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# Operations 3-C Support

September 27, 2008



## AFTER ACTION REPORT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Operation 3-C Support Full Scale Exercise was conducted on September 27, 2008. The exercise was a volunteer based exercise to respond to and set up an emergency shelter for the evacuation of personnel from an assisted living facility. This was the first exercise conducted by Pima County utilizing volunteer agencies as the primary players.

The following target capabilities were chosen by the exercise design team:

- On-site Incident Management
- Communications
- Mass Care and Feeding
- Volunteer and Donations Management

Although not chosen as a capability; Medical Assessment was added as a focus area. The scenario involved the evacuation of an assisted living facility after the uncovering of several barrels of a hazardous material during re-modeling and construction.

The Pima County Health Department Full Scale Exercise: Operation 3-C Support was composed of numerous and diverse agencies, including Pima County Health Department, Pima County Office of Emergency Management, Pima Health System, Pima County RACES, Pima County Sheriff's Department, Pima County Citizen Corps, Pima County Emergency Response Teams, Pima County Medical Reserve Corps, Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Management, Santa Cruz County Health Department, Cochise County Office of Emergency Management, Tohono O'odham Office of Emergency Management, American Red Cross, Green Valley Fire District, Pima Council on Aging, Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona, United Community Health Center and Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest. The exercise planning team spent seven months planning this exercise. The driving force to conduct this exercise was the fact that Pima County had never conducted an exercise utilizing volunteers as the primary exercise participants and the county wanted volunteers to gain familiarity with the set up and operation of a Type 3 Shelter. The exercise objectives chosen by the design team were identified as key capabilities needing to be accomplished in order to have a smooth operating shelter.

Based on the exercise planning team's deliberations, the following objectives were developed for Operation 3-C Support:

- Objective 1: Assess the capability to effectively direct and control shelter management activities utilizing ICS/NIMS
- Objective 2: Evaluate that the continuous flow of critical information is maintained as needed among multi-jurisdictional and multi-volunteer agencies through the duration of the shelter operations in compliance with NIMS
- Objective 3: Evaluate the capability to provide immediate shelter, feeding centers, basic medical assessment, bulk distribution of needed items and related services to persons including special needs populations affected by a large scale incident

- Objective 4: Test the capability to effectively notify and coordinate pre-trained and vetted volunteers and the registration and management of unaffiliated volunteers in support of shelter and mass care management activities.
- Objective 5: Test the ability to provide appropriate categorization of client's medical needs.

The purpose of this report is to analyze exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

## Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this exercise are as follows:

- Multi-jurisdictional/multi-volunteer agency teamwork
- Initiative by staff to do what was needed without being asked.
- Tucson Volunteer Reception Center worked well and was able to interview, place, brief and dispatch volunteers as needed.

## Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the exercise, opportunities for improvement in the participating agencies ability to respond to the incident were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

- Ability to fully implement the Incident Command System at all levels amongst all agencies. ICS needs to be fully implemented with a clear organizational chart and understood by all agencies involved.
- Develop an IAP to include an ICS organizational chart for shelter management and ensure personnel know where it is located.
- Identification of a single Command and Control area (Incident Command Post) where Command Staff personnel will be located and operating out of.
- Communication was lacking and confusing in part to the lack of an ICS organizational chart, and the failure to identify one primary form of communication (i.e. the Shelter Manager was carrying three different radios throughout the exercise, and was being shadowed by a member from RACES)

The Operation 3-C Support Full Scale Exercise was a success, because of the overall sense of teamwork and determination each agency brought with them to the exercise. Subsequent exercises should focus on the development and implementation of an ICS organizational chart where in volunteers from multiple agencies are called together to work under one command. More effort and emphasis should also be made to enhance the communications capabilities of the various volunteer agencies involved thus limiting the primary communications mechanism to a sole source with backups only used when needed.

# SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW

## Exercise Details

### Exercise Name

Operation 3-C Support

### Type of Exercise

Full Scale Exercise

### Exercise Start Date

September 27, 2008

### Exercise End Date

September 27, 2008

### Duration

8 hours

### Location

Desert Diamond Casino

### Sponsor

Pima County Health Department

### Program

2008 Tucson UASI/PDPC Exercise and Training Sub-committee

### Mission

Response

### Capabilities

- On-site Incident Management
- Communications
- Mass Care and Feeding
- Volunteer and Donations Management

### Scenario Type

A response to a no notice request to establish a community shelter (care/feeding) to personnel evacuated from an assisted living facility.

## **Exercise Planning Team**

Paul E. Taylor III – Exercise Director

Tim Siemsen – Lead Exercise Planner

Tom Taylor – Lead CERT Planner

Scott Ingram – Lead Volunteer Planner

Arlyn Johnson – Santa Cruz County Lead Exercise Planner

Mike Evans – Cochise County Lead Exercise Planner

## **Participating Organizations**

Pima County Health Department

Pima Council on Aging

Pima Health System

Pima County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

RACES – Pima and Cochise Counties

American Red Cross – Southern Arizona Chapter

Pima County Citizens Corps Councils and programs

Pima County Sheriffs Department

Pima County Sheriff's Auxiliary Volunteers

Southern Arizona VOAD

Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest

Tohono O'odham Nation – Desert Diamond Casino and Emergency Management

Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona

Cochise County Office of Emergency Management

Cochise County Health Department

Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Management

Santa Cruz County Health Department

United Community Health Center

## **Number of Participants**

### **SHELTER**

- Players: 92
- Controllers: 9
- Evaluators: 5
- Facilitators: 5
- Observers: 8
- Actors: 22

### **VOLUNTEER RECEPTION CENTERS**

- Players: 119
- Controllers: 6
- Evaluators: 6

## SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

### Exercise Purpose and Design

The purpose of the exercise was to evaluate vetted volunteer player actions against recent training and current capabilities for a response to establish a Type 3 Shelter, and register recruited unaffiliated volunteers through the establishment of a volunteer reception center. This exercise was used to create familiarity with Type 3 Shelter operations and management among exercise participants. The design of this exercise took approximately 7 months to complete and was organized and designed so that volunteers played the primary role. This exercise was funded by the 2008 Tucson UASI/PDPC.

### Exercise Objectives, Capabilities, and Activities

Capabilities-based planning allows for exercise planning teams to develop exercise objectives and observe exercise outcomes through a framework of specific action items that were derived from the Target Capabilities List (TCL). The capabilities listed below form the foundation for the organization of all objectives and observations in this exercise. Additionally, each capability is linked to several corresponding activities and tasks to provide additional detail.

Based upon the identified exercise objectives below, the exercise planning team has decided to demonstrate the following capabilities during this exercise:

- **Objective 1:** Assess the capability to effectively direct and control shelter management activities utilizing ICS/NIMS.
  - **On Site Incident Management:** Implement On Site Incident Management; Establish Full On Site Incident Command; Resource Management; Develop Incident Action Plan; and Execute Plan
- **Objective 2:** Evaluate that the continuous flow of critical information is maintained as needed among multi-jurisdictional and multi-volunteer agencies through the duration of the shelter operations in compliance with NIMS.
  - **Communications:** Alert and Dispatch.
- **Objective 3:** Evaluate the capability to provide immediate shelter, feeding centers, basic medical assessment, bulk distribution of needed items and related services to persons including special needs populations affected by a large scale incident..
  - **Mass Care and Feeding:** Direct Mass Care Tactical Operations; Activate Mass Care; Establish Shelter Operations; Shelter Special Needs; Shelter General Population; Establish Feeding Operations; Close Shelter; and Prepare and Distribute Food.
- **Objective 4:** Test the capability to effectively notify and coordinate pre-trained and

vetted volunteers and the registration and management of unaffiliated volunteers in support of shelter and mass care management activities.

