



KC RICE-SLICE '17

After-Action Report

FEMA Region VII



FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
9221 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114

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ADMINISTRATIVE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

1. The title of this document is the *KC RICE-SLICE '17* After-Action Report (AAR).
2. The information gathered in this AAR is *CONTROLLED/UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION (CUI)*. The control of information is based more on public sensitivity regarding the nature of the exercise than on the actual exercise content. Reproduction of this document, in whole or in part, without prior approval from the exercise planning team is discouraged.
3. Points of Contact:

Exercise Sponsor

Dennis Prevett
Federal Preparedness Coordinator DHS-FEMA Region VII
9221 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114
(816) 283-7022
dennis.prevett@fema.dhs.gov

Exercise Director

David L. Teska
Regional Continuity Program Manager
DHS-FEMA Region VII
9221 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114
816-283-7082 (voice) 816-283-7098 (fax)
David.Teska2@fema.dhs.gov

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Kansas City, and St. Louis Executive Boards exercises intend to build upon ongoing efforts to evaluate, test, and exercise the agencies continuity capabilities, including no-notice exercising and external evaluation of the Federal Community's continuity program.

KC RICE-SLICE '17 focus on a Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack (CCTA) which occurred July 24 at 1300 (CDT). The attack targeted Federal, State, Local government facilities and private organizations across Kansas City and St Louis Metro areas. Credible threats were also received throughout the four state region metropolitans of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. There were several fatalities and casualties from the incident. The incident degraded local response capability and severely degraded the Federal agencies capability to perform Essential Functions and Activities at the respective Primary Operating Facilities.

The coordinated attacks degraded local, state and federal response and recovery capabilities. The DOJ assumed command with the FBI as the Lead Federal Agency (LFA). FEMA has stood up the RRCC to Level 1 – Full Activation to support the incident. The States of Missouri has activated the EOC to Level 1- Full Activation. Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska have stood up their EOCs to Level 2 – Partial Activations. Missouri Governor Greitens and Kansas Governor Sam Brownback have declared a State of Emergency and activated the Missouri and Kansas National Guard to conduct security operations and protect key infrastructure throughout their States.

Major Strengths

The major strengths of the KC RICE-SLICE '17 exercise are as follows:

Areas for Improvement

The evaluators identified the following opportunities for improvement:

GENERAL ANALYSIS OF KC RICE-SLICE '17

As the regions continue to enhance and mature their continuity programs and response and recovery capabilities, they also should continue to identify, document, and incorporate best practices and lessons learned.

During this exercise, various Department and Agencies (D/As) Evaluators and Controllers identified several strengths and areas for improvement. As Lessons Learned Advisors and other Continuous Improvement Program personnel work with the region to conduct root cause analysis, develop corrective actions, and build an Improvement Plan for this After-Action Report (AAR), they should consider whether these items are best practices or lessons learned to share across Region VII.

Objective 1: Demonstrate the ability to implement the agency's Continuity plan by moving from Phase I (Readiness & Preparation) to Phase II (Activation) to Phase III (Continuity Operations).

Strengths

Strength 1: D/As developed objectives for operational periods both quickly and effectively.

Strength 2: Communication with employees was exceptional and aided in the successful completion of each operational phase objective.

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1: Educate individuals on various communication methods available to D/As, the lack of familiarity with redundant communications methods could severely impede MEF operations.

Objective 2: Demonstrate the ability to conduct Essential Functions during a Continuity activation event.

Strengths

Strength 1: D/As identified the required resources to perform MEFs include, but are not limited to, personnel, equipment, and consumable office supplies.

Strength 2: D/As have adequately analyzed and prioritized their MEFs.

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1: D/As need to conduct training with both their primary and alternate ERG members.

Area for Improvement 2: Situation reports should be considered, allowing for D/As to manage situation information analysis and development of integrated D/As Common Operating Pictures.

Objective 3: Demonstrate the ability to begin reconstitution planning.

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1: D/As need to conduct training with Reconstitution and Reconstruction Support Team members.

Objective 4: Demonstrate the ability to incorporate telework during a Continuity event.

Strengths

Strength 1: Web-based tools supported the simultaneous and collaborative sharing of real-time operational updates within the D/As and with ERG/non-ERG members.

APPENDIX A: AGENCIES FEEDBACK

The responses captured in this section are from the Agencies in the Region VII KC RICE-SLICE '17 Exercise.

Kansas City

Agency Specific Objectives

A. General Observations

- Overall exercise was good. Tested things we hadn't tested either in a long time or hadn't ever tested.
- The Kansas City National Security Campus is unique in its function. We are a campus of 2500+ people, but the majority are contractors. Due to the fact that NNSA has a small presence (40) as compared to our operating contractor (2500+), we invited them to participate. During an incident, they will be performing response and recovery activities and impacted significantly by an incident at the facility. If our contractor is impacted, then NNSA is impacted.
- We work well together. There was good participation and discussion, and the participants felt the exercise was beneficial.
- This exercise was a "starting point" for our COOP Program. We had not formally drilled until now.
- A lot of items to accomplish in a short period of time, maybe too much in this time period. Other than that it was very though provoking and had us thinking about actions we did not think of before.
- The exercise was more of a focus on facilities and human resource issues which helped to challenge and involve more of our IT and Admin branches of our Agency. The exercise identified weaknesses in our COOP Plan relating to Telework and finally reconstitution.
- This year's exercise was good. There are so many more things to consider when you introduce an active shooter scenario. I feel the topic was covered well, and was eye-opening in a lot of areas.
- Personnel accountability and communication were found to be effective.
- The agency had to change objectives due to a reduction in numbers of personnel involved. Due to this reduction of personnel involved the agency was able to only demonstrate the ability to conduct reconstitution planning from an alternate facility.

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- Overall, the event went well and several new backups were able to experience the COOP exercise. As ATT was out for several members, the teleworking component became an unexpected “inject.”
- District had leadership representation across the breadth of the district's area of operation. Participants were generally engaged within the first half of the exercise. Exercise provided a venue to "learn" each office's specific roles and responsibilities and to identify capability shortfalls. Visual products helped stimulate conversation.
- In general, the exercise went well and staff were able to perform required tasks without any difficulty while at their telework sites. There was also good cooperation from the staff in our agency in the exercise with effective communication and accountability. The ISIS attacks were realistic and everyone was not informed of the event until it happened in real time.

B. Exercise Structure and Flow

- With the first inject being two days after the incident having a list of dead; we presumed accountability had been taken. Did not test the ability to really take accountability in an active shooter situation where cell phone may still be in the building or people would be in lock down for hours. Tons of injects coming fast was a challenge, but VERY realistic.
- Pace was slower. The FO was anticipating outside agencies asking for assistance.
- The exercise was unable to simulate the chaos of the situation. The exercise should not be announced.
- I think the exercise would have benefited from a few less injects or more time between them; our agency had a hard time executing these due to lack of time to get it all done.
- The structure and flow was organized everyone in the office at the time was unaware and kept in the dark until the exercise kicked off.
- Exercise went as planned and flow was successful.
- Outside federal agencies did not coordinate with GSA for Reconstitution, which was a key component for this exerciser to drive testing of this PME.F.
- Having a team design the MSEL from the group up, or having agencies create organization specific MSELs would be beneficial to allow testing and not as much organizational tweaking.
- A centralized SIMCELL could prove to be beneficial.
- Since we were at the beginning stages of our COOP development and activation, we did not utilize many of the tools available for the KC RICE SLICE. Much of the information provided was too advanced for us and/or not applicable for our situation.

After-Action Report

- Some participants felt the exercise was a little too long. Prior to the exercise, the two trusted agents reworked the MSEL to be more site specific. The first 45 minutes was a discussion of how the initial emergency response would have been address, then the COOP portion of the exercise lasted for 2 hours. The final evaluation and hot wash lasted 15 minutes.
- Again, a lot of information for a small period of time.
- Though this one seemed more detailed than some in year's past. In some areas it felt a little dis-jointed but that has more to do with our facility's setup (we are a tenant on a GSA compound) than with the actual spreadsheet.
- The exercise was written very well. It needs to be longer. The exercise MSEL should strive to push people to provide more detailed responses to better rest people. The structure did seem to accurately reflect real world events after various recent European attacks.
- If agency cross communications is desired the exercise structure will have to be changed.
- Exercise scenario forced us to look at a plan from a much different perspective. Recommend exercise in 2019 consider a scenario that forces agencies to again look at continuity operations from an event(s) other than weather. A "real-world" example was that we had a power outage here a few months back and we had conducted a "mini" COOP where we displaced employees in the building at a location where they had never worked before (and had to deal with limited capability).

C. Preparation for the Exercise

- Need more information about the FEB blog site. Read the materials but overlooked that. Request that this be called out separately. It would have been an excellent way to reach out for interagency questions.
- The Continuity Plan was disseminated prior to the exercise. No additional training was conducted.
- Documents were prepared in advance and worked well for the exercise. The offsite facility functioned as planned.
- Like it went off without notice to the agency.
- The Kansas City Area Office seemed to be well prepared.
- ARG/ERG needs to review Essential Functions prior to exercise.
- Lead Controller needed to identify and notify the employees that were supposed to have been injured prior to the day of the exercise so that the secondary group members had to take on the primary roles.
- I coordinated with the organizational business lines to hold the date. I also worked with our seven venues to control and evaluate at each respective venue.

After-Action Report

- The KC RICE SLICE event motivated us to get our COOP from paper to action. We moved forward with our program significantly in preparation for the exercise. This included enhancing our employee alert system and our "go kits" for the Emergency Response Group. Prior to the exercise, we also conducted all-employee training on the COOP and each employees role and responsibilities.
- Agency personnel who did participate seemed prepared.
- We feel as though we were well prepared for the exercise. The district COOP Manager had adequate information and knowledge to execute the training in the "spirit" in which it was designed. We did not feel as though we were lacking anything from FEMA or the FEB. Leadership indicated exercise was prepared for in an appropriate manner.
- The agency seemed to be well prepared for the exercise especially on performing its notification system. The AT&T network was down and those who had service with it were unable to talk on their cell phones. We were able to text them on the cellular system.

