**What is a functional exercise?**

**Introduction:** A functional exercise simulates an emergency in the most realistic manner possible, short of moving resources to an actual site. The exercise is conducted in a “real—time” environment in an EOC or Command Post. The exercise is intended to provide more stress and pressure to the participants. A functional exercise is used to test and evaluate the capability of an organization to respond to an emergency using a simulated event.

**Definition:** The functional exercise is designed to focus on testing and evaluating the centralized emergency operational capability of an organization in a simulated real time environment.

**Major Elements:**
- Simulation of an emergency incident
- Includes a team of simulators and a timed sequence of events.
- EOC and ICS personnel practice coordinated response

**Participant Expectations:**
- Be a key decision maker or coordinator
- Normally work in the EOC or Command Post
- Respond as they would in a real event
- Accept the scenario and work within the presented parameters

**Controller Expectations:**
- Control pace and flow of exercise
- Orient the participants to the exercise and present the narrative

**Evaluator Expectations:**
- Observe the exercise progress and identify strengths and areas of improvement
- Assist in development of After Action Report

**Observer Expectations:**
- Participate in exercise when asked

**Advantages:**
- Real time, stressful environment
- Allows practice of prioritization of response
- Allows evaluation of multiple functions

**Disadvantages:**
- Does not allow for actual testing of seldom used resources
- Requires a measurable commitment of resources (man-hours, supplies)
- Cannot truly simulate pressure arising from on scene events

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