

# **Florida Department of Health in Taylor County**

**Media Relations in Emergencies PIO Tabletop Exercise**

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

December 9, 2014

*Sponsored by Florida Department of Health in Taylor County*

This page is intentionally blank.

## HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

The information gathered in this After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) is classified as **For Official Use Only (FOUO)** and should be handled as sensitive information not to be disclosed. This document should be safeguarded, handled, transmitted, and stored in accordance with appropriate security directives.

This document is exempt from release under public records request under Florida Statutes Chapter 119.

***Exercise Director:***

Ann Rowe, Lead Crisis and Risk Communicator  
Florida Department of Health, Office of Communications  
(850) 245-4444 ext 2131  
[ann.rowe@flhealth.gov](mailto:ann.rowe@flhealth.gov)

Melanie Motiska, Statewide PIO Training Coordinator  
Florida Department of Health, Office of Communications  
(850) 245-4444 ext 2133  
[melanie.motiska@flhealth.gov](mailto:melanie.motiska@flhealth.gov)

***Agency POC:***

Padraic Juarez  
Administrator/Health Officer  
FDOH in Taylor County  
(850) 926-0400 ext 203  
[Padraic.Juarez@flhealth.gov](mailto:Padraic.Juarez@flhealth.gov)

Christie Mathison  
Planning Consultant  
Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Preparedness and Response  
(850) 445-9769  
[Christie.mathison@flhealth.gov](mailto:Christie.mathison@flhealth.gov)

Laurie Westbrook  
Emergency Preparedness Planner  
FDOH in Taylor County  
(850) 926-0400 ext 206  
[Laurel.Westbrook@flhealth.gov](mailto:Laurel.Westbrook@flhealth.gov)

This page is intentionally blank.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>67</b>
EXERCISE DETAILS .....	67
EXERCISE PLANNING TEAM.....	78
EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS .....	79
<b>SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN AND SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>810</b>
EXERCISE PURPOSE AND DESIGN .....	810
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES AND CAPABILITY .....	810
SCENARIO SUMMARY .....	1011
<b>SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES .....</b>	<b>12</b>
CAPABILITY 1: PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNING.....	12
<b>SECTION 4: CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>1417</b>
SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK.....	1518
<b>APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN MATRIX .....</b>	<b>1619</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: ACRONYMS .....</b>	<b>1821</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: PICTURES .....</b>	<b>1922</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-Exercise Planning Team .....	78
Table 2- Exercise Participants for December 9, 2014.....	79
Table 3-Participant Feedback .....	1518
Table 4-Improvement Plan Matrix.....	1720
Table 5-Acronyms .....	1821

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Taylor County Media Relations in Emergencies PIO Tabletop Exercise (TTX) was sponsored by the Florida Department of Health in Taylor County and took place on December 9, 2014 at the Department of Health in Taylor County. It was developed to test the DOH public information response staff and the attending PIO response partners in Taylor County, as well as to enable Public Information Officers within Taylor County to practice skills related to public information during an incident. The exercise planning team included members of Florida Department of Health in Taylor County Emergency Preparedness staff and DOH Office of Communications Training and Exercise staff.

Florida Department of Health in Taylor County recognizes the importance of media relations during emergency events. Specific agencies and organizations holding responsibility for post-exercise improvement are specifically identified in Appendix A: Improvement Plan contained in this report. Homeland Security Preparedness involves a cycle of assessment, planning, capability development and organization, training, exercising, evaluation, and improvement. Successful exercises lead to an ongoing program of process improvements. This report is intended to assist Taylor County in achieving preparedness excellence by analyzing exercise results.