D. Participation in the Exercise

- We feel this is very important and push folks to participate even the “time is not right” or the “right folks are not available.”
- The exercise was attended by 14 agency observers and participants. The interaction and discussion was very thorough and insightful. Some lessons learned and opportunities for improvement were identified.
- Participation was great, however, we had fewer people participating than recent years due to travel and a few people being out of the office.
- This was a local level exercise only.
- The agency had great participation across all seven venues from all levels of the ERG.
- Because we are a regulatory agency and not first responders, more time needs to be spent on agency specific injects to the exercise instead of using all the ones given in the exercise itself.
- The local office of Department of Health and Human Services did not reach out to our FDA district office at all during the exercise.
- We had other Regional OSHA offices drill their COOPs - even those outside the KC/St. Louis area.
- Due to the proximity of the COOP scenario to our real-life presence in the Richard Bolling Federal Building, the event seemed more pertinent and realistic.
- Participation was at a level consistent with other training we conduct here in our office. Leadership indicating training is important to them sends the message that it should be important to their subordinates. Command emphasis improves

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participation, Leader involvement encourages participation, and executive level guidance and feedback promotes long-term ownership and participation.

- The exercise was taken very seriously to discover strengths and weaknesses in our coop program.
- The agency needs more people to participate in the exercise. It should be people off of the ERG roster.
- The exercise needs more workers involved from sections like facilities, security, budget, etc.
- Great discussions about all facets of communications.

E. Strengths Observed

- First time as a group testing at our new alternate site, went well.
- Tested first successor team being in multiple places. Comms worked well, but ultimately would rather be together (so positive and lessons learned).
- First successors were out (real life) and 2nd successor had to play, some for the first time. They did well.
- GSA Region 6 was testing a Departmental Operation Center (DOC) concept, a newly drafted COOP Plan that builds ICS into the organizational structure. This worked well and helped provide better operational coordination and communication than previous efforts.
- COOP calling tree/ notification roster is complete and accurate
- Alternate work site capabilities
- The portable office at the alternate work site is available and contains all necessary items to assist in the continuity of operations.
- A Common Operating Picture (COP) was used and will be used moving forward as it created a single point to access data.
- Everyone took the exercise seriously and participated appropriately.
- SERT got “sick” in the exercise and successor had to take over. Did very well.
- We work well together.
- GETS cards
- ERG did a good job referencing and utilizing prepared documents. They also showed up timely at the offsite location for the event and worked together to work through the injects.
- All staff, for the most part, knew what to do when at their telework site. Everyone were all accounted for, even those on travel, and everyone were able to access all FTA systems and networks.

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- Identified capability gaps with respect to post-event communications, security, knowledge management (KM), activation/notification, automations. Venue will serve as a catalyst for COOP plan revision.
- Agency Employee Accountability
- The information our people brought to the table via various contacts was very helpful.
- Very effective reporting and communication.
- Prepared. Written procedures in place for most items.
- Good representation from sections which in the past were not present. They had a lot to offer. Their contributions enhanced all who participated.
- It was a great opportunity to test a new planned alternate site. Operating from that site was the best way to both test and learn about it.
- Agency personnel should great flexibility in everything connected about the exercise. They were able to shift gears quickly to reflect current realities.

F. Weaknesses Observed

- Not sure if it was the AT&T outage, but we didn't get as good of response to our ENS. We are reviewing this.
- We must be more aggressive in forcing GSA to provide an active shooter policy.
- Definitely need to immediately assign someone to track injects outside of email and assign a Communications person.
- Would try as much as possible for successors to be onsite at alternate site.
- Honeywell Employee Accountability
- Lack of adequate control/procedure for visitors into our district office and resident posts.
- Need for active shooter training for employees.
- Lack of employee familiarity of COOP and how it applies to them.
- We learned that we have many areas of our COOP that need updating. Coordination among offices within our Region was cumbersome and confusing and, employee notification had problems as well.
- I should have socialized the COP more as it was about 50/50 that knew about it. They all were briefed during the participant briefing though.
- Google Hangouts ended up being the primary mode of communications, which was opposite of my planning efforts.
- Communications may be in issue. We have a communications plan, but has not been exercised.

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- A few people did not know who to call when the notification system was implemented.
- Information flow from leader to subordinate with respect to their level of preparation for the event, inability to move further into the MSEL action/reaction process, and realization of the difficulty to get greater participation.
- Honeywell does not have GETS cards.
- Teleconferencing equipment was an issue for the hearing conversations within the room. We will continue to address satellites for these conference phones. AT&T being out for several teleworking ERG members' forces the ERG to come up with communication strategies to keep them in the loop. Although unexpected, backups could have been called in possibly vs working through that contingency.
- Identified there will not be instant funding for these types of events.
- Secondary or back-up muster point, the park east of Union Station, was found to be too close to our primary muster point that is Union Station.
- More people need to participate in the exercise.
- More workers needs to be involved in ERG. These would be the people who would do the work during an emergency.

