

PUBLISHED DOCUMENT

# PD 25666:2010 Business continuity management – Guidance on exercising and testing for continuity and contingency programmes



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## **PUBLISHED DOCUMENT**

# **Business continuity management – Guidance on exercising and testing for continuity and contingency programmes**

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### Summary of pages

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## Foreword

### Publishing information

This Published Document is published by BSI and came into effect on 31 July 2010. It was prepared by BSI panel, BCM/1/-/9, under the authority of Technical Committee, BCM/1 *Business continuity management*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

### Use of this document

As a guide, this Published Document takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this Published Document that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

### Presentational conventions

The provisions in this Published Document are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is "should".

The word "should" is used to express recommendations of this Published Document. The word "may" is used in the text to express permissibility, e.g. as an alternative to the primary recommendation of the clause. The word "can" is used to express possibility, e.g. a consequence of an action or an event.

### Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

**This Published Document is not to be regarded as a British Standard.**

## 0 Introduction

This Published Document gives appropriate guidance to all organizations on performing exercising, including testing activities, for continuity and contingency programmes. Arrangements for information technology (IT) systems also fall under this general guidance. This guidance is intended to be read and used in conjunction with BS 25999, BS 25777, ISO/PAS 22399 and BS ISO/IEC 27001 and the other relevant BSI documents.

This Published Document provides a framework for, or signposts to, good practice for any organization that wishes to engage in exercising activities.

Although there are operational differences between contingency and continuity programmes, it is suggested that there is synergy in exercising activities between these disciplines.

*NOTE For the purposes of this document, the term "contingency" includes the disciplines of emergency, crisis, security, safety, resilience, incident and disaster management. It may also include disaster recovery activities from the field of IT.*

BS 25999-1 has this to say about exercises:

"Exercises provide demonstrable evidence of a business continuity and incident management competence and capability. Time and resources spent proving BCM [business continuity management] strategies by exercising BCPs [business continuity plans] will lead to a fit-for-purpose capability. No matter how well designed and thought-out a BCM strategy or BCP appears to be, a series of robust and realistic exercises will identify areas that require amendment."

In "*Emergency preparedness*" [1], the UK Cabinet Office gives the following guidance:

- a) "... regulations require that plans include provisions for carrying out exercises", which
- b) "....means that the plan itself must include reference to an exercise programme, which will maintain its currency and validity."

The guidance in this document has been developed from a practical perspective and is designed to aid delivery of cost-effective and efficient exercising activities.

## 1 Scope

This Published Document (PD) establishes the principles and terminology of exercising and gives guidance on the processes and methods for developing or improving continuity and contingency capabilities.

*NOTE For the purposes of this PD, testing is defined as a particular type of exercise that incorporates an expectation of a pass or fail element within the aim or objectives of the exercise being planned. Accordingly, the term "exercise", where used in the PD, might also refer to testing activities.*

The purposes of this PD are to:

- a) provide a basis for understanding, developing and implementing an effective exercise programme within an organization;
- b) provide confidence in the organization's ability to conduct exercises and tests with internal and external stakeholders;

- c) assist the organization in developing and assessing its exercising and testing capability in a consistent, cost-effective and risk-assessed manner that reflects good practice; and
- d) encourage constant improvement in contingency and continuity programmes within an organization.

This PD is intended for use by anyone with responsibility for operations or the provision of services, whether in public, private or not-for-profit organizations, from top management through all levels of the organization; from organizations with a single site to those with a global presence; from small to very large organizations.

## 2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this Published Document, the following terms and definitions apply.

### 2.1 brief

document (or oral instruction) which explains the exercise rules to exercise participants, and/or gives them background information about the scenario

### 2.2 debrief

occasion for exercise participants or incident responders to review and provide feedback relating to functional effectiveness, efficiency and resilience, usually after the exercise or incident is over, with the purpose of identifying lessons and participants' feelings that could provide learning opportunities

*NOTE Usually, this is a facilitated discussion and a record is kept of the lessons identified. Debriefs immediately after an exercise are also known as "hot debriefs" (or "hot wash up"). Debriefs are an essential part of learning the lessons of an exercise or incident.*

### 2.3 directing staff

*NOTE See Clause 7 and Annex A for guidance on the roles of directing staff.*

#### 2.3.1 controller

exercise participant with overall control of part or all of the exercise and responsibility for:

- managing role-players and observers;
- coordinating improvised responses for issues that are not covered by the exercise script; and
- exercise administration generally, including health and safety

#### 2.3.2 director

exercise participant with overall control of part or all of the exercise and responsibility for:

