

# The “Simulation and Training Exercise Collaboratory” (SIMTEC)

## Black Fault Exercise

### CONTROLLER GUIDE



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JIBC

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SIMTEC Research Chair

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## ABOUT THE CONTROLLER GUIDE

This Controller Guide contains the instructions on how to successfully deliver SIMTEC's Exercise Black Fault. The exercise makes use of both online and print content. Consisting of a variety of functional activities, Players will be challenged to explore and apply Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) processes and activities. By conducting these exercises, personnel should be able to confirm the capabilities of the EOC to respond to a catastrophic earthquake, including managing the psychosocial impacts. They will also identify areas where additional training, planning, or resources are required. Subsequent exercises can then validate the efficiency of any "corrective actions" that are put into place.

It is important to note that this material is designed for **experienced Exercise Controllers** to deliver an exercise to experienced command and control personnel proficient in **EOC response processes and protocols**. To ensure success, additional training may be appropriate for both Controllers and Players prior to delivery of the exercise.

**Please ensure you have reviewed this entire document prior to running your exercise.**

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SIMTEC is a multi-year project, based at the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), which will assist Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) personnel to consider the psychosocial dimensions of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) and other hazardous events. The term **“psychosocial”** refers to the mental well-being of an individual and the role of relationships and community in impacting that person’s mental health. The project involves designing and conducting simulation exercises with complex disaster scenarios and injects specifically to elicit psychosocial responses from senior decision-makers in the EOC.

*“Psychosocial” refers to the mental well-being of an individual and the role of relationships and community in impacting that person’s mental health.*

Information collected from the exercises, focus groups, and Subject Matter Expert interviews throughout the research process will assist in the development of training materials and guidelines for psychosocial interventions by senior EOC personnel. Training EOC personnel to

respond to the psychosocial consequences of disasters will reduce stress levels and enhance strategic and tactical decision-making. The exercises and training protocols will be publicly-available through an online collaboratory for use by any English-speaking jurisdiction with access to high-speed internet and emergency management protocols that include an EOC.



Black Fault is the fifth in a series of simulation exercises which includes winter storms, decontamination, mass casualty incidents, and pandemic events. This exercise focuses on the responses of a community-based EOC to assist in the development of protocols and procedures to manage a catastrophic earthquake and to provide psychosocial support to the EOC.

This Controller Guide provides details on the administration of the SIMTEC Black Fault training exercise including background information, how to run the exercise, key training points to be emphasized, and a list of frequently asked questions for Controllers.



## PURPOSE AND DEVELOPMENT OF EXERCISE BLACK FAULT

Exercise Black Fault was designed with two purposes in mind:

1. To serve as an opportunity to exercise a potentially real scenario involving a catastrophic earthquake.
2. To deliberately include inputs of psychosocial stressors.

This simulation exercise and training video can assist emergency management leaders in understanding and enhancing the decision-making processes and psychosocial interventions of EOC personnel during an earthquake or other natural disaster response.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXERCISE AND TRAINING PROTOCOLS

The simulation exercise and training points were developed with information from the Expert Working Group, interviews with a network of Subject Matter Experts, literature reviews, and the combined expertise of the simulation specialists and researchers. Training and support materials were reviewed by the Expert Working Group members.

## SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Along with this Controller Guide, the exercise, the Team Support Worker training video, training protocols, and supporting materials are available on the online SIMTEC Collaboratory. Materials are organized into sections based on how they are used in the exercise. These sections are titled:

- Materials for Controllers
- Materials for the EOC Pod
- Videos

## ABOUT EXERCISE BLACK FAULT

Exercise Black Fault is a functional tabletop exercise to assess working relationships and to analyze processes related to decision-making and worker-care used by community-based EOC personnel responding to a catastrophic earthquake. It will validate the Players' ability to complete common tasks and to consider the psychosocial impact of their decisions and actions on those affected by the earthquake, including EOC colleagues, other responders and receivers, decision makers, and community members.

The exercise materials were originally focused on a catastrophic earthquake taking place in southwestern British Columbia. Many inputs were customized to reflect the make-up of participating communities (e.g. including references to local hospitals, reception centres, and evacuation routes). Participants, who included a range of individuals representing Police, Fire and Rescue Services, Emergency Medical Services (paramedics), Emergency Social Services, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Human Resources, Emergency Managers, and other available program managers were placed into simulated EOC rooms. A **disaster psychosocial professional** was assigned to three of the four EOCs as the Team Support Worker (TSW).

*“Disaster Psychosocial Service professionals are qualified counsellors, social workers and psychologists, trained in providing psychological and social supports, including assessment, psychological first aid and stress management during a disaster.”*

The exercise scenario begins 18 hours after the EOC was activated. Participants were told that aftershocks were continuing to occur and that initial damage assessments indicate extensive damage to infrastructure and buildings, including the primary EOC. A temporary EOC has been set-up. It is smaller and lacks some of the materials and tools normally provided in an EOC. Fortunately, electronic communication with a central command centre and communication with incident commanders in the field has been established, although there may be limited connectivity. Players are advised that flexibility will be key as they may be required to deviate from their planned and practiced EOC procedures.

Players are advised that any relevant operational and tactical aspects of the response will be managed as the exercise unfolds so that they can concentrate on the human dimension of the EOC operation. During the exercise, they are prompted to complete specific tasks—some of which can be completed in minutes while others can take upwards of an hour. These tasks may include making decisions regarding where to deploy first responders, managing EOC staff, briefing the media, providing policy guidance, and preparing plans and recommendations. In each case, Players rely on their training, experience, and plans to decide the most appropriate course of action.

Players are advised that there are no “right” or “wrong” decisions when determining the course of action to take. Rather the focus of this exercise is on exploring the psychosocial aspects of their decision making on those impacted by the earthquake.

### **EXERCISE – FEBRUARY 3, 2015**

The SIMTEC team conducted the Black Fault functional tabletop exercise on February 3, 2015 in the Dr. Donald B. Rix Public Safety Simulation Building at JIBC. Four rooms were set up as temporary EOC facilities. Data collected in this exercise was analyzed and used to create the final web-based exercise.

- Each exercise participant received an email with a link to the JIBC newscast with breaking news of the earthquake and the community-specific damage assessment 18 hours prior to the start of the exercise.
- An introduction was provided to Players about the simulation exercise and the supplies and resources available in each pod.
- The training video from Exercise Winter Blues was shown—it highlights best practices in promoting worker-care and providing psychosocial support to EOC personnel. A three-hour simulation exercise was conducted; it was audio/video-recorded.
- Researchers, evaluators, and simulator actors observed the exercise in real-time from the control room. Invited guests observed the exercise via audio-visual connection.
- A psychosocial debrief of the simulation exercise was held with all present.
- Researchers conducted post-exercise function-specific focus groups— these included groups for the EOC’s, evaluators, simulator actors, media, and guests. These were recorded and transcribed.
- A facilitated large group debrief was conducted allowing participants to share their experiences and reflections from the exercise.

Both the focus groups and the large group debrief gathered information on the realism of the exercise, the role of the team support worker (TSW), and the decision-making processes in the EOCs. Many of the questions concentrated on the Players’ perceptions of the TSW, including their effectiveness, role and responsibilities, and potential influence on decision making and actions taken in the EOCs.

