

LADDER

Local Approach to Discussion-Based Disaster Exercises and Readiness

Facilitator Guidebook



<https://ladder.ca.uky.edu/>

This guidebook provides facilitators and hosts with the background information for exercise preparation, conduct, evaluation, and after-action activities. This Facilitator Guidebook is intended FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY by the exercise Facilitator and Host. Players should not receive a copy of this guidebook.

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GETTING READY

The goal is to team Extension educators with their local emergency management partners to engage whole community stakeholders in a discussion-based exercise to improve disaster preparedness involving animals. LADDER is a unique low-cost, low-technology tool that offers emergency management a Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) consistent “exercise-in-a-box” to incorporate into their exercise schedule, allowing communities to identify ways to become more resilient. The exercise includes a game as an interactive tool to engage individuals involved in disaster preparedness for animals, as well as an opportunity to evaluate and discuss the local emergency operations plan. Depending on the needs of the jurisdiction, the game can be played with either pets or cattle scenarios.

Facilitator Role

Facilitators collaborate with emergency managers to determine stakeholder invitee list, conduct the exercise, and complete the After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) following the exercise. Facilitators guide game play and discussion to meet exercise objectives, and ensure issues are explored as thoroughly as possible within the available time.

Facilitators encourage all participants to contribute to the discussion and remind them that they are discussing hypothetical situations in a no-fault environment. Facilitators build and maintain an environment where all the participants feel comfortable speaking honestly and where differences of opinion are respected. Facilitators ensure that everyone feels included in the conversation and has an opportunity to participate. Facilitators should not lecture or dominate the discussion, but rather keep conversations moving.

Who to Invite

LADDER is best played with animal planning and response stakeholders in your jurisdiction. Once a date and venue are determined, utilize the recruitment flyer (available on LADDER website) to invite participants.

- Emergency Managers (required)
- Extension Educators
- Public Health Professionals
- Livestock Producers
- Local Government Officials
- First Responders
- Veterinarians
- Animal Control Personnel
- Shelter and Response Personnel
- and more!

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**Site Logistics**

- Supplies
 - table and chairs
 - paper and pens, if desired for note taking
 - sign in sheet
- Players: 4-8 players per game (2-4 players per team)*
- Exercise Time: 3-4 hours
- Lunch and refreshments, if desired

*If expecting more than 8 players, setting up more tables to play additional games concurrently is recommended. Include all teams in the post-game discussion.

Game Setup

Prior to the day of the exercise:

- Determine whether pets or cattle scenarios will be in play.
- Print and assemble game components for the determined animal type utilizing *Appendix A: Printing Instructions*.
 - Exercise printable materials are found on the LADDER website (URL).
 - Many documents are two-sided, so a printer with the ability to print double-sided is recommended. If you do not have access to a color printer, the documents may be printed in black and white or grayscale.
- Familiarizing yourself with the game instructions prior to the exercise is strongly recommended.

On the day of play, set up the game utilizing *Appendix B: Game Layout*.

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Exercise Overview

Exercise Name

LADDER: Local Approach to Discussion-Based Disaster Exercises and Readiness

Scope

This exercise is a discussion-based game, planned for 4 hours. Exercise conduct focuses on resource identification and coordination in a fictional community and applying outcomes to the jurisdiction's local emergency operations plan.

Mission Area(s)

Protection and Response

Core Capabilities

Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Planning

Objectives

Exercise objectives are designed to bring relevant stakeholders together to identify ways to meet animal needs during disasters. The objectives are as follows:

1. Teams compete to acquire and apply resources to resolve five animal needs assignments following game rules.
2. Players determine whether their local plans, policies, and procedures meet National Incident Management System guidance using three game assignments.

Threat or Hazard

All hazards

Scenario

Calamity County suffers from frequent disasters. Teams identify and utilize resources to meet assignment needs.

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General Information

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *Participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Some roles may be performed by a single individual (e.g., facilitator, evaluator, and host). Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Note Taker.** Note Takers record key points of information during the exercise.
- **Facilitators.** Facilitators provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required.
- **Evaluators.** Evaluators are assigned to observe and document certain objectives during the exercise. Their primary role is to document Player discussions, including how and if those discussions conform to plans, policies, and procedures.
- **Host.** The exercise Host performs administrative and logistical support tasks before, during and after the exercise (e.g., registration, site logistics).

Exercise Structure

This exercise will be a facilitated exercise. Players will participate in 2 modules:

- Module 1: Interactive Gameplay
- Module 2: Guided Discussion

Exercise Guidelines

- This exercise will be held in an open, low-stress, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
- Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., you may use only existing assets) and insights derived from your training.
- Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your organization's final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.

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- Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve protection and response efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus of this event.

Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation. During this exercise, the following apply:

- The exercise is designed to evaluate resource identification and coordination capabilities, plans, systems, and processes rather than individual actions or abilities.
- The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.
- Players can assume unspecified resource characteristics. For example, if a resource card does not specify size, assume the size is appropriate.
- Participating agencies may need to balance exercise play with real-world emergencies. Real-world emergencies take priority.

