FOOD TRUCK FIASCO

LEAD PLANNER'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION / WELCOME

Welcome to the *Food Truck Fiasco Lead Planner's Guide.*

As the lead planner, you will be responsible for overseeing the planning, operations, logistics, and administration of the training event. This guide provides you with all the necessary information to plan, coordinate, and execute these events.

Overview

At any point during production or distribution, food can be contaminated. It is critical that relevant parties/partners understand the roles and responsibilities of all participating entities during investigations, since communication is key to the efficiency and success of investigations.

This tabletop exercise has been designed by a group of subject matter and instructional design experts to provide participants with a real-life, plausible food safety scenario. This exercise is related to the **retail** food sector, focusing on multi-jurisdictional communication strategies when a situation stemming from ill retail workers impacts customers across multiple counties, states, or even countries. While the scenario has been simplified to present the information in an effective way, the scenario and the discussion questions have been designed to encourage participant dialogue and to help bring up topics that are critically important to react to during such incidents. The exercises have also been developed to provide participants with an opportunity to explore important topics like interagency collaboration, jurisdictional issues, and risk communication. The information in the scenarios reflects the policies and procedures in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards as of November 2024. If there has been an update to the procedures in your jurisdiction, please be sure to make the group aware of the change and work with the facilitator to ensure that all participants understand the update.

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Structure and Objective of Exercises

Food Truck Fiasco is designed as a 6-hour (contact time) tabletop exercise where the scenario centers on the retail sector. This tabletop exercise presents a food-related incident to participants, which will require them to think critically about procedures and communications necessary to protect public health as the situation evolves. It is a highly interactive exercise with three learning modules, each with questions and discussions.

- **Module 1:** Identification of confirmed illnesses, internal and external coordination, and communication
- **Module 2:** Prevention plan/public communication strategies, mock conference call

- **Module 3:** Scenario conclusion and wrap-up questions

Participation in this exercise will allow learners to:

1. Understand the importance of internal (interjurisdictional) communications and coordination to react proactively to public health issues.

2. Develop and/or review existing external (public) communications in collaboration with other public health partners that provide comprehensive and collaborative ideas, strategies, and solutions to mitigate the public health impact of a potential foodborne illness outbreak or contamination event.

3. Describe how the environmental assessment and appropriate measures of control support effective response and action to identified food safety and public health risks.

4. Use a collaborative approach to efficiently deploy the responsibilities of each agency/discipline to implement proactive solutions during situations that may impact public health.

5. Apply local, state, tribal, and federal regulations related to human pathogen control in retail establishments that span multiple jurisdictions.

6. Utilize established investigation, reporting, and response procedures to manage public health risks.

The following materials are included to aid in executing this tabletop exercise:

- **Situation Manual (SITMAN)** – A handbook given to participants that contains the scenario, tabletop exercise schedule, objectives, a Personal Learning Inventory, and any supplemental documentation needed.

- **Facilitator Guide** – A handbook that provides guidance for facilitating the session, including slide notes and questions/answers for the mock inspection.

- **PPT Presentation** – Used by the facilitator in conjunction with the SITMAN to lead participants through the scenario.

- **Certificate** – Should be printed and presented to participants after the exercise.

- **Table Tents** – A printable document used to group participants.

- **After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) (optional)** – The primary document resulting from an evaluation of the tabletop exercise. The lead evaluator should be designated as the person responsible for creating the AAR/IP and identifying a team to assist with the development of this report. For further definition and details, please see *Appendix E* and review the AAR/IP template.

  EEG (optional) – Exercise evaluation guide for evaluators.

PLANNING AND OPERATIONS

Exercise and Participant Identification

By design, tabletop exercises involve key personnel discussing simulated scenarios in an informal setting. Tabletops can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures.

Participants should represent a broad array of viewpoints and professional responsibilities, so they can adequately address the tabletop exercise objectives and provide value to the group dialogue.

