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Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)  
After Action Report/Improvement Plan  
(AAR/IP)

Town of Simsbury  
Full Scale Exercise 2010

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**Operation Iron Horse 2010**

**May 8, 2010**

**AFTER ACTION  
REPORT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**[Draft]**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Simsbury Full Scale Exercise 2010 –Operation Iron Horse was developed to test the Town’s Command and Control, Response, and Recovery capabilities resulting from a major disaster. The exercise planning team was composed primarily of representatives from Civil Preparedness, Police, Fire, and EMS. The exercise planning team discussed in detail, early in the planning process, such factors as scope, timing, and length of the proposed exercise. The consensus was that a relatively large scale exercise would be required to realistically “stress” the emergency response capabilities resident within the town’s various agencies. The planning process began approximately 12 months prior to the actual exercise, initially germinating from several planning sessions between the Civil Preparedness Director and his Assistant. The next phase brought the Public Safety Sub-Committee into the process. This committee includes all of the heads of emergency service agencies within the town, in addition to town department heads and is chaired by a Selectman. The final planning evolution consisted of a tabletop (discussion format) exercise for the Emergency Operations Center staff to overview of the planned operation.

The scenario chosen for this exercise was a simulated crash of a narrow body commercial aircraft. There were several reasons for this choice of scenario.

- Realistic probability- The geographic location of Simsbury in relation to Bradley International airport places much of the town under the overfly footprint for both departures and arrivals for a majority of operations from Bradley.
- Multiple agency involvement- This type of scenario could easily involve virtually every town agency/department and numerous requirements for mutual aid assistance. The planners were committed to a valid, hands on, training experience for the entire spectrum of agencies, not just a typical Fire, Police, EMS exercise.

The capabilities exercised during this operation correspond to eight specific areas listed in FEMA’s Target Capabilities List- Communications, Emergency Operations Center Management, Fire Incident Response Support, Onsite Incident Management, Emergency Public Safety and Security Response, Emergency Triage and Pre- Hospital Treatment, Hazardous Materials Response and Decontamination, and Mass Care.

Based on the exercise planning team’s deliberations, the following objectives were developed for Operation Iron Horse

- Objective 1: Communications-Demonstrate ability to establish and maintain effective operational communications with all appropriate emergency response locations, organizations, and personnel.
- Objective 2: Alert and Notification- Demonstrate the ability to effectively notify both public officials and the public at large of an emergency situation and disseminate advisory/instructional messages in a timely manner.

- Objective 3: Direction and Control- Demonstrate the ability to effectively direct, coordinate, and control emergency operations. Included in this objective set is establishment and operation of the Emergency Operations Center for an extended period.
- Objective 4: Public Safety and Security- Demonstrate the ability to effectively control entry to the accident scene for protection of the public and evidence preservation.
- Objective 5: Mitigation of immediate hazardous conditions- Demonstrate capability of Fire Department related operations including suppression, extrication and rescue operations.
- Objective 6: Hazardous Materials Response and Decontamination- Demonstrate the ability to effectively manage and mitigate a hazardous materials release concurrently and in conjunction with an ongoing large scale operation.
- Objective 7: Medical Services- Demonstrate adequacy of procedures, personnel, and required equipment for triage, treatment, and transport of injured personnel.
- Objective 8: Relocation and Shelter Operations- Demonstrate the adequacy of procedures, facilities, equipment, and personnel for the congregate care of evacuees or displaced personnel.

The purpose of this report is to analyze exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

## Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this exercise are as follows:

- Excellent inter-departmental cooperation. All involved units and departments appeared to interface well with little or no unnecessary overlapping of efforts.
- Good knowledge and use of “regional” assets ie.- IMT, Regional Hazmat assets, Task Force 54, etc.
- Strong ICS/NIMS skill levels demonstrated by emergency responders.

## Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the exercise, several opportunities for improvement in Simsbury’s ability to respond to the incident were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

- Notification of Personnel- Some management personnel received delayed notification of the simulated emergency due to the overwhelming initial work load of the Emergency dispatcher. Recommendation- Review of emergency call procedures and consideration of use of “Everbridge” reverse 911 call system for notification/recall of key personnel.

