



2024

JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA

AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

AND ASSOCIATED
IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Clear Creek Amana CSD Training Exercise

Prepared on behalf of the Johnson County
Emergency Management Agency

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Handling Instructions

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Message from the Director

The Clear Creek Amana Community School District (CCACSD) Training Exercise conducted on August 2, 2024, provided an essential opportunity to test and refine our ability to respond to a complex and dynamic threat scenario. This full-scale exercise, simulating an active shooter, multiple threats, and mass casualty/fatality incidents, allowed us to evaluate our preparedness, coordination, and response efforts across multiple agencies and jurisdictions.

Our goal remains clear: to continually assess and improve our disaster responses. By reviewing the lessons learned and best practices identified during this exercise, we ensure that Johnson County and our partners are better prepared to face similar incidents in the future.

This After-Action Review (AAR) is the result of collaboration among the participating organizations, facilitated by Johnson County Homeland Security & Emergency Management. It serves as a tool for stakeholders to reflect on their performance and make the necessary adjustments to their plans and systems.

I would like to express my gratitude to our Federal, State, and local partners for their commitment to ensuring the safety and security of our community. Together, we enhance our capabilities to protect our citizens during any disaster or emergency.

Dave Wilson

Director

Johnson County Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management

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Executive Summary

The After-Action Review (AAR) for the Clear Creek Amana Community School District (CCACSD) Training Exercise, conducted on August 2, 2024, offers a detailed evaluation of the preparation, response, and recovery efforts during a full-scale exercise simulating an active shooter, multiple threats, and mass casualty/fatality incidents. With 163 participants from 50 agencies, this was the largest exercise of its kind locally, rigorously testing interagency coordination and operational readiness. The AAR identifies best practices, training gaps, and areas for improvement across key mission areas such as public safety, hazard response, operational coordination, communications, and emergency medical services. By incorporating collaborative feedback from all stakeholders, the review underscores the strengths of interagency operations while offering actionable recommendations to improve preparedness and resilience for future incidents.

As identified in the Exercise Plan (ExPlan), the following were the objectives of this exercise:

- **Objective 1:** Ensure a safe and secure environment through law enforcement and related security and protection operations for people and communities located within affected areas and also for response personnel engaged in lifesaving and life-sustaining operations.
- **Objective 2:** Conduct a systematic process engaging the whole community as appropriate in the development of executable strategic, operational, and/or tactical-level approaches to meet defined objectives.
- **Objective 3:** Deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community utilizing appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard, as well as the actions being taken and the assistance being made available as appropriate.
- **Objective 4:** Establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.
- **Objective 5:** Conduct analysis and attribute terrorist acts to their source, including forensic analysis and attribution for an attack, in an effort to prevent initial or follow-on acts and swiftly develop counter-options.
- **Objective 6:** Identify, discover, or locate threats and/or hazards through active and passive search procedures, systematic examinations, assessments, or physical investigation and intelligence.

- **Objective 7:** Conduct appropriate measures to ensure the protection of the health and safety of the public and workers, as well as the environment, from all hazards in support of responder operations and the affected communities.
- **Objective 8:** Provide structural and specialized firefighting capabilities to manage and suppress fires of all types and complexities while protecting the lives, property, and the environment in the affected area.
- **Objective 9:** Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.
- **Objective 10:** Provide lifesaving medical treatment via Emergency Medical Services and related operations, and avoid additional disease and injury by providing targeted public health, medical, and behavioral health support and products to all affected populations.
- **Objective 11:** Provide all decision-makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.

This AAR highlights notable strengths while also addressing areas that need improvement. Among the key findings:

Major Strengths

- Effective collaboration across multiple agencies, with 163 participants from 50 agencies.
- Strong interagency coordination, demonstrating the ability to manage a complex, multi-threat scenario.
- Valuable insights into operational procedures, helping refine future responses

Areas for Improvement

- Coordination at unified Command requires LE/FD/EMS & EMA to be collocated each operating on their respective talk groups to share real time information for coordinating the RTF response. For the purpose of the exercise not enough talk groups were allocated to be used and not all key staff stayed co-locate at the UCP.
- Significant gaps in RTF knowledge were identified, largely due to the loss of institutional expertise over time. Need more RTF training for LE, FD & EMS.
- The exercise lacked the necessary realism in handling casualties (Fatalities), which affected the dynamic of the scenario and not enough live role players.