Participants are expected to have a working knowledge of their standard operating procedures, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), or other interdisciplinary mechanism(s) used during foodborne illness outbreak investigations. They should have relevant experience and share those experiences with less experienced participants during the breakout sessions.

Five groups are the focus of the scenario; the exercise is designed to facilitate discussion among these various organizations:

- EHS – State/Local/Tribal/Territorial environmental health specialists (including those responsible for inspecting retail and foodservice establishments)
- LPH – Local public health/epidemiologist
- SRA – State regulatory agency, including Rapid Response Team (RRT) coordinators
- PIO – Public information officers
- FED – FDA and CDC representatives can be included if the option to include multiple states is selected

Note: Clinical and food laboratories play a lesser role in this scenario, but their presence or availability for consultation is suggested. The scenario was designed to span multiple jurisdictions within a state or region; therefore, cross-collaborative training groups may be useful. The scenario can be expanded to include representatives from industry partners (or trade associations) and federal agencies (FDA and CDC).

To help you identify the appropriate participants for the ***Food Truck Fiasco*** exercise, the following descriptions are provided for each of the roles and responsibilities (lead planner, participants, facilitator, evaluator group leader, and group recorder). Additional details on the roles of the facilitator and evaluators are included in *Appendix C*:

- **Lead Planner** – The person who has overall responsibility for the tabletop exercise, including convening the Planning Team and all pre- and post-exercise needs. It is important, but not required, that lead planners are trained in or familiar with the policies and procedures in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards as of November 2024.

- **Participants** – Respond to the scenario based on their first-hand, experiential knowledge; current plans and procedures of their entity, agency, or jurisdiction; and insights from training and experience.

- **Facilitator** – Generally leads the exercise, provides situation updates, and moderates discussions. Also provides additional information and resolves questions as needed.

- **Evaluator(s) (optional)** – Representatives chosen by the Planning Team to record the events at each breakout table or group. This person does not participate in the tabletop exercise but captures the essence of the dialogue for use in the After-Action Report. They are chosen based on their expertise in the area (e.g., epidemiology) that they are to observe. There should be one evaluator assigned to each breakout table or group.

- **Group Leader** – A representative from each table (volunteered by the group) who will lead the group as it explores discussion questions and performs the breakout activities.

- **Group Recorder/Reporter** – A representative from each table (volunteered by the group) who will ensure that the group discussions are kept on time, record the key themes discussed at the table, and will be responsible for reporting out during the large group dialogue.

Lead Planner's Roles and Responsibilities

3-4 Months in Advance of Event

☐ Identify and coordinate an Exercise Planning Team if necessary. It is highly recommended that lead planners convene and serve as leaders of the exercise planning team. The planning team should be composed of key leaders from your jurisdiction and represent the jurisdiction's various agencies, stakeholders, and subject matter experts. For each tabletop exercise, suggested participant groups are recommended, and it may be beneficial to include representatives from these groups on the planning team.

☐ Determine the scope of the exercise, including which groups should be represented (e.g., options for multiple jurisdictions, states).

☐ Identify a facilitator. The ideal facilitator would have subject matter expertise and general knowledge about how all of the individuals involved in a multi-jurisdictional incident may work together to protect public health most effectively and efficiently. See Appendix C for more information on the role of the facilitator.

☐ Select a site/date for the tabletop exercise. Secure a meeting location that can accommodate round tables or pods, set for 5-8 people per table, and has adequate AV and audio.

  - The exercise works best with ~25-30 people.
  - The suggested maximum size is ~100 participants (e.g., 3 tables for each participant category)

- ☐ Determine whether meals and snacks will be provided. If possible, have lunch onsite or very nearby, as opposed to releasing people for lunch.

