



**KC RICE-SLICE '15**  
**REGIONAL INTER-AGENCY CONTINUITY EXERCISE**  
**Full Scale Continuity Exercise After-Action Report**

Kansas City and  
Greater St. Louis  
Federal Executive Board

September 4, 2015

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine to include the National Preparedness Goal and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.



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## HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

1. The title of this document is the KC RICE-SLICE '15 Regional Inter-Agency Continuity Exercise After Action Report (AAR).
2. The information gathered in this AAR is UNCLASSIFIED. The control of information is based more on public sensitivity regarding the nature of the exercise than on the actual exercise content.
3. All exercise participants should use appropriate guidelines to ensure the proper control of information within their areas of expertise and protect this material in accordance with current agency-specific directives.
4. Public release of exercise materials to third parties is at the discretion of the Greater Kansas City Federal Executive Board and the Greater St. Louis Federal Executive Board.
5. For more information, please consult the exercise points of contact (POCs).

## EXERCISE OVERVIEW

<b>Exercise Name</b>	KC RICE-SLICE '15
<b>Exercise Dates</b>	July 29, 2015
<b>Scope</b>	KC RICE-SLICE '15 was designed as full scale exercise consisting two major events. Both exercises incorporated a single time “jump.” STARTEX begun in real time based on the scenario disaster and included a subsequent time jump two hours into the exercise will simulate actions 14 days from the scenario disaster.
<b>Mission Area(s)</b>	Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, and Response
<b>Core Capabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities</li> <li>• Long-term Vulnerability Reduction</li> <li>• Operational Communications</li> <li>• Planning</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate capability to activate deploy Emergency Relocation Group members to the primary Continuity Facility and conduct MEFs from that location.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate the capability to conduct MEFs while employing telework for some ERG members.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate the ability to conduct reconstitution planning efforts in anticipation of returning to the agency’s primary facility.</li> </ol>
<b>Threat or Hazard</b>	Tornado
<b>Scenario</b>	The National Weather Service (NWS) issues in the afternoon of Tuesday, 28 July 2015 a tornado watch for a wide swath of the central U.S. including the metropolitan areas of Kansas City and St. Louis. The Federal Executive Boards (FEB) in Kansas City and St. Louis added to the weather service’s notice. They issued a notice to their members to be watchful of the deteriorating weather Tuesday evening and on into Wednesday morning.
<b>Sponsor</b>	Kansas City and Greater St. Louis Federal Executive Boards Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region VII

**Participating Organizations**

See Appendix B for a full list of participating agencies

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Continuity exercise, KC RICE-SLICE '15, demonstrated the ability to activate an agency Continuity of Operations plans (COOP) and evaluate continuity plans and reconstitution procedures. The purpose of this exercise was to test the Federal community's ability to activate, mobilize and commence initial emergency Continuity of Operations under guidance outlined in Federal Executive Board (FEB) Federal Continuity Directive FCD-1, federal statutes, Executive Orders, and Agency plans in response to severe emergency that affects the Kansas City metropolitan area.

KC RICE-SLICE '15 established an environment for players to exercise their continuity plans and procedures. The exercise focused on PLANS AND PROCEDURES through coordination of activities with external partnering agencies and critical vendors notionally during real time and from the scenario disaster.

The exercise, conducted from multiple agency exercise locations in Kansas City and St. Louis following, began at 8:00 am and concluded at 12:00 pm. Both FEBs sent out a pre-exercise message using their Emergency Notification Systems (ENS) the day before.

Overall, KC RICE-SLICE '15 successfully provided a learning environment that presented an opportunity for agencies to review their continuity plans and procedures, interact with other agencies, and reinforce the need for robust continuity planning, training, and exercises. This report will analyze the exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

This exercise established a learning environment for all participants, analyze the exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

## ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

### Objective 1

Demonstrate capability to activate deploy Emergency Relocation Group members to the primary Continuity Facility and conduct MEFs from that location.

### Core Capability

Operational Communications

### Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

**Strength:** Multiple Levels of Communication

- Important of ENS and maintaining Emergency Contact Lists
- Social Media
- Call in numbers for employees

### Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

**Area for Improvement:** Leaders need to communicate with their workforce and among one another, measure organizational performance.

**Reference:** D/As COOP Plans (Delegations of Authority and Orders of Successions)

**Analysis:** Integrate leadership coordination and communication in exercise play.

### Core Capability

Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities

**Strength:** Execute COOP plan

- Maintain Mission Essential Functions
- Assesses potential threats to project/program completion

### Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

**Area for Improvement:** Beginning a COOP dialogue is useful in encouraging leadership and staff in understanding the COOP plan and responsibilities.