Conclusion

A. Agencies Takeaways

- Reviewing the “weakness” items an and also talking through accountability more for an Active Shooter situation. We had just had active shooter training, so this helped some.
- Our main take away from this exercise was to provide a real world and real time exercise to everyone in the office. Last year it was weather related and everyone had sufficient warning that the exercise was happening. This year, only those in leadership knew when the exercise was starting.
- In addition to the strengths and weaknesses, we learned that we need more frequent, focused and shorter drills. We need to repeat this drill for the alternate identified in the plans.
- The Regional Physical Security Coordinator will take steps to better define the roles and responsibilities for the ERG and ERT members. Additional refresher training will be implemented as well to keep documents updated and prepared throughout the year. A tertiary site has been identified and this site will be equipped with the necessary COOP supplies and infrastructure to function as planned.
- Ways to strengthen our notification system. Implementing alternate ways to communicate with headquarters and employees if cell service and land lines are unavailable.

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- We have a long way to go to get us to a place where this is a flawless process. We need to drill, drill, drill!
- Strengthen communication with HQ for better allocation of resources.
- SLICE '17 was a more than adequate test of our BCP. While not every item directly applied to what we do as a government agency, they can easily be adjusted to meet our requirements.
- We need to stay on top of our recall procedures and contact information.
- May need to be practiced more often.
- WE learned that our new planned alternate site will work and we can operate adequately from there.
- We learned about procedures about how the agency would execute one of its MEFS.
- Take-aways include: the need for a COOP plan update, continued emphasis on incorporating COOP planning into daily planning/operations, the need to upward accountability reporting, and Knowledge Management will continue to challenge the agency.

B. COOP training or Assistance Needed to Strengthen the Exercise

- Clarification on timeline of the events day 1 and flow to day 3, but didn't know what took place day 2. Overall very good exercise.
- Short video footage would add a sense of realism to the exercise.
- Hard to do unless you rerun this exercise.
- The exercise should be trained more often.
- I have been providing ICS courses, I think this will help the rest of the federal family if we all were working under ICS as required per HSPD-5.
- Internal COOP training is needed to strengthen the roles and responsibilities for ERG members. This will be implemented in FY18. The ability to utilize backups in real emergencies must continue to be explored in a newer teleworking environment.
- The resources were useful and the assistance provided to answer our questions was much appreciated. Again, for our purpose, the exercise (generally) was too advanced for where we are. We plan to drill our COOP again a few times before the next formal exercise.
- The agency properly will run more emergency notification drills to build up capacity in that area.
- I believe it would benefit the ARG/ERG to conduct an exercise that did not deal with a huge disaster and only something that affected our individual building.

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When the building is affected due to a large scale event people lose sight of COOP and focus on the emergency only.

C. Additional Comments

- Thank you again for allowing us to participate in this year's exercise!
- The next step is to work in more telework for future exercises.
- Request to be involved with out-year exercises as a team member/contributor.
- The incident at the FOB was very true-to-life for those who work in downtown KC metro area, very much appreciated.
- Great work for the design team. We can possibly get started about a month earlier so all of the exercise documentation would be complete the beginning to middle of June. Participant Feedback forms in this format are not working when submitting. It takes a long time to load and eventually stalls.

St. Louis

Agency Specific Objectives

A. General Observations

- The St. Louis Area Office activated its continuity plan without any issue. Contact was established with alternate work site and all managers and employees were accounted for. Coordination with The KC Regional Office and all Region VII agency offices occurred.
- First COOP exercise for Director. Only have 1 permanent member of ERG as hiring freeze has impacted selection of additional personnel so only acting members are part of team. Slow response at the start but things started to flow smoother as we went along. I plan on holding a mini COOP exercise in 6 months' time after a permanent ERG is in place that will be unannounced that will simulate a real world situation.
- The overall exercise was well developed and allowed for the testing of MEFs across the federal family.

B. Exercise Structure and Flow

- The exercise format was appropriate and the exercised flowed well.
- This year's exercise is chillingly realistic and I conveyed that to the participants that this year we will have a situation that would be upsetting to most if it were real. The situation was good in that information came out in bits with some contradictory items that would be present in a real situation.
- Pace was slower. The FO was anticipating outside agencies asking for assistance.

C. Preparation for the Exercise

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- Our office has training on all types of emergencies on a yearly basis.
- I did have to tweak the exercise for the injects that Goodfellow received out share of the brunt of the disaster.
- Had FO team on standby and ready to participate.

D. Participation in the Exercise

- The exercise gave us the opportunity to demonstrate coordination of our resources and reinforced our plans for necessary communication and function.
- Was difficult because of the in-experience factor.
- Worked as a controller or evaluator for the FO venue. Was provided an opportunity to provide field office specific injects.

E. Strengths Observed

- Communication within OSHA Region VII offices went without a hitch.
- One experienced player had an idea how to respond.
- Coordination was great among the entire chain.

F. Weaknesses Observed

- The Kansas City regional office did not initially update our status to all concerned parties.
- Hiring freeze has severely weakened the ability to put in permanent ERG. This would be a serious challenge to overcome should a real life COOP event occur. Folks did not have an idea of how they should react, folks reacting when they were not affected.
- Share documents and information sooner with players.

Conclusion

A. Agencies Takeaways

- It demonstrates the details necessary to ensure that our Agency can provide the services required in National Emergencies. It also illustrates that real events can impact our ability to perform our mission.
- We have to get permanent replacements in for our ERG.
- Coordination and communications are key elements and a common operating picture allowed situational awareness in real time for the whole team to efficiently execute MEFs.

