



NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT Tabletop Exercise Toolkit

**Facilitator Guide
Supply Chain Disruption**

Version 1.0



SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTION RESPONSE SCENARIO

Congratulations, you have been identified as the facilitator for the upcoming tabletop exercise. Whether this is your first time as a facilitator or you have experience, please use this document to help guide you through this process. Thank you for taking on this important role on behalf of the organization.

Before you continue, make sure you are familiar with the scope and objectives set by the organizers and planning team for the tabletop exercise. If those have not yet been identified, please refer to the organizer's guide for assistance. It can be found under Tools and Resources on the Private Sector Partner Portal (www.privatesector.nyc).

This scenario, based on a fictional supply chain disruption impacting New York City that affects your primary facility and employees, is designed to test your initial response to a notice incident. At the start of the incident, participants must deal with personal preparedness and the city's response. As the scenario continues, the focus shifts to business continuity concerns.

This Facilitator Guide contains the text that will appear on the PowerPoint. Certain slides also include questions that you may use to encourage discussion. The questions are categorized based on the business continuity function to which they pertain as a way to help you steer discussion to areas relevant to your participants and exercise objectives. Not all of these questions will be relevant to your organization or to the particular participants. Additionally, in some cases, you may want to re-word the questions to prompt the participants to identify the problems that the questions address.

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Introduction

This facilitator manual contains some background about tabletop exercises, suggestions for how to run a successful tabletop exercise, as well as the current exercise scenario with possible questions to encourage discussion, and notes detailing the purpose of certain slides.

Background

What is a Tabletop Exercise?

A tabletop exercise is a facilitated discussion of a plan in an informal, low stress environment. It is like a problem-solving or brainstorming session where participants share capabilities and solve problems as a group based on their organization's existing plans and the determined objectives of the exercise.

The success of a tabletop exercise is determined by feedback from participants and the impact the feedback has on the evaluation and revision of policies, plans, and procedures.

What a Tabletop Exercise is Not

A tabletop exercise is neither the tool through which you make a plan nor the place for training and discussion about a plan. A prior step to holding a tabletop exercise is often a workshop to train and discuss a plan. This toolkit is meant to be used once your organization has a plan in place and is ready to evaluate it.

Why Run a Tabletop Exercise?

Tabletop exercises build organizational capacity, help organizations evaluate their business continuity plans and identify strengths and areas for improvement. These exercises provide training and awareness to staff who have an opportunity to rehearse their roles and responsibilities during an incident. Plus, they are low-cost and low-stakes.

How Long is a Tabletop Exercise?

A tabletop exercise usually lasts from one to four hours, but it can vary depending on the incident. Discussion times are open-ended, and participants are encouraged to take their time in arriving at in-depth decisions without time pressure. When the time is up, the activity is concluded.

There is never a perfect moment to run a tabletop exercise for everyone, but try to do so at a time that doesn't compete for everyone's attention.

Facilitating a Tabletop Exercise

The facilitator has a number of responsibilities, including:

- Introducing the narrative
- Encouraging problem solving
- Controlling the pace and flow of the exercise
- Stimulating discussion and drawing answers and solutions from the group (rather than supplying them)

Setting the Stage

The opening remarks and activities influence the whole exercise experience. Participants need to know what to expect, and to feel comfortable about being participants. Consider including the following elements at the start of your exercise:

- Begin by sincerely welcoming participants and putting them at ease.
- Brief the participants about what will happen. This should include a clear explanation of the exercise's purpose and objectives, agenda, ground rules, and procedures.
- Start the exercise by reading (or having someone read) the first two slides of background information.
- Try breaking the ice by beginning with a general question directed at one or two high-ranking individuals or to the group as a whole. Later, other questions can be addressed to other individuals.

Ways to Involve All Participants

It is important that everyone participates and that no one person dominates the discussion. Tips for involving all of the participants are summarized below:

- Give extra encouragement to those who are a little tentative.
- Recognize that junior staff might be hesitant to comment in front of senior management.
- Avoid the temptation to jump in with the right solutions when participants are struggling. This can hamper discussion. Instead, try to draw out answers from participants. They will be more likely to participate if they feel people are listening intently and sympathetically.
- Model and encourage the behaviors you want from participants.
- Make eye contact with participants.
- Acknowledge comments in a positive manner.

Controlling and Sustaining the Action

To maintain a high level of interest and to keep everyone involved, the facilitator needs to control and sustain the action. There are several ways to do this.