**Reference:** D/As COOP Plans and FEMAs training on gaining leadership support.

**Analysis:** Planning for a COOP event is multi-faceted, agency oriented and needs to be ongoing.

## Objective 2

Demonstrate the capability to conduct MEFs while employing telework for some ERG members.

### Core Capability

Long-term Vulnerability Reduction

### Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

#### Strength:

- Telework
- GSA is able to monitor and assist
- Ability to devolve

### Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

**Area for Improvement:** Tactical discussions regarding COOP were challenging among players with varying experience and training.

**Reference:** None

**Analysis:** Not all leaderships are trained in responsibilities.



## Objective 3

Demonstrate the ability to conduct reconstitution planning efforts in anticipation of returning to the agency's primary facility.

### Core Capability

Planning

### Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

**Strength:** Exercise

- Identifying the need for COOP, exercises and policies for COOP incidents
- The importance of developing policies and practices
- The importance of understanding how COOP comes into play in a hazardous incident
- Examples of how perception vs. reality can be disjointed in such an incident

### Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

**Area for Improvement:**

- Beginning a COOP dialogue is useful in encouraging leadership and staff in understanding the plan
- The opportunity to begin test, training, and education on Reconstitution procedures at their facility or a new facility

**Reference:** FEMA's COOP Training (i.e. Reconstitution Planning Workshop or Independent Study Course -545: Reconstitution Planning Course)

**Analysis:** Continue training and educating individuals on COOP.

## APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for Agency’s as a result of Kansas City and St. Louis Hot-washes conducted on August 29, 2015.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element <sup>1</sup>
<b>Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities</b>	1. Getting people engaged  2. Relocating to COOP/Alternate Facilities	1. Plan Organizational Initiatives that outlines the process for setting security goals; identifying assets, systems, networks, and mission essential functions.  2. Include Business Impact Analysis frameworks in COOP plans.	Planning
<b>Long-term Vulnerability Reduction</b>	Updating COOP plans	1. Provide strategic leadership and overarching policy direction for the continuity program.	Planning
<b>Operational Communications</b>	Communications will be key in during an actual activation and for personnel accountability	1. Established and test procedures for activation, operation, and deactivation of primary and COOP facilities. Document results and corrective actions addressed.  2. Develop and maintain a plan to initiate, receive, and/or relay notifications to all personnel.	Planning and Training
<b>Planning</b>	The need to have senior staff involvement for successful exercise	1. Have Leadership promote and ensure continual connection (e.g., ongoing standing meetings, webinars, and teleconferences) and use continuous quality improvement process to define and redefine information-sharing needs.  2. Have leadership provide support for policy and security change processes so all employees feel equipped with the necessary training to react correctly to a situation.	Organization

<sup>1</sup> Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

## APPENDIX B: AGENCY'S FEEDBACK FORM

### Kansas City

#### Agency Specific Objectives

##### A. General Observations

- The notifications were sent in a timely manner. The exercise moved at a pace that supported the training that was achieved.
- The agency did demonstrate improvement over last year
- Agency participants did do a lot more cross talk between sections, teams, divisions.
- The agency very quickly set up a battle rhythm for communications. This greatly enhanced operations.
- Agency participants thought out answers deeper than before.
- Figured out a way to manage teleworkers through battle rhythm.
- Good exercise; well planned.
- The Port of Kansas City found that this exercise to be an informative and learning one. We were impressed with the number of Agencies involved. As individuals the exercise really made you think, what would I do in the case of such an emergency.
- An agency completed the KCRICE-SLICE 15 applicable objectives successfully. Lessons Learned were noted, but overall the exercise was a success.
- The agency's alternate site is used daily as a training room. It took 3 – 4 hours of preparation before the exercise to make it ready for use as the COOP site. Access to data drops was limited.
- Our office communicated well. Everyone seemed to know where to find the information that was requested or how to get in contact with the correct person/agency.

##### B. Structure and Flow

- The exercise moved at a pace that supported the training that was achieved.
- Very close to home scenario given the Kansas City had recently two small tornadoes.
- The current set up seems to offer the advances of both tabletop and functional.
- The one time jump is better than the two from last year.
- There needs to be a better way to talk to other agencies. The exercise would have been better had participants been able to talk to GSA.
- Good exercise, well planned; important and identified time jump at 10am.
- Overall we found the exercise large and not always realistic. We were not comfortable with the time frames. There were questions being asked that we would have no means of answering at the point in an emergency (for example, about costs of rebuilding). It also seemed unreal that it wasn't declared a national emergency for two weeks.
- Exercise structure and flow worked well during this exercise. Agency had no issues with the structure and flow of the exercise.