The audio recordings were transcribed and analyzed, and video footage was analyzed for non-verbal behaviours. During the data analysis process, the SIMTEC research team identified relevant key common themes that emerged from the exercises:

- In the fast-paced environment of an EOC, stressful situations arise when personnel are required to make quick decisions or allocate limited resources without the necessary information and when personnel are required to interact and/or respond to the media.
- How the EOC Director introduces, interacts with, and supports the TSW position can influence how EOC personnel respond to TSW interventions and how they practice worker-care and team-care.
- The TSW can provide calming, compassion, encouragement, and facilitate positive interaction within the EOC which goes beyond taking breaks or connecting with family.
- The TSW is valued when they are known to EOC personnel or when they demonstrate their appreciation for the pressures of the EOC. This requires that TSW's be properly trained in basic EOC operations management and that they be included in EOC practice exercises.
- Collaboration amongst EOC personnel can facilitate information sharing, task and resource prioritization, and consensus building however, this must be balanced with situational awareness that ensures timely decision-making, role/function clarity, and seamless operations (achieved through adherence to emergency response management goals, holding regular briefings, and using checklists/visuals/maps).
- In the initial chaos of responding to a crisis, the EOC may be operating within difficult conditions that will require flexibility as personnel deviate from their planned and practiced management procedures or processes.
- The media can be a valuable resource and support to the EOC; they can be an ally in relaying information or instructions to the public. However, in order for this to relationship to work effectively, the media require accurate, timely information.

Later, members of the EWG met with the SIMTEC research team to review the exercise feedback and findings and to view the training video on best practices and strategies for integrating the TSW into the EOC. Minor adjustments were made to the exercise and training video following this meeting, and after analyzing and incorporating the data and the feedback from participants.

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## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE EOC**

Along with their other research questions, the SMTEC research team was interested in examining the relationships within the EOC thus, they asked Players in the February 2015 exercise to complete a pre- and post-exercise questionnaire measuring Emotional Intelligence

(EI). Emotional intelligence is the faculty to take action and guide our thinking processes, based on the acknowledgment of one’s own and other peoples’ feelings and emotions. <sup>1</sup>

All EI scores for the participants were within the normal range. On average, the EI scores among all participants decreased after the simulation, however this difference was not statistically significant. The decrease in emotional intelligence levels might be attributed to the stressful environment of the simulated EOC, which was designed to reflect the unpredictable nature of a real earthquake scenario and how the EOC would operate under those circumstances. Moreover, it is possible that the participants’ EI scores may not have statistically significantly decreased after the event because each pod had a dedicated TSW who may have intervened to provide psychosocial care before the participants’ EI scores could decrease further.

The EI scores across all participants in the four age categories (19-35, 36-45, 46-54, and 55+) also changed between the pre and post-exercise survey, however they were also not statistically significant. Interestingly, the youngest age group (19-35) was the only age category that had an average *increase* in EI scores after the simulation, while the oldest age category (55+) had the smallest change in their EI scores.

Among the participants in the Black Fault simulation exercise, there was one statistically significant difference ( $p=0.03$ ) between the post-exercise emotional intelligence scores of the female participants (127.6) and the male participants (121.2). The results of the EI survey indicate that female EOC personnel had a higher EI score after the simulation than the male participants. This finding may suggest that female EOC personnel may have more resilient EI scores than their male colleagues, or it may imply that women gain additional confidence when working in EOC environments. The SIMTEC team intends to continue exploring the role that EI can play in an EOC and the benefits of employing a diversity of EOC members.

## EXERCISE AGENDA

A sample agenda for the day, including timings, is as follows:

Time Required	Activity	Comments
12 minutes	WELCOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Opening remarks</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Salovey, P. & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9, 185-211.

18 minutes	TRAINING VIDEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Training Video by Players</li> </ul>
8 minutes	EXERCISE BRIEFING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise briefing</li> <li>• Updates (JIBC TV and government)</li> </ul>
22 minutes	EOC PREPARATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Player introductions and roles</li> <li>• Select TSW</li> <li>• Identify potential psychosocial impacts</li> <li>• Review damage assessments</li> <li>• Move to temporary EOC</li> </ul>
180 minutes (3 hours)	Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start</li> <li>• End</li> </ul>
90 minutes	DEBRIEFING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychosocial debriefing</li> <li>• Focus group conducted</li> <li>• Exercise debrief</li> <li>• Player feedback gathered</li> <li>• Exercise Evaluation Guides gathered</li> </ul>
<b>330 minutes</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	
<b>(5 hours 30 min)</b>		

## GETTING STARTED – OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a Controller, you are responsible for making sure the exercise is planned, organized, and delivered effectively. The information provided in this section will assist you to ensure your exercise is a success.

### IDENTIFYING PLAYERS

This exercise is intended primarily for responders and local government staff who have already completed some EOC related training. If there are some personnel participating that have not taken EOC training, it is best to pair them with those who have been trained.

This exercise brings together representatives from local government agencies to practice their response to the earthquake. Ideally, Players will include representatives from Police, Fire & Rescue Services, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Social Services, Emergency Management, Public Works, and Administration. If you are unable to find a Player from each agency, you are still able to conduct the exercise; however, the EOC Director will need to ensure that the functions of that agency are still able to be performed.

In all cases, Players will draw on their real world experience as they complete the tasks assigned to their position.

Throughout this document, the terms “Players” and “participants” are used interchangeably.

*Team Support Workers provide psychosocial support to EOC personnel and frontline staff as well as offer resources regarding the psychosocial needs of community residents.*

### TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS

A Team Support Worker, (TSW) should be assigned to your EOC team. It may be possible that a local organization (e.g. Victim Services, Disaster Psychosocial Services or Emergency Social) may be able to provide an individual who is trained and willing to participate. If unavailable, the role of TSW can be taken on by a member of your staff or EOC team. In fact, some communities who have trained TSW’s as part of their staff have shared how useful it is to have an individual who they already know and trust providing support to their team. Any member of your staff can be a TSW. Just remember that if someone from your staff has been assigned the TSW role, their other responsibilities during the exercise may have to be reassigned.

Training materials for TSW’s are provided as part of this exercise and can all be found on Black Fault webpage. Materials include:

- The Black Fault Training Video and accompanying brochure (2.3)
- A Team Support Worker Guidebook which outlines practical tips and strategies for TSW's before, during and after an EOC activation (2.5)

## PRE-TRAINING

In order to ensure an enriched learning experience, it is strongly recommended that exercise Players take part in Emergency Operations Centre training prior to participating. Ideally, all exercise Players will also have some practical experience. For further information on Emergency Operations Centre training, please contact the JIBC's Emergency Management Division at [www.jibc.ca/emergency](http://www.jibc.ca/emergency).

