 323-980-2260.



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# ***APPENDIX B***



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## **APPENDIX B**

# **LOS ANGELES COUNTY AFN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Primary Name</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>
Los Angeles County of Emergency Management	Sinan Khan	323-980-2264
Los Angeles Chief Executive Office (CEO), Disability Civil Rights Section	Angela Davis	213-202-5828
Los Angeles County Department of Children & Family Services	Jessie Comer	213-351-5504
Los Angeles County Department of Community & Senior Services	Elle Wolfe	213-738-2681 or 213-215-4158
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health/EMS/Alliance	John Chung	213-270-5835
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health	Ana Maria DeLaTorre	213-305-3238
Los Angeles County Department of Health Services	Sandra Shields	562-347-1648
Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services	John Cvjekovic	562-345-7729
Los Angeles County Department of Internal Services	Emily Montanez	323-267-3558
Los Angeles County Sheriff Department	Eric Fox	323-997-1084



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Los Angeles County Fire Department	Pablo Valadez	323-881-2323
Los Angeles County Public Works	Ron Lacayo	626-4587313
ACCESS	Evie Palicz	213-290-6000
Alliance Regional Catastrophic Planning Group	Paul Jernigan	323-807-7061
American Red Cross Los Angeles Region	Batzabet Chavez	310-903-6299
City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department	Alen Pijuan	213-484-4813
Independent Living Centers Rep (6 Centers)	Alan Toy	310-390-3611 x 201
Eastern Los Angeles County Regional Center	Liz Harrell	626-299-4862
Emergency Network Los Angeles (ENLA)	Cullen Amet	757-645-8256
Greater Los Angeles Agency of Deafness (GLAD)	Richard Dickinson	rdickinson@gladinc.org
Save the Children	Marnie Suss	310-210-2579
CALIF (Communities Actively Living Independent & Free)	Ban Rockwell	562-435-4236
Area E	Raquel Vernola	562-902-2368
OPS/Fire- Fire Chief	Andrew Marques	909-444-7500
Department of Veterans Affairs	Stanja Cherry	424-832-8242
Los Angeles County AAA	Michael Gavigan	213-738-2702
GVC Consultants	Peggy Brutsche	pbrustsche@earthlink.net
ARC Volunteer	Dionne DeMille	310-571-1818
City of Los Angeles – BCSF Consultant	Patrick Munongo	951-831-3701
Department of Beaches & Harbors	Kenneth Foreman	310-305-9550



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# ***APPENDIX C***



## **APPENDIX C**

# **ETIQUETTE GUIDE**



## **THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK OR WRITE: POLITE COMMUNICATION**

The words one chooses to use when referring to people with disabilities in oral and written communication often carry either a positive or a negative connotation. Therefore, adopting the following suggestions will help others know that you respect people with disabilities and may also encourage people to think and act more appropriately toward others.

### **Put People First**

The person should always come first. An individual has abilities as well as disabilities. Focusing on the person emphasizes the status we share, rather than conditions we presently do not. Thus, say “the person who has a disability”, rather than “the disabled person”. Similarly, it is better to refer to “people with disabilities” than to “the disabled” or “the handicapped”.



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### **Emphasize Action**

People with disabilities, even severe ones, can be quite active. Thus it is better to say “President Franklin Roosevelt used a wheelchair and occasionally walked using braces and crutches” rather than “he was confined to a wheelchair”, or “the wheelchair-bound President”, or “the President was in a wheelchair”.

### **Do Not Sensationalize, Pity or Characterize**

Avoid words like “afflicted”, “crippled”, and “victim” when referring to a person with a disability. Also, remember that people are more than their disabilities. Instead of saying that “President Roosevelt suffered from asthma”, “Helen Keller was handicapped by blindness”, “Peter Stuyvesant was an amputee” or “Moses was afflicted with a speech impairment”, do say “Einstein has a learning disability”, “Napoleon had epilepsy”, or “Alexander Graham Bell was hard of hearing” or “Marlee Matlin is an actress who is deaf”.

### **Avoid Inappropriate Words**

“Handicapped” has gone the way of “invalid” and “crippled” and is no longer viewed as an appropriate term to refer to a person with a disability. “Differently abled” and “physically challenged” are fad phrases which have not gained general acceptance among people with disabilities and, in fact, offend many. “Special” when used to refer to people with disabilities, is a rather backhanded compliment – everyone is special in some way – and use of that term as an alternative to “different” is as inappropriate as using the latter term. Words like “wheelchair person” simply should not be



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used. People without current disabilities, when referred to in contrast to people with disabilities should be referred to as “people without disabilities” rather than as “able bodied” or “normal” since a person with a disability may be more “abled” than others with respect to pertinent activities. Of course, in some contexts, when quoting from an old statute or referring to a particular entity by name, use of some words which otherwise should be avoided may be necessary. For example, The Federal Rehabilitation Act uses the term “handicapped” and schools have “Committees on Special Education” (an improvement over the former “Committees on the Handicapped”). At the time when some organizations were formed and laws were written, few people had yet considered the role of language in encouraging inclusion.