- There were some duplications of injects and informational slides. Generally the flow was good. The exercise can't fit every agency perfectly, so we tailored to fit our needs.
- Things seemed to flow better this year. I liked the way the MSEL was put together. And I was better prepared this year.

#### C. Agencies Preparation for the Exercise

- Our agency was prepared for the exercise. Our COOP plans are up to date and supported the emergency situation as expected.
- The agency found out after the fact it could have used more advanced training prior to the exercise.
- Reviewed all plans, reconstitution plans, essential and vital records and updated cascade lists for agency. Tested GETS and WPS prior to exercise.
- We found that the exercise re-emphasized the need to plan ahead.
- Agency plans to participate in next year's KC RICE exercise. The current COOP plan will incorporate the lessons learned from this exercise, along with self-assessment issues to help reflect current COOP operations. Other lessons learned corrective actions will be completed to help prepare for next year's exercise.
- We had a pre-exercise meeting to let the participants know the general plan of the exercise, and the type of disaster that was occurring. Participants seemed to be prepared for the actual exercise.
- Our agency was prepared and ready for the exercise.

#### D. Agencies participation in the exercise

- Exercise time line was adequate to allow employees to support training and then return to the regular daily workload.
- People showed good initiative in taking things to a higher level.
- People showed good forethought in acknowledging various implied tasks needing to be done for the bigger task to be done. An example is a fixed building still needs fixed computers and furniture to be functional.
- Some sections did show good cross communications among themselves about ramifications of the emergency.
- Agency Senior Leadership engaged realistic exercise.
- Unfortunately, staffing/scheduling issues greatly limited the number of our employees who could participate in this exercise.
- An agency was able to meet the reference objectives above as a whole, with lessons learned captured. These lessons learned will have corrective actions to resolve noted issues. Overall the exercise was a success.
- Everyone was very cooperative and involved in the exercise.
- We had a few challenges trying to juggle the exercise and some other meetings but we managed to make it work.

#### E. Agencies Strengths Observed

- Plans were up to date. Staff knows what to do in an emergency.
- Deep thinking-exercise participants in most responses were thinking answers throughout. Their responses showed attention to detail and second, third order effects. There was some thought towards synchronization of actions the course of exercise time.
- A few emergency personnel in the Washington office. Their interaction greatly enhanced the exercise.
- There was more cross talk across the organization than last year. People were talking more within their team, to key partners and to the contractors.
- Good plans in place, discussion supported decision making by leadership.
- The exercise showed again the agency has a strong staff, a few of which actually have experience in working disasters (ex. Like Katrina and Gustav).
- Agency field office notification tools such as the phone tree were successful in quickly communicating to employees the exercise test.
- Agency field office and agency Emergency Management participation allowed an accurate flow of operational steps that would occur prior to COOP operations beginning. This integration allowed a picture of the exercise from start to finish to be captured.
- After last year's KC RICE the decision to expand the ERG with more operational managers was incorporated. The decision proved to be successful.
- Exercise approach as a way to test and improve the plan.
- Almost everything tested in the exercise was in the plan in some form.
- The agency has the expertise to work through a COOP and Reconstitution.
- We are a smaller agency and we all work very well together. We all want to see our agency to do well.

#### F. Agencies Weaknesses Observed

- Main agency servers are located in the primary facility. The loss of the primary facility would mean the servers would go down. Repair or replacement of those servers would take time.
- At various times throughout the exercise there was evidence that there needs to be more training
- Several participants said they felt the exercise did not test them enough.
- The alternate site in two of the three buildings did not have enough LAN connections.
- Agency is developing a Reconstitution Readiness Team. The exercise demonstrated that a large scale disaster with many facilities being damaged would quickly overcome local resources. We are developing an R-team and will conduct a table top exercise late fall.
- We discovered that our COOP is good, but still needs improvement in a few areas. It would have also been better for us if this exercise had been better supported at our higher level.

- Integration with alternate work location failed to identify IT network change communications over the course of the year. This change could have delayed exercise IT network connectivity. Corrective actions are in place to resolve this issue.
- The field office COOP plan had outdated contact numbers referenced. These corrective actions have been captured and will be incorporated with any other issues noted in the upcoming FY15 self-assessment. The next revision of the agency COOP plan will resolve these issues.
- Expansion of details on reconstitution agency contact information was lacking in the COOP plan. This will be resolved to prevent future confusion.
- We tried having the Emergency Relocation Group go to the alternate site and the Emergency Response Team and Reconstitution Team remain in the federal building. We did not have good communications.
- Some components of the Agency telework and some are just piloting it.
- We have had different people detailed into executive positions. Some did not turn over all the COOP materials when they changed positions.
- We had a couple hiccups and some things that could be improved. We have made notes of them and will have it corrected before the next COOP exercise.