Ideally, participants should receive some education about the psychosocial stressors that occur when working in an EOC during an emergency. The SIMTEC website offers a number of resources, training videos and pamphlets about identifying and managing stressors. Our Winter Blues! training video provides an excellent overview of these issues and can be found here: <http://simtec.jibc.ca/node/46>

## DETERMINING EXERCISE NEEDS

Exercise Black Fault is designed to explore how EOC personnel consider and integrate the psychosocial aspects of an effective earthquake response into their strategic and tactical decision making as they chose to allocate limited resources, to communicate internally with each other and externally with responders, partners, media, and the public, and to address worker-care. Specifically, the three key objectives of the exercise were to:

1. Examine the processes used by EOC personnel when formulating high-risk, high-consequence decisions and when communicating tactical-level decisions with responders and response partners.
2. Examine worker-care strategies implemented by EOC personnel in their response to the earthquake.
3. Examine the role of the TSW in helping manage individual worker-care and group dynamics during a high-stress event.

Each of the inputs delivered during the exercise will prompt Players to perform tasks related to one of these objectives. These tasks are relatively broad; if there are activities or practices specific to an agency that Players would like to see validated, they are encouraged to develop additional objectives and expected actions.



Not all inputs are required for the exercise to successfully be completed. As the Controller, you may choose to omit or adjust some of the paper inputs to better meet the needs of your organization.

## IDENTIFYING EXERCISE STAFF

In order to run the exercise, you will require Controllers, Evaluators, and Simulators.

- **Controllers** will provide inputs to Players, monitor the exercise, respond to Player questions, and manage Player activities as necessary.
- **Evaluators** will observe Player actions and determine the degree to which these activities achieve the objectives of the exercise.
- **Simulators** will participate in the following ways:
  - **By phone:** throughout the exercise, participants will receive phone calls from a number of organizations (e.g. Fire & Rescue Service, Police Service personnel; Emergency Medical Services (paramedics); Provincial and Federal government emergency management) throughout the exercise. If you have the capacity, you can invite individuals who represent each of these organizations to attend the exercise and make the scripted phone calls. Otherwise, one or two individuals can be assigned the responsibility of simulating calls from all the organizations throughout the exercise
  - **Entering the pod:** throughout the exercise seven people will physically enter the pod and interact directly with Players. These individuals will simulate: an irate citizen who demands access to the EOC; a security guard protecting the EOC from unauthorized visitors; a member of the EOC who has been working since the initial earthquake; a Deputy Fire Chief in uniform; a Police Chief in uniform; a councillor with local government. Ideally, you would have 6 different people simulate these roles but if that is not possible, you can cast one of two individuals in multiple roles and provide them with a small collection of simple costume changes (e.g. hats, coats, props) for realism.
  - **The runner:** One individual will be in charge of delivering and picking up EOC documents throughout the exercise. They will be required to briefly interact with EOC staff but for the most part, they will be organizing paper injects and ensuring that EOC staff submit documents when they are due.

**The media:** Throughout the exercise, there are a number of media injects in which stories and tweets are provided by media personnel. If possible, try to contact a local media outlet to see if one of their reporters might like to participate. Often, reporters are appreciative of the

opportunity to practice their response during an emergency. If this is not possible, find a simulator who is able to act as a media personnel throughout the exercise by seeking comment and incident information from the EOC and by developing stories throughout the exercise. Outside of their timed injects, this person should be given a fair amount of freedom to interact with EOC members and develop stories and tweets as they see fit.

In total, you should have a minimum of 5 individuals helping you (the controller) throughout the exercise.

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### **INJECT 31 – AN INEBRIATED EOC MEMBER**

In addition to the exercise staff mentioned above, you will have to select one exercise participant who is willing to do some acting in the exercise. In confidence, select an EOC member, who is willing to slowly show symptoms of inebriation throughout the exercise. As the exercise progresses, this EOC member will become increasingly drunk, showing signs of lethargy, incompetence or clumsiness. If you wish, you may provide this person with a small flask. Ensure that the participant is comfortable in the role and that they understand that they must keep their role a secret. Also, note that this inject is optional.

### **SETTING A DATE AND TIME**

The exercise will take approximately five hours and 30 minutes to complete. The first 60 minutes will focus on briefing Players and will include providing an update on the earthquake, setting the tone for the psychosocial focus by showing the training video, and orientating Players to their EOC. The next three hours will focus on exercise play. The final 90 minutes will be used to debrief Players. The materials have been developed with a start time of 9:00 am. When delivering your own exercise, it is ideal to schedule it with a 9:00 am start time, so that times on document injects match real time.

When determining a date for your session it is always best to give participants at least two weeks' notice.

### **ARRANGING A LOCATION**

Exercise Black Fault will make use of a specific location known throughout this document as the “pod.” The pod will represent a community-based EOC.

The setting for this exercise is a temporary EOC facility; it should be smaller and lack some of the materials and tools normally found in the primary EOC. Try to select a location away from

the office or other distractions and that can accommodate a meeting space for the EOC, for the Simulator Actors, and for the media. The meeting space should accommodate the number of participants attending—a school classroom, a large office, or community centre facilities would be suitable. Ideally, you will require:

- an EOC room
- a room for the Simulators
- a room for the media
- a room for the Controller to run the exercise

However it's possible that the Controller, Simulators and media can share a room.

## SUPPLIES

The EOC should have the following supplies:

- Flip charts or whiteboards
- Basic office supplies (paper, pens, markers)
- One computer with speakers for playing the input videos
- A telephone with direct contact to the telephone simulator(s). Cell phones are also appropriate.

Try to provide the simulators and the EOC participants with the phone number or extension that they will have to call in order to contact each other. If you wish, you can set up multiple phones for the simulators, each representing different organizations. If you do this, be sure to provide a phone list of all the necessary numbers. No other communications equipment will be necessary. **Players should not be in contact with actual agencies during the exercise** – all communications are between the Players and the Simulator actors or the Controller.

In addition, the media will require a computer and printer.

## CATERING

Catering should be ordered for this exercise. The level of catering required is at the discretion of the Controller but should include refreshments for a coffee break and a lunch service. One of the key learning points of any exercise is the importance on taking breaks and the need to provide healthy, nutritional food for EOC personnel.

Fresh fruit and vegetables, sandwiches, and hot and cold beverages (coffee, tea, juice, and water) should be made available to all exercise participants. Include decaffeinated beverage options to discourage the over-consumption of caffeine and its negative effects on the body.

Energy bars and bottles of water should be included in the pod for times when Players need a quick snack while continuing to work.

## PREPARING MATERIALS

This exercise is most effective when data from the EOC's community is integrated into the exercise materials. The list of the information required to develop these materials is detailed below. Some of these materials are available for download from the SIMTEC website and some of these materials will need to be developed with information from the local authority or be sourced from the participating agencies. **It is recommended that you download all of the videos.** While you have the option to stream them during the exercise, there is the potential for small interruptions in the feed that may impact your exercise timing.

Please note that the materials for this exercise are focused on a catastrophic earthquake impacting southwestern British Columbia. Some customization work will be required in order to deliver this exercise outside of British Columbia, including identifying contextual details for the scenario and updating documents and/or videos.

In exercise development, it was determined that creating generic versions of the materials would be impractical as the hazard profile for earthquakes differ significantly between provinces and territories. Additionally, the materials require specific details on the location, level of damage, and community impact for each participating local authority. General forms are provided to update and/or customize the exercise materials (highlighted in yellow) with the information necessary for the EOC to fully participate in the exercise.

