

Radiological Sheltering Tabletop Exercise Toolkit



Background

Radiation preparedness is no longer a necessity only for jurisdictions neighboring nuclear facilities. While the probability of catastrophic radiation events such as an incident at a nuclear facility or a terrorist attack using a radiation dispersal device is relatively low, the consequences are extremely high. In fact, experts are concerned that the threat of a radiological emergency is growing across the nation.

Both the long-term and immediate health risks associated with radiation exposure can cause severe damage within an impacted community. These factors increase the significance of a timely evacuation, specialized treatment, and available shelters for displaced residents.

Purpose of the Toolkit

Although many jurisdictions have general purpose sheltering plans for natural disasters and other non-radiation related emergencies, these plans are not sufficient for those displaced by a radiological incident. In response to this national gap for radiation preparedness, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to create the Radiological Sheltering Tabletop Exercise (TTX) Toolkit.

The toolkit supports local health departments (LHDs) and community stakeholders in developing and implementing effective public sheltering plans, specifically when responding to a major radiation emergency. The toolkit aims to do the following:

- Identify strengths and areas for improvement in mass shelter plans for radiation emergencies;
- Promote LHD use of CDC's *Guide to Operating a Public Shelter in a Radiation Emergency*; and
- Increase LHD access to tools, strategies, and other resources related to public health and radiation preparedness.



How to Access the Toolkit

1. Visit <http://goo.gl/EUsZUM>.
2. Log into or create a "My NACCHO" account.
3. Download the Adobe Acrobat Portfolio or zip file containing all TTX Toolkit materials.

Toolkit Features

The Radiological Sheltering TTX Toolkit contains Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)-compliant materials designed to guide LHDs in the development, implementation, and evaluation of a discussion-based exercise on effectively establishing a public shelter following a radiation event. Toolkit features include the following:

- Customizable templates that can be used to design, plan, and evaluate exercises;
- TTX materials with built-in guidance and training on establishing and operating a radiation shelter;
- Two videos to enhance exercise realism and expand on scenario information;

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- Links to other radiation materials relevant for LHDs; and
- Comprehensive instructions and additional tools to assist with exercise planning and logistics.

Toolkit Development

The Radiological Sheltering TTX Toolkit was piloted by five LHD sites prior to its official release. The NACCHO Exercise Team selected sites, assisted with planning, and customized TTX materials according to each site's needs and capabilities. Participating pilot sites ranged from small, rural health departments to large, metropolitan health departments, each with varying levels of prior radiation planning experience.

NACCHO adjusted all materials in the toolkit based on feedback provided by the pilot sites. The pilot sites also used feedback collected from the TTXs to evaluate their radiation response plans and inform future radiation preparedness activities.

References

1. NACCHO. (2016). *NACCHO National Preparedness Profile Findings*.
2. NACCHO & Radiation Injury Treatment Network. (2015). *A Summary of Radiation Emergency Preparedness in the 50 mile EPZ Surrounding Nuclear Power Plants*.

Acknowledgments

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Did You Know?

- 59% of LHDs indicated they were with either slightly or not at all prepared for an accidental radiological or nuclear release.¹
- 25% of all health departments within 50 miles of a nuclear power plant have never exercised a radiation sheltering plan.²
- 87% of all health departments within 50 miles of a nuclear power plant have plans for radiation emergencies.²

Additional Radiation Resources

NACCHO Radiation Webpage

<http://goo.gl/HOLQQ>

Contains the most up-to-date LHD radiation preparedness information.

NACCHO Radiation Toolkit

<http://toolbox.naccho.org>

Contains a collection of radiation tools, guidance, resources, and websites that are relevant for LHDs.

CDC Guide to Operating Public Shelters in a Radiation Emergency

<https://goo.gl/vmHADB>

Contains guidance for planning and response efforts related to shelter operations in a radiation emergency.

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health



The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice with local health departments.

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