- The reunification process needs improvement to ensure smoother evacuation and handling of non-injured students.
- Improved interagency communication and role clarity are needed to enhance the coordination among fire, EMS, and law enforcement personnel during high-stress incidents using the RTF model needs practiced more. There has been a large knowledge loss across all disciplines since the 2018 and 2019 exercises.
- Enhance the initial RTF kits carried by VFDs and EMS to mirror the MARCH-E care/triage outlined in TECC. Several agencies relied on standard jump kits instead of the provided NAR RESCUE W.A.L.K. kits and other Stop the Bleed Kits provided by EMA. All units responding should call MCI trailers and additional resources early.
- All responders should be trained in TECC and use the MARCH-E kits for initial life saving intervention care for active shooter responses.

Despite these challenges, the exercise was successful in fostering collaboration across multiple agencies, and it provided essential lessons that will help strengthen interagency communication, refine and offer more Rescue Task Force training, and enhance the realism of future exercises by adding more live role players over mannequins. By addressing these findings, Johnson County and its partners will be better prepared to respond effectively to complex, high-risk incidents.

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Exercise Overview

Exercise Details

Exercise Name

Clear Creek Amana CSD Training Exercise

Type of Exercise

Full-Scale

Exercise Start Date/Time

August 2, 2024, ~0910

Exercise End Date

August 2, 2024, 1120

Duration

~2 Hours

Location(s)

Clear Creek Amana CSD High School

Sponsor(s)

Clear Creek Amana CSD

City of Tiffin

Johnson County Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management

Johnson County Sheriff's Office

Program

This exercise was developed and conducted internally.

Mission

To evaluate and enhance the preparedness, coordination, and response capabilities of local, state, and federal agencies during a complex, multi-threat incident involving an active shooter and mass casualty/fatality situations. Through realistic simulation and interagency collaboration, this exercise aims to identify strengths, address operational gaps, and improve resilience across public safety, emergency medical services, communication, and incident management to better protect the community during real-world emergencies.

Capabilities

For this exercise, the following capabilities have been identified by the planning team:

- Response
- Whole Community
- Planning
- Public Information and Warning
- NIMS/ICS Operations Coordination
- Prevention

Scenario Type

Mass Causality & Mass Fatality Active Shooter Event with a hazardous device causing a chemical release (natural gas leak and structural damage)

Exercise Planning Team

Clear Creek Amana CSD

Johnson County Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management

Johnson County Sheriff's Office

Participating Organizations

City of Tiffin Council

City of Tiffin Public Works

City of Tiffin Fire Department

Veritas Church

Johnson County Park Rangers

Johnson County Medical Examiner's Office

Johnson County Ambulance

Johnson County Joint Communications

Johnson County HazMat Team

Johnson County Bomb Squad

Johnson County Drone Team

Johnson County Attorney's Office

Johnson County

Johnson County Fleet Manager

Oxford Fire & First Responders

City of North Liberty Police Department

City of North Liberty Fire Department

City of North Liberty Public Works

City of Coralville Police Department

City of Coralville Fire Department
City of Coralville Public Works
City of Iowa City Police Department
City of Iowa City Fire Department
Iowa State Patrol
University of Iowa Police Department
University of Iowa Emergency Management
University of Iowa Public Information
University of Iowa Healthcare
University of Iowa AirCare 1
University of Iowa Med 1
City of University Heights Police Department
EMS Students
Local Volunteers
Lifeguard Air Ambulance
Federal Bureau of Investigations
Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security
Agency
71st Civil Support Team
State of Iowa Medical Examiner
Dallas County Emergency Management Agency
State Fire Training Bureau
The Salvation Army
Hy-Vee
Iowa County Emergency Management Agency
Washington County Emergency Management Agency
Wapello County Emergency Management Agency
CARE Ambulance

Exercise Design Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the Clear Creek Amana Community School District (CCACSD) Training Exercise is to test and improve the coordination, communication, and operational readiness of local, state, and federal agencies in responding to a complex emergency involving an active shooter, multiple threats, and mass casualty incidents. This full-scale exercise is designed to assess the effectiveness of current protocols, identify gaps in training, and enhance the overall preparedness of emergency response teams. By simulating a high-stress, multi-faceted crisis, the exercise aims to strengthen interagency collaboration, refine public safety and medical response procedures, and ensure that all participating entities are better equipped to protect the community in the event of a real-world emergency.