Take the following steps in order to prepare the documents for the exercise

---

### STEP 1 – SET THE SCENE

In order to customize the documents that you will be using throughout the exercise, take a few moments to establish the following details about the earthquake event:

1. The city in which the exercise is located: \_\_\_\_\_
2. The names of at least three other communities that are impacted by the earthquake
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_

- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Milestone dates for the exercise:
- a. Date of the initial earthquake (the day before the exercise):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Date of the exercise (18 hours after the initial earthquake):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- i. NOTE: For the purpose of this document, the assumption is that the exercise will start at 9:00 am. As such, initial notifications about the earthquake would be sent to Players at 3:00 pm the day preceding the exercise. If the intent is to run the exercise at a different time, the timing will need to be updated on all documents
4. The provincial or state emergency program office: \_\_\_\_\_
- a. It's location after an earthquake: \_\_\_\_\_
5. The provincial/state/regional leader: \_\_\_\_\_
6. The provincial/state/regional capital: \_\_\_\_\_
7. The name of a fault line that is likely to produce a catastrophic (magnitude 8 or greater) earthquake in the region: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Emergency management legislation that specifies the authority granted to the local authority to initiate evacuations within their boundaries: \_\_\_\_\_
9. One health authority (or provincial/territorial equivalent) that will be referenced during the exercise: \_\_\_\_\_
10. The name of a long-term care facility that will partially collapse during the exercise: \_\_\_\_\_
- a. Address: \_\_\_\_\_
11. The name of a local college or university: \_\_\_\_\_
12. The name of drug store franchise: \_\_\_\_\_
13. A significant landmark in the community (i.e.: cenotaph, statue, public art work):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- a. Location of Landmark: \_\_\_\_\_
14. The name of a local hospital that would still be functioning following a major earthquake: \_\_\_\_\_
15. An intersection where a sinkhole will occur \_\_\_\_\_
16. The name of a councillor with the local authority who will be found dead during the exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Note: The councillor does not need to participate in the exercise, however they should be briefed that they will be identified during the exercise. This name can also be invented.
17. A low-income housing complex and an art gallery that are located close to one another:
- a. Housing: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Address: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Art Gallery \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Address: \_\_\_\_\_
18. Neighbouring Operations Centre that can support the EOC, ideally in a different region:  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. The telephone number for the Simulators: \_\_\_\_\_

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## STEP 2 – PREPARE THE SCRIPTS FOR THE SIMULATORS

Download the Exercise Black Fault Simulator Scripts (1. 5) and open it in Word or a similar text editing program.

You will notice that this document has sections in it that are highlighted in yellow with an accompanying number (e.g. 2). Go through the scripts and find all highlighted yellow sections and replace these sections with the information that corresponds to the numbers identified in Step 1. For example if the number 10 is highlighted in yellow, replace that with the name of the Care Facility identified as number 10 in Step 1. Anytime you see name, you can invent a name or the simulator can use their real name.

Print of the full document and separate it into piles based on who will be completing each of the roles identified in different colours at the top of each page. Put all these documents in the room where your simulators will be during the exercise.

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## STEP 3 – PREPARE THE PAPER INJECTS

Download the Exercise Black Fault Paper Injects (1.4) and open it in Word or a similar text editing program.

This document also has highlighted sections with numbers. Follow the same procedure as you did for Step 2. Each time you see a highlighted number, populate it with the information established in Step 1.

Print of the full document except Injects 1a, 1b and 1c. These documents will be sent to participants by email so you do not need to print hard copies. You can print hard copies for your own reference.

Put aside Inject 4a, 4b and 4c. These will be delivered to participants on the morning of the exercise before they enter the EOC. See 'Player Briefing Injects 2-7' below for more details.

Put the rest of the injects with the Runner's Script Documents. The runner will be delivering these throughout the exercise.

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#### STEP 4 – PREPARE THE MEDIA SIMULATORS

Prepare an email for the media participants and inform them of the following information:

- 1) Throughout the exercise they are allowed to make contact with the EOC pod at any time but they must be respectful if requested by the pod to leave.
- 2) At Inject 13, the media will be asked to introduce themselves for the first time to the EOC. At this time, they can ask questions and try to get as much information as possible from the EOC team.
- 3) Throughout the exercise, they should be tweeting any news they might receive from the EOC. They will do this by typing their tweets on a word document on the computer and then printing the tweets off in order to deliver them to the EOC. **Remind the media that they should not actually use Twitter or any other actual social media outlets during the exercise.**
- 4) The media can write as many news articles as they like and deliver them to the pod throughout the exercise, however the following two stories must be completed at the appropriate times:
  - a. Inject 26: Based on the information that they have collected, the media will write a story about the earthquake events to date, however, part of the story must be inaccurate. They will deliver this story to the pod.
  - b. Inject 32: See example inject provided in the Exercise Black Fault Paper Injects (1.4). Reporters can deliver the sample document or they can write up a similar document, based on what they have established from contact with the EOC. This inject must contain information about the death of a firefighter.

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## STEP 5 – PREPARE EOC DOCUMENTS

When participants arrive in the EOC, they are informed that they are replacing a skeleton crew. The skeleton crew will have left the EOC in a very messy state with papers scattered everywhere. The majority of these papers will not be important and will have no relevant information on them. There are, however, a series of documents that are relevant to the exercise and will also need to be prepared:

Download Exercise Black Fault EOC Documents (2.8) and open it in Word or a similar text editing program. To update these documents, you will need to identify the following:

- 1) Milestone dates for the exercise (same as in Step 2):
  - a. Date of the initial earthquake (the day before the exercise):  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Date of the exercise (18 hours after the initial earthquake):  
\_\_\_\_\_
    - NOTE: For the purpose of this document, the assumption is that the exercise will start at 9:00 am. As such, initial notifications about the earthquake would be sent to Players at 3:00 pm the day preceding the exercise. If the intent is to run the exercise at a different time, the timing will need to be updated on all documents
- 2) An area in a neighbouring community where train tracks move underneath a major road or highway:
  - a. Neighbouring Community: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Highway: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. A known intersection near that location:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) The location of a gas station that is on fire. The gas station should be located near a major intersection: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) The name of an industrial park with a building that could potentially house common pool chemicals. For the purpose of the exercise, the address alone is sufficient – the business does not need to be named:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) The intersection of a water main, whose rupture will impact a nearby building and undermine a major road: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) The location of two hospitals in a neighbouring community:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Address: \_\_\_\_\_



- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) A reception centre \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Address \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) A 2<sup>nd</sup> Reception Centre that can accommodate pets: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Address \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Police Station Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) The telephone number for the Simulators (Same as in Step 2:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Once you have identified the above information, you can populate the Exercise Black Fault EOC Documents (2.8) by inserting the above information. All parts that need to be populated are highlighted in blue accompanied by a number (e.g. 2). These numbers correspond to the items identified above.

