



The ERP DRILLIT Template Compliments of Fireside Partners



The ERP DRILLIT Template™ is a straightforward, .pdf form-fillable, electronic user's manual for planning aviation accident drills and exercises. This is a valuable tool for operators seeking to test the utility and effectiveness of their aviation emergency response plan (ERP).

Further, this template is of value for those operators seeking IS-BAO Registration in Stages II and III, as the Emergency Response Plan, a critical piece of the SMS equation, must be a functioning document, and sustained and supported throughout the SMS evolution¹.

The ERP DRILLIT Template™ approaches Drills and Exercises with a *goals* and *results* oriented view, and it walks the operator through essential planning and evaluation considerations. Then, it dives into the granular aspects of drill and exercise planning. Finally it finishes with some best practice recommendations, and suggestions on where to get support and additional resources.

Getting Started: A Task List for Developing your ERP Drill or Exercise

First- Establish your Purpose and your Goals for conducting the ERP Drill/Exercise:

What specifically about your plans and processes do you want to evaluate, and how will you evaluate it?

1. Define your Purpose Statements:

Example: "I want to evaluate how long it takes our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to become fully staffed and functional, outside of normal business hours."

¹ Extracted reference from IS-BAO Policy 2012-03, Section 2.

2. Set Expectations :

Example: “#1 We expect our EOC to be fully operational in under 2 hours and staffed at the minimum level required to manage a response. #2 We expect the key roles to be present and have the necessary work tools available to make effective decisions, and have the facts needed to arrive at conclusions that best protect our organizational concerns and priorities.”

3. Establish Evaluation Criteria for Expectation #1:

Example: We will use the following “time hacks” to evaluate our capability:

- ⊕ Time hack one: Initial call comes in, (Call screening checklist required)
- ⊕ Time hack two: Confirm an accident with our aircraft, (Accident verification checklist required)
- ⊕ Time hack three: Activate ERP and notify essential personnel, (ERP Call-tree required)
- ⊕ Time hack four: EOC set-up and operationally ready, (EOC setup checklist required)
- ⊕ Time hack five: EOC staffing level sufficient to start managing event, (EOC checklist required)
- ⊕ Time hack six: Delivery of the first “all hands” event briefing. (EOC event log required)

Time	Event	Notes

4. Establish Evaluation Criteria for Expectation #2:

Example: Once we have everyone in place at the EOC (more or less) I want to examine how we make decisions as a group”.

Evaluation Scale: 1-5 (1 being “not very effective”, 5 being “very effective”)

- ⊕ Observation one: we carve through the fog and arrive at decisions effectively and efficiently
- ⊕ Observation two: we are clear on who leads the EOC and roles are articulated and understood
- ⊕ Observation three: we are able to discriminate between what is really urgent, what can wait, and what decisions can be delegated downward, or really belong to another group outside the EOC

Observation	Scale

NOTE: To fully test our decision making capabilities, will use an external source of expertise to hit us with real world concerns. These will run the gamut from the time critical to the unimportant, and we will evaluate against our scale above.

- ⊕ Concentration area one: *Federal Agencies*
- ⊕ Concentration area two: *Local Responders*
- ⊕ Concentration area three: *Mainstream and Local Media*
- ⊕ Concentration area four: *Critical Stakeholders*
- ⊕ Concentration area five: *Mutual Aid Organizations*
- ⊕ Concentration area six: *Families and Employees*

Next – Now that we have established our purpose, our expectations, and our evaluation criteria, we will now decide which one we will conduct, a DRILL or an EXERCISE.

What is the difference?

DRILL: A simulated emergency scenario designed to facilitate the activation of the Emergency Response Plan. You can drill the comprehensive company response, or drill and evaluate the performance of specific response capabilities and/or the performance of ERP Team(s) within the ERP. The specific contents (scenario) of the drill are usually withheld until execution, **and there are no “time-outs” or “do-overs” during the drill**. A drill is conducted from start to finish, gaps are recorded for follow-up later, but the response continues as if it were a real event. A drill can be conducted with no notice, some prior notice, or with full prior notice.

EXERCISE: A simulated emergency scenario designed to facilitate the activation of any portion, or all portions of the Emergency Response Plan, and the practicing of any portion of the response. The exercise scenario is designed for a **specific educational purpose** and there may be operational “time-outs” for discussion and learning, or “do-overs” during the exercise for these same purposes. An exercise is an appropriate option for those testing their ERP for the first time. That said, in order to keep the exercise moving along, be mindful to coach the group through the discussions, and try not to become tangled “in the weeds”.

Next - Describe what success looks like at the end of the Drill/Exercise:

As the late Stephen Covey said, “begin with the end in mind”. If you have not identified the fixed point in space you are aiming toward, it will be almost impossible to gauge the success of the drill. Although it is often said that you can’t plan for everything, you should have solidified procedures for the things you can plan for. The following are examples of success markers:

First Example: “In full consideration of our Expectations #1 and #2, we want to increase our confidence in our plan and checklists, identify areas of improvement, and evaluate how effective we are in meeting our three main organizational priorities: (1) Provide essential comfort and aid to the victims and families, (2) Protect our brand by managing public perceptions, and (3) quickly establish effective and productive relationships with the Federal investigative agencies”.