- ensuring that the exercise achieves its objectives; and
- starting and stopping the exercise

*NOTE See Clause 7 for greater detail about the role of the director.*



**2.3.3 observer**

exercise participant who watches selected segments as they unfold, whilst remaining separate from player activities

*NOTE Observers play a crucial role in the debriefing and reporting process following an exercise. The term is also used for "VIP observers", who usually visit the exercise for only a short time, largely for internal or external PR purposes, and do not take part in the debrief. Observers differ from umpires in that they are passive, while umpires are active participants.*

**2.3.4 role-player**

exercise participant who creates or simulates a scenario by acting out the role of someone who would be involved in a real incident, but is not otherwise involved in the exercise

**2.3.5 safety officer**

exercise participant, usually in "live-play" exercises, who is tasked with ensuring that any actions taken are performed as safely as possible

**2.3.6 umpire**

exercise participant with the ability to intervene or adjudicate in the exercise to ensure that it progresses towards the aim or objectives

*NOTE Umpires are often used to evaluate particular objectives which have been pre-designated in the exercise design. The umpire may also act as safety officer.*

**2.4 types of exercises****2.4.1 drill**

coordinated, supervised activities usually employed to exercise a single specific operation, procedure or function in a single agency

*NOTE See 5.1a).*

**2.4.2 exercise**

planned rehearsal of a possible incident designed to evaluate an organization's capability to manage that incident and to provide an opportunity to improve the organization's future responses and enhance the relevant competences of those involved

*NOTE A test (see 2.5 and 5.1) is a particular type of exercise, which incorporates an expectation of a pass or fail element within the aim or objectives of the exercise being planned.*

**2.4.3 live play**

exercise activity that is as close as safely practicable to the expected response to a real incident

*NOTE See 5.1e).*

**2.4.4 seminar (or syndicate) exercise**

exercise in which the participants are divided into groups to discuss specific issues

*NOTE See 5.1b).*

**2.4.5 simulation**

exercise in which a group of players, usually representing a control centre or management team, react to a simulated incident notionally happening elsewhere

*NOTE See 5.1d). Sometimes referred to as "command post exercise".*

- 2.4.6 table-top exercise**  
facilitated exercise in which participants are given specific roles to perform, either as individuals or groups  
*NOTE See 5.1c).*
- 2.5 test**  
exercise whose aim is to obtain an expected, measurable pass/fail outcome
- 2.6 exercise programme**  
planned series of exercises designed to develop or evaluate an organization's resilience  
*NOTE Usually, the design of each exercise takes into account the lessons identified during previous exercises. Although individual exercises may focus on different issues, taken together the exercise programme is intended to validate the whole of the organization's resilience or response programme.*
- 2.7 facilitator**  
person who presents the scenario of a seminar or table-top exercise to the players and helps to bring about a successful conclusion to the exercise by giving unobtrusive guidance, helping the players to solve problems or communicating problems and taking feedback, without becoming involved in the players' actual discussions
- 2.8 inject**  
scripted piece of information input to the exercise designed to elicit a response or decision and facilitate the flow of the exercise
- 2.9 master events list**  
list of exercise injects, usually for delivery by role-players, but sometimes also including other materials such as written injects or directions for simulating an incident
- 2.10 player**  
exercise participant who responds to a set of stimuli generated by the exercise script
- 2.11 post-exercise report**  
document which records, describes and analyses the exercise, drawing on debriefs and reports from observers, and derives lessons from it  
*NOTE See 8.7.*
- 2.12 scenario**  
pre-planned storyline that drives an exercise and is chosen to enable it to meet its objectives
- 2.13 script**  
story of the exercise as it develops, which allows directing staff to understand how events will develop during exercise play as the various elements of the master events list are introduced  
*NOTE The script is often written in an "essay" style, amplifying the scenario outline.*

### 3 Programme management

*This clause gives guidance on establishing a programme that develops the competence and confidence of people through training and exercising.*

**3.1** To ensure that plans and procedures remain fit-for-purpose, and that people acquire and maintain high levels of competence in implementing them, it is vital that exercises take place and that all personnel who might be involved in a response are exercised regularly. Such exercises should, over time, seek to validate in full any continuity or contingency capability. A single exercise, or indeed real incident, is unlikely to provide the total level of assurance required. Also, in selecting the focus of any exercise, it is important to note that a less demanding exercise scenario might not provide an accurate level of validation of the plans. This risk should be measured against the aim and objectives of the exercise.

