

INTEGRATING INFORMAL DRILLS TO IMPROVE CHEMICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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Problem

- Developing timely risk communication materials
 - Not enough trained staff
 - Takes too long
 - Inconsistent message development
- Handling data with EDEN (Environmental Data Exchange Network)
 - Not enough trained staff
 - Protocols for user administration and site management need improvement

Solution: Informal, Frequent Drills

- Large, formal drills and exercises are appropriate to improve coordination of high-level, cross-sectional processes
- Informal, frequent drills allow programs to focus on internal operational issues
 - Small drills supported by agency and used by several programs
 - Can be used by others

Drill Format

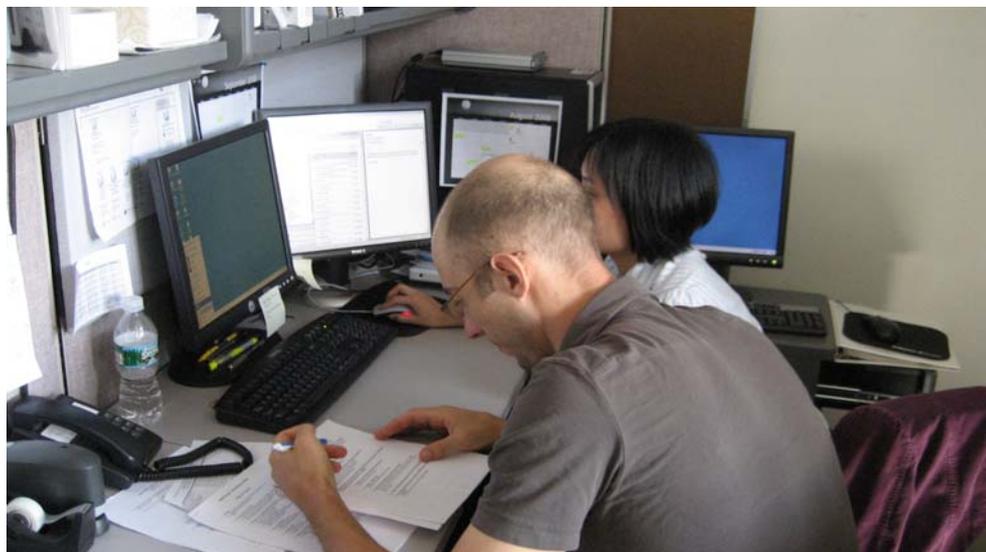
Participants:	5-6 staff assigned to tasks 2 observers
Timeframe:	1 – 2 hour drill
Scenario-driven:	Environmental emergency: fires, chemical spills, radiological incident, etc
Drill tasks:	RC: Develop FAQs, talking points, 311 scripts EDEN: Create database objects, manage user accounts, provide user support.
Evaluation:	Debrief session – 30 minutes Identify gaps and propose corrections

Scenario Design

- Written by the staff members who evaluate the drill
- Simple descriptions based on real incidents or incidents of concern
 - Sample incidents: Major fire, radiation release, mercury spill
 - **Scenario:**
 - “This morning chemical alarms went off at fixed monitoring locations in Gotham Park. First responders are currently responding. DOHMH has activated EDEN.”

Risk Communication Drills

- Assign scenario and tasks to 2 different teams
- Research and develop environmental health materials
- Review and finalize text
- Keep to time frames
- Debrief/compare



Data Handling Drills

- Assign scenario and tasks to “users” and “administrators”
- Users obtain EDEN accounts, upload environmental data files, map and summarize data, post comments
- Administrators activate new user accounts, manage EDEN database, support EDEN users, monitor/create site content
- Keep to time frames
- Debrief



Lessons Learned

- Observer is essential to capture gaps and strengths
- Must involve key experts during drill or debrief to have effective transfer of knowledge
- Multiple drills needed to reinforce lessons learned and ensure that identified gaps are addressed

Think Small!

- Small, informal drills can be used to improve task performance and coordination of emergency activities.
 - Low cost and low tech
 - Require minimal coordination and preparation
 - Fit into daily schedules
 - Can be done on regular basis
- Appropriate for emergency programs

Thank You

Special thanks to Environmental Disease
Prevention staff!

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