Scope

The scope of the Clear Creek Amana Community School District (CCACSD) Training Exercise outlines a Full-Scale Exercise taking place from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM at Clear Creek Amana High School in Tiffin, IA. The exercise simulates an active shooter and mass casualty incident, incorporating multiple modes of emergency communication, including cellular, landline, AV systems, emergency radio, and Text-to-911. The initial dispatch will follow standard protocols, with additional resources requested as needed through radio communications.

Participants will include various local, state, and federal agencies, such as law enforcement, fire departments, medical services, hazmat teams, and specialized units like the bomb squad. On-scene activities will cover a range of emergency responses, including Command & Control, threat elimination, rescue task force operations, triage, and transport to medical care. Simulated hazmat and bomb incidents, mass fatality management, and family reunification will also be tested. Staging for participating agencies will be located inside and near the high school building.

Exercise Evaluation

Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs) are essential tools used in emergency management and response exercises to evaluate participant performance against predefined objectives and capabilities. They provide a structured framework for evaluators to observe and assess how well individuals and teams meet the critical tasks outlined for the exercise. EEGs help measure the preparedness of participants by specifying the

actions and responses that need to be completed during the exercise, ensuring that key tasks are carried out effectively under real-time conditions. These guides are crucial for identifying strengths within the response system as well as uncovering gaps or challenges that need to be addressed.

Each EEG is focused on specific core capabilities, such as public health, medical services, on-scene security, or fatality management, which represent the essential functions required to manage emergencies. By aligning the evaluation with these capabilities, EEGs ensure a comprehensive assessment of the exercise. They also provide a standardized method for evaluating exercises across different agencies and jurisdictions, making it easier to compare results and assess operational readiness on a broader scale.

Based upon the identified exercise objectives below, the exercise planning team has decided to demonstrate the following during this exercise:

- **Objective:** START Triage System-Rescue Taskforce-SMART System management of incident. TECC Concepts and MARCH-E care.
 - **Capability:** Public Health and Medical Services
 - **Capability Target 1:** Activate Triage and Pre-Hospital Treatment
 - **Critical Task:** Dispatch and support medical care personnel
 - **Critical Task:** Complete scene survey
 - **Critical Task:** Establish scene safety based on the type and severity of the incident
 - **Capability Target 2:** Triage
 - **Critical Task:** Conduct initial and on-going pre-hospital triage in accordance with START triage
 - **Critical Task:** Initiate a patient tracking system
 - **Critical Task:** Ensure decontamination of patients prior to treatment and transport
 - **Critical Task:** Move patients to a safe, secure, and easily accessible treatment area(s)
 - **Capability Target 3:** Provide Treatment
 - **Critical Task:** Establish immediate, minor, and delayed treatment areas
 - **Critical Task:** Provide pre-hospital treatment appropriate to the nature of the incident and number of injured/ill
 - **Capability Target 4:** Transport
 - **Critical Task:** Identify transport vehicles, victims, and priority of transport

- **Critical Task:** Coordinate and transport patients to the appropriate treatment facility
- **Objective:** Conduct On-Scene Fatality Management Operations
 - **Capability:** Fatality Management Services
 - **Capability Target 1:** Conduct scene evaluation, document, and remove fatalities from the scene
 - **Critical Task:** Conduct scene survey for fatality management operations
 - **Critical Task:** Document the scene for fatality management operations
 - **Critical Task:** Document (photograph, measure, obtain witness statements) in a manner consistent with the Medical Examiner/Coroner's incident plan
 - **Critical Task:** Gather forensic evidence for fatality management operations
 - **Critical Task:** Remove remains to staging
 - **Critical Task:** Decontaminate remains
 - **Critical Task:** Recover human remains in a dignified manner
 - **Critical Task:** Transfer remains from staging to morgue operations
- **Objective:** Fire Suppression, Rescue Taskforce, First Response Medical Care, and Hazmat Operations
 - **Capability:** On-Scene Operations
 - **Capability Target 1:** Size Up (Assess Site)
 - **Critical Task:** Observe incident site upon arrival and conduct initial size-up (site assessment)
 - **Critical Task:** Provide a verbal situation report
 - **Critical Task:** Communicate the need for additional resources
 - **Capability Target 2:** Search Scene and Rescue
 - **Critical Task:** Initiate search for endangered, trapped, or injured victims
 - **Critical Task:** Remove endangered, trapped, or injured victims to a safe area
 - **Critical Task:** Initiate or request treatment for victims
- **Objective:** Security and Protection for all participants
 - **Capability:** On-scene Security and Protection
 - **Capability Target 1:** Assess the Incident Scene and Secure the Area
 - **Critical Task:** Secure the incident site
 - **Critical Task:** Determine the appropriate emergency medical personnel to respond on-site for injuries and fatalities