**3.2** In any organization or multi-agency response there are likely to be a number of agencies, departments or sections that, together, will provide the overall response to any disruptive challenge. In order to be in a position to give a reasonable level of assurance to all stakeholders that a disruptive challenge will be successfully dealt with, the response to any such challenge has to be practised. However, because it is generally impractical to involve everyone on each occasion, it is advisable to design a programme that involves a series of smaller exercises which exercise parts of the plans or improve the capabilities of individuals before scheduling an integrated exercise [see 5.1e)].

**3.3** The exercise programme should be designed to:

- a) progressively improve the competence and confidence of people;
- b) exercise specific elements of the incident response capabilities to ensure that these work as required;
- c) assist the integration of the disparate incident response elements into a combined response;
- d) identify any necessary improvements to the contingency or continuity strategy and response arrangements; and
- e) demonstrate that investment in exercising benefits the organization.

The programme may also be used to provide a benchmark on the organization's preparedness to face the challenges of an incident or disruptive event.

**3.4** The exercise programme should be documented to provide the basis for an audit trail, including:

- a) the frequency of exercising;
- b) the scope of the programme, including locations, business areas, etc.;
- c) the overall risks to be managed in the programme;
- d) resources required for the programme to be effective;
- e) the competence of the people delivering the exercise activity and reporting; and
- f) sign-off by top management.

**3.5** Each individual exercise should be undertaken and planned in the context of the overall programme. As such, it should have its own aim, objectives, scope and constraints. The outcome of each exercise should inform the continual improvement of the organization's ability to deal with disruptive challenges (see also Clause 4).

**3.6** The situation could arise where a real incident or disruptive event occurs that at first inspection reduces or negates the requirement for an exercise. This should be treated with caution because a real incident or disruptive event might not meet the objectives and secure the benefits of an equivalent exercise.

**3.7** The organization should use the guidance in Clause 8 to evaluate the lessons identified from the incident or disruptive event and then consider the impacts, if any, upon the aim and objectives of the organization's exercising programme.

## 4 Planning an exercise as a project

*This clause describes the processes for defining the aim and objectives of exercises, presenting a business case and putting together a team to design and deliver an exercise.*

### 4.1 Defining the purpose and establishing the aim

It is critical that a sound understanding is arrived at early as to why any specific exercise is required. This is beyond any simple adherence to a programme and hinges on defining the true business case for that specific exercise. Such a business case should identify the perceived benefit(s) to be realized as a result of conducting the exercise. This should lead to the capture of a specific aim for the exercise. It is this specific aim that will drive all other planning arrangements and validation procedures.

Achieving the strategic aim of an exercise can be the ultimate benchmark of success for that event. When setting a strategic aim, which will influence the actions of participating individuals or organizations, clear and concise language should be used.

### 4.2 Defining the desired outcomes/setting the objectives

The objectives of an exercise can be expressed as a number of desired outcomes. Selecting the desired outcomes of the exercise aids planning and helps to shape the format of that exercise. This should be aligned to the overall objectives of the organization(s) taking part, with individual component exercises part of an overall programme that leads to reasonable assurance regarding the whole response.

When establishing the objectives it should be remembered that they will have to be subject to validation and used to develop evaluation criteria. As such, they should be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-based (SMART).

### 4.3 The wider business case

Once a specific aim, supported by clear and concise objectives, has been established it is necessary to formulate a wider business case before seeking full authorization for each exercise. Such a wider business case, possibly presented as a project initiation document, should cover:

- a) an assessment of the business risks that are associated with designing and delivering the exercise;
- b) the objectives and expected outcomes;
- c) the expected benefits that the exercise will provide;
- d) financial resources/constraints;
- e) organizational resource assets/constraints, including human resources;
- f) time resources/constraints; and
- g) the necessary top management commitment.

### 4.4 Building a team

For a small organization it might be possible for a single person to design and deliver an exercise. For larger organizations, or multi-agency situations, this will most likely require an exercise planning and delivery team. If so, it is important that a competent planning and delivery team is established and experienced exercise designers and facilitators are used to avoid adverse outcomes. The team should have top management support. The team should also include representatives from each element or function of the organization best able to implement planning activity relating to the aim and objectives of the exercise. The team should have access to appropriate knowledge or expertise to meet, for example, any compliance requirements with all relevant health and safety, legislative, regulatory and contractual obligations that might arise from the test or exercise.

When building a team, the concerns and requirements of organizational members beyond the planning team should be considered. It is important, from the beginning of the project, to engage with those likely to experience, hear about or participate in the exercise. The early provision of information helps to prevent rumour and obstruction. It can also enable the legitimate concerns of people to be acted upon in the planning stage.

