

EXERCISE OBSERVATION AND DEBRIEF TEMPLATE

Purpose

Your role is to observe how plans, procedures and systems perform during the exercise to support learning and improvement. Focus on:

- How decisions are made in practice
- How communication and coordination processes work
- How roles, responsibilities and response arrangements are applied in practice, including in dynamic or evolving situations
- How plans and procedures support or hinder response
- How situational awareness was established and maintained

Observations should focus on how systems and processes perform, not on evaluating individual performance.

Reference Note

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) Handbook 3: Managing Exercises, which provides the recognised Australian framework for the planning and conduct of exercises, has been considered in the development of this template.

Before the exercise:

- Review the exercise plan, scenario and objectives
- Understand your assigned focus area
- Familiarise yourself with relevant plans, procedures and systems
- Check the templates you will be using

Recording Observations

Capture observations aligned to the exercise objectives, focusing on how effectively plans, procedures and systems operate in practice, including:

Decision-making processes

- Clarity of decision-making authority

Communication

- Did communication align with emergency services or external instructions where relevant?
- Avenue for participants to report information or seek clarification

Roles and responsibilities

- Were roles and responsibilities clearly defined, communicated and supported by available guidance or systems?

Coordination (internal and external)

- Were coordination processes, roles and communication pathways clearly defined and supported during the exercise?
- Systems and processes

Situational awareness (e.g. how processes, systems and tools supported the collection, sharing and updating of information)

Observation Template Guidance

Use the Observation Template to capture:

- What happened
- What was expected based on plans or procedures
- What worked well / what did not work or gaps
- Why did this occur?
- Impact

Keep notes clear and factual. Focus on how systems, processes and guidance supported or constrained actions, rather than judging individual performance.

What Not to Do:

During the exercise, do not:

- Change or influence the scenario
- Provide direct feedback to participants
- Critique or coach participants
- Interfere with exercise flow
- Assess or judge individual performance

After the Exercise:

- Contribute to the debrief discussion
- Help identify key lessons and actions
- Ensure your observations are clear and complete

EXERCISE SUMMARY

Exercise Details	Exercise Name	
	Date	
	Building / Site	
	Objectives being tested	
	Observer/s	

OBSERVATIONS

Area	What happened	What worked well	What didn't work	Why did this occur?	Impact
Decision-Making					
Communication					
Roles & Responsibilities					
Coordination					
Systems / Processes					

OBSERVATIONS (CONTINUED)					
Area	What happened	What worked well	What didn't work	Why did this occur?	Impact
Situational Awareness					

DEBRIEF SUMMARY	
What worked well?	
What could be improved?	
Key insights	

Notes: