

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMERGENCY SERVICES DESKTOP SIMULATION EXERCISE EVALUATIONS

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The Responsible Care® Management System requires signatories to the Responsible Care® Initiative to communicate openly on their performance and products. The Emergency Response Code encourages the sharing of safety, health, environmental and security resources as well as information including emergency support information, thus benefitting the broader community.

In this regard, CAIA is calling all signatories to the Responsible Care® Initiative to put internal procedures in place and carry out desktop emergency response simulation exercise evaluations in order to enhance capabilities in safeguarding people, property and the environment. Post evaluation corrective action will be expected to ensure gaps are filled and stakeholder capabilities ascertained. Simulation exercises are a dynamic tool used to test plans, rehearse procedures, identify gaps, solve problems, increase confidence and generally add to the overall capacity to react to emergencies in an effective, timely and reliable manner.

What is a Simulation Exercise (SIMEX)?

A SIMEX is a people centred, action focused activity, which simulates, at least in part, an emergency situation. It is designed to implement emergency response plans and evaluate the plan against approved standards, procedures or objectives. Participants in a SIMEX include but are not limited to national and local Governments, humanitarian organisations and emergency response staff that are in a position to take decisions during an emergency.

A SIMEX is a fictional disaster event created to assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Emergency responders are given the chance to develop their skills and knowledge and it also provides a valuable opportunity for the various stakeholders to meet and work together to improve coordination. A SIMEX is a highly effective training and educational tool to raise awareness, test systems, develop skills and knowledge as well as deepening people's understanding of emergency response through practical experience. It also assists in improving

relationships and coordination within teams and between stakeholders. Ultimately, it is about making sure Local Governments and other emergency responders are ready and prepared when an emergency situation hits the signatory.

What is a Desktop SIMEX?

A Desktop SIMEX is a discussion-based session where team members meet in an informal, classroom setting to discuss their roles during an emergency and their responses to a particular emergency situation. The aim is to identify major gaps or conflicts in response planning. A facilitator may be utilised to guide participants through a discussion of one or more scenarios. The duration of a desktop exercise depends on the number of participants, the topic being exercised and the exercise objectives. Many desktop exercises can be conducted in a few hours, making them cost-effective tools to validate plans and capabilities with no real resources being used.

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