### 4.5 Engaging wider stakeholders

As well as engaging widely within an organization it is important to consider engaging with other relevant organizations, such as clients, suppliers, regulators, emergency services, pressure groups, statutory bodies and agencies, and the voluntary sector. The main considerations that drive such engagement include:

- a) enhancing interoperability: affording others, with whom the organization might have to work in a real event, the opportunity to work towards the same aim;
- b) enabling "piggy-backing": providing an opportunity for other organizations to achieve separate aims and objectives, using the exercise as a vehicle;

- c) enhancing stakeholder confidence: giving others a level of assurance through participation, either in assisting with design, delivery and validation or as observers, that the continuity or contingency arrangements are being properly validated; and
- d) publicizing the exercise: informing partners, the media and/or the public that the exercise is taking place.

#### 4.6 Post-exercise administration

It is necessary to plan the procedures and processes necessary to return the organization and the environment in which the exercise was conducted to normal operating conditions when the exercise has ended. These might require support from resources different to those required when conducting the exercise, and could vary in complexity and in duration, but they need to be included in the overall exercise management.

## 5 Exercises

*This clause describes the various methods of delivering exercises, which can be used singly or in combination to meet the exercise programme, and details the parameters that need to be considered in order to select the best approach to meet the particular exercise aims and objectives.*

### 5.1 Methods of delivering exercises

Five methods of delivering exercises are described, which vary in complexity of planning, conduct and cost.

#### a) Drills

A drill (see 2.4.1) is a test of particular capabilities or skills, which focuses on a single specific operation, for example:

- 1) fire evacuation tests;
- 2) recovering a single server;
- 3) testing the emergency communication system;
- 4) testing a specific reversionary mode of operation;
- 5) proving the technical aspects of opening a recovery site.

#### b) Seminar (or syndicate) exercise

In a seminar exercise (see 2.4.4) the participants are divided into manageable groups (syndicates) of people. The groups can be made up of the same or mixed disciplines. The players are posed a number of questions about a given scenario and given a period to discuss the answers within each syndicate. At the end of that period of time feedback is taken from each syndicate and a facilitated discussion takes place amongst all of the groups to distil and consolidate the learning. The scenario is then moved on in time or location and the process is repeated.

**c) Table-top exercise**

A table-top exercise (see 2.4.6) is a facilitated exercise which differs from a seminar exercise in that the participants are given specific roles to perform, either as individuals or groups. They decide on the actions and decisions that their role would be required to undertake in managing the scenario. A model or maps/plans of a given location are often used to place the exercise into a specific geographic context. There can be different time phases in the exercise and it is the role of the facilitator to drive the exercise forward in time, using additional information feeds and so on. This form of exercise rehearses a specific team in its roles and responsibilities to manage an incident or disruptive event.

**d) Simulation exercise**

A simulation exercise (see 2.4.5) involves the managers or key decision makers and their support teams from an organization or department working through a scenario within the location they would actually use when managing an incident or emergency. Information is fed into the room in various ways from an exercise control of role-players working to a script of injects, or the responses of other teams taking part, and the players are expected to manage and respond to the information that they receive in a realistic manner. If the actual location is not available for the exercise then a simulation of the normal command arrangements can be used. The exercise may involve teams at more than one level and location within the organization, for example incident management at the simulated event location, business support or recovery teams for the affected business units and a business-wide crisis management team. This exercise format offers a wide range of options with regard to cost, complexity and maturity of planning.

**e) Live play**

A live play (see 2.4.3) exercise develops the experiences gained from paper-based simulations and drills to engage players in the management of events which as closely as possible simulate a real incident or emergency. This is possibly the highest level rehearsal of the readiness of an organization to manage incidents. As with the simulation, it may engage a range of levels and locations within the organization and give opportunities for active engagement by outside agencies such as the emergency services. This can be the most costly and time-consuming form of exercise.

**5.2 Selecting the appropriate exercise methods**

Exercise types should be viewed as a menu of options by the exercise planner. It is entirely feasible to combine different types of exercise into a single event. This is particularly relevant where multiple levels of the organization are taking part. For example, an exercise may be initiated by conducting a full fire evacuation of a location (a drill), followed by gathering the crisis management team together to consider the follow-on actions as the starting point for a table-top exercise. Similarly, a major IT disaster recovery exercise is a mix of drills (the process to recover individual components) and a live exercise to recover integrated IT systems within an agreed timescale to permit business recovery.