- **Volunteer and Donations Management:** Coordinate Management of Unaffiliated Volunteer Management Operations; Organized Volunteers and Assign them to Disaster Relief Efforts; Integrate Individuals' Skill Sets with Disaster Relief Efforts; and Deactivate Volunteer Management an Donations.

## SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

This section of the report reviews the performance of the exercised capabilities, activities, and tasks. In this section, observations are organized by capability and associated activities. The capabilities linked to the exercise objectives of Operation 3-C are listed below, followed by corresponding activities. Each activity is followed by related observations, which include references, analysis, and recommendations.

### CAPABILITY 1: ON SITE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

**Capability Summary:** On Site Incident Management is the capability to effectively direct and control incident management activities by using the Incident Command System (ICS) consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Participants were expected to direct and control all shelter activities utilizing ICS

#### Activity 1: Implement On Site Incident Management

**Observation 1:** Area for improvement: The command structure was never fully established between the participating agencies

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** The command structure was never fully established between the participating agencies and an IAP was never developed. Questions existed throughout the exercise as to who was in charge and assumptions were made. The On Site Incident Management Evaluator indicated that it was not apparent to him that an Incident Commander even existed until several hours into the exercise. An ICS organizational chart was never developed and questions as to who was in charge were spread by “word of mouth”. Adding to the confusion, an Incident Command Post was never identified within the shelter and the Incident Commander (IC) was far too active (walking around) and should have remained stationary. This made locating the IC difficult at best.

#### Recommendations:

- Upon assuming command, hold a briefing for all players, and identify key personnel.
- Develop an IAP and complete in ICS organizational chart and ensure all personnel know where it is located.
- Identify to all players an Incident Command Post where key ICS personnel can be reached.

#### Activity 2: Establish Full On Site Incident Command

**Observation 2:** Area for improvement: ICS was not full implemented

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** The command staff was partially identified with an Incident Commander, PIO, and Safety Officer. General Staff positions were filled but not necessarily by ICS title i.e.; Shelter Manager, Medical Reserve Corp Manager, CERT Team Manager. Players had trouble separating themselves from their usual title or duties as it applied to the exercise. The Operations Section was basically covered by the Shelter Manager, and other lower level management positions reported to the Shelter Manager who reported to the EOC instead of the IC. Communication with the EOC hardly existed, and the Shelter Manager needed to be coached on what to report and what could be requested through the EOC. Most communication was being done by the EOC to the Shelter Manager instead of the other way around.

A noted strength was that all facilities were in appropriate locations away from potential problems. The area for evacuees could have been spread out utilizing a larger area; and in a real situation this most likely would have taken place. Radios were in short supply, but this was the error of the planning committee and not the participants. The Command Group had problems in establishing and staying in a central location for command and control functions, but eventually limited themselves to a single area.

**Recommendations:**

- Follow ICS guidelines and identify personnel by ICS role.
- Establish a central location to conduct command and control operations from.
- Conduct training in applied ICS.

**Activity 3: Resource Management**

**Observation 3:** Area for improvement. This task was not observed during this exercise.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** Due to the confusion Controllers prompted players, including the Shelter Manager, to consider these actions, but no communications between the IC and the Shelter Manager were observed to ensure this was being done. Evaluators did not observe anyone who was directly responsible for managing and tracking resources. This function appeared to have never been considered by the Command Group, and the lack of “command” led to resources standing around after the completion of their assignments not knowing what to do next. The Shelter Manager was seen going around from station to station monitoring the progress being made and making spot decisions as to the problems presented but would only utilize personnel who were standing in the immediate area as there was no formal procedure for drawing from a resource pool. Eventually this process began after the Command Group was prompted by an exercise controller.

**Recommendations:**

- Identification of personnel and manage and track resources.
- Follow ICS guidelines and identify personnel by ICS role.
- Conduct training in applied ICS.