- EOC IT support. There were difficulties with operation of IT related equipment during the initial set up of the EOC, which necessitated distracting key personnel (primarily PD) from their primary duties to solve IT issues. There were also shortfalls equipment identified. With the ever increasing reliance on web based information sharing and management, this is becoming a key functional responsibility within the EOC. Recommendation- 1. A dedicated IT support member be assigned to the EOC. 2. Additional IT training for key EOC personnel. 3. Procure additional IT hardware for dedicated use in the EOC.
- Communications- Although there were no outright failures in communications functions, there was some evidence of unfamiliarity of available systems by some EOC personnel. In addition, at times the level of radio chatter in the EOC was somewhat distracting. Recommendations- 1. Review of communications section/procedures in the town's Emergency Operations Plan. 2. Training for key personnel emphasizing both procedures and capabilities of available communication systems. 3. Investigate use /installation of mobile vs. portable radios in the EOC and/or headset use for high traffic nets within the EOC.
- Medical Triage- Overall, there was a marked improvement in the ability to efficiently conduct medical triage compared to previous exercises, however there was a short delay in disbursement of triage system tags. Recommendation- Complete the training (which is already underway) for involved agencies.

Over all, this was a highly successful evolution. The overwhelming consensus in the feedback received from participating agencies was that the scenario was realistic, well controlled, and provided valuable training for all participants. Recommendation for future exercises: Discussion based exercise pertaining to emergency response to a Cat 3+ hurricane.

## SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW

### Exercise Details

**Exercise Name**

Operation Iron Horse 2010

**Type of Exercise**

Full Scale Exercise

**Exercise Start Date**

May 8, 2010

**Exercise End Date**

May 8, 2010

**Duration**

4 Hours

**Location**

Town of Simsbury, area surrounding Iron Horse Blvd.

**Sponsor**

Town of Simsbury, Emergency Management

**Program**

Program funding is local, reimbursement will be completed through Capitol Region (CREPC)

**Mission**

Response and Recovery

**Capabilities**

Emergency Operations Center Management

Onsite Incident Management

Emergency Public Safety and Security Response

Emergency Triage and Pre-Hospital Response

Hazardous Materials Response and Decontamination

Fire Incident Response Support

Communications

Mass Care

### Scenario Type

Large (commercial) aircraft crash

## Exercise Planning Team Leadership

Kevin Kowalski- Emergency Management Director, Simsbury Fire District (chair)  
Geoffrey Giddings- Assistant, Emergency Management, Simsbury Fire District.  
Kristin Kelley- Captain, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Co.  
Sgt. Nick Boulter- Training Officer, Simsbury Police Dept  
Mike Delehanty- Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association

## Participating Organizations

Town of Simsbury Public Safety Sub-Committee (EOC Staff)  
Simsbury Police Department  
Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company  
Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association  
Town of Simsbury Public Works Dept  
Town of Simsbury Social Services Department  
Town of Simsbury Board of Education  
Avon Volunteer Fire Department  
Canton Volunteer Fire Company  
North Central Regional Hazmat Team  
Region 3 Incident Management Team  
Bradley International Airport Operations  
Bradley International Airport ARRF  
CL&P  
Salters Bus Company  
American Automobile Association  
Dyno-Nobel Inc.

### Number of Participants

- Players: 80
- Controllers: 2
- Evaluators/Facilitators: 4
- Observers: 6
- Victim Role Players: 41

## SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

### Exercise Purpose and Design

The overarching purpose of this exercise was intended to evaluate the capability of the Town of Simsbury and related organizations to respond to a major, unexpected emergency requiring multiple responses. Previous exercises conducted over the last two decades tended to be much more limited in scope- MCI drills, mass influenza inoculations, etc. The consensus of the exercise planning team was that the town's emergency response organizations had reached a level of proficiency that it was time to conduct a "graduate level" full scale exercise. Planning for this evolution began well over a year prior to the exercise date. Numerous meetings were conducted with the major "players" to define and refine the scope of the exercise. The final, defining planning meeting was conducted as a table top exercise involving the EOC staff and all town Department Heads in a discussion format in the Emergency Operations Center two months prior to the actual exercise.

### Exercise Objectives, Capabilities, and Activities

Capabilities-based planning allows for exercise planning teams to develop exercise objectives and observe exercise outcomes through a framework of specific action items that were derived from the Target Capabilities List (TCL). The capabilities listed below form the foundation for the organization of all objectives and observations in this exercise. Additionally, each capability is linked to several corresponding activities and tasks to provide additional detail.