Next, download the Exercise Black Fault Supplementary EOC documents (2.9). Follow the instructions in this document to populate the sticky notes and notepaper contained in this document (**Note:** When updating the dates on each document, the existing ‘February 3’ date should be updated to the date of the exercise delivery. The existing February 2 date should be updated to the date preceding the exercise.) Combine these with the Exercise Black Fault EOC documents. On the day of the exercise, these will be placed in the EOC before the participants arrive.

**Important Note:** The final report in the Exercise Black Fault EOC Documents is a resource request from the police service. This will be used during Inject 25. When the simulator playing the police officer goes into the EOC, they must bring this document with them, in order to question the police representative about their reasons for not having responded to the request. It is advisable to print a second version of this document for the police representative.

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## MATERIALS FOR CONTROLLERS

These materials are necessary to manage and evaluate the exercise.

Item	Number	Description
<b>1.1 Exercise Black Fault Controller</b>	1 copy per Controller	This document provides an overview of the exercise. This includes how to prepare for delivery of the exercise, how to control

<b>Guide (this document)</b>	exercise play, and how to evaluate/follow-up with Players once the exercise has been completed.
<b>1.2 Exercise Black Fault Master Sequence of Events List</b>	1 copy per Controller  The Master Sequence of Events List (MSEL) is a chronological timeline of Player actions and scripted messages and events that will occur during the exercise. This document is used by the Controller to identify when inputs are to be sent to Players. The MSEL also identifies when Runners should drop off or pickup documents.
<b>1.3 Exercise Black Fault Exercise Inputs</b>	1 copy for the Controller and 1 copy for each Simulator  During the exercise, information is sent to Players based on the timings listed in the MSEL. This information is provided through a series of vignettes found on the “Input Video” as well as through pre-scripted phone calls made by Simulators.
<b>1.4 Exercise Black Fault Paper Injects</b>	1 copy  These are all of the printed paper injects that will be delivered by the runner throughout the exercise. You will have formatted these prior to the event based on Instructions above. These documents should be printed in colour on standard letter sized paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input 4a – Damage Assessments</li> <li>• Input 4b – Declaration of State of Local Emergency</li> <li>• Input 4c – Psychosocial Impacts Template</li> <li>• Input 10 - Incident Report - Collapsed Care Facility</li> <li>• Input 14a - Decision Template</li> <li>• Input 14b -Handwritten Memo – Volunteers</li> <li>• Input 18 - Decision Template</li> <li>• Input 24 - Resource Request – Landmarks</li> <li>• Input 28 - HUSAR</li> <li>• Input 33 - Sensitive Briefing Document</li> </ul>
<b>1.5 Exercise Black Fault Simulator Scripts</b>	These are all the scripts developed for the simulators and the runner. You will have

formatted these prior to the event based on Instructions above.

**1.6 Exercise Black Fault Evaluation Guide**

1 copy per Evaluator

The Exercise Evaluation Guide provides instructions to evaluators regarding the recording of their observations of Player actions and recommendations for improvement planning. The guide becomes a record of the level and quality of Player performance, and as such, is used to develop an After Action Report and Improvement Plan.

## MATERIALS FOR THE EOC POD

These materials will be used by the EOC Players (items in **red** refer to documents that need to be created or obtained by the Controller prior to the exercise).

Item	Number	Description
<b>Local Authority Emergency Management Plan</b>	1 copy	This plan should describe the management structures and agreements created by the local government in order to support the management of emergency events.
<b>Optional: Local Authority Earthquake Plan</b>	1 copy (if available)	Some communities have pre-identified activities that would be performed to repair and protect critical infrastructure and to undertake business continuity activities. If this document is available, it should be obtained for the exercise.
<b>Local Resources &amp; Demographics</b>	1 copy	Resource information should include the resources maintained by each agency under local authority control. Demographic information should include population numbers and distribution in the region.
<b>Mutual Aid Agreement</b>	1 copy	During the exercise, Players may determine the need to access mutual aid from neighbouring communities. If available, mutual aid agreements would describe the mechanisms for obtaining mutual aid.

<b>2.1 EOC Response Goals Poster</b>	1 copy	This poster reminds EOC members of their priorities during the exercise.
<b>2.2 Leadership Poster</b>	1 copy	The leadership poster provides a cue to staff regarding the types of behaviours that are consistent with safe and positive leadership practices.
<b>2.3 SIMTEC Exercise Black Fault Training Video Brochure</b>	1 copy	The brochure describes important highlights from the training video.
<b>2.4 Stress Tip Cards</b>	1 copy for each participant	These cards should be printed on 10.16 cm X 7.62 cm cards and made available in the EOC. They can be ordered free of charge from the Emergency Social Services Office at Emergency Management BC at <a href="http://www.ess.bc.ca/pubs/workercare.htm">http://www.ess.bc.ca/pubs/workercare.htm</a>
<b>2.5 SIMTEC Team Support Worker Training Manual</b>	As many as needed	This manual can be given to the designated TSW before the exercise in order to prepare for the exercise.
<b>2.6 Exercise Black Fault EOC Forms Package</b>	As many as needed by EOC	During the exercise, the pod will be asked to develop messages to the community. This template form provides a structure for Players to record their responses.
<b>2.7 Exercise Black Fault EOC Information Sheets</b>	1 copy	These sheets contain information about certain chemicals that the EOC team might encounter. All of these documents should be placed in the EOC prior to the beginning of the exercise
<b>2.8 Exercise Black Fault EOC Documents and;</b>  <b>2.9 Exercise Black Fault EOC Supplementary Documents</b>	1 copy	These documents include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The EOC documents that you edited prior to the exercise</li> <li>b. The supplementary documents that you edited prior to the exercise</li> </ol>

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All of these documents should be placed in the EOC prior to the beginning of the exercise

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These are the videos required to run the exercise.

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Item	Number	Description
<b>Training Video</b>	1 copy to play on Computer	This video provides Players with the key psychosocial training points in preparation for the exercise. It is intended to be played prior to the exercise. This Controller Guide provides additional information to assist Controllers to answer any questions regarding the training points.
<b>Exercise Black Fault Input Video - BC</b>	1 copy to play on Computer	This video contains a series of vignettes that describe events going on related to the earthquake. <b>This version of the video contains specific location references and is appropriate for communities located in southwestern British Columbia.</b> It is to be played to Players during the exercise.
<b>Exercise Black Fault Input Video - Generic</b>	1 copy to play on Computer	This video contains a series of vignettes that describe events going on related to the earthquake. <b>This version of the video does not contain specific location references and is appropriate for all communities in Canada that have identified earthquakes as a risk.</b> It is to be played to Players during the exercise.

## CONTROLLER PREPARATION

When controlling the exercise, it is important to provide clear direction to all those involved. Review your materials in advance so that you are clear and confident during the exercise. When introducing the exercise it is always important to reinforce the exercise objectives. This provides Players with a clear understanding of the anticipated outcomes. Have your room set-up and all

materials prepared in advance so that you can focus on welcoming Players at the start of the session.