- ☐ Identify a team of evaluators and ensure that the lead evaluator has the tools needed to coordinate the development of the AAR/IP. Additional details on the role of evaluators are included in *Appendix C.*

2-3 Months in Advance of Event

- ☐ Facility Space: Perform a site visit to ensure the location is appropriate. In other words, it's large enough; has a minimum of four tables for tabletop groups; and areas for lunch, snacks, and day of check-in; restrooms; and either IT support or clear instructions for adjusting temperature, power, lights, etc. Make sure the room is accessible to all participants, including those with disabilities. Ensure all participants can see the facilitator and the PPT displayed on the projector.

- ☐ Decide, in collaboration with the Exercise Planning team and facilitator, which questions to prioritize and use at the end of each module. The template agenda allows sufficient time for participants to address all questions.

  Note: To ensure that all stated learning objectives are addressed during the discussion, please select at least one question from each objective to present during the exercise. The tables in *Appendix A* map each question to one or more objectives. These tables should be referenced in the question selection process.

2 Months in Advance of the Event

- ☐ Conduct an introductory meeting with the facilitator to discuss training and the learning objectives.

- ☐ Identify and invite a balance of exercise participants, ideally 6 to 8 weeks in advance, so that each group has roughly equal numbers of attendees, and participants can block time on their schedules. *Consider capabilities, objectives, and desired outcomes for each group invited.*

- ☐ Develop and send a participant registration/RSVP (e.g., Survey Monkey, Google Doc) to collect information on participants/assign groups:

  - First and last name
  - Email address
  - Phone number
  - Organization/department
  - Role (select 1)

    - Epidemiologist
    - Environmental health specialists
    - State regulatory agency
    - Public information officers
    - Federal regulatory (e.g., FDA or CDC)

- Dietary restrictions
- Special accommodations (e.g., hearing, mobility, etc.)
- Emergency contact

☐ Determine a backup plan or cancellation of the training plan due to an emergency or weather.

2 Weeks-1 Month in Advance of Event

☐ Help the facilitator understand expectations and go through the Facilitator Guide together.

☐ AV/Audio: Be sure to include a microphone if the room is large, or to aid in hearing of facilitator by participants. Secure a power strip and extension cord, if needed.

☐ Secure a laptop computer with Microsoft PowerPoint or PowerPoint viewer and projection equipment (LCD, DLP) for the facilitator's use. Consider a backup computer.

1 Week in Advance of Event

Send a reminder email to remind participants of the event and location details (e.g., parking, location details, arrival time, agenda).

☐ Check in with the facilitator and ensure they are comfortable with the exercise.

☐ Arrange lunch. (Bringing lunch into the training location is recommended due to time constraints unless local eateries are nearby.)

☐ Obtain snacks and drinks.

❑ Load the PPT Presentation Slide Deck in advance.

- Consider a backup copy on a USB.

☐ Gather supplies, including markers, pens, highlighters, paper, sticky notes, and flip charts for exercise groups/participants, registration, and "parking lot."

☐ Name badges: Provide all participants with a name badge during the sign-in process. Indicate the participant's name, agency/organization, and the name of the participant group to which they are assigned. This will make it easy to call the participants by name and identify participants from a particular agency/organization.

☐ Table tents: Place on the tables before the tabletop exercise begins (see Table Tent file). The table tents will guide participants to the appropriate location. At sign-in, participants should be directed to the table listed on their name badge.

☐ Make copies of the situation manual (SITMAN) for each participant.

☐ Make copies of the agenda for each participant *(Appendix B* is a sample agenda).

- ☐ Develop and bring copies of an evaluation (optional) if you want to ask questions beyond the required AFDO electronic evaluation. (*Appendix D* is a paper-based copy of the electronic evaluation form.)

- ☐ Bring copies of certificates for participants unless you opt to email them post-event. Help distribute certificates to participants upon successful completion of the exercise.

- ☐ Sign-in sheet for participants (*Appendix F)* to record attendance. You may want to provide each participant with a finalized, typed version of the attendance roster so they have the names and contact information of the other attendees.

- ☐ Bring a copy of the Facilitator's Guide (paper copy for Facilitator use).