The choice of exercise type should take into account the following:

- target audience;
- exercise aims and objectives (see 4.1 and 4.2);
- measures of success;
- budget;
- time;
- risks arising as a result of conducting the exercise;
- available resources;
- maturity of continuity and contingency plans and experience of the incident management teams at each level; and
- degree of familiarity with planning and running exercises of both the exercise planners and the organization as a whole.

### 5.3 Strengths and weaknesses of particular methods of exercising

The relative strengths and weaknesses of the various methods of exercising are indicated in Table 1 on a scale of 1 to 10. The range of values is designed to allow for the fact that all exercises vary in size and scope and it is difficult to generalize. The values are therefore only indicative.

Table 1 Choosing an appropriate method of exercise

Qualities		Method of exercise					
		Drill	Seminar	Table-top	Simulation	Live	
Ease of creation	(1 = Easy)	1–3	2–4	3–6	4–8	4–10	(10 = Hard)
Development time	(1 = Quick)	1–2	2–4	3–6	4–8	5–10	(10 = Lengthy)
Cost	(1 = Cheap)	1–4	2–4	2–5	3–7	4–10	(10 = Expensive)
Level of corporate risk	(1 = Low risk)	1–3	1–2	1–3	3–6	5–10	(10 = High risk)
Numbers of players who can take part	(1 = Few)	1–5	1–7	2–6	2–6	1–10	(10 = Many)
Pressure generated on players	(1 = Little pressure)	1	1	3–7	3–8	5–10	(10 = High pressure)
Amount of realism that can be generated	(1 = Limited realism)	1–3	1–2	2–4	3–7	8–10	(10 = Almost the real thing)
Numbers of directing staff needed	(1 = Few)	1–3	1–2	1–2	4–8	5–10	(10 = Many)
Method of developing plans	(1 = Not a good method)	1–2	4–8	3–7	1–3	1–3	(10 = Excellent method)
Way of evaluating plans	(1 = Not a good method)	2–4	1–3	2–5	2–8	7–10	(10 = Excellent method)



## 6 Exercise preparation

*This clause describes the steps to be followed before commencing the exercise and considers the logistical issues that might complement the exercise design phase.*

### 6.1 Timing

The exercise should be conducted at an appropriate time that best meets the objectives of the event, and:

- a) causes the minimum level of disruption to the organization and its stakeholders [this aspect should be considered in conjunction with 4.3a)];
- b) when the appropriate numbers of participants required to support the exercise are available;
- c) when any physical locations, assets, equipment or facilities are available for use in the exercise.

### 6.2 Documentation

The exercise planning team are responsible for ensuring that all the necessary documentation required to support the facilitation of the exercise is produced in a timely manner and approved by the exercise director or controller to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose and supports the objectives of the exercise. The objective is to generate an exercise with a sufficiently high degree of realism to both represent a credible risk and engage the players to deliver an appropriate response.

The documentation may include such items as:

- a) exercise timeline;
- b) scripts and injects;
- c) multi-media materials to support the scenario;
- d) durable records of decisions made;
- e) contact/communication details for participants;
- f) briefing documents; and
- g) instructions to support staff

### 6.3 Exercise design review

**6.3.1** All of the assets, including the participants, required to support the exercise should be reviewed to ensure that the assets are suitable and appropriate, and available to meet the objectives of the exercise.

This review of assets may cover:

- a) finance;
- b) logistics;
- c) time/availability of all participants;
- d) the roles or functions required to support the delivery of the exercise and the identification, training and availability of suitable deputies to support these roles or functions if necessary;

- e) lessons identified from previous events that might be relevant to the planned exercise;
- f) suitable venues or locations, which should be visited and inspected by the planning team prior to the event;
- g) equipment;
- h) use of simulation equipment or techniques to enhance the reality of the exercise;
- i) the exercise scenario (including all supporting injects) to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose and best suits delivery of the objectives (see Clause 4).
- j) compliance with all relevant health and safety, legislative, regulatory and contractual obligations;
- k) exercise documentation (see 6.2);
- l) currency and appropriateness of plans for the return to normality after the exercise (see 4.6 and 7.7).

**6.3.2** At an appropriate time before commencing the exercise, the exercise director should:

- a) brief role-players, controllers, observers and umpires;
- b) check safety issues and communications at locations;
- c) brief any third parties who are likely to become aware of the exercise (own staff, outsiders or media);
- d) brief all participants on the exercise communications protocols and processes;
- e) brief all participants on the procedure, and code words if appropriate, for suspending or stopping the exercise to respond to real life events;
- f) if the nature of the exercise merits, compile a record of the content of the briefing and the details of all participants and stakeholders who receive/attend the pre-exercise briefings.