- **Critical Task:** Identify and establish the innermost incident/crime scene perimeters
- **Capability Target 2:** Activate Public Safety and Security Response
 - **Critical Task:** Conduct a public safety and security response
 - **Critical Task:** Establish or integrate into Incident Command/Unified Command (IC/UC)
 - **Critical Task:** Coordinate and receive instructions from tactical operations
 - **Critical Task:** Ensure that responders have the appropriate equipment to perform assigned tasks
- **Capability Target 3:** Command and Control Public Safety and Security Response Operations
 - **Critical Task:** Identify personnel needed to maintain security support and response
 - **Critical Task:** Establish staging areas for law enforcement to conduct law ops personnel assignment and briefings
 - **Critical Task:** Utilize available technologies to maintain accountability of personnel, track hot zone locations, and track resources
 - **Critical Task:** Deploy appropriate personnel for public safety and security

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Appendix A: Improvement Plan

Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Primary Responsible Organization/POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Rescue Task Force Policy and Procedure	Review and mark up the policy and procedure.			
	Conduct additional training opportunities to get familiar with the policy and procedure			
	Continue to check with C3 Pathways for available training dates or explore other providers			
	Reach out to Arlington, VA to explore their just-in-time training resources			
	Modify the policy and procedure to state that the leader of the RTF is the front guard law enforcement officer			
	Consider assigning more event channels or talk groups prior to events.			
Communication channels	Continue to identify radio communication dead spots in the building and work with the school district to fix them			
	Have RACOM fix the talk group so CCACSD will match the radio name			
	Test every radio in the school			
	Test radios in other school districts			
	Update internal policies and countywide EOP to standardize terminology.			
	Ensure all relevant participants are involved in future exercises			
Participation	Future exercises should allow for EM participation instead of facilitation			
	Involve more regional partners, such as hospitals in future exercises			
	Consider adding unannounced role players to future exercises			
Exercise Role Players	Consider right-sizing future evaluators to the extent of the exercise in an effort to reduce redundancy			
Reunification	Conduct a workshop focused on reunification.			

Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Primary Responsible Organization/POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Incident simulation	Exercise longer duration calls with dispatch to test their capabilities			
	Clarify expectations with dispatch regarding notifications during exercises			
	Investigate if the HazMat alert was sent and ensure proper paging methods are used in the future			
	Train on the proper response process prior to conducting the exercise			
	Incorporate more realistic responses to injuries in future exercises			
	Consider involving front office staff in future exercises to enhance realism			
	Allocate sufficient time for scenario execution to avoid rushed decisions			
School lockdown procedures	Test and evaluate the lockdown procedures and move the workstation closer to the center of the room to reduce physical movement	CCACSD		
	Work with Iowa City CSD to ensure procedures are the same for all CSD on how to respond to an active threat incident			
Evidence preservation and collection	Solidify a process for evidence collection and communication with police during an active threat incident			
Emergency communication	Consider strategies to manage high communication volumes during emergencies	CCACSD		
School infrastructure	Implement numerical and directional labels on cameras and corresponding physical locations	CCACSD		
	Label all interior and exterior doors with numbers and directional indicators	CCACSD		
On-scene response	Repair the alerting system in the school office	CCACSD		
	Work through pre-identifying staging areas for responders			
On-scene response	Assign transportation officer role to a physician from UI Med 1 in future scenarios			
	Pre-identify a process for determining who will coordinate the landing zone for helicopters			

Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Primary Responsible Organization/POC	Start Date	Completion Date
	Pre-identify a process for determining the appropriate location for media staging			
	Utilize refrigerated trucks for mass transport in future scenarios			
	Ensure that there is always someone with the apparatus when arriving to allow for needed movement of vehicles			

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