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

- **Objective 1:** Communications -Demonstrate ability to establish and maintain effective operational communications with all appropriate emergency response locations, organizations, and personnel. 1. Set up STOCS network at incident command post in order to operate on multiple bands and frequencies. 2. Establish communications links with operating agencies and EOC reps. 3. Coordinate ancillary communications duties between Police and Fire Dispatch Centers/ Controllers.
- **Objective 2:** Alert and Notification- Demonstrate the ability to effectively notify both public officials and the public at large of an emergency situation and disseminate advisory/instructional messages in a timely manner. 1. Notify /recall EOC staff members in a timely manner. 2. Issue public information releases regarding appropriate actions for the public at large. 3. Coordinate with appropriate agencies (FAA, NTSB, Airline involved) press releases.
- **Objective 3:** Direction and Control- Demonstrate the ability to effectively direct, coordinate, and control emergency operations. Included in this objective set is establishment and operation of the Emergency Operations Center for an extended

- period. 1. Activate/establish Emergency Operations Center. 2. Ensure EOC staff members coordinate and support needs requests from their operating units. 3. Request assistance from the Region 3 Incident Management Team for subsequent operational periods.
- **Objective 4:** Public Safety and Security- Demonstrate the ability to effectively control entry to the accident scene for protection of the public and evidence preservation. 1. Police Department personnel establish security perimeter in coordination with Incident Commander. 2. Police Department coordinate possible evidence preservation measures. #. Police Department coordinate actions required by National Security- FBI/FAA.
  - **Objective 5:** Mitigation of immediate hazardous conditions- Demonstrate capability of Fire Department related operations including suppression, extrication and rescue operations. 1. Fire suppression aircraft wreckage. 2. Structure fire suppression. 3. Extrication of victims from aircraft. 4. Extrication of Vehicle accident victims.
  - **Objective 6:** Hazardous Materials Response and Decontamination- Demonstrate the ability to effectively manage and mitigate a hazardous materials release concurrently and in conjunction with an ongoing large scale operation. 1. FD/Regional Hazmat Team manage/mitigate leaking tanker truck caused by debris strike.
  - **Objective 7:** Medical Services- Demonstrate adequacy of procedures, personnel, and required equipment for triage, treatment, and transport of injured personnel. 1. triage both live player victims and manikins. 2. Set up collection/treatment station. 3. Transport victims requiring hospital care. 4. Establish temporary morgue in conjunction with Medical Examiners office.
  - **Objective 8:** Relocation and Shelter Operations- Demonstrate the adequacy of procedures, facilities, equipment, and personnel for the congregate care of evacuees or displaced personnel. 1. Activate shelter at Simsbury High School to house any possible evacuees. .

## Scenario Summary

For an operations-based exercise, this section should summarize the scenario or situation initially presented to players, subsequent key events introduced into play, and the time in which these events occurred. For a discussion-based exercise, this section should outline the scenario used and/or modules presented to participants.] The exercise was scheduled to begin at 0600. The actual “kick off” was delayed a few minutes due to thunderstorm safety precautions. The initial setup involved a derelict school bus simulating the major portion of the aircraft fuselage section. In addition there were two plywood mockups representing smaller fuselage sections. All three sections contained both “live” victims and dummies requiring various levels of extrication and triage. Victim role players were moulaged and specifically positioned for extrication in both the aircraft sections and automobile accident scenarios. For realism, several containment vessels with liquid fuel fires were scattered throughout the “crash scene.” On the adjacent roadway six automobiles were setup in various MVA scenarios resulting from debris strikes and subsequent

collisions. In addition, two of these autos had downed high voltage cable contacts requiring power company involvement. Just to the north of the auto scenarios, a large semi trailer tank truck was located also having suffered a debris strike. The truck was rigged with a very realistic leak flowing green fluid. On the southern end of the play area there was a simulated structure fire marked by signage, requiring high (1000gpm+) fire flow.

The only real artificiality in the scenario was the need to pre-stage units scheduled to participate. This was done for two reasons- First, for public safety reasons it was decided that no units would operate in the “lights and sirens” mode, and volunteer firefighters would be prepositioned at their firehouses to avoid any problems from an undue sense of urgency operating private vehicles. Secondly, if mutual aid and regional assets responded from their home stations, we would have exceeded the time frame allowed for the exercise. However, several injects were used to manipulate the arrival times of units to more realistically flow units to the scene and control the level of response. Fire units were required to remain in quarters for two minutes after dispatch to simulate volunteer firefighters transiting from home. The involvement of power lines on the automobile accident area was designed to slow the extrication operations. The regional Hazmat team was held in staging for a period of time to force the local FD to initiate the Hazmat operation and mutual aid fire units were likewise held for a period of time.