## 7 Conducting an exercise

*This clause describes the practicalities of conducting an exercise and addresses some of the issues that could be encountered during the course of such an event.*

### 7.1 Starting the exercise

**7.1.1** An exercise can begin in one of several ways (e.g. at a prescribed time, or without announcement), but the commencement should be clear and unambiguously communicated to all participants. The exercise director is responsible for ensuring that it is an appropriate time to commence the event and confirming that all relevant participants are ready.

**7.1.2** Great care should be taken throughout to ensure that all participants are aware that the event is an exercise. Participants should ensure that the risk of leakage of information from the exercise scenario into the “real” world is controlled to prevent any

misunderstanding. In the case of a “no notice” or “limited notice” exercise, any participants joining the exercise should be notified and appropriately briefed [see 6.3.2a)] at the earliest opportunity that the situation is not real and is an exercise.

## 7.2 Managing the exercise

**7.2.1** The exercise director is responsible for ensuring that the exercise is conducted in a manner that best supports the objectives of the exercise.

**7.2.2** The exercise director should have the appropriate level of authority to make any material changes to the delivery of the exercise necessary to support the attainment of the objectives of the event.

## 7.3 Visitors and media

Visitors may take a more or less formal “observer” role. They may also be “VIP visitors”, who are often there to see only part of the exercise in action. They still need to be briefed beforehand on the rules of the exercise, and should also be informed of the exercise objectives and the scenario. VIP visitors should be escorted and managed throughout. As far as possible, they should be instructed not to intervene in the exercise.

Media are occasionally invited to report exercises. If so, care should be taken not to allow them to see any confidential aspects of the organization’s responses or strategies. Television or photographers might require facilities, i.e. access to film certain events. If this is granted, they should be escorted and safety aspects should be carefully considered. Exercise participants should be warned before media are allowed into their areas. In general, the presence of the media puts players on their guard and makes it more difficult to learn from an exercise. It is best to limit their access to specified sections of the exercise, at specified times.

Simulated media (i.e. role-players) are different. They should act as far as possible like real media, but should not misuse their access to the exercise area to gather information that real media would not have.

## 7.4 Administrative issues

In the background of the design and planning of the exercise it is essential to ensure that the necessary administrative support is coordinated. This should cover such issues as:

- a) managing working hours and necessary breaks to ensure that all participants continue to operate effectively and safely;
- b) provision of refreshments;
- c) ensuring all participants operate in a safe environment (enthusiasm for realism can on occasion lead to participants taking unnecessary risks in live play exercises);
- d) provision of communications access; in particular, non-standard internet access or similar will need to be arranged; and
- e) provision of other resources, including stationery items, printed forms derived from templates.

## 7.5 Stopping or suspending the exercise

The exercise should be monitored to see when it has achieved its objectives or when it is clear that little more is likely to be achieved by continuing, and to allow the exercise director to decide when to stop the exercise.

Exercises may be stopped, or suspended, ahead of the scheduled time for a number of reasons, including where a real incident arises. This decision to stop or suspend the exercise should be taken by the exercise director, who should be in possession of the current status of all the activities in the exercise and able to decide the safest time to halt activities. Some organizations use code words to achieve this; however, it might be enough for the exercise director simply to explain the reason for halting the exercise.

The exercise director should decide whether the exercise needs to be concluded or when the exercise can be safely resumed. This message should then be clearly and unambiguously disseminated to all participants in the exercise.

*NOTE Nothing in this sub-clause dilutes the duty of all participants in the exercise to protect the health and safety of their colleagues and to stop or halt any activity or practice that could cause injury or harm to themselves or another. If such a situation arises, then the details of the incident have to be immediately reported to the exercise director.*

## 7.6 Gathering material for the post-exercise phase

During an exercise a lot of material can be produced. All documentation generated during the exercise should be collected and saved for post-exercise analysis.

Umpires or observers may also take photographs or make other records, which should also be saved for later analysis.

These documents and materials may be used in conjunction with the activities in 8.1 to 8.5 to assist in the compilation of the post-exercise report (8.6 provides further detail on this aspect).

A record should be made of who took part in the exercise; these may not always be the individuals who were expected to take part.

## 7.7 Post-exercise administration

Once the exercise has been stopped it is necessary to undertake procedures to return the business and the environment in which the exercise was conducted to normal operating conditions. Once they have been successfully completed then this fact has to be communicated to all interested parties.