B. COOP training or Assistance Needed to Strengthen the Exercise

- Perhaps a longer scenario where all aspects of the plan are touched upon.
- Will hold another mini-COOP once leadership positions are filled.

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- ICS training to better operate in the new framework.

C. Additional Comments

- Excellent scenario this year.

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The responses captured in this section are from the Participants in the Region VII KC RICE-SLICE '17 Exercise.

Kansas City

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

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat	Moderately	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have more knowledge of Continuity of operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation	1%	1%	1%	54%	43%
I was prepared for the exercise	3%	3%	9%	69%	16%
The exercise affected my understanding of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation	1%		4%	67%	28%
Exercise objectives were clearly understood	3%	1%	12%	49%	35%
Exercise met the stated objectives	1%	3%	9%	59%	28%
Exercise materials and information provided before and during the exercise were helpful	1%	1%	6%	64%	28%
Amount of time allocated for this exercise was appropriate	1%	1%	10%	48%	40%
Exercise was well organized	3%	1%	16%	52%	28%
Off-Site Exercise Execution – Exercise action items were successfully received in a timely and accurate manner	3%		18%	51%	28%

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)
3%	3%	1%	1%	6%	9%	16%	35%	16%	10%

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

- Enabling communication for coordination will be most challenging.
- Many players acting in unison is critical.
- Communication is important.
- Don't reply to all.
- Good participant guide. Provided a lot of what to expect information. Good info sharing prior to exercise. Allowed us to be somewhat prepared without giving out too many details and taking away the surprise effect of the exercise.
- People that had been through an exercise prior to this one were helpful and provided guidance to those who had not.
- The smaller SERT team seemed to allow for more cohesiveness on the Sert.
- Over-reliance upon technology can be problematic.
- Useful having links to necessary documents in participation handbook. In a real life scenario would a similar document be provided that required all necessary links and roles?
- Collaboration in the room, Clear Objectives, and Effective Response times.
- Insufficient information /communication flow.
- One place to enter and track all action items.
- The event scenario was well detailed.
- Action tracker, although a there was a learning curve, worked well once we understood it. Chat worked better than meeting space for most folks.
- Tracking sheet - using google docs for the tracking sheets allowed groups at different locations to communicate well. Right flow of information for a practice; we were able to discuss some strategies in detail since it wasn't too rushed.
- Google Hangouts was the most used communication tool, adding to plan for primary communications.

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- Finding a more organized fashion to account for all staff.
- I became familiar with the Regional Office's COOP plan.
- Be prepared for the unexpected.
- I participated away from the SERT. I received timely injects from management and was able to respond accordingly. The exercise included the entire Region in varying capacities.
- You can never be too prepared.
- Communicating will be extremely challenging if cell phone use is affected.
- How the agencies different components will work together. Who does what and what OIG responsibilities are.
- That I am on the ERG and Mike is on the ERT.
- The importance of being prepared
- Multiple location casualties operations
- Several people do know know or understand technology.
- Ensuring accountability and contact with personnel.
- We need to be better prepared to facilitate the exercise for offsite participants and better utilize technology, including having contingency plans for when it fails.
- This was my first COOP exercise. I learned so many things.
- Just putting our plan in place and analyzing the success and deficiencies.
- Learned shortcomings of the OIG COOP.
- Understanding role of others on the team and doing an actual emergency.
- As a non-bargaining unit – the amount of union involvement needed in this crisis.
- Injects
- This was the first time that we exercised our COOP, so just drilling it was very valuable.
- Emergency management --> Business Continuity Plan
- Role: clarity amongst Honeywell FM&T/Honeywell/KCFO
- Terrorist event is very different from standard emergency
- Responsibilities of each component
- That EM & COOP are parallel.
- The need to add more detail information to the COOP.
- Additional info regarding responsibilities in my current role.

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- It was a good overall discussion
 - Decision Decisions - Establish an operating system quickly
 - All the different for ___ managing people
 - We will work well together (DOE/NNSA and Honeywell FM&T contractor).
 - The most significant thing that I learned from the exercise is, in addition to trying to reach the people below me on the phone tree via their phone, I should try to text then email as well.
 - Not all cell service works the same, so if you cannot reach someone on their cell phone; text.
 - The agency need to enhance COOP plan to adequately address IT infrastructure for reconstitution to resume key program processing.
 - Phone connectivity issues indicated a clear need for alternatives.
 - How significantly all groups rely on IT to complete everyday tasks.
 - We are not well prepared for an incident of this magnitude.
 - Succession planning due to my RA being neutralized.
 - Delegation and communication are very important.
 - Necessity to establish concurrence of communications to HQ and media to prevent overload of inquires that would hamper response to more pressing matters.
 - The ability to manage and respond to many questions and injects that occur.
 - Familiarize yourself with the COOP for you organization.
 - We discovered that we need to develop a new secondary muster site. Our primary site is Union Station and our secondary site is the park across the street from union station which is probably too close if Union Station is a target.
 - The severity of the impact if IT MEFS were unavailable for longer than 30 days.
 - Need to have a structured way to track injects and immediately designate a communication person to ensure good coordination.
 - The execution of the communication and the potential lack of technical resources in a devastating event.
 - We have backup support from Albuquerque (satellite office).
 - Better understanding of the plan
4. What deficiencies in your Continuity of Operations Plan(s) or Continuity planning did you identify?
- Need to ensure access to the control documents are available redundantly.

