



VCS Emergencies  
Partnership

# Winter Preparedness: Scenario Exercise Facilitator Pack

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# Exercise structure

<b>Introduction and overview</b> (Suggested time 5 minutes)	<b>1</b> Begin the exercise by introducing yourself and provide a short overview of the aims, objectives and process. Emphasise the purpose of the exercise and the four questions to keep front of mind throughout.  Explain the roles of the facilitator and note-takers. Ask participants participating to have their camera on, and those observing off. Invite participants to introduce themselves, their role and organisation in the chat. After introductions, remind everyone to share responsibility for making the exercise useful and productive, take space and make space.
<b>Exercise and discussion</b> (75 minutes inc comfort break)	<b>2</b> Once you have provided the overview, begin by introducing the scenario, reading it aloud and sharing the questions. To simulate a real event, the scenario unfolds through updates. Each update includes an additional set of questions for participants.  The prompts are for you to help steer conversation or stimulate thought if it's not naturally happening. They are optional, use some, none or all depending on flow.
<b>Debriefing and next steps</b> (Suggested time 25 minutes)	<b>3</b> Once you have concluded the exercise, it is critical to debrief and establish follow-up plans. A debriefing is simply a review of the exercise and an opportunity to identify next steps. Keep this summary simple by asking for input to create a list of the areas identified as major strengths and areas for improvement; notetaker to help inform this discussion.
<b>Session close</b> (Suggested time 5 minutes)	<b>4</b> End the session by thanking everyone for their participation and their honest feedback. Explain the Partnership's commitment to using the exercise as a building block to continue to strengthen sector relationships and work to build capabilities across any gaps highlighted.



# Facilitation tips

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Review the aims and objectives and ensure exercise discussions will meet all objectives
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are elements of the scenario which need to be customised for the region ahead of delivery, be sure to adjust these. Review the questions and prompts, add any additional you require
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Review the list of participants for your region and familiarise yourself with the organisations joining
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discuss the scenario with the notetaker ahead of the exercise, particularly on how you want to debrief
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Involve all participants. Try not to let one or two people monopolize the conversation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Try not to jump in with solutions but use the prompts to encourage conversation and work to draw the solutions out from them
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Watch for signs of frustration or conflict. Remember that the exercise is not a test, but an opportunity to identify areas for improvement. If you see mounting frustration or conflict, pause the exercise and suggest a break
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that discussion remains within the scope of the given discussion area. Sometimes the conversation may begin to drift to topics more appropriate for discussion in later periods of the exercise, or the conversation may get stuck on a problem area that will need to be resolved later. To keep the discussion moving, use a “bike rack” technique to record difficult issues that can be discussed more fully later.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Monitor time closely, use a stopwatch and try to stick to the outlined times

## Following up is critical

After the exercise, be sure to follow through with addressing the “bike rack” and gather reflections on how things went. Be explicit about how you will follow up on the learnings identified by participants in a timely fashion and how you will share the summary notes and any next steps.



# Aims and objectives

The Emergencies Partnership scenario exercising has three core **aims**:

- ✓ 1. Partners test and strengthen relationships before they're needed
- ✓ 2. Partners better understand each other's capacity and capabilities
- ✓ 3. Improve the level of community preparedness/awareness in emergency response

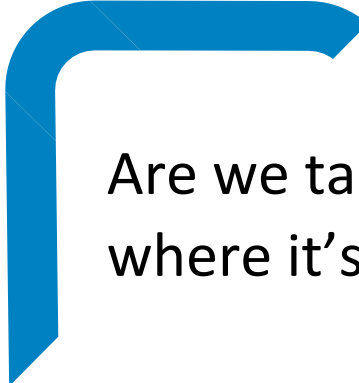
Our **objectives** in carrying out these exercises are:

- ✓ 1. For an organisation to test/assess its ability to respond using any existing emergency response plans, policies, and resources and to identify actions for improvements
- ✓ 2. To understand, test and navigate the flow of information in an emergency
- ✓ 3. To understand, test and navigate how connections are made, and who should be in communication with whom
- ✓ 4. How the needs of everyone in a community are being met, particularly the underserved and disproportionately impacted
- ✓ 5. To explore how we pool resources and collaborate more effectively

# Key questions throughout




Who is best placed to respond?



Are we targeting the response where it's needed most?



Who else might already be responding?



How are we making best use of our resources?



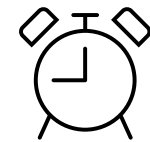
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# Winter Preparedness: Initial Scenario

# Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 14:45

The MET Office detects a cold front moving toward **[your region]**. There have been increased warnings with officials predicting heavy snowfall and some of the lowest temperatures in years. Officials urge the public to prepare for a large storm that will likely begin in the next 24-48 hours. An amber level warning is issued for the whole of the region with **[X and Y areas]** expected to be hit hardest.

The MET Office predicts light snow over the next 12 hours that will likely mix with or change to sleet or freezing rain with significant icing possible by tomorrow afternoon. Ice accumulation will likely be between 1/2 and 1 inch, with highest icing potential near **[your community]**. The public is advised to expect widespread power outages, fallen trees, and treacherous road conditions because of the ice storm. There is a planned rail strike affecting all services on both Saturday and Sunday. Most local schools are already closed for the Christmas break.