# 8 Post-exercise/real incident and disruptive events activities

*This clause outlines the activities to be performed by the organization after any exercise, incident or disruptive event to gather the "lessons identified" so that the information gained can be analysed, retained and then used to support improvements in the organization's continuity or contingency programme.*

**8.1** At a suitable time, e.g. after the conclusion of an exercise, incident or disruptive event, and while events are still fresh in participants' minds, a meeting should be held that supports a debrief process, which should include contributions from all of the available participants. This meeting should be conducted as soon as practicable after each participant's involvement in the event has ended (see **3.5**, **3.6** and **3.7**).

**8.2** This debrief session should be facilitated by an appropriate individual with a view to capturing any issues requiring immediate remedial action, and should be conducted in a suitable environment that protects the potentially confidential nature of the information being exchanged. If the debrief follows a test or exercise, it should be informed by the aim and objectives of the test or exercise (see **4.1** and **4.2**).

**8.3** It is for the organization to consider what information is required at this stage but, as a minimum, the following areas of inquiry should be considered in the debrief.

- a) What went well?
- b) What did not go well?
- c) Are there any risks or issues revealed by this test, exercise, incident or disruptive event that require an immediate response?
- d) Are any other risks or issues revealed by this test, exercise, incident or disruptive event that could require resolution over a longer term?

**8.4** A record of the responses and information provided by the debrief participants should be compiled by the debrief facilitator to ensure that all the available "lessons identified" are retained for future reference.

**8.5** In the event of multi-agency participation in an exercise, or a response to an incident or disruptive event that involves separate sections within an organization, each participating agency or section of the organization should solicit feedback from their people who participated in the event. This information gathering process should follow the guidance in **8.1** to **8.4**.

*NOTE With multi-agency participation, key issues such as organizational values that shape the decision-making process and the level of transparency are important considerations for open reporting and knowledge transfer.*

**8.6** Depending on the scale, nature and complexity of the exercise, incident or disruptive event, it might be appropriate to hold a further debrief meeting involving representatives from each participating agency or section of the organization. This debrief should take place in a suitable time frame to permit consideration of the issues revealed in the activities in **8.1** to **8.5** and any further factors that are subsequently revealed. This final debrief meeting should capture all of the relevant lessons identified from the activities in **8.1** to **8.5** with a view to providing a comprehensive and objective report, which should be made available to the organization's top management and relevant stakeholders for consideration. In the case of a complex, large-scale or multi-agency exercise, the final report should clearly identify which organization (or section within it, in the case of a large or complex organization) is responsible for resolving or escalating each issue or lesson identified.

**8.7** The organization should put in place a process to ensure that the information gathered from the activities in **8.2** to **8.6** is retained and managed, so that it can be incorporated into relevant plans and programmes for future responses to incidents or emergencies or used to assist in the development of scenarios for future exercises. The information management process should also have the capacity to absorb lessons identified from other organizations. These processes should be owned by the organization's top management and integrated with the organization's risk management activities.

**8.8** Where appropriate, the organization should consider sharing any relevant lessons identified from the activities in **8.2** to **8.7** with other organizations on a cross-organization or inter-organizational basis.

## Annex A (informative) Roles of the participants

### A.1 Exercise director

The exercise director ought to be appointed by the organization's top management and have the appropriate authority to discharge the required duties effectively. The role of the exercise director may be as follows.

- a) Overall responsibility for delivery of the exercise.
- b) Setting the objectives of the exercise and defining measures of success.
- c) Overall responsibility for the safe conduct of the exercise.
- d) Ensuring appropriate risk assessments have been completed, both for the safety of people during the exercise and the wider risk to the organization which could arise as a result of conducting the exercise.
- e) Starting and stopping the exercise, and being aware of and managing any impact the exercise could be having on the outside world.
- f) Internal and external communication about the exercise.
- g) Presenting the post-exercise report to top management.
- h) Taking overall ownership of the post-exercise action plan to agree and implement learning points.

### A.2 Exercise controller

The role of the exercise controller may be as follows.

- a) Coordinating all aspects of the delivery of the exercise in order to achieve the exercise objectives.
- b) Managing the exercise timetable.
- c) Monitoring umpires and role-players.
- d) Guiding participants as necessary.

*NOTE* Role-players might need advice on how to interpret a role or answer a question. Players might need advice on the "rules of the game", though they ought not to be given advice on how to handle the actual scenario.

- e) If players appear to have misunderstood the scenario, or if it develops in unforeseen ways, intervening in the exercise, either directly or by producing new injects to rebalance the situation.
- f) In a multi-centre exercise, being aware of what is going on in each centre and ensuring that they are working to the same timing and broad understanding of the scenario.
- g) Coordinating the collection of feedback from all participants.
- h) Drafting the exercise report for exercise director.