## Conclusion

### A. Agencies Takeaways

- Our agency needs to be able to respond whenever an emergency presents itself.
- The importance of setting up and keeping to a set battle rhythm for emergencies.
- Loss of the building will mean loss in IT equipment like computers and servers. The loss of the IT equipment will mean recovery will take a lot longer than just fixing the roof.
- Identified the need to have one master control response record to keep track of taskers and actions once received.
- We are glad that we participated in this exercise as it provided experience and pointed out some things that needed to be addressed. Some employees felt that such exercises, howbeit not in such a huge disaster, should be done more often. Smaller, but more frequent exercises would help with participation.
- Agency field office will continue to participate in headquarters and FEMA exercises throughout each fiscal year to ensure COOP preparedness. Lessons Learned were captured and corrective actions will resolve these issues.
- We had some to do items to add to the plan.
- Need to ensure that incoming executives are briefed and have up to date documents.
- We will keep monitoring COOP Plan and updating when needed.

B. COOP training or assistance needed to strengthen the exercise

- It needs to be longer, like two days.
- It needs to be a no notice exercise for participants.
- The exercise needs to push people to do more things like call GSA.
- Conduct table top exercise in FY2016 with multiple agencies requiring alternate space. Continued continuity awareness training will be most beneficial.

C. Additional Comments

- The exercise was well done.
- Additional enhances like video segments or an exercise web site with media would enhance things.
- The exercise was well prepared and thought out. It showed great insight and knowledge. That teams needs an award.
- Like how the base format allowed for easy inclusion of agency specific stuff.
- The agency discovered that a large catastrophe might render large numbers of employees unavailable due to emergencies at home.
- Unfortunately, there were several places in the paperwork provided that really needs editing. You could tell that it had been done before, and that not everything had been updated.
- Agency field office appreciates the hard work and dedication that FEMA and other participating agencies displayed throughout all phases of the exercise. Thank You!

## St. Louis

### Agency Specific Objectives

#### A. General Observations

- Damage to land lines is reported as extensive. Ethernet connections are unstable and sporadic outages are expected. Phone service may be interrupted and trunk lines are overloaded. Agency operations center has requested a status of all mobile communication devices be posted in WebEOC.
- Scope was limited to staff available today. Was reliant on assumption of successful coordination and communication of key staff.
- Utilizing "Real World" events makes COOP exercises useful to the point of there is always something missed in a BCP and really gets you thinking of non-critical actions that are still needed to be included. Such as the postal delivery or FedEx and any other vendor deliveries. This hadn't been thought of prior to this exercise.
- This year we took all regular leadership out of the exercise and had the Assistants play along. This created a situation where we were able to expose the Assistants to a role they may have to assume should the regular Chief's be unavailable.
- Ability to operate using ERG backups as opposed to standard ERG. ERG backups took the exercise seriously and provided excellent leadership throughout.
- The exercise went well. We had very good discussions on how we would conduct our MEFs and what improvements were needed in order to make our COOP Program more efficient.
- Overall, the SLICE exercise went well. We now know of certain areas that need to be given more attention including; Human Resource policies during a COOP, contractor contact information, and reconstitution planning.
- It is always beneficial to participate and exercise the COOP each year. No matter how many times you conduct these types of exercises, there is always something to learn and things you miss that need to be addressed. It also provides exposure to new, inexperienced team members who are new to location or even COOP operations/preparations.

#### B. Structure and Flow

- Both were good we had some minor communication flow problems with St. Louis
- Organized well and move efficiently
- We had high praise from our senior leadership on the organization, flow, and realistic nature of the event.
- I think the structure of the exercise is fine, but maybe this could be something carried over to 2 days vice 1/2 day.
- MSEL was the best to date! The fast paced flow of the exercise provided some real world response challenges to the team.
- The ERG felt there were too many injects in the first couple of hours on day 1. Other than that, the structure and flow was fine. I modified the MSEL prior to the exercise to add or remove injects that did not apply to our agency.



- The exercise was structured in way that allowed for various areas to be reviewed, while flowing nicely. For future preparation, we will be sure to tailor slides and information more to our Agency.
- It was a little rough for us, as far as flow this year, did not know for sure who would be participating till the day of the exercise and the majority had not participated in a COOP exercise, like this before. Overall, we found ourselves a little rushed for most of the exercise, in trying to keep pace. It is still a very good format and structure, but it's hard getting prepared, as you don't know exactly what will be exercised. Also there is always the challenge of trying to maintain agency day to day operations and conduct a major COOP exercise.