The exercise began with a radio call from the PD facilitator (acting as a patrol officer) to the PD dispatcher reporting an explosion with smoke in the area. After this initial radio call, the scenario was allowed to “play out”. Minimal injects were required by the facilitators. Facilitators did initiate several preplanned actual 911 calls to increase the tempo of operations in the dispatch centers. In addition to being used as a shelter, the High School was used as a simulated hospital for victim transport.

## SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

This section of the report reviews the performance of the exercised capabilities, activities, and tasks. In this section, observations are organized by capability and associated activities. The capabilities linked to the exercise objectives of Operation Iron Horse 2010 are listed below, followed by corresponding activities. Each activity is followed by related observations, which include references, analysis, and recommendations.

[The format for Chapter 3, as described above, represents the preferred order for analysis of exercise observations. However, observations that are cross-cutting and do not apply to one, specific activity within the capability should be listed first, directly under the capability summary. Below the cross-cutting observations, you may then present the complete list of activities which apply to the observation.]

### Capability 1: Communications

**Capability Summary:** Demonstrate ability to establish and maintain effective operational communications with all appropriate emergency response locations, organizations, and personnel

**Activity 1.1:** Set up STOCS network at incident command post in order to operate on multiple bands and frequencies.

**Observation 1.1:** Rated as a “strength” Personnel at the Incident Command Post very quickly set up the required STOCS transceiver equipment.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** Traditionally, one of the inherent weaknesses of multi jurisdiction/unit operating has been the necessity to operate on multiple frequency bands (UHF, VHF, LB, 800 Hz etc.) The STOCS system allows the IC to transmit and receive on virtually all spectrum frequencies. The only weakness in this system is that the transceiver boxes are regional assets and must be deployed and set up, requiring a level of familiarity by the local operators. It was obvious that the IC staff members were well trained and familiar with the equipment and procedures.

**Recommendations:** None

**Activity 1.2:** Establish communications links with operating agencies and EOC reps.

**Observation 1.2** Rated as an “Area that needs improvement” There appeared to be some confusion among some of the EOC staff , specifically those who do not routinely use portable radio nets in a command function of their daily operations. (the non- first responders)

**References:** Town of Simsbury Emergency Operations Plan

**Analysis:** Excepting Fire, Police, and Ambulance, the other department reps appeared to be somewhat hesitant or tentative in the initial phase of the EOC operations in general. It did not appear that they did not understand their specific role or responsibilities so much as how they were supposed to integrate with the overall operation. Initially establishing communications with their “troops in the field” was a marker of this trend.

**Recommendations:**

1. Conduct a training session with the EOC staff specifically reviewing procedures as delineated in Emergency Operations Plan

**Activity 1.3:** Coordinate ancillary communications duties between Police and Fire Dispatch Centers

**Observation 1.3** Rated as an “Area that needs improvement” As expected for an incident of this magnitude, the primary dispatch center (PD) was task saturated during the initial phase of response. It would appear that some of the required tasks could be off loaded to the secondary dispatch (FD) site.

**References:** None

**Analysis:** Simsbury is somewhat unique in that it operates two, separate, full time dispatch facilities, one manned by the Police Department and one manned by the Fire District. Because the Police dispatcher has the primary 911 and first responder dispatch responsibilities, they bear the brunt of the initial dispatching duties. In the event of a catastrophic incident they can be quickly overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the number of assigned tasks, many of which are outside their normal daily operations. In addition to dispatching multiple first responder units, they must coordinate mutual aid requests, initiate the EOC recall list, field multiple 911 calls, etc. It would appear that certain tasks could be shifted to the Fire Dispatcher in a better allocation of resources.

**Recommendations:**

1. The EMD coordinate with the Police Chief and Fire Chief a better allocation of duties when responding to an emergency of this magnitude.
2. The Emergency Operations Plan be revised to reflect those changes.

**Activity 1.4:** Communicate with the public regarding the disaster and any necessary actions.

**Observation 1.4** Rated as an “Area that needs improvement” There did not appear a clear designation, or training background for a representative to issue statements or press releases on behalf of the First Selectman.

**References:** Town of Simsbury Emergency Operations Plan

**Analysis:** Although there was a representative from the Board of Selectmen in attendance at the EOC to function as the Public Information Officer (PIO), she appeared to assume this was a training session. Consequently, there was little attention given to this critical function.

**Recommendations:**

1. The First Selectman designate several personnel from their staff as Public Information Officers.
2. Insure those designated receive training and guidance essential for this function.
3. Include these personnel on the EOC activation phone tree.