### A.3 Umpires

The exercise roles of umpires may be as follows.

- a) Observing as instructed and reporting back at once to the exercise director any problems that arise, e.g. if players have misunderstood the scenario or are having serious difficulties with it.
- b) Advising players on the "rules of the game", but not on how to handle the actual scenario.
- c) In live exercises, particularly on hazardous sites, continuously monitoring the safety of the participants and intervening or stopping the exercise if anyone is at risk.

In large exercises, umpires have to be clearly identified as umpires, e.g. by distinctive tabards. Otherwise, it is usually enough just to introduce them to the players at the start.

### A.4 Observer

The role of the exercise observer is passive and unobtrusive, and may include the following.

- a) Observing specific teams or activities as directed, to provide an independent perspective to the post-exercise analysis.
- b) Monitoring and, if necessary, informing the umpire of any potential crossover between the exercise and reality.
- c) Referring all other issues to the exercise controller or umpires.

As with umpires, observers have to be identified as such to the players. Observers ought only to be present if they can learn from the exercise or contribute to the post-exercise analysis. Numbers ought to be limited.

In some cases "VIP observers" are important for public relations purposes. They need to be carefully briefed and escorted. They are usually there to get an overview of the exercise and do not contribute to post-exercise analysis.

### A.5 Players

Players are the target audience of the exercise. Their role is as follows.

- a) Responding as best they can to the scenario within the "rules of the game".
- b) Applying their common sense to prevent any circumstance that might be unsafe, or any accidental crossovers between fiction and reality.
- c) Ensuring that any contacts made are fully aware that the contact is part of an exercise and any response is appropriate.
- d) Understanding the process in place to stop the exercise in the event of a real emergency (usually achieved through a code word).
- e) Recording learning points regarding their individual role for the debrief.



## A.6 Role-players

Role-players may help to facilitate the exercise by:

- a) stimulating exercise play through presenting scripted injects as required by the master events list;
- b) enhancing realism and pressure by “acting” their given part(s);
- c) recording their actions and response, and identifying learning points for the exercise report.

They may achieve this by:

- 1) reading their injects in advance and preparing or requesting any background information they feel they need;
- 2) being familiar with the overall exercise objectives and scenario;
- 3) playing their injects sensibly: they may elaborate on them, but not in such a way that significantly alters the scenario, e.g. a role-player with medical expertise may elaborate realistically on the detail of a supposed injury, but not develop it into a death without first consulting the exercise controller;
- 4) responding to requests for information or action from players as realistically as possible, in line with the scenario;
- 5) if asked any questions they do not know how to answer, consulting the exercise controller before answering them.

## A.7 Role-play journalist

In some exercises, dedicated role-play journalists may be introduced to simulate media interest in the scenario. They may prepare simulated news stories based on the information they can garner from the players. For large exercises they ought not to be co-located with the other role-players or given access to the full master events list to prevent them “second-guessing” the players.

## Bibliography

### Standards publications

For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

BS 25777, *Information and communications technology continuity management – Code of practice*

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### Other publications

- [1] CABINET OFFICE. *Emergency preparedness*, Chapter 5 (available at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/preparedness/training.aspx>)

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Tel +44 (0)20 8996 9001

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This Published Document (PD) establishes the principles and terminology of exercising and gives guidance on the processes and methods for developing or improving continuity and contingency capabilities.

The purpose of this PD is to:

- a) provide a basis for understanding, developing and implementing an effective exercise programme within an organization;
- b) provide confidence in the organization's ability to conduct exercises and tests with internal and external stakeholders;
- c) assist the organization in developing and assessing its exercising and testing capability in a consistent, cost-effective and risk-assessed manner that reflects good practice;
- d) encourage constant improvement in contingency and continuity programmes within an organization.

This PD is intended for use by anyone with responsibility for operations or the provision of services whether in public, private or not-for-profit organizations, from top management through all levels of the organization; from organizations with a single site to those with a global presence; from small to very large organizations.

This guidance is intended to be read and used in conjunction with BS 25999, BS 25777, ISO/PAS 22399 and BS ISO/IEC 27001 and the other relevant BSI documents.



#### BSI Group Headquarters

389 Chiswick High Road  
London W4 4AL  
United Kingdom

Tel +44 (0)20 8996 9001  
Fax +44 (0)20 8996 7001  
Website: [www.bsigroup.com](http://www.bsigroup.com)  
Email: [info@bsigroup.com](mailto:info@bsigroup.com)