#### C. Agencies Preparation for the Exercise

- We increased our IP addresses from 16 to 64 to accommodate the possibility of more people at our COOP site.
- All in all, pretty well organized.
- We conduct COOP table top exercises yearly and continually refine our BCP and OEP, so I feel that we are prepared for any exercise. Real COOP could be a different story, but to date that hasn't been activated.
- All players were given the handbooks and were notified ahead of time of their participation. I set out ground rules since the vast majority of players were new.
- ERG backups were not briefed prior to the exercise to add some realism to the urgency of their actions. They met the challenge and provided very useful feedback.
- No comments were made regarding agency preparation, but as the lead controller/COOP Coordinator, I feel the preparation required was minimal in terms of preparing for an exercise of this size.
- Our COOP provided many of the resources to answer questions from the MSEL. Clarification from HR regarding personnel issues and leave during a disaster needs to be included. We will also be looking into our Reconstitution plan.
- This is always a struggle as you try to find the time to prepare and keep all of the COOP material up to date and relevant. Our agency mission takes a huge amount of our time and there is a fair amount of turn over with ERG members including TDYs. However, we are going to implement some additional initiatives to help increase COOP planning and preparation for the future.

#### D. Agencies participation in the exercise

- Overall it was good we were able to learn from it to do better in a real event. Management was on board with the exercise and real world they were gone so we had to use our order of succession to conduct the exercise.
- Staff was limited today. Would have benefited from inclusion of others.
- Currently, it is just our local command that participates. We might involve our other Agency commands at Scott AFB in future exercises.
- Almost all players participated; we had some that appeared to be unsure of their role and elected to not respond even though they were in a situation to respond.

- ERG was able to make real world types of command decisions to meet and exceed exercise expectations.
- All ERG members were present and fully engaged in the discussions forthcoming from the injects. Many good ideas were discussed and will be adopted.
- Minimal agency participation occurred during this exercise. In the future we would like to participate in a larger scale to better test our continuity planning.
- This is always a challenge for a smaller size port like us, the struggle to find the time for the ERG members to participate in the exercise while maintaining the day to day operations. The exercise date is set two to three months ahead of time, allowing for planning, but you still can't control what the work load will be that day, which does impact the people available to participate. Participation in the SLICE is very beneficial with our continued COOP planning and preparation.

#### E. Agencies Strengths Observed

- We had prepositioned six laptops at our COOP site to be used if needed and they are always connected to the intranet to maintain updates. We increased our IP addresses from 16 to 64 to accommodate the possibility of more people at the COOP site. The cooperation and communication between the participants was outstanding and it was conducted as a group each one help the other.
- Communication systems, redundant electronic systems, redundant mission-critical functions
- Preparedness and planning.
- The exposing of a new set of personnel to the scenarios and problems they may face should they be thrust into that role.
- Flexibility throughout the exercise with struggling to understand injects. Real world events leave less to the imagination on actual status of operation and facilities.
- Strong COOP site with adequate IT system availability. Ability to react to varying situations and garner support from surrounding field offices, if needed.
- Our continuity plan provided many answers during the exercise.
- We are fairly experienced in COOP deployments as we have initiated the COOP multiple times over the last 5-7 years for various situations. We also have an advantage as our COOP sites are current in use facilities. Our agency is built with emergency management in mind, so we have additional layers of support and expertise to call upon, going up our chain of command. We also feel that we could continue our MEF fairly quickly, depending on the severity of the emergency event and its impact.

#### F. Agencies Weaknesses Observed

- We need to add contact into the COOP plan to make the process flow better that will allow more people to access to the information. Communications with our St. Louis office was not as good as it should be. We need to work together better and conduct our own exercise to address the issue. Our IT infrastructure does not allow us to access social networking sites so they are no advantage to us.
- Site specific testing, reliant on key staff for knowledge for reconstruction needs

- We will carry out more extensive COOP training to lower levels and establish a specific reconstitution team to include specific representatives.
- Communication is always an issue since we depend so much on the current technology for every day operations.
- Need for documentation, rather than just knowing something in your head. Communications with employees should be modified and stressed so everyone knows proper procedures.
- Reconstitution Planning
- We discovered that some injects pointed out things that we had not addressed in our current COOP. We did run into a small issue with access for some employees to our COOP sight. WE may need to develop some of the re-constitution portion of the COOP. Need to re-educate current GETS card holders on use.