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- No offsite location available immediately.
- GETS cards for BOC & FM&T Leadership
- GETS Calls seemed to be difficult, suggest a test call a day or two before the exercise.
- There should probably be more exercises.
- Clarification on defining the purpose between the SERT and DOC and how to properly communicate.
- The system needed revamped.
- More teaching opportunities for each service and a better understand on FAS structure.
- Telecommunications-Meeting space was not working.
- GETS Calls seemed to be difficult, suggest a test call a day or two before the exercise.
- All exercise documentation, scenarios, etc. would be better accessed if organized in one location vs the various Google Sites - Drive - emails / attachments, etc.
- The role of the SERT devolving to an operations room is not a workable COOP solution. For FAS, our business model is not a vertical (geographic) model like PBS with a building manager under regional control that could operate specifically around the needs of a geographic location in the region. The FAS operations are horizontal where programs located in the region are national, regional, and zonal and under either National, Regional, Zonal leadership. Our Portfolios are widely dispersed and non-related (Fleet, Network Services, Furniture, Travel/Purchase Cards, Procurement via Schedules, FSSI, Category, and Communication Centers including the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) and Accident Management Center.
- Notification system did not confirm receipt of some participants appropriately.
- We have several action items we will address.
- Didn't see much role play in my subject area (Legal).
- Necessity for a second COOP site in the event the first is compromised, and initial alerting system and accountability of staff.
- I did not identify deficiencies in our Continuity of Operations Plan(s) or Continuity planning.
- Business lines did not understand the functions of each other, which resulted in confusion of responsibilities.
- No Method to communicate with team members in the field if cell service is down as not all field personnel have Internet service or access to a land line.

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- Need a better roll up of who should get GETS cards and ensuring they do. Need to incorporate contact information for contractors into our plan.
- I did not know mb coming into KCK/South. I do now and both are sufficient bandwidth.
- Some additional detail in plan.
- We need to improve the phone blast, which we are in the process of doing.
- Update contact info
- Need more contact info for managers.
- Shelter in place vs. evacuation needs to be better defined.
- There are always things that pop up that are never planned for. Have to be more flexible in some instances and for firm in others
- ID non-electronic records and impact on work.
- Communication specifies as it relates to various components and law enforcement.
- To do a successful plan, you need to rely on the available technology, if you do know how to use the technology the operation will fail.
- The need to have offsite/out stationed people on list.
- MENS communications not complete.
- Plan to review COOP with staff and update information as needed.
- Need to ensure all supervisors have all contact info readily available and have calling trees in place.
- Don't have GETS card for OIG.
- Keeping the program updated.
- Need a way for staff to contact management, add details to own information.
- Comm channels for staff/supervisors need to be worked (calling cards)
- Need to redo back-ups and additional personnel contacts to be added.
- Accountability of employees remains a key issue.
- We still have accountability issues. As a result, we are implementing a new web-based notification tool. Also, our continuity site had flooding issues (wet carpet) due to recent rains. We realized a need to have a second (local) continuity site.
- Overall employee communication plan for people offsite.
- Need more exercising of our plan. We need to develop tools to help us be effective with the implementation of the plan. Maybe some refresher on ICS

After-Action Report

training. Better communication between our field offices and our Regional Office. Challenging employee accountability.

- Phone circuits were not working (ATT). Had to use text and emails on the notification tree.
- There are some minor changes, such as handling calls etc. that may need to be on spot decisions.
- Honeywell may need to improve their accountability process.
- Process of tracking injects can be improved.
- We need a tracking mechanism to ensure we are covering all injects.
- Consider an indoor secondary site.
- Ability for users to get access to email through their personal computers
- Lack of a current DR site
- We need to check our ENS. It worked for some and not for others.
- A coop site for the applications/hardware and outlook (email) is not in place.
- Time frame - up to 90 days to get partially operational again.

5. What would you like to see done differently in future exercises?

- We discussed time-phasing of the injections (identifying that it's now day 5 after the incident)
- Include more individuals from units.
- Room Temperature adjusted and Clarify roles.
- More Agency Direct Catastrophe's in outlying areas not just downtown
- Nothing this was a very well conducted exercise.
- Find a better system that doesn't send multiple unneeded messages.
- More coordination with Reconstitution.
- Centralized SIMCELL would be very beneficial and have the federal agencies actually contact each other as appropriate. Reconstitution needs this coordination to be tested. I think that each Lead Controller on the Design Team should be hosting meetings internally to develop injects that are very specific to the organizations.
- Additional links to the R6 Operating Page.
- This may need to be held locally rather than Region wide so this can be more focused for each office and at different dates. This way the OMA is available to work one on one with the local office rather than spread out over the Region with every FO.