Exercise Evaluation

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the exercise objectives and aligned capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks. Additionally, Players will be asked to complete participant feedback forms. These documents, coupled with Evaluator observations and notes, will be used to evaluate the exercise and compile the After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP).

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Module 1: Interactive Gameplay

Determine whether pet, cattle or both assignment groups will be in play. Utilize appropriate game pieces and follow the game guide instructions to play the game. This is expected to take 1-2 hours.

Module 2: Guided Discussion

Select at least three assignments encountered during gameplay in Module 1 and facilitate a discussion to:

- determine which plans, policies, procedures, or resources contain information to address selected assignments
- identify contact information for each resource (phone number and/or address) to address selected assignments
- verify memorandums of understanding, contracts or agreements are current and accurate to address selected assignments

Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 2. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time. This is expected to take 1-2 hours.

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Analyzing the Outcomes

Hotwash

A hotwash is a facilitated discussion held immediately following an exercise among exercise players that is designed to capture feedback about any issues, concerns, or proposed improvements players may have about the exercise. These guided discussion questions are designed to help emergency management identify next steps for improvement planning and develop the AAR/IP. Select the questions (or create your own) that are most beneficial to your community to expand and strengthen community preparedness. Many of the questions below come from the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101. Frame the questions in the context of the scenarios presented in the game.

1. What other exercises should we conduct to improve preparedness?
2. What renovations/new construction is required to best meet animal needs in our community?
3. What sources of funding should we apply for to improve our plan?
4. How do we educate our community to improve individual and business preparedness?
5. Does the plan identify equipment and supplies that may be needed to operate each animal shelter, as well as supplies that owners may bring with them?
6. Does the plan provide for acceptance of donated resources (e.g., food, bedding, containers)?
7. Does the plan provide for the acquisition, storage, and security of food and water supplies? Does the plan provide for the diverse dietary needs of animals?
8. Does the plan recommend just-in-time training for spontaneous volunteers?
9. Does the plan have or refer to an MOA/MOU or MAA that defines the roles and responsibilities of each organization?
10. Does the plan describe the partnership between the jurisdiction's emergency management agency, the animal control authority, the mass care provider(s), and the owner of each proposed animal sheltering facility?
11. Does the plan address how animals are provided with evacuation assistance are registered, documented, tracked, and reunited with their owners if they are separated during assisted evacuations?
12. Does the plan identify the agency responsible for coordinating shelter operations?

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13. Does the plan provide guidance about utility provisions, such as running water, adequate lighting, proper ventilation, electricity, and backup power, at animal shelters?
14. Has your community planned for liability in the event of injury/disease transmission or other health risks to staff or volunteers by an animal in their care?
15. Does the plan provide for communication of public information regarding shelter-in-place accommodation of animals, if available?
16. Does the plan provide mechanisms for continually updating public statements on shelter capacity and availability as people/animals are coming to shelters?
17. Does the plan address the evacuation and transportation of animals?
18. Does the plan identify adequately address the needs of service animals and their owners?
19. Does the plan include identification and reunification criteria for sheltered animals?
20. Does the plan identify equipment and supplies needed to operate each shelter or supplies that may need to be provided to individuals who shelter-in-place?
21. Does the plan provide for the physical security of each animal facility including perimeter control and security personnel?
22. Does the plan provide for technical consultations with veterinarians or veterinarian technicians as official responders?
23. Do agencies identified in plan have the authority to conduct the duties or activities listed?
24. Does an updated emergency response information list (ERIL) exist?

After Action Report/Improvement Plan

A LADDER AAR/IP customizable template is available on the LADDER website.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**Appendix A: Printing Instructions**

Pet scenarios:

Exercise Material	Print Quantity	Single or Double-Sided	Special Instructions
Pet Resource Cards	1	Double	Cut apart, Print: flip on long edge
Pet Chaos Cards	1	Double	Cut apart, Print: flip on long edge
Pet Assignment Cards	1	Double	Cut apart, Print: flip on long edge
Calamity Currency	1	Double	Cut apart, Print: flip on long edge
Assignment LADDER	1	Single	NA
Game Guide	1 per participant	Double	Print: Flip on short edge
Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG) (editable template)	1	Double	
AAR/IP (editable template)	1	Double	
Participant feedback form	1 per participant	Double	
Emergency operations plan	1		

Cattle scenarios:

Exercise Material	Print Quantity	Single or Double-Sided	Special Instructions
Cattle Resource Cards	1	Double	Cut apart, Print: flip on long edge
Cattle Chaos Cards	1	Double	Cut apart, Print: flip on long edge
Cattle Assignment Cards	1	Double	Cut apart, Print: flip on long edge
Calamity Currency	1	Double	Cut apart, Print: flip on long edge
Assignment LADDER	1	Single	NA
Game Guide	1 per participant	Double	Print: Flip on short edge
Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG) (editable template)	1	Double	
AAR/IP (editable template)	1	Double	
Participant feedback form	1 per participant	Double	
Emergency operations plan	1		

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Appendix B: Game Layout Illustration