## Conclusion

### A. Agencies Takeaways

- We are going to try telework for the next event, bring contractors into the mix and conduct an inter-agency COOP exercise.
- Reliance on IT and cellular communication means
- Involving other Agency commands in this exercise will provide better options in COOP locations should the entire GSA complex become unusable.
- That we will improve on our COOP plan and organization of the reconstitution team. It was re-iterated by the Director to our “players” that they should have focused more on accountability and safety of personnel than replacing computers and acquiring office space in the initial aftermath.
- The plan works and can be implemented by each level of the management team. The ERG was able to adapt and overcome common issues that would arise in a real world situation.
- Even though most ERG members are prepared to "hit the ground running," the importance of having a good COOP Plan was evident. Communication is vital.
- The SLICE 2015 provided a good environment to establish the portions of our continuity plan that are well equipped for an COOP implementation, as well as the items that need to be reviewed more closely. We have gained new knowledge through participation that will better allow our agency to continue after a disaster.
- We still have more COOP plan developing to conduct. There were a few issues revealed during the exercise that we had not addressed or thought about. We are going to implement some new initiatives to allow for further COOP planning and development.

B. COOP training or assistance needed to strengthen the exercise

- We are going to review the COOP and make improvements to our duties. We need to have the Chiefs communicate specifics to their Assistants. Currently, too much knowledge is centralized in a few people.
- No comments. The exercise was good and by modifying the MSEL, there were no injects that did not apply.
- Internally, more participation!
- Development of what exactly is required in a COOP. What makes for solid relevant material that allows for emergency operations.

C. Additional Comments

- Great learning experience.
- Overall, I believe it was good. I did have to throw out MSEL and create a separate “MSEL” for those items relevant to St. Louis.
- Thanks to the exercise team for their hard work in developing the exercise. It is always a pleasure to work with such a professional group of emergency planners.
- Look forward to continued participation in the St. Louis COOP Working Group. I have found this initiative to be helpful and beneficial to me as a COOP planner.

## APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT'S FEEDBACK FORM

### Kansas City

1. What is your assessment of the exercise design and conduct?

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat	Moderately	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>I have more knowledge of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>I was prepared for the exercise</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>The exercise affected my understanding of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Exercise objectives were clearly understood</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Exercise met the stated objectives</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Exercise materials and information provided before and during the exercise were helpful</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Amount of time allocated for this exercise was appropriate</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Exercise was well organized</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Off-Site Exercise Execution – Exercise action items were successfully received in a timely and accurate manner</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>29%</b>

2. Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the exercise, to what extent has the exercise met your expectations?

Falls Short (1)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Exceed (10)
<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>

3. What is the most significant thing that you learned from the exercise?

- Exercise enabled us to identify gaps that need to be addressed in our COOP plans and execution
- By following the procedures stated in the Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP) booklet guide will help ensure that I'm prepared to provide the guidance needed in handling a

major disaster. The KC RICE-SLICE exercise on-hands mock (real-life) scenario helps to me practice the essential functions that are provided by the COOP information.

- More Lab staff needs to be included in future exercises. An example is the Industrial Hygienist.
- Our agency learned that it is very important to be able to respond to any emergency in a timely and effective manner.
- Importance of being prepared and making sure equipment works ahead of time
- Some items needed updating i.e.: phone numbers, contacts, etc...
- COOP is a constant work in progress. Each year we find something that needs to be added. This is a good thing because that means we are constantly learning.
- The staff did create a battle rhythm quickly. That helped them considerably.
- The people that will secure the building.
- A review of COOP.
- Good to have awareness of how all components approach certain scenarios.
- We always take the easiest scenario and don't get into a lot of details.
- The importance of including the ERT in discussions from the start.
- Be prepared for the unexpected.
- The effects on the staff and how leave, pay, etc. will be handled.
- There needs to be teamwork.
- That there is a plan. The obstacles may be easy or difficult depending on the situation.
- This exercise is very familiar with what I was involved with in the Military.

4. What deficiencies in your Continuity of Operations Plan(s) or Continuity planning did you identify?

- COOP plan updating, items to include in our fly away kit, contact list updating, who to include in our ERG
- I believe that if there were live feeds, (maybe with a video for show only), providing sight and sounds of the disaster would make it a more reality scenario. Seeing what's going on around you can help to make better decisions to problems outside of the COOP groups. Having the feeling of being in a real tornado disaster by showing a real live disaster can put a difference spin on the exercises.
- Prior planning for off-site sample storage (both refrigerated and ambient) in an emergency situation.
- Continued review and update of the COOP plan is needed. Several contacts listed are no longer serving.
- New Disaster Evaluation Cards need to be issued.
- Phone numbers and contact information throughout our plan need to be updated.
- The servers being in the main building would be lost when the building goes down. That would knock out most functions, but not all. Things can be reconstructed eventually, but it would take time.
- PII losses and who will handle these.
- May need to modify based on changes to technology used in buildings.
- Not realistic enough.