When the exercise is underway, the Controller monitors the exercise and coordinates the Simulators in providing information to the Players. Throughout the exercise, both the Controller and the Simulators may need to provide assistance in clarifying the information provided in inputs, providing mentoring, and helping resolve conflict. However, the exercise should not become an instructional session. The intent of the exercise is for Players to work through the materials on their own. The scenario, inputs, tasks, and Simulator communications should prompt Players in addressing each of the objectives. During the exercise, if there is significant need to explain processes and practices, then this likely identifies a need for further training prior to subsequent exercising.

Most of the Simulator messages are scripted though there may be times when information needs to be identified on-the-spot. When this occurs, the Simulators should provide only the information that is necessary for the Players to complete their given tasks. Additionally, this unscripted information should be shared with all other Simulators.

It is likely the simulator(s) will receive information requests for agencies that are not specifically identified in the exercise materials. In these cases, the simulator(s) should draw on their experience and knowledge of non-participating agencies in providing basic information back to Players. They have the option of telling Players that information is not currently available from an agency.

All Simulators will attempt to provide answers and feedback based on how agencies would most likely respond to each request. The Controllers and Simulators need to be very familiar with the exercise materials so that they can provide appropriate feedback.

Throughout the exercise, the Runner will drop off and collect various documents. These documents can be reviewed and evaluated based on agency standards.

## GETTING STARTED – PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the Controller, you are responsible for the administration of the exercise, and the organization of all of the necessary resources and supplies for the day. You should not be participating directly in the exercise; even though in your day-to-day job you may act in a supervisory, management, or command role. This section provides information on what to keep in mind when preparing to conduct Exercise Black Fault with your EOC personnel, including:

- The presence of strong, positive leadership and advanced planning to maximize training benefits
- The importance of the physical and emotional well-being of EOC team members
- Awareness of potential psychosocial stressors and reactions during the exercise
- Availability of appropriate psychosocial supports for EOC members
- Supporting nutritional needs

**These principles remain the same, regardless of activities at the EOC and the number of people within it.**

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Several common reactions were identified among exercise Players, based on observations from SIMTEC's previous simulation exercises, including:

- Reluctance to take breaks
- Tension between first responder (uniformed) and non-first responder (non-uniformed) Players
- The importance of clear leaders in the decision-making process
- Individuals being excluded from the decision-making process, not being heard by other team members, and missing opportunities to articulate their views on a specific issue
- Non-verbal signs of stress, fatigue, frustration such as sweating; face in hands; rapid clicking of pens; getting distracted and/or separating oneself from the rest of the team and no longer providing input in the decision-making process

This exercise is designed to test the Players for their ability to respond to regular EOC actions and to take into account psychosocial considerations. A strong leader first considers the physical and emotional well-being of all EOC personnel, as this is the first priority in any organized emergency response.

As the Controller, it will be important for you to assess, in advance of the exercise, the psychosocial **issues** that may come up during the exercise and how these can impact each EOC member. Make use of the template provided (Inject 4c) in order to brainstorm some of the issues that may arise.

## PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

To ensure that your team's physical needs are met throughout the duration of the exercise, advanced planning is required. Be sure to make available **beverages** such as water and juice, and

**healthy food options** such as fruit, sandwiches, and energy bars. It is important to include decaffeinated beverage options. While many team members will be accustomed to choose caffeinated coffee and soft drinks in an effort to remain alert, discouraging excess consumption of caffeine will help to reduce over-stimulation of workers' internal systems and the "crash" effect that follows.

Observations from previous exercises showed that very few workers took breaks, and signs of stress and fatigue were exhibited by many of the individuals. As the intensity of the exercise increased, the EOC's ability to make clear decisions appeared to decrease. Taking breaks is a key training point in this exercise. When workers do not look after themselves, consequences such as worker burnout, an increased risk of errors in judgment, and hostility among team members can occur. Strong leadership and modeling by the EOC Director is key to ensuring that members are **taking appropriate breaks** in order to manage their stress levels and complete their operational tasks effectively.

## EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

The simulation exercise incorporates various **stressors** that can be experienced during a response to a catastrophic earthquake, including:

- Serious injury or death - news and images of the serious injury and death of children and other civilians; sounds of people screaming or buildings collapsing
- Information – too much, too little, or conflicting information, information gaps, inaccurate information, information received via social media
- Political – pressure related to status, power, and disclosure of information
- EOC environment – high noise levels; extreme work load; safety issues; time pressures
- Media – Increased and/or negative media scrutiny of emergency operations

Given the range of experiences that various EOC personnel bring, there is also a **range of reactions** to typical stressors. Positive leadership within the EOC is crucial for assessing the variety of psychosocial needs, for ensuring appropriate support, and for promoting the value of embedding psychosocial supports within all EOC activities.

## PSYCHOSOCIAL REACTIONS TO STRESSORS

The range of reactions among EOC Players includes both verbal and non-verbal behaviours and can include the following:



- Behavioural—pounding the table; attempting to mediate; leaving the room in frustration; yelling; not listening attentively when requested
- Cognitive—appearing confused; forgetting information; writing things down; making lists; setting priorities
- Emotional—using black humour; expressing rage or anger; expressing joy or sadness; crying
- Physiological—sweating excessively, trembling, or shaking; increasing caffeine intake; getting up to stretch; keeping hydrated
- Spiritual—questioning one’s religious faith or criticizing another’s faith; praying according to one’s faith

It is important that Players do not separate emotions from tasks; that they not avoid addressing their emotions in order to complete operational tasks or prevent appearing weak or unable to handle the situation. It is equally important that any disturbing information be acknowledged, respected, and addressed. Leadership in sharing information, asking for acknowledgement, and providing opportunities for support to EOC personnel is imperative to address the different reactions that occur as Players progress through the exercise.

It is essential to include a TSW, trained to work in disasters, in the EOC team. This person is available to provide psychosocial support to EOC personnel who may be triggered or stressed, to organize breaks, to monitor worker and team care, and to conduct a brief demobilization with the team.

## DELIVERING THE EXERCISE

Once you are ready to begin the exercise, there are a number of tasks to perform.

### SETTING UP THE POD AND CONTROL ROOM

Prior to the exercise, you will need to setup the pod used by Players as well as the Control room.

To setup the Player room, you will need to perform the following tasks:

1. Confirm the room is available for the entire length of the exercise (approximately 5.5 hours)
2. Print out/gather all 'Materials for the EOC pod' and lay these materials out in the room and place them in the EOC. Everything in the 'Materials for the EOC pod' table above should be available in the EOC before the exercise begins.
3. Gather office supplies for use by Players (pens, pencils, paper, laptops, etc.)
4. Post the EOC Posters in the room—Players will use these objectives and priorities to structure their initial actions and will update, remove, or add to these objectives and priorities as the exercise unfolds
5. Try to create an atmosphere of chaos in the room. Scatter all the documents in a disorganized manner. Feel free to decorate with old paper cups, empty water bottles or snack wrappers in order to give the impression that last EOC team was disorganized and stressed.
6. Ensure the room is accessible by telephone to receive inputs from Simulators. This may involve placing a telephone in the room, confirming an existing telephone works and is available for the exercise, or confirming Players will be bringing cell phones to the exercise
7. Bring in adequate water and healthy snacks for Players during the exercise
8. Locate the computer so that it can be seen by all the Players—the computer playing the inputs file should be placed prominently in the room.