**Activity 4: Develop Incident Action Plan**

**Observation 4:** Area for improvement. This task was not observed during this exercise.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** No written plans were created and the information gathering consisted of walk-throughs and short briefings by various section personnel. No planning section was created during the incident. The response team arrived with plans to set up and operate a shelter, but other than that, no plans were developed to continue operational periods, and no further objectives were identified. The planning process did not occur at any time during the exercise. Had the IC and Shelter Manager been in communication, then the gap may have been identified and appropriate actions taken.

**Recommendations:**

- As soon as possible after arrival an IAP needs to be developed
- Follow ICS guidelines and identify personnel by ICS role.
- Conduct training in applied ICS.

**Activity 5: Execute Plan**

**Observation 5:** Area for improvement. This task was partially completed during this exercise.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** The response team arrived with a plan to set up and operate a shelter, and did, but other than that no plans were developed to continue operational periods and no further objectives were identified. There was no personnel accountability identified nor were any mechanisms developed for controlling the incident.

**Recommendations:**

- As soon as possible after arrival an IAP must to be developed
- Follow ICS guidelines and identify personnel by ICS role.
- Conduct training in applied ICS.

## **CAPABILITY 2: COMMUNICATIONS**

**Capability Summary:** The fundamental capability of various agencies and jurisdictions to use authorized communications systems to exchange voice, data, or video on demand and in real time in a sufficient manner to meet their daily internal and emergency communications requirements.

### **Activity 1: Alert and Dispatch**

**Observation 1:** Strength. Plans and protocols were in place and utilized during the exercise.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** Plans and protocols were in place and utilized during the exercise. The turnout for the exercise was larger than expected. Members of RACES that responded came equipped and ready to work with their own hand held talking devices and plenty of battery life. Evaluators noted there was adequate “chit chat” amongst communication links to ensure they stayed in operation throughout the exercise. The information facility and network systems were protected as well as they could be and were housed inside two different vehicles for the duration of the exercise

#### **Recommendations:**

- Issue colored vest to HAM Operators to make them more identifiable.
- Utilize digital communications for future exercises as they are deemed more efficient and secure.
- Enforce the use of “This is an exercise” command at the beginning of all electronic communications

## **CAPABILITY 3: MASS CARE**

**Capability Summary:** The capability to provide immediate shelter, feeding centers, first aid, and bulk distribution of needed items and related services to persons affected by a large scale incident to include special needs populations.

### **Activity 1: Direct Mass Care Tactical Operations**

**Observation 1:** Strength. Plans and protocols were in place and used by the CERT and MRC teams but they did not necessarily correspond with the standards set forth by the American Red Cross

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** Plans and protocols were in place and used by the CERT and MRC teams but they did not necessarily correspond with the standards set forth by the American Red Cross. It should also be noted that several of the Mass Care and Tactical Operations activities took place during the original planning for the exercise. Ultimately a shelter was opened that provided basic feeding capabilities, first aid, and the distribution of necessary items to affected personnel. Evaluators made special note of the leadership displayed by the Shelter Manager and her calm demeanor. This resulted in a calm and controlled response by her team.

**Recommendations:**

- Continued training with the American Red Cross so all responding personnel operate under the same standard.

**Activity 2: Activate Mass Care**

**Observation 2:** Strength. Mass care was needed and a trained and willing staff responded with necessary resources.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** Mass care was needed and a trained and willing staff responded with necessary resources. Mass Care Management Teams were assembled, but not properly identified to other participants. The necessary equipment was already on scene prior to the team's arrival, and response personnel arrived via private vehicle.

**Recommendations:**

- Continued training with the American Red Cross so all responding personnel operate under the same standard.

**Activity 3: Establish Shelter Operations**

**Observation 3:** Strength. Participants responded as requested and immediately began shelter operations and made necessary preparations to receive displaced persons, to include food preparations.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** Upon arrival, the Shelter Manager began a walk through of the shelter to identify any hazards and simultaneously monitor the set up of the shelter. The response team responded with appropriately trained personnel and immediately began shelter operations and the preparing of meals. The shelter was up and operational at 0930, and

lunch was served at 1200 hrs..