- Vary the pace. Give messages at different rates, perhaps even giving two at once to increase pace and interest.
- Maintain a balance between talking about a problem to death and moving along so fast that nothing gets settled. Don't hesitate to control the exercise tightly.
- Watch for signs of frustration or conflict. Always remember that the tabletop is an opportunity to evaluate your plan in a no-fault environment, and gaps should be expected. People may be sensitive or inexperienced. If you see mounting frustration or conflict, stop the exercise. Reach into your experience as a discussion leader to help participants resolve conflicts and feel comfortable.
- Keep it low-key. Avoid a bad experience by keeping in mind the low-key nature of the tabletop.
- If you spend all of your time on one big problem, maintain interest among participants, and reach consensus, then the tabletop can be considered a success. Push the participants past superficial solutions. A few carefully chosen, open-ended questions can keep the discussion going to a logical conclusion.
- Remember that not everyone will be equally knowledgeable about the plan that is being evaluated.

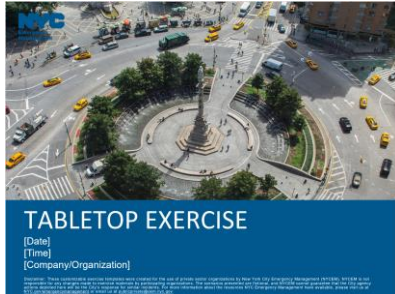
Note: The point is not to debate or discuss the City's response; the key is to be aware of the response and see how they impact your organization's response.

Using the Possible Questions

The questions that accompany the following scenario slides cover a broad range of plan components that can be evaluated. It is recommended that only the questions relevant to the tabletop exercise's scope and purpose be discussed. Not every question needs to be asked, and each scenario can be used multiple times to test different components of your plan. For example, if the goal is to evaluate the organization's communications strategy, it may not be necessary to ask participants about operating from a backup facility. Use your best judgement when deciding what questions to ask. Facilitator notes are also included on some of the slides to help you better understand the context.

Scenario Slides & Possible Questions

1 Tabletop Exercise



Disclaimer: These customizable exercise templates were created for the use of private sector organizations by New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM). NYCEM is not responsible for any changes made to exercise materials by participating organizations. The scenarios presented are fictional and NYCEM cannot guarantee that the City agency actions depicted here will be the City's response for similar incidents. For more information about the resources NYC Emergency Management have available, please visit us at

[NYC.gov/emergencymanagement](https://nyc.gov/emergencymanagement) or email us at publicprivate@oem.nyc.gov.



2 Ground Rules

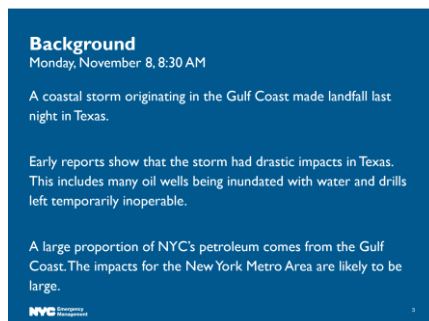
Don't fight the scenario! It is a tool to guide the discussion. This exercise will be held in an open, low-stress, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected. Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of your organization's current plans and capabilities. Decisions 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.

Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve response efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus. The Parking Lot: A place to note ideas that can be discussed at a later time.

Facilitator Notes:

- Make sure to explain in basic terms what a tabletop exercise is and how it works.
- Gently explain why the parking lot exists and the importance of keeping the conversation on track.



3 Background, Monday, November 8, 8:30 AM

A coastal storm originating in the Gulf Coast made landfall last night in Texas. Early reports show that the storm had drastic impacts in Texas. This includes many oil wells being inundated with water and drills left temporarily inoperable. A large proportion of NYC's petroleum comes from the Gulf Coast. The impacts for the New York Metro Area are likely to be large.

Possible Questions for ALL

- Where does the organization get information from? Is someone at your organization responsible for maintaining situational awareness?
- What actions, if any, will you take at this point?
- Does your organization take any general preparedness measures for a supply chain shortage even when it is not a threat?

Possible Questions for CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- Who is on your crisis management or response team? Do you have such a team? Would these people be able to come to the office? If not, could they fulfill their obligations from a remote location?
- If members of your response team are entirely unable to work, who will fill in for them?
- What are your organization's dependencies? What or who do you rely on to complete your critical operations?
- Are any employees signed up for CorpNet?

Possible Questions for IT, MANAGEMENT, and CRISIS MANAGEMENT


- Does your organization have the capability to communicate with employees? Will you attempt to get in touch with them at this time?
- Do you have policies in place permitting employees to work from home? If so, will your employees actually be able to work from home? Have you tested the technology?
- Have employees ever practiced working from home in non-emergency situations to ensure that everything functions properly? Can your network withstand the increased traffic from multiple employees working from home?