After-Action Report

- Communication about the exercise and how it would operate was not working well within GSA and other agencies.
- We may need a bit more educating about roles and responsibilities of all members in the future. We have new leaders and times have changed related to gun violence.
- Smaller scope of the incident.
- Multiple communication tools... being adaptable to use various communication tactics, such as chat.
- Start to simulate what we believe that the DHS will actually take over in such situations.
- Prior to the beginning of the exercise, at the pre-meet, would be good to outline the roles of the different players. More information at the beginning of the exercise about where the other teams are located and how we are to communicate with each other. We figured it out, but a little slow to determine what to do initially.
- During a real world event, the phone/cell network and/or internet and/or electrical grid will probably be inoperable. Is there a way to test our Continuity of Operations Plan(s) if we cannot communicate with each other?
- More tailoring of injects for specific areas of the COOP plan requiring more discussion and contingency planning and solutions.
- Be more flexible, willingness to do "work-arounds". If you are lacking the technology skills, learn them! or ask for assistance.
- Specific action identified.
- More hands on training with other agencies
- Better facilitate for those offsite.
- An increase in communication / updates
- When done at the Regional Office level, do not alert any of the area offices or ARA sections ahead of time, or alert all Area Offices or ARA sections ahead of time they will participate.
- 1st time, I thought it was very good.
- Thought it went well.
- Role playing in real life – with all groups/teams involved.
- More realistic role playing.
- Stronger facilitation through injects/activity.
- Mix it up some by injecting different scenarios.

After-Action Report

- Maybe exercise could be a surprise scenario and have team actually communicate with all/some members of component in some way.
 - Name plates.
 - Be better prepared to focus on what we would have actually done, not just responding to the exercise injects.
 - We had to keep ours very simple, so we were not able to use most of the materials there were provided. Generally speaking, the exercise details were way too advanced for our application.
 - Make it shorter.
 - Possibly eliminate redundant questions. It would be good to have some more guidance from HQ.
 - It would be great if there were graduated exercises available to organizations that are somewhat in the beginning stages with programs or new team members.
 - Maybe have more than the top official neutralized. See how staff acts without agency leadership.
 - I felt that the time-frames of when we would receive certain objects was unrealistic. All injects came in on 7/26. Exercise can occur in the same time-frame but with so much time allotted to day two after event, day 5 after event, two weeks after event etc.
 - Start with day zero and progress through the exercise.
 - Shorter Duration
 - We had players in multiple locations. Overall the communication worked, but it would have been more effective if the team of first successors were all in one room at our alternate site. We purposely did this to test our communications, but in a real event we would call the immediate team onsite to the alternate location.
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:
- We were onsite.
 - I do not have additional comments on the exercise execution and my ability to communicate with the exercise staff and on-site agency representatives.
 - We found that we were able to communicate with our exercise staff quite well.
 - Teleworking excellent. Used to be issue but now internet access is excellent.
 - Remote work was good.
 - Teleworking employees had phone issues so IM's were used.

After-Action Report

- For virtual employees and in a real life scenario, it was difficult to tell who is truly available and responsible for various actions (even if people have been identified in a planning effort).
- Additional team members/functions present.
- Personnel need to know how to use the documents and processes to adequately telework.
- Need starship mics and ensure individuals onsite did not have side conversations. Difficult to hear. Needed an onsite facilitator to keep the exercise moving. It evolved over time but someone needed to step up early on. Also needed injects to be sent to folks offsite or to be included in the PP so they had some idea of the background for the conversation in the room.
- I was able to communicate with whom even I had the need to. We all knew that this would or could limit our working abilities and we prepared for that, I do not feel that there was any problems with communications.
- Communication went well. Calling tree needs to be worked on as the Agency has reorganized.
- Suggest improved information flow, exercise communications, to inform remote staff members on what is occurring if possible.
- I would like to know how many employees can remote in to work at the same time from an IT perspective.
- Communication with employees away from the office is accomplished via text and phone.
- All attendees need to be on site at designated location to help facilitate more discussion.
- Communication and responses to injects were more difficult off-site only because you were not aware of what on-staff were discussing. However this represents a good scenario because staff are scattered between on site and off site locations. It will be good to have senior staff come together at some point but the use of a dedicated conference line could be useful as well.
- Communication was very good while Teleworking. Teleworking on a normal basis helped us know what types of communication were available for us.
- All off-site personnel were responsive and communication was found to be effective.
- Ensure IT connectivity has been established and adequate bandwidth, etc. so that increased traffic in an emergency won't cause slow down of communication; review of local COOP communication plans and Cascade are completed; training provided for key personnel listed on the SERT.

After-Action Report

- Although we were working via e-mail, it was quickly realized that e-mail would not be available.
7. What type of COOP training or assistance would strengthen weaknesses found during the exercise?
- Provide follow up on all responses.
 - I did not find weaknesses during the exercise.
 - Periodic follow-up and update of key items identified during the exercise.
 - Training and exercising on active shooters.
 - Leadership Team training: those in Appendix A
 - I feel we just need more COOP training for our own program. I think some training on coordination with local authorities would also be of assistance.
 - Continued awareness of overall COOP plan and communication.
 - None - Just create variation in scenario(s)
 - Drill, Drill, Drill!!
 - Sending the alert via text and call.
 - Familiarization with location of COOP materials.
 - More people need to take all the ICS training; once they do, would be good to see how our exercises fit into it.
 - I actually don't remember receiving any COOP training specific to our office. That would be a great benefit. Having a specific office training.
 - Additional impact/training on active shooter.
 - ICS training is needed for all COOP team so they understand how operational coordination is to occur, as required by HSPD-5.
 - Additional training is unnecessary at this time. Fluidity of actions need to improve.
 - Repetition of the same
 - Better understanding of all individual/team roles and responsibilities.
 - Expendable poly comms.
 - Not everyone knows their true role during these types of events.
 - Test the new phone blast, practice the COOP plan at least one time a year.
 - We need MENS data on participating staff.
 - Active duty training/education.
 - Exercise for more managers (wider scale practice).

