



DAMS SECTOR TABLETOP EXERCISE TOOLBOX



OVERVIEW

The Dams Sector Tabletop Exercise Toolbox (DSTET, Toolbox) provides dam owners and operators with exercise planning resources to address sector-specific threats, issues, and concerns related to the protection of dams. Through a series of facilitated discussions, the Toolbox enhances effective information sharing and coordination between owners and operators, first responders, and relevant stakeholders during various threat and incident phases.

The DSTET provides five scenarios and associated templates, customizable by the organization, to facilitate an interactive, discussion-based exercise focused on owner and operator response and coordination with other entities during adversarial incidents or potential attacks on their facility. The intent is to improve the overall operational response and collective decision-making processes of the participating entities. Each of the exercise scenarios included in the DSTET provides a platform for an exchange of ideas by expanding the existing knowledge of policies and procedures relevant to security-related incidents. Each exercise emphasizes emergency response coordination and resource integration with problem identification and resolution during a security and/or cyber event.

DSTET scenarios and templates, developed by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) as the Sector Risk Management Agency for the Dams Sector, are available on the Homeland Security Information Network—Critical Infrastructure (HSIN-CI) Dams Portal.

SCENARIOS

Central to the DSTET is a suite of scenarios based on realistic security threats that could potentially occur at dams and the facilities operating the dams. Exercise planners can choose from one of five scenarios—Active Shooter Threat, International Adversary Threat, Cyber Threat (Internal), Cyber Threat (External), and All-Hazards Threat—and tailor the exercise details to match the facility's operational environment and needs.

TOOLKIT CONTENTS

Supporting the development and implementation of the exercise is a suite of templates, consistent with the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP), which can be tailored by the organization to meet their exercise needs:

- **Administrative Documents:** Includes sample exercise invitations, a fact sheet on the Toolbox, and participant and exercise feedback forms.
- **Exercise Planner Instructions:** Provides guidance for the exercise planners with step-by-step instructions to develop and execute the tabletop exercise.
- **Facilitator and Evaluator Handbook:** Guides the facilitator and evaluator by providing instructions and examples for conducting the exercise, as well as capturing information and feedback needed for review and development of an After-Action Report and Improvement Plan.
- **Situation Manuals:** Provides participants with detailed descriptions of the scenario and potential questions to supplement the details presented and stimulate discussion.
- **Briefing Slides:** Mirrors the Situation Manual and is used by the exercise facilitator to guide participants through the scenario and discussion questions.
- **Reference Materials:** Aids the exercise planner, facilitator, and participants by providing additional information on the exercise and other related topics.
- **Videos:** Set the stage for relevant scenarios in the Toolbox.

BENEFITS

Exercises, such as those supported by the DSTET, are necessary to maintain operational readiness and test the timeliness and responsiveness of the responding entities. In addition, an organization can benefit from testing the communication processes and information-sharing mechanisms that support engagements with similar facilities, interdependent critical infrastructure, and other owners and operators who may benefit from the appropriate level of situational awareness regarding an incident affecting their sector. Periodic exercises, conducted on a pre-determined schedule or after an incident, result in improved plans because lessons learned are incorporated into the updated planning document(s). Additional benefits of exercises to an organization include:

- Raise the general awareness of the hazards likely to impact the organization.
- Reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the plan(s) selected for testing, including identifying deficiencies in resources, information and data available, and protocols.
- Ensure key staff members, emergency management agencies, and other senior leaders understand their roles and responsibilities and improve individual performance of those responding to the crisis.
- Improve coordination efforts between the dam owner and emergency management authorities potentially responding to incidents at the dam project.
- Identify improvements to the plans and future training and exercises to enhance the organization's ability to respond to an incident.

For additional information on the DSTET, access our webpage by scanning the QR code to the right. For questions about how to access the HSIN-CI Dams Portal, contact the Dams Sector Management Team at DamsSector@cisa.dhs.gov.