Facilitator Notes:

- The CorpNet program is managed by NYC Emergency Management and provides business partners with current, accurate information about emergencies to enhance awareness and aid decision making, should their businesses be affected. Businesses can learn more and enroll at the [Corpnet Homepage](#).

Press Briefing
Monday, November 8, 10:00 AM

The mayor announces that the coastal storm in Texas will likely lead to a fuel shortage for New Yorkers in the coming week. Petroleum products such as gas and heating oil will become scarce for an undetermined time. The public is urged to limit non-essential travel and to not panic buy for risk of making the situation worse.



Considerations

- Does your organization rely on oil to heat the building?
- What other utilities rely on this fuel for day-to-day operations?

NYC Emergency Management

4 Press Briefing, Monday, November 8 10:00 AM

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Possible Questions for FACILITIES, IT, MANAGEMENT, and CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- How will the organization use this time to prepare for the upcoming emergency?
- Does the organization rely on petroleum products? Is there alternative fueling options for critical functions?
- How long can the organization be without fuel before critical functions are affected?
- What else is the organization concerned about at this point?
- Is there a designated process for coordinating the organization's preparation?
- Does the organization have a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)?

Possible Questions for HUMAN RESOURCES and CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- Should you send a message to all of your employees? What should this message say?
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Facilitator Notes:

- Managers have to simultaneously consider their own concerns and fears as well as how to direct and lead their employees during emergencies.
 - Participants should consider where they are getting information from. Some expected sources include notification systems, news outlets, social media, and upper management. Are these sources vetted and how does information get passed along in your organization?
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5 ARE YOU READY?

PREPARE for a possible fuel shortage:

Keep adequate supplies on hand at all times, store fuel in a dry, sealed container away from flammable objects

All New Yorkers should sign up for *NotifyNYC* to receive up-to-date emergency alerts via www.nyc.gov/notifynyc or follow@notifynyc.

Facilitator Notes:


- Notify NYC is the City of New York's official source for information about emergency events and important City services. Alerts from Notify NYC comes directly from NYC Emergency Management's 24/7 Watch Command, which monitors emergency activity in NYC and the metropolitan area. Participants can sign up at NYC.gov/notifynyc.
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Possible Questions for ALL

- How prepared are individuals for a fuel shortage?
- Are all employees signed up for NotifyNYC?

- How should employees use this time to establish personal preparedness before an emergency?

Supply Distribution Update
Tuesday, November 16, 10:00 AM



During a morning press conference, NYCCEM announces that borough-based emergency fuel sites have been set up in all five boroughs. Priority will be given to emergency and city-owned vehicles due to the limited supply.

Considerations:

- Is the organization prepared to deal with limited access to fuel locations?
- Will staffing be an issue for your organization based on continuing challenges?

NYC Emergency Management

6 Supply Disruption Update, Tuesday, November 16, 10:00 AM


During a morning press conference, NYCCEM announces that borough-based emergency fuel sites have been set up in all five boroughs. Priority will be given to emergency and city-owned vehicles due to the limited supply.

Possible Questions for CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- How does the establishment of emergency fueling sites change your posture in regard to the organization's response to the supply chain disruption?
- Is the organization prepared to ration their use of fuel? What does that look like for this organization?
- Which employees are considered essential to maintain critical functions?

Growing Concerns
Tuesday, November 16, 2:00 PM

One of your vendors has contacted your organization to notify you that a shipment of supplies critical to your organization has been delayed as a result of the fuel shortage. The vendor has prioritized other organizations and won't be able to deliver for several days.



Considerations:

- How is your organization prepared to respond to this?

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7 Growing Concerns, Tuesday, November 16, 2:00 PM

One of your vendors has contacted your organization to notify you that a shipment of supplies critical to your organization has been delayed as a result of the fuel shortage. The vendor has prioritized other organizations and won't be able to deliver for several days.

Possible Questions for SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT and CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- Considering the significant impact to travel, does a contingency plan exist for vendor delays or cancellations?
- Do you know if your suppliers and vendors (including telephone service, internet provider, teleconferencing provider, and other technological support providers) are prepared for emergency situations? Will they be there when you need them? Do you have alternates in the event that one of your providers fails?
- Will the organization's supply chain be disrupted in any way? If so, how?
- How long can the organization continue critical functions without these supplies?
- What redundancies are in place to cover this supply chain shortage?
- Do you have a vendor/supplier contact list that you can access remotely if you need to use it?
- Are you able to contact these providers in the event of an emergency? At any time of day?