- ☐ Send the facilitator a list of participants and their affiliations (information from the registration survey).

1 Day in Advance of Event

- ☐ Send a reminder email to remind participants of the event. Give location details (e.g., parking, location details, arrival time, agenda).

- ☐ Confirm lunch order (if a working lunch).

Day of Event

- ☐ Arrive early to set up the room: The facilitator and the lead planner should arrive at least 30 – ideally 60 minutes – before the scheduled start time to make sure the room is set up properly and necessary documents and supplies are available. If possible, set up the room one day early and test all audio/visual equipment and the multimedia presentation.

- ☐ Direct participants to their table group as indicated by their personalized table tents.

- ☐ Distribute the SITMAN and agendas to all participants.

- ☐ Ensure the AFDO evaluation is completed before participants leave.

After the Event

- ☐ Work with Evaluators to finalize the AAR/IP.

- ☐ Within 30 days, distribute the draft AAR/IP to participants as a "For Official Use Only" document. (optional)

- ☐ Within 60 days, distribute the final AAR/IP to participants. (optional)

After-Action Report / Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) (optional)

An After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) *(*condensed version in *Appendix E;* full version as download 8*)* is the primary document resulting from an evaluation of your tabletop exercise and consists of two interdependent parts. The AAR portion contains observations about the tabletop exercise and makes recommendations for post-tabletop exercise improvements (download item 8). These observations should be documented in the Exercise Evaluation Guide (download item 9). The Improvement Plan portion identifies specific corrective actions to be taken, assigns those actions to specific individuals or organizations, and establishes a time frame for the completion of the assigned actions.

An AAR/IP is an important tool used to evaluate the tabletop exercise, addressing outcomes, strengths, weaknesses, and lessons learned, and it helps share that information with participants. Participants should be informed by the facilitator at the end of the tabletop exercise about when to expect to receive this document. They should also be advised that the AAR/IP is considered a "For Official Use Only" document that should only be shared with those with a need to know. It is recommended that the *draft* AAR/IP be distributed to tabletop exercise participants for review no more than 30 days after the exercise, and that the *final* AAR/IP be disseminated no more than 60 days after the exercise is completed.

The lead evaluator is responsible for drafting the AAR/IP and sending it to the lead planner for distribution to the attendees.

APPENDIX A: MODULE MAP

The tables below map the exercise learning objectives to the question numbers in the SITMAN for each group for each module. Select the questions that are most appropriate for the training. Note: The template agenda is designed with the expectation that a subset of questions, based on the desired learning objectives, will be answered.

Learning Objectives (LO)

At the conclusion of this tabletop exercise, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of internal (interjurisdictional) communications and coordination to react proactively to public health issues.

2. Develop and/or review existing external (public) communications in collaboration with other public health partners that provide comprehensive and collaborative ideas, strategies, and solutions to mitigate the public health impact of a potential foodborne illness outbreak or contamination event.

3. Describe how the environmental assessment and appropriate measures of control support effective response and action to identified food safety and public health risks.

4. Use a collaborative approach to efficiently deploy the responsibilities of each agency/discipline to implement proactive solutions during situations that may impact public health.

5. Apply local, state, tribal, and federal regulations related to human pathogen control in retail establishments that span multiple jurisdictions.

6. Utilize established investigation, reporting, and response procedures to manage public health risks.

Module 1

	EHS	LPH	SRA	PIO	FED
LO1	1, 3, 4, 6, 8	1, 2, 9	1, 2, 4	1, 3, 5	1, 4
LO2	9	5, 10	6	2, 3, 4	
LO3	2	3	2		
LO4	1, 3, 6	2, 3, 10	1, 2, 3, 5	4, 5	1, 2, 3
LO5	2, 7	7	2, 5	2	3
LO6	1, 2, 3, 5, 8	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 4	2, 3

Module 2A

The mock conference call within this part of the exercise touches on all six learning objectives for all groups.