## Capability 2: Emergency Operations Management

**Capability Summary:** Demonstrate the ability to effectively direct, coordinate, and control emergency operations. Included in this objective set is establishment and operation of the Emergency Operations Center for an extended period. .

**Activity 2.1:** Activate/establish Emergency Operations Center

**Observation 2.1:** Rated “area for improvement” There appeared to be two specific impediments to the initial setup of the EOC. One, it became apparent that the recall list for the EOC staff was in need of revision. Several member’s contact numbers had not been updated. In addition, key EOC members were diverted from some of their primary tasks to get some of the I.T. equipment functioning.

**Analysis:** The issue of difficulties contacting/activating EOC staff members speaks for it’s self. The members involved are now well aware of the importance of up to date contact lists. This issue was also addressed above under observation 1.3 in that this is one of those time consuming duties that can contribute to task overloading in the PD dispatch center. As to the IT issue, like it or not, the EOC has become highly dependent on technology. WEBEOC, Smartboards, computer displays, etc, are highly effective tools when up and running, but require expertise, especially in the set-up phase.

**Recommendations:**

1. The EOC staff be augmented with a dedicated IT member, familiar with not only the specific equipment resident in the EOC, but also knowledgeable in NIMS so as to advise the EMD on appropriate use of electronic media.
2. The Emergency Operations Plan be revised to include an Emergency Technology Support Team of sufficient strength support 24 hour operations.

**References:** N/A

**Activity 2.2:** Ensure EOC staff members coordinate and support needs requests from their operating units .

**Observation 2.2** Rated as a “Strength.” The individual EOC members, primarily department heads, appeared to be intimately familiar with the needs of their units and once the initial communications difficulties mentioned in observation 1.2 were overcome, functioned well in the operation.

**References:** Town of Simsbury Emergency Operations Plan

**Analysis:** A detailed description of how the EOC members interface with their assigned units would go well beyond the scope of this document. Suffice to say, there were no obvious shortcomings involving coordination of requested services or requests for outside agency help by any of the agencies represented on the EOC staff.

**Recommendations:**

1.N/A

**Activity 2.3:** Request assistance from the Region 3 Incident Management Team for subsequent operational periods.

**Observation 2.3:** Rated as a “Strength”. Early in the evolution, the EOC manager requested the assistance of the Regional Incident Management Team.

**Analysis:** This was the first time this team had been requested for an operation in this town. Without exception, it was one of the most successful facets of the exercise. Due to time constraints, the team was prepositioned prior to exercise kick-off, however they did not begin to set-up until after the EOC was in operation. Although the team’s primary mission is to prepare for the next operational period, their experience and expertise was invaluable in helping to get the EOC running smoothly.

**Recommendations:**

1. Highly recommend consideration to requesting the IMT for any large scale response in the future.
2. Recommend inclusion of IMT capabilities in the next revision of the Emergency Operations Plan.

### Capability 3: Fire Incident Response Support

- **Capability Summary:** Mitigation of immediate hazardous conditions- Demonstrate capability of Fire Department related operations including suppression, extrication and rescue operations. 1. Fire suppression aircraft wreckage. 2. Structure fire suppression. 3. Extrication of victims from aircraft. 4. Extrication of Vehicle accident victims.

Demonstrate the ability to effectively direct, coordinate, and control emergency operations. Included in this objective set is establishment and operation of the Emergency Operations Center for an extended period. .

**Activity 3.1:** Fire suppression aircraft wreckage

**Observation 3.1:** Rated as a “Strength”. Overall, the suppression operations demonstrated strong command and control, and an obvious high level of technical expertise.

**Analysis:** From the time of initial arrival, the personnel assigned to aircraft fire suppression were well deployed and highly organized. Once the fires had been “knocked down” units were positioned for protection of victims and rescuers during extrication operations. In addition to the traditional structure fire apparatus, the Bradley International ARFF unit was integrated into the operation on arrival.

**Recommendations:**

1. N/A

**Activity 3.2:** Structure Fire Suppression.

**Observation 3.2:** Rated as a “Strength”. The units assigned to the simulated structure fire quickly setup and operated at the required fire flow for the simulated structure fire- 1000 gpm.

**Analysis:** The objective of this activity was to test the ability of the Fire Department (and/or mutual aid companies) to set up an elevated master stream operation as would be required for a defensive operation on the unoccupied restaurant on the western edge of the debris field. The actual operation was located just south of the restaurant on the east side of Iron Horse Blvd. due to run off considerations for such a large volume of water. The assigned Tower Ladder crew quickly set up the apparatus, secured an adequate water supply, and commenced operations, flowing 1000 gallons per minute for the duration of the exercise.