### **Points to Keep in Mind**

- Physical disability does not imply a mental disability or childishness.
- Different means of communication does not mean low intellectual ability.
- Disabilities can occur to anyone at anytime in life.
- Some disabilities can be temporary or episodic.
- Don’t be afraid to encounter someone with a disability.

### **Note on language referring to the “elderly”**

There are several terms used to refer to the “elderly” that are used interchangeably, depending on the agency or organization. Common terms include: “seniors”, “elderly”,



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“the aging”, “older persons”, etc. Often the title used in the name of the agency or organization will indicate the appropriate term to use while working with that entity (e.g. the Administration on Aging uses the “aging” primarily in speech and written materials). Follow the same general guidance listed here for people with disabilities and defer to individual preferences.

***By choosing words which convey a positive image of our colleagues, clients, and friends, we begin to break down often unconscious attitudinal barriers to their integration and meaningful participation in society.***

Adapted from *Rights and Responsibilities – People with Disabilities in Employment and Public Accommodations*, Mark H. Leeds, Esq. (City of New York 1990).



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# ***APPENDIX D***



## **APPENDIX D**

# **VIGNETTES AND EXAMPLES**

### **Training & Exercise**

1. When including people with disabilities, others with access or functional needs, non-English speakers and/or youth in drills or exercises avoid pre-assigning them a designation that would classify them as “deceased at scene” or anything that would be passed over during a triage evaluation by first responders. This will allow you to test more complex situations and test assumptions that otherwise you may not be presented over the course of the exercise.
  - During a functional exercise, several people with disabilities were included in the drill. However they were all labeled “deceased”. This did not allow responders to test their capabilities and knowledge of working with people with disabilities during the exercise.
2. When conducting an evacuation drill with a hospital, nursing home or assistive living facility, for example,



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consider testing use of different staff. The effective and appropriate use of all personnel, including those who are often overlooked, such as Physical Therapists may provide you with skilled resources that you would have otherwise not utilized. Doing so results in fewer injuries in play or real-time and demonstrates the need to incorporate all skill sets into response training.

- An assisted living facility tested their plan to evacuate their facility. They discovered that many more people needed assistance than expected. Early in the exercise staff physical therapists, who had not specific determined role at the time of the exercise, were identified. With their training and experience they were able to skillfully help residents evacuate safely during the exercise.
3. When testing appropriate decontamination procedures, be sure evaluators review the simulated decontamination of people and their auxiliary aids such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, glasses, hearing aids, service animals, etc. Alternatively, evaluate on scene work-arounds such as transfer from one wheelchair to a “clean” one outside the hot zone. Doing so results in the very critical



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understanding of whether the integrity of a safe zone remains intact or compromised.

- During a simulated response to a chemical release, several exercise participants with disabilities were decontaminated. However, none of their auxiliary aids such as walkers, wheelchairs, service animals were decontaminated. This resulted in the exposure and contamination of all participants including first responders.
4. When setting up a Point of Distribution (POD) drill to test the flow of people through the location, consider the logistics of how to set up the stations, the sequence of the stations, and communication at each station. Account for unobstructed routes of travel and accessible entrances for people with mobility disabilities; for graphic based and multi-language directional signage; for medication instructions in alternate formats; etc. Doing so results in a faster flow of public through the POD and less bottlenecks.
- During a POD drill, a County tested their plan to determine how many people could get through per hour. However, they did not account for



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people with mobility disabilities, and doorways, aisles, and line set up was not accessible. As a result this disrupted the flow and prevented some individuals with mobility disabilities from participating.

5. When engaging members of the community as volunteers, account for and plan around daily logistics not in the control of exercise designers such as the schedule of public transportation and paratransit in the area. Doing so results in volunteers being able to arrive in time for safety briefings, make up, and other factors. Not taking public transportation into account can mean that the invitation to participate is not going to result in actual volunteers.
  - Prior to an exercise, many volunteer organizations including those that serve people with disabilities were engaged to participate in the exercise. However, the time of the drill was so early in the morning that public transportation services were not available. The result was that many of the people that were signed up to participate, could not get there in time for the exercise.



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