The exercise gave participants an opportunity to evaluate current concepts, plans, and capabilities for responding to an incident in Taylor County. The purpose of this report is to analyze exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

### Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this exercise are as follows:

- Progressing through an entire incident
- Bringing all disciplines together and gaining familiarity with other PIOs
- Addressing multiple aspects of PIO responsibilities

### Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the exercise, several opportunities for improvement in the PIOs' overall understanding and ability to respond to the incident were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

- Establish a wider public information network (PIN) within Taylor County and with state level partners
- Plan additional Taylor County specific Joint Information Center/Joint Information System training program with partners

This page is intentionally blank.

## SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW

---

### EXERCISE DETAILS

**Exercise Name**

Taylor County Media Relations in Emergencies PIO Tabletop Exercise

**Type of Exercise**

Tabletop

**Exercise Date**

December 9, 2014

**Duration**

4 hours

**Location**

Florida Department of Health in Taylor County, 1215 North Peacock Avenue, Perry, FL 32347

**Sponsor**

Florida Department of Health in Taylor County

**Mission**

Response

**Capabilities**

Public Information and Warning

**Scenario Type**

Collision of transport train and industrial truck; resulting chemical spill

## EXERCISE PLANNING TEAM

The following individuals were involved with the design, development, conduct, and evaluation of the exercise.

Name	Organization	E-Mail
Ann Rowe	DOH Office of Communications	ann.rowe@flhealth.gov
Melanie Motiska	DOH Office of Communications	melanie.motiska@flhealth.gov
Laurie Westbrook	DOH in Taylor County	Laurel.Westbrook@flhealth.gov
Christie Mathison	DOH in Taylor County	christie.mathison@flhealth.gov

Table 1-Exercise Planning Team

## PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

### Number of Participants

- Players - 12
- Controller/Evaluators- 2
- Director-1
- Technical Support/Camera Operator-1

## EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Name	Department/Agency
Padraic Juarez	DOH-Taylor Administrator 2-1-1 Taylor Inc.
Melanie Motiska	DOH – Central Office ( Controller)
Christie Mathison	DOH – Taylor County Planning Consultant
Laurie Westbrook	DOH- Taylor EP Planner
Steve Spradley	Taylor County Emergency Management
Kristy Anderson	Taylor County Emergency Management
James Rachal	DOH – Taylor County EH Director
Kristie Lutz	DOH-Taylor Program Manager
Audra Gorby	DOH- Taylor
Charlotte Sorrell	DOH-Taylor Finance
Mary Lescher	Doctors’ Memorial Hospital
Ann Rowe	DOH – Central Office (Exercise Director)

Table 2- Exercise Participants for December 9, 2014

## SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN AND SUMMARY

---

### EXERCISE PURPOSE AND DESIGN

#### Purpose

The purpose of this exercise was to provide a learning environment for PIOs of Taylor County to practice public information response activities during a rapidly escalating incident affecting multiple jurisdictions. The Taylor County Department of Health Emergency Operating Procedures (EOP) and Crisis and Emergency Risk Communications Annex were provided as partial response guidelines; however, since most of the attending staff are from Department of Health, other agency's level of familiarity with these documents varied.

#### Scope and Design

The scope of play for the exercise included four modules delivered over four hours. Participants worked through the modules together. At the beginning of each module, a scenario briefing was given at the main table. The purpose of each briefing was to share scenario updates that drive tasks during that module. The modules included:

- News Release/Talking Points/Statement / Media Advisory Writing
- News Conference
- Interviews
- Rumor Control / Social Media

Each module allowed approximately 45 minutes to complete tasks and review performance.

During exercise play, the exercise director was available for the players to consult for additional information, clarification and if needed, approval.

A brief hotwash had been planned for all exercise participants after the completion of the fourth module. The time constraints did not allow for a group hotwash, however course evaluations provided information and feedback from the students. These evaluations were provided to the Emergency Preparedness Planner.

### EXERCISE OBJECTIVES AND CAPABILITY

#### Exercise Objective

Discuss the ability of local agencies with the emergency public information system to provide official information and instruction to diverse populations in order to facilitate timely and appropriate public response during a major emergency or disaster.

### **Core Capability**

FEMA - Public Information and Warning: Deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard and, as appropriate, the actions being taken and the assistance being made available.<sup>1</sup>

By refining the ability to disseminate accurate, consistent, timely, and easy-to understand information about emergency response and recovery processes, a jurisdiction can contribute to the well-being of the community during and after an emergency.

---

<sup>1</sup> FEMA- Crosswalk of Target Capabilities to Core Capabilities (May 2014)

## SCENARIO SUMMARY

### Module 1 News release/Talking points/Statement/Media Advisory Writing

---

- **Time allotment:** 55 minutes play / 10 minutes review
- **Staffing:** Controllers
- **Description:** Players will be required to develop news releases, talking points, statements and a media advisory based on the key points from the module briefing. The group should determine what to include for the news release(s) depending on scenario updates, and also determine the best organizational structure to complete the tasks.
- ***The player PIOs come from different agencies that may or may not be affected by the scenario items; in the event that some PIOs would be unaffected, they should assume the role of an affected agency.***
- One of the tasks for this module is to obtain approval for the news release from the Incident Commander(Director of Emergency Management, Health Department Administrator or Exercise Director). Players must determine how to locate leadership to provide them with the news release draft. Once the group obtains approval, they will then submit to the controller for review.

### Module 2 News Conference

---

- **Time allotment:** 55 minutes play / 10 minutes review
- **Staffing:** Controllers
- **Description:** Players will be required to develop a news releases, talking points, statements and a media advisory based on the key points from the module briefing. The group should determine what to include for the news release(s) depending on scenario updates, and also determine the best organizational structure to complete the tasks.
- ***The player PIOs come from different agencies that may or may not be affected by the scenario items; in the event that some PIOs would be unaffected, they should assume the role of an affected agency.***

### Module 3 Mock Interviews

---

- **Time allotment:** 15 minutes preparation / 20 minutes play / 10 minutes review
- **Staffing:** 1 mock reporter, 1 mock camera operator
- ***The PIOs will come from a variety of different agencies that may or may not be affected by the scenario items; in the event that some PIOs would be unaffected, they should assume the role of an affected agency.***
- An experienced PIO was on hand to act as the media and assist in the review at the end of each module. Each interview was recorded and provided to the participant on DVD if they wished to have a copy. The group reviewed the challenges of giving interviews in both an everyday and

emergency situation.

- Participants provided with two guidance documents, “Message Points in Emergency Communication” and “Preparing for an Interview Checklist” to help guide their actions.

#### **Module 4 Rumor Control/Social Media**

---

- **Time allotment:** 45 minutes
- **Staffing:** Controller, Exercise Director
- **Description:** Group will have three basic tasks in this module:
- Players will develop Twitter and Facebook updates based on the key points from module briefing. They will be provided with screenshot handouts of mock messages from Taylor County Emergency Management, Doctors Memorial Hospital and Perry Downtown Revitalization for reference.
- Players are also tasked with monitoring social media sites (Google Alerts, Topsy, Meltwater’s IceRocket, Tweetdeck) for rumors; this will be simulated by viewing the local media, Taylor County, Doctor’s Memorial and Florida Department of Health Twitter feeds and Facebook posts.
- Players will build draft scripts for “211- Taylor “callers. (24-hour crisis, suicide prevention, human services information and referrals - dial 211 or 877-211-7005 outside of the Big Bend). They can obtain guidance/answers from the Exercise Director as necessary. Talking points developed earlier should be a resource. [www.211BigBend.org](http://www.211BigBend.org)
- Players should follow all procedures outlined in their respective agency’s policies when describing their actions and developing messages. The purpose of tasks #2 and #3 is to give PIOs the opportunity to determine which rumors require corrective actions, and how to employ corrective actions.
- The group will be given a form to write down actions and responses for each task and then share with the controller. At the end of the module, the controller will review the form and then keep it for submission to the planning team at the end of the exercise.

## SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

---

This section of the report assesses how well the exercise participants demonstrated knowledge of plans, policies, procedures, training, resources and relationships or agreements that guide the prevention or response to an incident.

This tabletop exercise used task-based modules to assess the following core capability: Public Information and Warning.

### CAPABILITY 1: PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNING

**Capability Summary:** Deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard and, as appropriate, the actions being taken and the assistance being made available. *Note: all activities were observed through discussion based modules, including press release writing, news conference, interviews and rumor control/social media.*

#### Activity 1.1: Press Release Writing

**Observations:**

**Analysis:** STRENGTHS:

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

#### Activity 1.2: News Conference

**Observations:**

**Analysis:** STRENGTHS:

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

#### Activity 1.3: Interviews

**Observations:**

**Analysis:** STRENGTHS:

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

#### Activity 1.4: Rumor Control/Social Media

**Observations:**

**Analysis: STRENGTHS:**

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

**Analysis Summary:**

**Recommendation 1:**

**Action Item 1.1:**

**Recommendation 2:**

**Action Item 2.1: Action Item 2.2:**

**Action Item 2.3:**

## SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

---

The structure was designed such that each module allowed participants to gain more knowledge which could then be put to use during the next activity. The use of group briefings during module transitions, and controller interaction was extremely helpful. The videotaping of the news conference and interview added to the realism of the exercise. While the exercise provided an excellent forum for training and practice, responses and actions were mostly driven by the participants' own experiences and the checklists provided rather than established plans and procedures.

The turnout for this exercise was across jurisdictions and is an indication of dedicated professionals. Despite daily duties and responsibilities, a number of public information officers and others in the county made time and adjusted schedules to participate in this exercise. With the momentum from this exercise, Taylor County has the opportunity to build on their already strong public information partnerships and continue to enhance response capabilities through training, planning, and exercises.

## SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Avg. Score (1-5)	Assessment Factor
5.00	(A) The exercise was well structured and organized.
4.88	(B) The exercise scenario was plausible and realistic.
4.76	(C) Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position
5.00	(D) The participants included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines
5.00	(E) After this exercise I believe my agency is better prepared to deal successfully with the scenario being exercised

*Note: Strongly agree=5 and Strongly Disagree=1*

**Table 3-Participant Feedback**

## APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN MATRIX

This Improvement Plan has been developed specifically for the Taylor County Media Relations in Emergencies FE held on December 9, 2014.

Capability	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
<b>Public Information and Warning</b>	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Provide the opportunity for continued engagement amongst PIOs by establishing a Public Information Network (PIN) for Taylor County.	<b>Action Item 1.1:</b> PIN members should meet regularly (quarterly, biannually) to maintain familiarity, network, and discuss upcoming local, state, or FEMA PIO specific training.	Planning				
	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Taylor County should consider developing a JIC/JIS training plan to supplement to the CERC Annex. Provide PIO specific training and exercise opportunities.	<b>Action Item 2.1:</b> Obtain funding for a training and exercise program.	Planning				
		<b>Action Item 2.2:</b> Utilize a workshop including Taylor PIN members and other relevant agencies to practice more different scenarios.	Training & Exercise				

		<p><b>Action Item 2.3:</b> Provide task-specific training in the form of discussion or operations based exercises to test concepts and procedures outlined in the CERC plan.</p>	<p>Training &amp; Exercise</p>				
--	--	--	--------------------------------	--	--	--	--

Table 4-Improvement Plan Matrix

## APPENDIX B: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
AAR	After Action Report
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
TTX	Tabletop Exercise
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOUO	For Official Use Only
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
IC	Incident Command
ICS	Incident Command System
IP	Improvement Plan
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
NIMS	National Incident Management System
PIN	Public Information Network
PIO	Public Information Officer
POC	Point of Contact
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TCL	Target Capabilities List

Table 5-Acronyms

## APPENDIX C: PICTURES