**25**  
minutes



# Winter preparedness

Who is best placed to respond?

Are we targeting the response where it's needed most?

Who else might already be responding?

How are we making best use of our resources?

Initial scenario questions		Suggested time: 25 minutes
1	Who is responsible for monitoring or would likely hear or receive a MET Office alert? How would they receive this information?	<b>PROMPT:</b> Do they know the meaning of an Amber warning and what guidance should be issued? How might a power outage impact your communications?
2	What information are you sharing with your [employees/service users/wider sector/volunteers] at this time? What are the current process and communications platform(s) used to notify them of potential threats or hazards or share information/intelligence?	<b>PROMPT:</b> Who decides when and how to share information about severe weather? What communication platforms do you use regularly (email, whatsapp, phone calls, radio, social media)? Are these dependent on community sources of power? How are you considering those with a communication access need? How are you identifying them?
3	With the available information, what or who are your immediate concerns?	<b>PROMPT:</b> Are there additional measures needed to support communities, disproportionately impacted or at higher risk? Are there any steps to be taken to support an out of hours response?
4	Based on the forecast, what preparatory measures can be taken by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You/Your organisation</li> <li>- The sector</li> <li>- The community</li> </ul>	<b>PROMPT:</b> What do you need to do to safeguard your team, what can the sector do to target response where it is most needed and make the most of available resources, what messages do your community need to hear for those most able to self-serve and reduce possible negative impact?



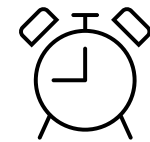
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# Winter Preparedness: Scenario Update #1

# Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 10:00

Weather conditions have deteriorated over the weekend, with heavy snowfall and winds reaching 98mph. Ice up to 1 inch thick accumulates on roads and pavements, many routes are blocked by fallen trees. Trees have also damaged a number of power lines and houses in the area. Authorities are attempting to clear the major roadways, but the dangerous conditions make it nearly impossible to keep even the largest vehicles on the road.

The National Grid have just confirmed widespread power outages, the local authority is reporting that over 70% of its grit/salt supply has already been used.



**20**  
minutes

# Winter preparedness

Who is best placed to respond?

Are we targeting the response where it's needed most?

Who else might already be responding?

How are we making best use of our resources?

Scenario update #1 questions		Suggested time: 20 minutes
1	What are your immediate actions and priorities in the first 10-15 minutes?	<b>PROMPT:</b> Who is in charge? How will leaders communicate with each other and with [employees/communities/the sector/volunteers]? How will any actions from the weekend be shared with those just coming 'back online'?
2	What and how is your organization communicating about the winter storm at this time? And to who?	<b>PROMPT:</b> Do you have an alternate plan for communications if traditional systems are damaged or the power is out due to downed power lines?
3	What information do you have that others might not?	<b>PROMPT:</b> Do you have organisational emergency response plans for this situation? What information do you need from others?
4	How might the cost of living crisis have an impact here?	<b>PROMPT:</b> What essentials might people finding themselves stranded or unexpectedly isolated not have?

# Comfort break

Back in 10 minutes



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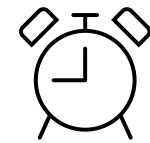
# Winter Preparedness: Scenario Update #2

# Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 18:00

As the day develops heavy snow has turned to sleet, winds have dropped but remain above 30mph. Some roads have been cleared, in part by Local Authorities and others by members of the community. The MET Office are reporting that the worst of the storm has passed but the warning level remains at Amber.

The National Grid have stated work is ongoing to restore power but the damage is so severe they are estimating some areas could be days if not weeks before power is restored. **[Local Hospital]** has had intermittent outages, forced blackouts are happening in some areas that hadn't lost power as it is redirected to support the hospital. The number of calls to emergency services is exceeding capacity, Accident and Emergency wait times are over **[X hrs]**.

Most businesses have (or remain) closed, including many petrol stations, supermarkets and convenience stores. A small number of residential floods are being reported due to frozen pipes bursting.



**20**  
minutes

# Winter preparedness

Who is best placed to respond?

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Initial scenario questions	Suggested time: 20 minutes
<p>① Based on this updated information, how have your concerns changed? Do you have any new concerns?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> How are you connecting with communities where English is not the first language? Do you know what proportion of your community are disabled, or might have additional support needs which aren't being met?</p> <p>How might pets and animals be impacted, directly or indirectly?</p>
<p>② How are you engaging volunteers?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> What roles, if any, are safe for volunteers to support in these conditions? How are you harnessing the spontaneous volunteering that is happening?</p>
<p>③ Are there new risks emerging now the worst of the storm has passed? What are they? Can you mitigate any?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> Are there any additional considerations for the time of year it is? What risks could present over the coming days as people may attempt to travel?</p>
<p>④ Who is best placed to respond, where, and how long for?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> Are there new communications messages needed for communities to lessen the impact over the coming days?</p>



# Exercise Debrief

Feedback and reflections

# How did it go?

- What went well?
- What unanticipated issues arose during the exercise?
- What gaps were identified?
- What are the high-priority issues that could be addressed?
- What are new ideas and recommendations for improvement?
- Were the exercise objectives met?



# Aims and objectives: Reminder

The Emergencies Partnership scenario exercising has three core **aims**:

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