To setup the Control room, you will need to perform the following tasks:

1. Confirm the room is available for the entire length of the exercise (approximately 5.5 hours)
2. Print out or gather the Controller and Simulator resources identified earlier and lay these materials out for easy access. Print copies of the Simulator scripts and provide to the Simulators

3. Gather office supplies for use by Controller and Simulators (pens, pencils, paper, laptops, etc.)
4. Provide the runner with all the Exercise Black Fault Paper Injects (1.4) and a MSEL so that they know when they need to deliver the documents.
5. Bring in adequate water and healthy snacks for Controllers and Simulators during the exercise

## 18 HOURS BEFORE THE EXERCISE – INJECT 1

The day before the exercise begins, you will need to send the following injects to EOC members 18 hours before the exercise is scheduled to begin:

- Inject 1a- Introduction Email
- Inject 1b – Email – Damage Assessment
- Inject 1c – Social Media – Twitter – High Level Damage Assessment

You should have already edited Inject 1b and it can simply be sent as a PDF attachment along with Inject 1a. These injects will provide participants with the information needed in order to arrive at the exercise the following morning. Inject 1a is the content of the email that you will send. Feel free to edit Inject 1a with other information that Players might need about exercise logistics.

You will note that in inject 1a, there are two video links. One was designed for exercises in British Columbia, the other was designed for exercise elsewhere. Be sure to delete the link that is not relevant to your exercise.

## PLAYER BRIEFING – INJECTS 2-7

On the day of the exercise gather all participants, simulators and Controllers in one room in for a briefing. During this briefing, the Controller should provide an overview of the SIMTEC project; describe the structure of the exercise; review the types of communications that will be used during the exercise; and review the materials and resources available in the pod. The Controller should inform the Players that they will be prompted to perform specific tasks during the exercise. Some tasks have a set timeframe which will be communicated to Players; other tasks are open ended and take multiple hours to complete. Once this is done, show the training video on the role of the Team Support Worker in an EOC ( ). This briefing will take approximately 35-40 minutes.

Following this, play the introductory video (Inject 2 – Welcome to Exercise), the second news report (Inject 3 – JITC News – 18 Hours into the Event) and the player preparation video (Inject 4).

Players will then be asked to complete the Input 4 tasks. These are as follows and are also identified on Inject 4c:

- 1) Introduce yourself to the other Players and explain what your role would typically be during an event of this type.
- 2) Identify who in the EOC will be responsible for providing psychosocial support (i.e. the team support worker); this discussion should also include identifying what authority that individual may have to implement worker-care practices.
- 3) Brainstorm any possible psychosocial impacts that you feel EOC personnel, responders, and the public may experience around this event. Record these ideas on the template as they will help you in your discussions later in the exercise.
- 4) Review the damage reports for your community and consider some of the actions the EOC will need to perform to support the community and begin recovery.

Players will need approximately 15-20 minutes to complete these tasks.

Once the briefing and these tasks are complete, show the third news cast (Inject 5 – JITV News – Provincial, Federal and NGO response). **Once complete, indicate to participants that the exercise has begun.** At this point, the first simulator (Input 7 – Technician) will arrive and will direct EOC participants to their pod for the remainder of the exercise.

Players should be encouraged to alter their pod as they feel is appropriate. This includes:

- Maintaining, altering, and removing information displays
- Assigning Players different roles
- Writing on (marking up) materials that are provided in their pod

## STARTEX

Once the Players are ready to begin the exercise, you will start the Input Video. The video features a series of vignettes that setup and advance the exercise scenario. Following along on the MSEL, you will notice that some inputs have specific tasks to be completed. These tasks may be completed with resources in the room, through the use of materials provided by Runners, or based on prompting provided by calls from Simulators. Players should attempt to complete these tasks as best they can, using their training and experience.

It should be noted that the times on the MSEL are approximates. Actual times may vary depending on when each video was started.

## CONTINUITY

If the Controllers decide to pause the exercise (i.e.: Players are becoming overwhelmed), they will need to pause the Input video. Restarting streaming videos may be difficult; it is recommended that you only pause videos that have been downloaded and which are playing off the computer's hard drive.

## MASTER SEQUENCE OF EVENTS (MSEL) AND PAPER INPUTS

During the exercise, the Master Sequence of Events List (1.2) will detail the approximate timings and lengths of the various inputs Players will receive. The Injects document (1.3) provides a detailed script of what is being said. As the Controllers follow the MSEL, they should pay close attention as to when a document appears, as this indicates the Controllers are to provide a print copy of this document to the Players.

## COMMUNICATION

The Runners and Simulators will play an active role in communicating with the Players throughout the exercise. The Runners and Simulators will:

- Provide printed copies of documents. This is to be done at the timings indicated on the Master Sequence of Events List
- Simulate outside agencies, answering Player questions and providing feedback similar to the answers that would be provided by outside agencies
- Gather the documents created by the Players.

The Controller has some leeway in the types of answers provided to Players depending on how well the exercise is proceeding. For example, Players may be asked to provide a specific type of guidance to the public during the exercise; however, the urgency of the request is not provided. If Players appear to have the exercise well in hand, the Controller can indicate the request is urgent and requires an answer within the next few minutes. If Players are struggling and appear overwhelmed, the Controller can indicate the request is not urgent and can be dealt with as time allows.

## ENDEX

The exercise, aside from briefings and debriefings, will last three hours. The first 15 minutes of the exercise is for Players to setup and review the materials in their pod; the subsequent 165 minutes are for the exercise play. At the 180 minute mark, the Input Video will stop providing inputs. At this time, Controllers should inform Players that the exercise has concluded and that a debriefing will now be held.

## EVALUATION, DEBRIEFING AND CONCLUSION

### UTILIZING EVALUATORS

Exercise evaluators, using the Exercise Evaluation Guide, will observe, analyze and record Player actions to assess whether the exercise objectives are being met. Evaluators must take care not to skew the results of the exercise by intruding on the exercise. Interactions with Players should be avoided. Evaluators will work with the Controller to produce an evaluation report that identifies any issues and or gaps observed during the exercise.

### EVALUATION PROCESS

In order to successfully evaluate the exercise, evaluators need to perform the following actions:

- Position themselves so that they can view the Players but not intrude on their conversations
- Observe the action related to the objectives identified in their Exercise Evaluation Guide
- Follow the framework provided in the Exercise Evaluation Guide for recording their observations (this may be in the form of written statements, completing checklists, recording the time it takes to complete specific tasks, etc.)
- If required, perform a preliminary analysis of their observations, offering insights into why conclusions were made or specific actions were performed
- Alert the Controller if any problematic situations develop
- Attend the Player debrief, updating their Exercise Evaluation Guides as necessary
- Submit their completed Exercise Evaluation Guide(s) to the Controller following the exercise

## CONDUCTING DEBRIEFS

There are two types of debriefings which should be held following the exercise. One is an operational debrief and the other is a psychosocial debriefing.