- My Verizon iPhone turned off during the operation. Then when I noticed and turned it back on about 30 minutes later, it only had 1x for signal, which is basically a phone call and that's it, no internet. Probably a real scenario in this type of catastrophe. Communication would be difficult.
  - No issues with Plan, however, our IT process hindered the overall communication aspect of the exercise. A planned IT push occurred on my computer at 9:53am, of which I could not delay the implementation of the push. The end result is that I lost communications for approximately 3-minutes.
5. What would you like to see done differently in future exercises?
- Exercise had old dates from past years, time period was unclear at points - seemed limited to downtown area for the most part and our agency is not downtown
  - Completing a full scale continuity of operations focused internally. This would help expose any key points of interest the agency could work and improve on.
  - More details on the specific objective of the exercise provided ahead of time.
  - Earlier info on what to expect
  - More exercises geared toward specific agency and our function as opposed to guessing what some of the actual scenarios.
  - The method might have to be changed to bring in more people.
  - Better organized. Ensure we have the proper people available.
  - Conference call was awkward. In person is better for tabletop exercise.
  - Have everyone in the same location so people aren't talking over each other.
  - Recommend including ERT in discussions from the start to stimulate an actual emergency.
  - Know what was discussed at off-site so we can be aware on how to respond.
  - The scenario was very realistic for this part of the country.
6. Off-Site Agencies: Please provide additional comments that you may have on the off-site exercise execution and your ability to communicate with the exercise staff and on-site agency representatives:
- Planning for the off-site exercise went well.
  - Space provided was sufficient and well equipped.
  - Communications with staff was effective.
  - Our ability to communicate was effective.
  - Seemed cell phones were a little hard to keep working.
  - It was a challenge to improve the teleworkers. They solved that by setting up a periodic all parties conference call.
  - I am a telecommuter and was able to review the e-mailed updates and was available to execute any directive.

7. What type of COOP training or assistance would strengthen weaknesses found during the exercise?

- Ensuring all our staff is aware of COOP
- Class work instructions, maybe about an hour once before the exercises, with the District's COOP Coordinator would help strengthen weaknesses in the COOP exercise and further prepare the Full Relocation Staff to understand the exercises.
- Scenarios more applicable to lab operations can benefit emergency readiness. Specifics related to emergency procedures addressing the significant number of samples/evidence stored in the facility is one example. Scenarios requiring testing of communications procedures for diversion of samples while in-transit to the lab during an emergency can also be beneficial.
- Maybe something short (like an hour or so of training) for all employees.
- I found the first COOP we did with every HHS Department and some other Federal Agencies in the Kansas City Area very helpful. Everyone was there doing their own thing and going to other agencies for answers and help.
- We need a longer, more stringent COOP exercise in the future.
- Are there any checks on the COOP plan to ensure accuracy?
- Just an update on info and be aware of info discovered from questions.
- More information available on what to do or expect during an incident.
- This exercise mirrors what is practiced/executed by the Military everyday - A possible source for additional information.

8. Additional Comments

- I really enjoyed participating in the COOP exercises. The (COOP) coordinator was well prepared to answer any questions asked of her. I feel much more comfortable if a major disaster ever happens I will be able to handle any crises that come my way. I feel better prepared to take charge and do a job that I was trained for and was instructed to do.
- The exercise was well executed.
- The exercise should utilize things that push people to do more things vs. talking.
- My division was very informed and had a very good grasp of the situation and I believe if the problem presented itself to this division we would be in good hands.
- Exercise generated great discussion and yielded good results and action items.
- I enjoyed participating - My designated contact/director/manager did keep me current as the plan was executed - Nice job



**St. Louis**

1. What is your assessment of the exercise design and conduct?

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Some what	Moderately	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have more knowledge of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation	0%	11%	0%	56%	33%
I was prepared for the exercise	0%	6%	0%	56%	39%
The exercise affected my understanding of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation	6%	0%	6%	56%	33%
Exercise objectives were clearly understood	6%	0%	6%	56%	33%
Exercise met the stated objectives	6%	0%	6%	56%	33%
Exercise materials and information provided before and during the exercise were helpful	6%	0%	11%	56%	28%
Amount of time allocated for this exercise was appropriate	6%	0%	0%	61%	33%
Exercise was well organized	6%	0%	11%	44%	39%
Off-Site Exercise Execution – Exercise action items were successfully received in a timely and accurate manner	0%	0%	11%	39%	50%

2. Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the exercise, to what extent has the exercise met your expectations?