	All
LO1	1, 8
LO2	3, 5, 6, 7, 8
LO3	4
LO4	2, 7, 8
LO5	4
LO6	1, 2, 4, 7, 8

Module 2B

	EHS	LPH	SRA	PIO	FED
LO1	1, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2	4	8
LO2	5		6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3, 6, 7, 8
LO3	1, 3	5	3, 4, 5		
LO4	1, 3	3, 4	1, 3, 5	6, 7	1, 5, 6
LO5	2, 3	1, 5	3, 4, 5		1, 2, 5
LO6	2, 3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2	1, 5, 7	1, 4, 7

Module 3

	All
LO1	4
LO2	1, 2, 4
LO3	3
LO4	1, 3
LO5	3
LO6	1, 3

Duration = 6 hours

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE AGENDA

Time	Agenda
9:00 a.m.	**Sign-In/Registration (30 minutes)**
9:30 a.m.	**Welcome to the Day/Introductions (30 minutes)**
10:00 to 10:10 a.m.	**Exercise Objectives (10 Minutes)**
 10:10 to 10:20 a.m. **10:20 to 10:50 a.m.** **10:50 to 11:20 a.m.**	**Module 1 (70 minutes)** Set up Scenario Module 1 Groups Discuss Their Question Sets Group Report-Outs
 11:20 to 11:30 a.m. **11:30 to 11:40 a.m.** **11:40 a.m. to Noon**	**Module 2 (40 minutes)** Set up Scenario Module 2 Groups Prep for Their Mock Conference Call All Groups Join the Mock Conference Call
Noon to 1:00 p.m.	**Lunch (60 minutes)**
 1:00 to 1:20 p.m. **1:20 to 1:45 p.m.**	**Module 2 Continued (45 Minutes)** Groups Discuss Their Question Sets Group Report-Outs
 1:45 to 2:30 p.m.	**Module 3 (45 minutes)** Wrap-Up Group Discussions
 2:30 to 2:45 p.m. **2:45 to 3:00 p.m.**	**Wrap-Up (30 minutes)** After-Action Report Evaluations, Certificates, and close

APPENDIX C: FACILITATOR AND EVALUATOR ROLES

Facilitator's Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the facilitator is to guide the participants through the entire training exercise. It is preferred, but not required, that the facilitator be knowledgeable in food-related emergency response situations. The facilitator must be familiar with the following expectations before conducting the tabletop exercise contained within ***Food Truck Fiasco***:

2 Months in Advance of Event

- ☐ Meet with Lead Planner/Planning team to review Learning Objectives.

2 weeks-1 Month in Advance of the Event

- ☐ Meet with Lead Planner/Planning Team to go through the Facilitator's Guide.

1 Week in Advance of Event

- ☐ Read and understand the Facilitator's Guide before conducting the tabletop exercise.
- ☐ Be familiar with the objectives of the exercise.
- ☐ Work with the lead planner to ensure that participants are familiar with the objectives of the tabletop exercise and the goal.
- ☐ Thoroughly review the SITMAN, accompanying PowerPoint presentation, and mock conference call prompts.

Day of the Event

- ☐ Show up early (30-60 minutes) to help the lead planner and prepare for your day.
- ☐ Confirm with everyone that they have signed in if training records are needed.
- ☐ Establish and monitor a basic set of ground rules for participants to follow during discussion (covered in slide deck). Identify parking lots or ways that participants can provide feedback.
- ☐ Alert participants of restroom location, emergency exit procedures, and the day's agenda.
- ☐ Keep the tabletop exercise on schedule (time master).
- ☐ Facilitate discussions by asking pertinent questions rather than offering opinions.

- ☐ Keep all discussions focused by bringing the group back on track if the conversation strays from the topic.
- ☐ Encourage interaction among the different groups as they would interact in the real world.
- ☐ Encourage the participants to share their experiences and ideas so they can learn from one another.
- ☐ Help the small groups during the breakout sessions if they have questions or need clarification of the discussion questions.
- ☐ Identify participants who have relevant and recent experience with scenarios such as this and encourage them to share with less experienced participants.
- ☐ Lead the group in a wrap-up discussion based on the questions identified by the lead planner. Be flexible with the content of the questions – if there were key issues raised, be sure to revisit them during the wrap-up segment.
- ☐ Confirm with everyone that the evaluation is complete.

Evaluator's Role and Responsibilities (Optional)

Evaluators are typically non-participant representatives from the various organizations involved in this tabletop exercise (e.g., public health official, food inspector, epidemiologist). They should understand the learning objectives, know how to observe the discussion, and know what to look for, what to record, and how to analyze the collected data.

They assist in completing the AAR/IP. A summary is provided in *Appendix E,* which is also in the SITMAN, and the full AAR/IP and EED are included as separate files.

Evaluators should be sure to record:

- ☐ Identified issues
- ☐ How decisions are made
- ☐ Roles and responsibilities
- ☐ Coordination and cooperation issues
- ☐ Recommendations from the group

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

The prepared evaluation survey can be found at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RQSJPMM.

(QR code is in the slide deck)

Participant Feedback Form

Exercise Location		**Date**	
Participant Name		**Job Title**	
Agency/Affiliation			

Part I – Recommendations and Action Steps

1. List the top three best practices identified during this exercise.

2. Based on discussions today, list the top three issues and/or areas that need improvement.

Part II – Exercise Design and Conduct

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided below, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

Assessment Factor					
1. The exercise was well-structured and organized.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The exercise scenario was plausible and realistic.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The multimedia presentation helped the participants understand and become engaged in the scenario.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The facilitator(s) were knowledgeable about the material, kept the exercise on target, and were sensitive to group dynamics.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The Situation Manual used during the exercise was a valuable tool throughout the exercise.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The participants included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines.	1	2	3	4	5

Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.

APPENDIX E: AFTER-ACTION REPORT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN (AAR/IP)

Information and data collection for the evaluation of discussion-based exercises comes from the information that evaluators record as the exercise takes place. Typically, the evaluator (not to be confused with the group spokesperson or the group recorder) records specific information for each breakout group as the discussion is taking place. The kinds of information that evaluators should record include issues identified, how decisions are made, roles and responsibilities (of participating entities), coordination/cooperation issues, and recommendations made by the breakout group.

For the analysis phase of the exercise, evaluators should, as a group, try to address the following facets of the exercise:

- How well would personnel from the exercising jurisdiction and other participating entities have been able to perform the necessary or critical tasks?
- What decisions were required, and who should have made them?
- Were additional resources required? If so, how should they have been sourced?
- Would existing plans/protocols/policies enable the full performance of critical or necessary tasks? Were participants familiar with those documents?
- How well did personnel from various entities and jurisdictions coordinate and cooperate to accomplish necessary tasks? Are there agreements in place (among entities, agencies, and/or jurisdictions) to support cooperative accomplishment of necessary tasks?
- What lessons were learned from the exercise?
- What changes/improvements are recommended?

APPENDIX F: SIGN-IN SHEET

Name	Agency/Affiliation	Phone	Email

APPENDIX G: PERSONAL LEARNING INVENTORY (INCLUDED IN SITMAN)

This is your Personal Learning Inventory (PLI). Use it throughout the day to record your notes, questions, and discoveries. Not only is the PLI a convenient place to capture the significant events of today's tabletop exercise, but it can also be highly useful later for documenting your experience and reviewing the key points. The PLI is your personal document and will not be collected by the facilitator or evaluators. This is your journal.

Participant Name		**Tabletop Exercise**	
Date		**Facilitator**	

1. What are the most important things you learned today?

2. What are some key follow-up items you will undertake based on your participation in today's tabletop exercise?

3. Did you learn about some new resources that will help you in your daily activities? If so, list and describe.

General Notes