**Recommendations:**

1. N/A

**Activity 3.3:** Extrication of victims from aircraft .

**Observation 3.2:** Rated as a “Strength”. Rescue efforts were prioritized, and arriving mutual aid units integrated into tasking in an efficient manner. Fire department members appeared to be well trained in the new triage procedures and assisted in the expeditious processing of patients.

**Analysis:** The objective of this activity was to test the ability of the Fire Department (and/or mutual aid companies) to set up an elevated master stream operation as would be required for a defensive operation on the unoccupied restaurant on the western edge of the debris field. The actual operation was located just south of the restaurant on the east side of Iron Horse Blvd. due to run off considerations for such a large volume of water. The assigned Tower Ladder crew quickly set up the apparatus, secured an adequate water supply, and commenced operations, flowing 1000 gallons per minute for the duration of the exercise.

**Recommendations:**

1. N/A

## Capability 4: On Site Incident Management

**Capability Summary:** Demonstrate the ability to effectively direct, coordinate, and control emergency operations at the operational level. Included in this objective set is declaration of an overall Incident Commander, implementation of a NIMS compliant command structure, designation of branch and division entities as necessary for an appropriate span of control, an establishment of an effective on-scene command post.

**Activity 4.1:** Establish Incident Command in a timely manner.

**Observation 4.1:** Rated “strength” The first arriving Fire Officer quickly announced assumption of Command and began to designate subordinate command functions.

**Analysis:** The initial establishment of a strong, well coordinated, on scene command presence is essential to a successful outcome. Generally speaking, the tenor set during the first 30 minutes of the emergency response “sets the tone” for how the remainder of the operation evolves. A chaotic or disorganized start is extremely difficult to correct for once the operation begins. In this case, the IC quickly assessed the available intelligence, based on good size up communications from early arriving units, and formulated a good, coherent strategy.

**Recommendations:** N/A

**Activity 4.2:** Formulate and establish an effective communications net for direction of all operational units.

**Observation 4.2:** Overall rated “strength” with room for minor improvement. The IC quickly directed positioning and set up of the mobile command post and it’s associated comm. equipment, By designating specific individuals to handle these tasks, they were accomplished in a timely manner without distraction to the Command Staff.

**Analysis:** Establishing communications with all arriving support units is a critical task. This issue is complicated by the fact that not all units are capable of operating on the same frequency spectrum. In the case of this operation, while organic Simsbury units all operate on UHF, other mutual aid units use VHF, LB, and 800Mghz trunk systems. (this issue was addressed under activity 1.1 above) There were reports of some units experiencing difficulty receiving transmissions in the initial phase of the operation which appeared to improve after the IC directed FD dispatch to switch to another repeater. Also, one of the school buses was apparently on the wrong frequency, which precluded dispatch of this bus for evacuation operations. The loss of this asset was further exacerbated because the bus was not directed to the level 2 staging area. Had the bus been in staging, this issue would have been quickly resolved. It appears that school bus

drivers although very proficient in their routine student transport duties, would benefit from NIMS related training.

**Recommendations:** The Emergency Manager, and the Board of Ed. coordinate with the operator of the school bus company, to train bus drivers regarding applicable procedures which may be required when operating under the direction of emergency management forces.

## Capability 5: Emergency Public Safety and Security Response

**Capability Summary:** Demonstrate the ability to effectively control entry to the accident scene for protection of the public and evidence preservation.

**Activity 5.1:** Establish security perimeter.

**Observation 5.1:** Rated as a “strength” Police officers quickly responded to the area of the accident scene and began an effective, coordinated effort to cordon of the area using available on shift officers. . **References:** N/A

**Analysis:** Due to the limited number of routine on shift officers, (typically 4 Officers and a Supervisor) this effort consisted primarily of road closures. Early in the evolution, the Supervisor requested mutual aid assistance from surrounding communities. It is appropriate to note however, that one of the serious, expected problems of an incident of this type, namely civilian migration into the accident scene was not injected into the scenario.

**Recommendations:** None

**Activity 5.2:** Implement necessary procedures for evidence preservation as required until relieved by higher authority.

**Observation 5.2** Rated as “not observed” This important function was not specifically addressed during the exercise period, primarily due to the limited time frame of the exercise.

**References:** North Central Regional Aircraft Crash Plan

**Analysis:** This subject was addressed at some length during the tabletop exercise which served as the final planning conference meeting. Specific responsibilities such as coordination with FAA and NTSB and procedures delineated in the North Central Regional Aircraft Crash Plan were discussed.