Second Example: “Success to us is to lay the initial groundwork for recovery and resiliency, right at the outset. Our leadership should have all of the tools they need at their disposal to effectively manage the company response. This drill will evaluate if they are able to do that.”

NOTE: Interestingly, most drills end at the point where the real work begins for the operator. In almost all cases the “First Response” phase is out of your operational control, and in the hands of Fire, Police, EMS/Hospitals, etc. Yet this area is where most aviation drills focus upon.

Consider moving your focal point to the phases where the crash is confirmed, the fire is out, and the occupants are being rescued/recovered. Now what? This is the portion where your organizational

“brand” hangs in the balance and the really big decisions reside. For example, here are just some suggested areas to evaluate while the First Responder Activity is underway, and after it has ended:

- 1.) Activation and recall of EOC Leadership and ERP team members
- 2.) Confirming it was an accident, and it was one of your aircraft
- 3.) Confirming the status (well-being) of passengers and crew
- 4.) Getting “eyes on the ground” so that trusted information flows into the EOC
- 5.) Achieving situational awareness in the EOC, giving a “birds-eye view” of all response processes
- 6.) Notifying families and providing assistance
- 7.) Deploying a representative(s) to participate in the investigation, and relaying site information
- 8.) Coordinating with hospitals and/or the coroner/medical examiner
- 9.) Working with your insurance company and claims adjuster
- 10.) Post-accident communications and Public Relations

Next – Design the scenario with statistical relevance in mind, and forget the “worst case scenario”.

Exercises and Drills should primarily be an **educational experience** and a chance to practice checklists, response processes, and crisis decision making. It should build confidence and enhance response readiness. It should also align with your ERP team level training.

Too many drills become an exercise in frustration due to overzealous scripting, and personal agendas on the part of the exercise developer. When this happens, the drill or exercise erodes confidence and pulls your teams away from the tools and processes they thought they understood going in.

The “worst case scenario” is an indefinable and impractical concept. It means different things to different people, and can easily steer you away from a productive drill. Instead, focus on statistical likelihood given your operation, and initially at least, try to get really good at managing the realistic.

1. Establish **where** the scenario will occur, and generally **what** it will be:

Example: When thinking about where the scenario should take place, consider your frequently visited airports.. On average, 90% of all accidents occur within 3nm of an airport.

Consider an accident scenario at one of your frequented airports that involves landing (in-flight emergency and diversion) or departing (engine failure on rotation).

2. Establish your crew and passenger load for the exercise. Strongly consider using your existing processes and paperwork if you can do so safely, and without skewing your data (i.e. establish a fictional “training/drill” flight in your system, and keep it outside your operational data).

Example: What are your typical passenger demographics and numbers? Do you have accurate passenger lists complete with emergency contact information? Do you know what to do with the emergency contact information if you do have it?

NOTE: If you introduce “fake” information, or expect processes/actions that your folks do not employ in their normal duties, it becomes more confusing and stressful. However, be very sensitive to the personal impact of using real names and tail numbers. Also it is much easier for someone to mistakenly think it is a real event if the data is real. We discuss drill safeguards and Rules of Engagement in a separate publication.

3. Construct a simple scenario that flows along with the time you have allocated.

Scenario Suggestions:

*Make the scenario as straightforward as possible, to keep everyone busy, but without undue tricks and traps. Any operator who has actually responded to a fatal accident will tell you **the reality is difficult enough**, without adding more undue complexity. Lastly, ensure the scenario supports your Expectations above.*

If this is your first drill, or one of your first drills, then consider conducting an Exercise, and start slow. Focus on two or three key processes and really examine them to see if they work. Take occasional timeouts and get a fix on where you are. It always helps to involve an external specialist to help guide you through.

*NOTE: Try not to use the drill to identify gaps that you already know exist; make your best attempt to fill the gap first. The drill should then test your existing processes and indentify micro gaps. **Take copious notes**, and follow through on what you find needs to be adjusted or fixed. Be sure to record the date, the scenario, and all findings for inclusion as an appendix into your ERP manual – this should also help in your IS-BAO registration process.*

4. Now make it feel “real” by adding in the “outside world” component.

Suggestions:

In every real-world accident the outside world is brought into your operation ...through a deluge of phone call inquiries, families arriving, investigative authorities making requests of you, etc. If it happens in every real situation, then it should be a part of every practice situation. Rarely do drills include these realities, and it is what galvanizes the learning point and provides as close to the real experience as you would ever want.

Consider involving an external source with the technical know-how to assist in scenario development, add-in the real world experience component, and/or provide specially trained role players. Expect the same source to evaluate your Exercise or Drill and provide a comprehensive after-action report for your future audits.

5. Use this link to build your Exercise or Drill using the Master Planning Sheet Template (*available from Fireside Partners Inc. at 302-613-0012*) Good luck in your Exercise or Drill!

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