### OPERATIONAL DEBRIEFINGS

A formal debrief should be held following the delivery of the exercise. The debrief provides an opportunity for the Players and Simulators to share and comment on the work they completed and for the evaluators and Controller to comment on the expected outcomes as referenced in the applicable Exercise Evaluation Guide. All participants should be given the opportunity to comment during the debrief. Conversations should focus on:

- Areas where Players felt they performed well
- Areas where Players felt they require additional training, exercising, or mentoring
- Any actions requiring immediate attention (i.e.: updating an emergency plan)
- Potential next steps for Players or local EOC leaders

### PSYCHOSOCIAL DEBRIEFINGS

A formal psychosocial debriefing should be held immediately following the delivery of the exercise. It is always possible that one of the inputs into the exercise, or an experience while participating in the exercise, may trigger strong emotions in one or more of the Players. This is especially true if a Player has been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

A psychosocial debriefing will not take long but should be led by a Team Support Worker or trained psychologist or counsellor. The psychosocial debriefing should review the key stressors inherent in the exercise; normalize any reactions that Players may experience; provide some suggestions for coping or managing stress reactions; and provide contact information for referrals for any Player needing support (i.e.: accessing Employee Assistance Programs).

## COLLECTING AND ACTING ON FEEDBACK

Following the exercise, the Controller or other designated personnel will be responsible for collecting and consolidating feedback from the exercise. This could include group responses to exercise questions, completed paper work and records of activities performed. As part of your next steps, this information should be analyzed and an After Action Report, which includes an

Improvement Plan, should be prepared. An ultimate goal of exercises is to learn so that plans, procedures, and related training can be improved.

## **CONCLUDING THE EXERCISE**

Following the debriefings, participants should be informed that the exercise has been formally concluded. Controllers should gather the Evaluation Guides from the Evaluators, gather the materials used during the exercise, and return the room to its original state.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As the Controller, the following questions may come to mind as you prepare for the day.

### ***What are the qualifications of a Team Support Worker?***

The Team Support Worker is a professional with specific training in disaster psychosocial services. They are attentive to both the physical and emotional needs of those impacted by the exercise and can advise leaders in the EOC on strategies for addressing the psychosocial needs of EOC personnel, responders and receivers, decision makers, and community members. The EOC Director should introduce the Team Support Worker to the participants, and explain his or her role in order to promote the inclusion of this person and the recognition of psychosocial needs and supports.

### ***What is the role of the Team Support Worker?***

The role of the Team Support Worker includes:<sup>2</sup>

- Consulting the EOC Director and assisting with strategies to encourage worker-care and team-care by addressing the psychosocial needs of EOC personnel (organizing healthy food and beverage options; arranging for a calm, quiet space for breaks. etc.).
- Coordinating with EOC personnel to ensure appropriate and timely psychosocial support is provided to emergency responders and receivers in the field.
- Assessing and recommending the psychosocial supports that should be provided to those members of the community impacted by the earthquake.
- Providing consultation and support to the EOC Director in mediating conflicts and managing difficult decisions.
- Conducting a demobilization or debriefing once the EOC is deactivated.



### ***What if the exercise participants feel that the recommendations in the Training Video are not valid or supported?***

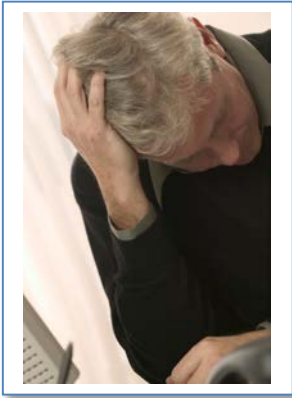
Change can be difficult sometimes, and it is important to note that these are not the only solutions to consider when addressing psychosocial factors in emergency response. The exercise

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<sup>2</sup> See Meyers & Hiley-Young (1994) for more information on the qualifications of mental health professionals and their role.

participants may have other solutions that work well, and what is most important is to recognize and address the psychosocial needs in a timely and relevant manner.

***What if an exercise Player gets really upset and quits the exercise?***



The role of the Team Support Worker is to be attentive to both the verbal and non-verbal behaviours of Players in the exercise. If a Player is visibly upset, the Team Support Worker can use their skills to approach the individual discreetly and check in with them to determine what resources they might need for support (such as a short break to rehydrate) or offer the opportunity to remove themselves from the exercise and get support in response to disturbing information. If the Player quits the exercise, the Team Support Worker will make themselves available to speak with the Player about their experience and provide a list of resources for further support if needed.

***What can I do to get organizational buy-in to participate?***

Consider which agencies you would like to invite to participate in this simulation exercise, and approach senior-level personnel who are strong, positive leaders and well-respected by their peers in emergency management. This exercise provides an opportunity for realistic, hands-on, practical group training with accessible, no-cost training materials available for support via the SIMTEC online Collaboratory. Emphasizing the benefits of training, such as building trusting relationships and a greater consideration of psychosocial factors in decision-making and community response during emergencies, and the consequences of not engaging in proactive training, should help to secure organizational buy-in.

***Is taking breaks really realistic when working in an EOC? How do I ensure this happens?***

Yes, taking breaks while working in an EOC is both realistic and necessary for worker-care. Often, individuals may feel as though they will miss something if they leave the EOC, and they are concerned about letting their colleagues down. They might experience an adrenalin rush as a result of the stressful EOC environment, and the need to eat, rest, and rehydrate may be suppressed. Observations from the previous simulation exercises and background research in emergency management indicate that the cognitive decision-making ability of individuals and groups in stressful circumstances decreases over time, while the risk of decision-making errors increases. Concern for the safety and well-being of their own family members may also distract EOC members from performing the tasks required of them. Strong leadership is required to identify appropriate times for break-taking and direct members to do so, and to ensure that tasks

are covered, and individuals are briefed upon their return to the EOC. As the Controller, you can assist the Players in appointing the most suitable person for this role.

***How do I manage tension and conflict among Players during the exercise?***

Prior to the beginning of the exercise, the key training points for the day can be highlighted for exercise Players. Strong leadership in the EOC involves making sure that everyone has an opportunity to share their views and be heard by others. If tension and conflict occur among EOC members during the exercise and are not addressed, the demobilization process at the end of the day can provide an opportunity to discuss as a group what happened, and what can be learned from it.

***Is it necessary to go through the psychosocial debriefing process at the end of the exercise?***

Yes, the Team Support Worker will lead the group through a brief discussion to process their thoughts and experiences in the simulation exercise. This step is important to reduce the impact of any stress reactions from one's involvement in the exercise.

***Where can I find a psychosocial tip sheet that I can make available to exercise Players?***

The two-sided stress tips card included as a Player resources can be ordered free of charge from the Emergency Social Services Office of British Columbia, Emergency Management BC website (<http://www.ess.bc.ca/pubs/workercare.htm>).

## OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

The SIMTEC Project Team would like to know about your experience as the Controller and hear your thoughts on the simulation exercise and training protocols. We are happy to receive your feedback on topics such as:

- The realism of the exercise
- Your experience in accessing and using the online Collaboratory
- The effectiveness of the training video component
- Reactions to the key training points
- Any challenges in implementing the training points
- Decision-making processes in the EOC during the exercise Focus Guide

## CONTACT US:

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call and/or email.

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