Executive Order Announced
Thursday, November 18, 10:00 AM

The mayor announces an executive order for odd-even license plate alternate day fueling. Vehicles with a license plate ending in an even number may only receive fuel on even calendar days, while license plates ending in an odd number may only receive fuel on odd calendar days.



Considerations

- How does this disrupt your employees' ability to commute to work?
- Are organization vehicles prepared for a fuel shortage?

8 Executive Order Announced, Thursday, November 18, 10:00 AM

The mayor announces an executive order for odd-even license plate alternate day fueling. Vehicles with a license plate ending in an even number may only receive fuel on even calendar days, while license plates ending in an odd number may only receive fuel on odd calendar days.

Possible Questions for ALL and CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- What contingency plans are in place if the employees do not have access to fuel?
- What impact will this continue to have on your employees?

Possible Questions for HUMAN RESOURCES and CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- Should you send a message to all of your employees? What should this message say?
- What is the policy surrounding time off for an incident such as this one? Are employees being asked to telework?
- If you have not contacted all of your employees yet, do you want to do so now? What will you tell them?
- Who is responsible for sending out this type of message to employees? Is this person/are these people able to contact all of your employees from outside of your facility?
- Who around the table would honestly be able to work on securing the business while ensuring their own households are safe?

Schools Stay Open
Thursday, November 18, 3:00 PM

The Department of Education announced that the fuel shortage will not impact school openings. Multiple employees from your organization expressed concern with dropping their children off at school. They believe they will not have sufficient fuel to travel to work and school.



Considerations

- How does this disrupt day-to-day operations?

9 Schools Stay Open, Thursday, November 18, 3:00 PM

The Department of Education announced that the fuel shortage will not impact school openings. Multiple employees from your organization expressed concern with dropping their children off at school. They believe they will not have sufficient fuel to travel to work and school.

Possible Questions for HUMAN RESOURCES, MANAGEMENT and LEGAL

- How is the organization prepared to respond to this incident?
- Is the organization prepared to deal with ongoing staff tardiness and/or absenteeism due to commuting challenges?
- Should your employees come to work during this time?
 - If not, should they use vacation time? Sick time?
 - Will they be compensated if your office is closed?

Possible Questions for HUMAN RESOURCES, MANAGEMENT, and CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- What will you tell your employees about working for the rest of the week? The following week?
- Can you get in touch with all employees? When you do get in touch with them, what will you tell them?

The Situation Improves
Tuesday, November 23, 9:00 AM



Photo credit: Matteo Cattaneo

- The fuel supply chain disruption has begun to ease as the response to the coastal storm has improved
- The mayor has disseminated alerts requesting residents to continue limiting unnecessary travel in order to assist in relieving stress to the fuel supply chain

Considerations:

- Is the organization prepared to continue to have limited access to fuel?

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10 The Situation Improves, Tuesday, November 23, 9:00 AM

The fuel supply chain disruption has begun to ease as the response to the coastal storm has improved.

The mayor has disseminated alerts requesting to continue limiting unnecessary travel in order to assist in relieving stress to the fuel supply chain.

Possible Questions for MANAGEMENT, and CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- What critical operations will need to get back up and running as soon as the supply chain is restored?
- How will you update employees about the situation? Will there be an evolving strategy in day-to-day operations?

Moving Forward
Friday, November 26, 12:00 PM



- The supply of petroleum to New York has been fully restored and there is no longer anticipated disruptions
- The odd-even license plate executive order has been lifted and the public is free to travel at their leisure
- Delivery of goods is expected to be restored unhindered

Considerations:

- How will the organization return to day-to-day operations?

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11 Moving Forward, Friday, 12:00 PM

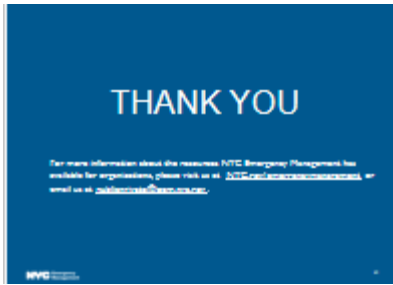
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Possible Questions for CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- What are the lessons learned from this scenario?
- How can the organization improve its response to notice incidents?
- How can the organization shift towards supply chains that are more resilient to climate-related incidents?



12 **THANK YOU**

For more information about the resources that NYC Emergency Management has available for organizations, please visit us at [NYC.gov/emergencymanagement](https://www.nyc.gov/emergencymanagement) or email us at publicprivate@oem.nyc.gov.