**Recommendations:** None

## Capability 6: Emergency Triage and Pre- Hospital Treatment

**Capability Summary:** Demonstrate adequacy of procedures, personnel, and required equipment for triage, treatment, and transport of injured personnel. The scenario as presented included 61 total patients (41 live moulaged victim role players, and 20 fatalities represented by “hose dummies”) The victims were spread throughout the accident scene, some requiring extrication.

**Activity 6.1:** Set up a transport and pre-hospital treatment station.

**Observation 6.1:** Rated as a “strength” Personnel from the Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association (SVAA) arrived on scene with their mass casualty trailer, early into the evolution, and quickly established a transport and pre-hospital treatment center under the direction of the Incident Commander

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** This portion of the medical operation appeared to go very well. There was evidence of a good communication stream between the SVAA medical supervisor, the IC and CMED. This facilitated appropriate requests for additional assets as needed. Of particular note was the use of the mass casualty trailer. This relatively new asset places much of the equipment needed for initial triage and treatment in one easily transportable unit which can be positioned quickly where most needed.

**Recommendations:** None

**Activity 6.2:** Triage operations to classify and sort victims for transport and/or treatment.

**Observation 6.2** Rated as an “Area that needs improvement” Although the overall operation was deemed as successful, the initial triage operation got off to somewhat of a slow start.

**References:**

**Analysis:** There has recently been a dramatic change in the concept of triage as it has been traditionally been conducted. Essentially, it transfers responsibility for initial triage sorting to the first responder in contact with the victim instead of a central triage location. There appeared to be some confusion with distribution of the “smart triage” tags which are applied by the first responders. Under current procedure, these tags are stored in a duty Police vehicle. There appeared to be somewhat of a delay in distribution of these tags. Once the tags were available for distribution, the triage operation proceeded efficiently.

**Recommendations:**

The EMD, SVAA, and Police Dept. review tag procedures to develop a more user friendly system.

**Activity 6.3:** Coordinate transport of those victims in need of hospital based care.

**Observation 6.3** Rated as a “strength” The medical on-scene commander quickly activated mutual aid ambulance companies through the CMED network.

**References:** None

**Analysis:** This function appeared to work very well. CMED, the controlling agency for mutual aid ambulance operations is a routine 24/7 operation which is used on a daily basis by area ambulance agencies. Because they are used on a daily basis, there really is no change in operation required when ramping up for a disaster. In addition, because SVAA has direct radio contact with CMED, dispatch of additional ambulance assets do not need to go up the chain of command, streamlining operations.

**Recommendations:** None.

## Capability 7: Hazardous Materials Response and Decontamination

**Capability Summary:** Demonstrate the ability to effectively manage and mitigate a hazardous materials release concurrently, and in conjunction with an ongoing large scale operation. The scenario presentation consisted of a tractor- trailer tanker with an active “unknown” fluid leak and two “downed victims”.

**Activity 7.1:** Recognition of HAZMAT situation, reporting and area denial procedures by first responder on scene.

**Observation 7.1:** Rated as an “area that needs improvement” The first arriving Police Officer, obviously focused on the crash scene, drove his cruiser right past the obviously jack knifed and leaking tanker. However, shortly thereafter, the first arriving Fire Officer recognized the hazard and began area denial procedures.

**References:** N/A

**Analysis:** Once the hazard was recognized (see above comment), the Fire Department quickly swung into action with appropriate initial procedures. The area was cordoned off, Command was notified, assets requested and product ID begun. As to the PD officer driving past the scene, although not acceptable, it was not really surprising. As he drove into the area of the tanker, he was presented with a rather spectacular scene, heavy smoke, multiple spot fires, wrecked cars, and walking wounded. Unlike Fire personnel, law enforcement officers rarely deal with hazmat situations of any consequence which makes it all the more difficult to address in moments of duress.

**Recommendations:** The Police Department insure all Officers are trained to the awareness level in haz-mat operations. In addition, implement some type of recurrent hazmat training.

**Activity 7.2:** Implement appropriate procedures to mitigate the hazmat release.

**Observation 7.2** Rated as a “strength” The first arriving Fire Officer immediately began to set up for a hazmat operation. Fortunately, Simsbury is well trained and equipped to handle most HAZMAT operations with organic assets. However, the IC wisely chose to request the Regional HAZMAT Team in view of other FD manpower demands.