Falls Short (1)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Exceed (10)
6%	0%	0%	0%	11%	6%	11%	33%	11%	22%

3. What is the most significant thing that you learned from the exercise?

- Strength of existing communication plan and contact network
- Necessity for an updated BCP model.
- The roles of others and how we all tie into the overall action plan.
- Overall knowledge
- That we are well organized.
- How important it is to be prepared and plan ahead of time.

- We need to ensure that our rosters are updated at all times. Supervisors need to bi-monthly ask their employees if they have any changes to their emergency contact.
  - That if multiple F4 and F5 tornadoes hit Kansas City and St. Louis all at the same time, there is no plan or training capable of preparing us for the difficulties to follow. How about we make a realistic exercise where we can talk through something that might actually happen? Just a guess, but I think the odds of a dirty bomb going off are astronomically higher than the given scenario.
  - That FBI and other agencies with a unique mission should be involved in the scenario development. Examples such as teleworking, demonstrate FEMA's lack of understanding of a particular agency's mission and the lack of participation in scenario development.
  - Sat phone/Sat radio in division.
  - Team working during a chaotic situation.
4. What deficiencies in your Continuity of Operations Plan(s) or Continuity planning did you identify?
- Reliance on electronic systems for information and/or communication with employees by cell phone only.
  - Noted that BCP did not cover employee backup in one area.
  - Communication.
  - Need to tweak some processes
  - Oversight on the importance and the improvement the agency needs.
  - How we would communicate with the management staff in the event we do not have access to computers.
  - That we are not and cannot prepare for the scenario.
  - One of our COOP sites is too close to the main site in a variety of scenarios.
  - Everything was real and worked out as expected.
5. What would you like to see done differently in future exercises?
- None. Great as it is.
  - Recognize the power of social media and how it would shape the scenario and response beyond your control.
  - Updated presentation and scenarios
  - Longer times to reply to information requested.
  - A realistic exercise. Do we really think multiple F4 and F5 tornadoes are going to hit at least two major metro areas at the same time. Talking through an unrealistic scenario does nothing but create unrealistic response plans.
  - Agency involvement in scenario development.
6. Off-Site Agencies: Please provide additional comments that you may have on the off-site exercise execution and your ability to communicate with the exercise staff and on-site agency representatives:
- Communication went well used our GETS.

7. What type of COOP training or assistance would strengthen weaknesses found during the exercise?
  - Include and require more management and/or other staff in process.
  - Additional training on the importance of having an updated COOP.
  - All management staff/supervisors need to understand the difference between an exercise and a true event.
  - A scenario that might actually happen.
  - Money!
  - Our COOP Program Manager addressed any questions throughout the year in Division and Unit Meetings about exercises.
  
8. Additional Comments
  - One item was duplicated and another item referencing an earthquake was from last year.
  - Thanks for all your efforts!
  - As presented, a total waste of time. FEMA Fail.

## APPENDIX D: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

KC RICE '15
CPB/Port of Kansas City
CMS/KC RO
DHS IP
DHS/FPS
DOI/OSMRE
DOI/OST
EPA
FAA
FBI Kansas City
FDA
FRA
FTA
GSA-OMA R6
NARA
NNSA
SSA
TSA-Kansas City
USACE-Kansas City District
USCIS/NBC
USCIS/NRC

SLICE '15
CECOM SEC/St. Louis
DHS/CBP
DISA DECC
FBI St. Louis
TSA-St. Louis
USACE-St. Louis District
USDA NFAOC
USDA/FSIS Midwest Lab
USDA/RD-CSC
VA/RMC

## Number of Participants

- 30 agencies & organizations
- ~ 580 Participants
- ~ 53 alternate sites (including telework locations)

Of the **30** agencies that participated in KC RICE-SLICE '15, **17** (57%) provided input to this AAR.

**39** (~ 6%) of individual Participant Evaluation Forms were received.

## APPENDIX E: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
AAR	After Action Report
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BIA	Business Impact Analyses
BPA	Business Process Analyses
COOP	Continuity of Operations
CWG	COOP Working Group
ENDEX	End of Exercise
ENS	Emergency Notification System
ERG	Emergency Relocation Group
FCD	Federal Continuity Directive
FEB	Federal Executive Board
FOUO	For Official Use Only
GSA	General Services Administration
GETS	Government Emergency Telecommunications Service
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
KC RICE	Kansas City Regional Inter-agency Continuity Exercise
IP	Internet Protocol
MEF	Mission Essential Function
MSEL	Master Scenario Events List
POC	Point of Contact
SLICE	St. Louis Inter-agency Continuity Exercise
STARTEX	Start of Exercise
TDY	Temporary Duty
WPS	Wireless Priority Service