After-Action Report

- Alternate forms of communication.
- In future exercises, incorporating individual who have not been through one.
- Once we have a DR facility, we need to do a real fail-over test.
- Pre watch videos; additional Online resources
- Drills and exercises for emergency situations.
- More practice with ENS and more time thinking through scenarios and mitigating them. We have some, but could always practice more.
- Putting further information into plan and standing up a coop site.
- Perhaps refer to how other organizations have responded to actual post emergencies and what lessons were learned.
- Explanation of ERG + ERT + who serves in each.
- Sub groups need to meet at least annually.
- This type of training is useful.

8. Additional Comments:

- Doing this exercise on an annual basis is excellent practice for us!
- I think it was a worthwhile exercise and worth the time investment.
- I appreciate the opportunity to exercise our COOP. This exercise definitely provided us an opportunity to review our operations and practices our written program.
- Well run by the COOP Staff at agency R7.
- Good exercise – identified some best practices we need to put in place to better facilitate communications.
- I found the exercise informative and challenging.
- Increased realism of the exercise. Agencies could be given a time frame of when the exercise will initiate, possibly during a given week, but not know the day or time.
- Thank you for preparing the exercise.
- A coordinated terrorist attack on 2 dozen buildings in the middle of the US seems highly unlikely.
- Overall our office worked well together, having this practice was very necessary. On paper things look different than they do when actively participating. If we could do one or two more small exercises, just each office on their own - this process could be perfected.
- Felt that it went pretty well.

After-Action Report

- This exercise was good. It raised much needed awareness about the Regional Office COOP plan.
- Great exercise. Thank you.

After-Action Report

St. Louis

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

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat	Moderately	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have more knowledge of Continuity of operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation			14%	43%	43%
I was prepared for the exercise			14%	72%	14%
The exercise affected my understanding of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation			28%	28%	44%
Exercise objectives were clearly understood		14%	14%	28%	44%
Exercise met the stated objectives			28%	28%	44%
Exercise materials and information provided before and during the exercise were helpful	14%		14%	28%	44%
Amount of time allocated for this exercise was appropriate			28%	28%	44%
Exercise was well organized		14%	43%		43%
Off-Site Exercise Execution – Exercise action items were successfully received in a timely and accurate manner	43%			43%	14%

After-Action Report

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)
	29%		14%	14%	14%		29%		

2. What is the most significant thing that you learned from the exercise?
 - This was well thought out.
 - I didn't play an active role in the exercise such that I learned anything.
 - STL East and STL West FO working together.
 - Great having both offices together (E/W) where we can assist each other. Good communication with personnel. We used the google doc and it went well with viewing on the projection screen. Having 1 person doing input helped to lower confusion.
3. What deficiencies in your Continuity of Operations Plan(s) or Continuity planning did you identify?
 - Need to test GETS more often.
4. What would you like to see done differently in future exercises?
 - More like this one.
 - More use of office personnel, Contracting, Space management, FSC, DH.
 - Distribute the preparation materials and objectives to all participants.
5. 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:
6. What type of COOP training or assistance would strengthen weaknesses found during the exercise?
7. Additional Comments:

APPENDIX C: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

KC RICE '17
Customs and Border Protections
Federal Protective Service
DHS Infrastructure Protection
Environmental Protection Agency
Federal Aviation Administration
Food and Drug Administration
Federal Railroad Administration
Federal Transit Administration
General Services Administration
National Nuclear Security Administration
Occupational Safety & Health Administration
Social Security Administration
Transportation Security Administration
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USCIS NBC
USDA OCFO
USDA RMA
USCIS NRC
Veterans Administration

SLICE '17
Defense Information Systems Agency
General Services Administration
Occupational Safety & Health Administration
Transportation Security Administration
USDA Rural Development
Veterans Administration

Number of Participants

- 33 agencies & organizations
- ~ 570 Participants
- ~ 240 alternate sites (including telework locations)

Of the **33** agencies that participated in KC RICE-SLICE '17, **21** (64%) provided input to this AAR.

76 (~ 14%) of individual Participant Evaluation Forms were received.

APPENDIX D: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
AAR	After-Action Report
CCTA	Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack
COOP	Continuity of Operations
D/As	Department and Agencies
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
ENS	Emergency Notification System
ERG	Emergency Relocation Group
ERT	Emergency Response Team
FOB	Forward Operating Base
HSPD	Homeland Security Presidential Directive
ICS	Incident Command System
IT	Information Technology
IM	Instant Message
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GETS	Government Emergency Telecommunications System
GSA	General Services Administration
LFA	Lead Federal Agency
MEF	Mission Essential Functions
MSEL	Master Scenario Events List
PMEF	Primary Mission Essential Function
NCSC	National Customer Service Center
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PMEF	Primary Mission Essential Functions
SimCell	Simulation Cell