**References:** Town of Simsbury Emergency Operations Plan

**Analysis:** The only “glitch” in the entire operation occurred at the outset of the hazmat scenario. This occurred primarily due to a somewhat subjective interpretation of the IDLH hazard description in the DOT guidebook for the identified chemical. Faced with the rescue decision for the two downed victims, the Hazmat IC ordered two Firefighters to effect a rescue in structural firefighting PPE rather than wait for arrival of level A suits. The facilitator elected to add an inject at this point and deemed the firefighters as overcome during the rescue, in order to force the use of Level A suits. The remainder of the HAZMAT operation was a textbook operation. Personnel dressed out in level A suits performed the rescues, plugged the leak, and contained the spill. An appropriate decontamination line was set up prior to beginning operations and all personnel were decontaminated prior to termination.

**Recommendations:** None

## Capability 8: Mass Care

**Capability Summary:** Demonstrate the adequacy of procedures, facilities, equipment, and personnel for the congregate care of evacuees or displaced personnel.

**Activity 8.1:** .Activate and operate shelter operations at Simsbury high School.

**Observation 8.1:** Rated as a “strength” Personnel from Social Services and the Board of Ed. activated sheltering operations at SHS in a timely manner.

**References:** Town of Simsbury Emergency Operations Plan

**Analysis:** As the primary shelter location for the town, the High School has been used numerous times in the past for actual shelter operations. Assigned personnel from Social Services, Board of Ed. cafeteria and janitorial staff and SVFC Ladies Auxiliary are well versed

and trained in regard to operating this shelter. To simulate an appropriate work load, it was used as the “hotwash” debrief site. Over 100 personnel were fed a hot breakfast snack during the debrief.

**Recommendations:** None

## **SECTION 4: CONCLUSION**

As noted in the executive summary, this exercise can only be deemed as a successful evolution. In the event that such a catastrophic event should unfold, there is no doubt that the Town of Simsbury will be better prepared to cope the effects as a result of this evolution. Of particular note was the increased use of regional assets in this exercise, reflecting current national trends, and the shared training opportunities this provides to surrounding communities. Although, as noted in this document, there are areas which need improvement, they are minor in nature. The first responder forces are well trained, equipped, and disciplined. The overall structure of emergency services and emergency management are sound and well managed.

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

After Action Report/Improvement Plan  
(AAR/IP)

Town of Simsbury  
Full Scale Exercise 2010]

## APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for Town of Simsbury as a result of Operation Ironhorse2010 conducted on May 8, 2010. These recommendations draw on both the After Action Report and the After Action Conference.

Table A.1: Improvement Plan Matrix

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Communications	1.2 EOC communications	EOC staff training EOP	Training	Planning	EMD	EMD	September 2010	September 2011
	1.3 Dispatch centers responsibilities	Formalize sharing of dispatch duties between PD and FD dispatch centers	EOP revision	Planning	Fire department Police department	EMD	September 2010	September 2011
EOC Management	1.4 Public information	Appoint and train PIO staff	EOP revision	Planning	First Selectman office	First Selectman	Aug 2010	January 2011
	2.1 EOC support	Appoint and train IT staff for EOC ops	EOP revision	Systems	Board of Education		July 2010	March 2011
	2.3 Regional IMT	Include IMT as resource in EOP revision	EOP revision	Planning	EMD	Assistant EMD	August 2010	January 2011
	4.2 Communications procedures	Train bus drivers in emergency ops	Training	Planning	Board of Education		September 2010	January 2011
Triage and Pre-hospital treatment	6.2 Smart tag distribution	Revise storage and distribution procedures		Planning	SVAA	Mike Delahanty	August 2010	January 2011
Haz-Mat	7.1 Haz-mat awareness PD	Train/retrain PD to hazmat awareness level	Training	Planning	SPD	Sgt. Boulter	August 2010	January 2011

## APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Participant feedback was received primarily in a verbal format during the bi-monthly meeting of the Public Safety Sub-committee of the Town of Simsbury. Additionally there was an opportunity for all players to comment during the “hotwash” debrief immediately following exercise termination. Feedback comments were universally positive. There were no objections or corrections to any of the conclusions reached in this report.

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[Protective Marking]

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)  
After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) [Full Exercise Name]  
[Exercise Name Continued]

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## APPENDIX F: ACRONYMS

[Any acronym used in the AAR should be listed alphabetically and spelled out.]

**Table F.1: Acronyms**

Acronym	Meaning
STOCS	State Tactical Operational Communication System
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
IMT	Incident Management Team
MCI	Mass Casualty Incident
gpm	Gallons per minute