

Before the COOP plan is exercised, personnel must be trained so they know their responsibilities and have the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out those responsibilities. There are two main methods of training.

1. Orientations

Orientations are usually the first type of training conducted. They are typically presented as briefings. An orientation is a good way to:

- Introduce the general concepts of the COOP plan.
- Announce staff assignments, roles and responsibilities.
- Present general procedures.
- Describe how and within what timeframes the COOP plan will be tested and exercised.

2. Hands-On Training

After familiarizing personnel with basic policies and procedures, hands-on training can:

- Provide practice in specialized skills.
- Allow for practicing newly acquired skills.
- Help maintain proficiency at infrequently used skills.

C. Exercises

Exercises allow participants to apply their skills and knowledge to improve operational readiness. Exercises allow planners to evaluate the effectiveness of previously conducted tests and training activities. The primary purpose of an exercise is to identify areas that require additional training, planning or other resources. Exercise histories and ongoing exercise plans should be documented. An exercise schedule should be published and kept current. Standard exercise templates should be developed.

The goal of exercising an agency COOP plan is to prepare for a real incident that would require COOP activation. Broad exercise goals are to:

- Discover planning weaknesses.
- Reveal resource gaps.
- Improve coordination.