**Recommendations:**

- Continued training with the American Red Cross so that all responding personnel operate under the same standard.

**Activity 4: Shelter Special Needs**

**Observation 4:** Strength. Participants responded as requested and immediately began shelter operations and made necessary preparations to receive displaced persons, to include those with special needs. Additional locations were identified by the Shelter Manager for possible quarantine of displaced persons if necessary

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** A registration was established for all incoming persons, which included an evaluation (both physical and mental) of needs based on any disability they may have had. Those with special needs were identified and requests were made for any additional equipment needed to support them.

**Recommendations:**

- Continued training with the American Red Cross so all responding personnel operate under the same standard.

**Activity 5: Shelter General Population**

**Observation 5:** Strength. Participants responded as requested and immediately began shelter operations and made necessary preparations to receive displaced persons, to include those with special needs.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** A registration was established for all incoming persons, which included an evaluation of needs (both physical and mental) based on any disability they may have had. Those with special needs were identified and requests were made for any additional equipment needed to support them. Those without were escorted to the general population area of the shelter.

**Recommendations:**

- Continued training with the American Red Cross so all responding personnel operate under the same standard.

## Activity 6: Establish Feeding Operations

**Observation 6:** Strength. Participants responded as requested and began necessary steps for the feeding of those involved, including special needs persons. The Pantano CERT team brought their mobile kitchen and provided food and drink for all exercise participants (players, facilitators, evaluators etc.) Evaluators noted the experience and solid leadership of the Food Service Manager and that decisions were made with the clients' best interest in mind.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** The mobile kitchen was an excellent resource, and those involved came completely prepared. The Feeding Operations Manager coordinated with the Shelter Manager to ensure all players were fed, starting with special needs personnel first. All personnel were well fed in a relatively short amount of time.

### **Recommendations:**

- Continued training with the American Red Cross so all responding personnel operate under the same standard.

## CAPABILITY 4: VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

**Capability Summary:** The capability to effectively coordinate the registration and management of unaffiliated volunteers in support of domestic incident management.

### Activity 1: Coordinate Management of Unaffiliated Volunteer Management Operations

**Observation 1:** Strength. The volunteer reception center was opened on time with sufficient staff and material resources. There were some miscommunications and bottlenecks at the beginning, but as time went on these errors were worked out and skilled and unskilled volunteers were interviewed, placed, and dispatched throughout the operation of the center.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** The volunteer reception center was opened on time with sufficient staff and material resources. As volunteers began to arrive there was some difficulty in the tracking system, due to a lack of experience from staff and exercise artificialities. Within an hour after opening the staff began setting up a web based database of volunteers and began logging them in so agencies would be able to log in and see who had been referred for various reasons. This was the first successful use of this particular software involved known anywhere in the country. The Just in Time training at the VRC was

inadequate and necessary training requirements for volunteers were not being met or were delayed due to miscommunications.

**Recommendations:**

- Continue to train with the volunteer registering software (Volunteer Solutions Disaster Management Module)
- Develop a simplified set of instructions for VRC operations.
- Continue training efforts with VRC personnel and identify a list of those experienced and trained in VRC operations and software for future use.

**Activity 2: Organize Volunteers and Assign Them to Disaster Relief Efforts**

**Observation 2:** Strength. The staff successfully used a web based system to log all referred volunteers

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** The staff successfully used a web based system to log all referred volunteers. Information captured included names, contact information, jobs and shifts assigned. This information was also documented in a paper record as well. The software allows agencies to log in and see the lists of volunteers who have been assigned to various positions and therefore simplify communications. Additionally the software allows volunteer hours to be tracked which will assist the state in counting volunteer hours spent in their contributions towards relief efforts

**Recommendations:**

- Continue to train with the volunteer registering software (Volunteer Solutions Disaster Management Module)
- Continue training efforts with VRC personnel and identify a list of those experienced and trained in VRC operations and software for future use.

**Activity 3: Integrate Individuals' Skill Sets with Disaster Relief Efforts**

**Observation 3:** Strength. The staff successfully used a web based system to log all referred volunteers. They also briefed 100% of all volunteers prior to the start of their assignments

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** The staff successfully used a web based system to log all referred volunteers. Information captured included names, contact information, jobs and shifts assigned. Additionally the software simplifies communications and allows volunteer hours to be

tracked which will assist the state in counting volunteer hours spent in their contributions towards relief efforts.

**Recommendations:**

- Continue to train with the volunteer registering software (Volunteer Solutions Disaster Management Module)
- Continue training efforts with VRC personnel and identify a list of those experienced and trained in VRC operations and software for future use.
- Develop necessary Just in Time Training program to ensure all volunteers are trained to the same standard

## 4: CONCLUSION

In summary, the Operation 3-C Support Full Scale Exercise conducted on September 27, 2008 was successful in many aspects. It gave CERT and MRC participants the familiarity that was desired in the set up, operation, care/feeding, and closing of a Type 3 shelter. It was also the first time that the Pima County Health Department had conducted an exercise utilizing volunteers as primary participants, and it provided participants with a window through which they could see how they may be utilized in a real world emergency.

The exercise design team identified four capabilities to be demonstrated/tested during this exercise; On Site Incident Management, Communications, Mass Care, and Volunteer Management. Evaluations, participant feedback, and the After Action Conference results concluded the volunteers demonstrated capabilities in three of the four areas; Communications, Mass Care, and Volunteer Management. Several gaps/failures were observed and noted for On Site Incident Management. During the After Action Conference it was determined by the committee that the failures observed during the exercise were in part due to a failure by the exercise committee to ensure the participants had the necessary knowledge and experience to allow them to succeed. Although all volunteers (CERT/MRC) have had training in ICS, they rarely, if at all, get to employ it at the level they were expected to perform at. They also do not have the opportunity to utilize it while working with multiple agencies. They ultimately did the best they could with what they had.

Based on information received from Evaluators, Facilitators, Participants Feedback Forms, and the After Action Conference, the failure to fully implement ICS was the Achilles heel of this exercise. Had ICS been fully implemented with the development of an Incident Action Plan, an organizational chart that identified who was operating in what role/position, and partnered with regular briefings, it was agreed that this would have alleviated or mitigated the majority of the other issues that arose during the exercise

## APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for Pima County Health Department as a result of the Operation 3 - C full scale exercise conducted on September 27, 2008. These recommendations draw on both the After Action Report and the After Action Conference

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
1. On Site Incident Management	1. ICS was not effectively utilized	Implement On Site Incident Management	Training in ICS 300	Training	Pima County Citizen Corps Council	Tim Siemsen	12/19/08	09/01/08
	2. ICS was only partially utilized.	Establish Full On Site Incident Command	Training in ICS 300	Training	Pima County Citizen Corps Council	Tim Siemsen	12/19/08	09/01/08
	3. Resource Management	Training in Resource Management	Training in FEMA Resource Management Course	Training	Pima County Citizen Corps Council	Tim Siemsen	12/19/08	09/01/08
	4. IAP was never developed	Develop Incident Action Plan	Training in ICS 300	Training	Pima County Citizen Corps Council	Tim Siemsen	12/19/08	09/01/08
	5. IAP was never executed	Execute Incident Action Plan	Training in ICS 300	Training	Pima County Citizen Corps Council	Tim Siemsen	12/19/08	09/01/08

## APPENDIX B: ACRONYMS

Table F.1: *Acronyms*

Acronym	Meaning
ARC	American Red Cross
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FOUO	For Official Use Only
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Commander
ICS	Incident Command System
MRC	Medical Reserve Corps
NIMS	National Incident Management System
PDPC	Pima Domestic Preparedness Council
PIO	Public Information Officer
RACES	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services
TCL	Target Capabilities List
UASI	Urban Area Security Initiative
VOAD	Volunteers Active in Disaster
VRC	Volunteer Reception Center