{Text in GREEN is instructional and can be removed before use.}

Once the situation has been analyzed in the *Operational Systems Worksheet* and the *Vulnerability Matrix/Guidance*, it’s important to set a strategic framework for your plan which is agreed on by leadership. In the Army Wwar College, this process is called Plan Design, the natural outcome of which is a Planning Directive. This Directive sets the parameters for what the plan needs to accomplish and will guide the Planning Team in its work. For large planning efforts, a Planning Directive lets different teams work on various planning problems while ensuring their approaches remain coordinated.

Usage:

1. To do this right will require a few meetings with high leadership and stakeholders. This may be difficult, but the payoff for you and for them is that the bulk of the planning process can them proceed with all parties clear on the strategic guidance and objectives.
2. The Planning Team should use the first two pages of the Planning Directive (through the *Objectives by Incident Phase* chart) as an agenda to meet with the Executive Sponsor or other leadership. This allows the highest level guidance (Goals, Objectives) to be developed with leadership.[[1]](#footnote-1)
3. At this meeting, use the *Operational Environment Worksheet* and *Vulnerable Populations Matrix* to describe the situation and get guidance on what leadership feels are the major priorities as outlined below. Remember to stay strategic. Do not get into how these goals will be accomplished. These meetings need to make the high level mission for the plan clear.
4. Once you have set the Objectives with Leadership, the Planning Team needs to work through some initial planning problems throughout this document. Since the tool is organized for leadership and contains the summary information first, that means you need to work backward.
5. The final section of the document is the *Community Systems Impact*, which is a summary of your Operational Environment Worksheet and Vulnerability Guidance. The intent will be to give all leaders and planners a clear sense of the impact they are planning for.
6. Still working backward, the next section from the back is the *Scenario Breakdown*.By looking at the goals and objectives and at the Systems Impact, the Planning Team can analyze how the scenario or problem will occur. It’s important to look for data and context. That is, you’re not saying “There will be flooding”. You need to think about how the impacts will occur and in what likely areas or populations. How will the incident proceed? Then, think about how that will be managed. Are there time thresholds that will be important? Will certain things fail first? You should include a few bullets about various ways the scenario should occur. In an all-hazards environment, consider different characteristics of events, such as no-notice versus slow moving.
7. This source material will give you the right information to draft a *Mission Narrative* – a walkthrough of what needs to happen to achieve each Objective. Instructions are in that section.
8. In the next section, you’ll connect that Mission Narrative to initial staff and resources by Functional Lines. This section answers the question *What might we need in order to pull this off?*
9. Finally, you can describe the key issues to be resolved. What are the gaps and holes and – even more importantly – how will those be addressed during the Planning Process.
10. The cleaned up document should be discussed in depth with high leadership and stakholders. It should then become both the guide for the rest of the planning process and a high-level strategic document to chart priorities during the course of a response.

The Planning Design proces can take substantial time, but it is essential when dealing with complex problems that need to be addressed with flexibility and imagination. It helps leaders to understand key decision and starts coordinating processes. More guidance is included throughout the document.

**Purpose:** Establishes the public health mission for your plan from your Incident Commander or Agency head. Directs planning at all levels- strategic, operational, and tactical – and sets forth what the Executive will ask the agency to accomplish rather than how it will get done.

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| **Problem[[2]](#footnote-2)** |
| A succinct statement of the problem which the plan is trying to manage or solve goes here. It should sum up some of the work that goes into the supporting materials below (e.g. Impact Analysis and Attack Frame).  |
| Leadership guidance (Proposed)[[3]](#footnote-3) |
| Indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore.  | **MISSION** | Remember that this statement needs to be brief and at the highest level. A narrative with more detail will follow later in the document.  |
| Describes leadership vision and priorities to measure achievement of the objectives. | **END STATE** | An easy way to think of the *end state* is that it’s the point when we can demobilize. So, this needs to be a clear way to measure success. |
| The principal element that stands in the way of accomplishing the objectives (risk) and/or the element that enables us to accomplish our objectives (strength).[[4]](#footnote-4)  | **CENTER OF GRAVITY** | This is new language, but it’s an important way to note priorities and risks to the operation. Think of these as “third rail issues” – things that will make everything fall apart. In military parlance, both friendly and opposing forces have centers of gravity; here, we translate that into key risks and neeeded strength.**Key Risk:** What is the biggest risk for the plan from the hazard scenario?**Needed Strength:** What’s our biggest advantage going in? The one that, if we lose it, will make us fail in our mission. |
| A broad concept that provides insight into how to solve the problem by reinforcing positives and countering negatives.[[5]](#footnote-5) | **OPERATIONAL APPROACH** | Remember to stay broad and brief – this is just a thought at the Executive level of the best way to solve the problem. Elements of it could be things like “Use a blend of prophlaxis strategies – both PODs and postal distribution – to ensure we reach a broad population” or “Establish a number of monitoring facilities around the city so that commuters can be screened for radiation”. |
| *Goals*indicate general methods for achieving the mission and end state, specifying desired results.  | **GOALS** | There are usually two or three major goals for the operation. They lay out high level strategic choices. Remember to include what we want to get from the method in the statement (e.g., “Protect all citizens from infection” – where “all citizens is the result). 1.
2.
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| Objectives by Major Function and Phase  |
| Objectives are the major specific and identifiable actions carried out during the operation. Below, the **Objectives** map to the major **Functions** of our response in the **ICS Structure** and through the **Incident Phases** of the operation. |

Here things get more specific; this page is a one stop plan design. At the top, list numbered Objectives. Remember the litmus test for how many Objectives you need: Each Operational piece of your response organization should be able to map to an objective during the response. You don’t need Objectives for things you do in every response, like paying staff or writing Situation Reports. Make sure your Objectives are specific, measurable, and use active verb language. You’ll also need a name for each one to use later in planning. As an example: “1. **Public Messaging**: Create accurate and reliable public messaging every day.”

Now, you need to make sure that you include Objectives for every phase of your response. In this document, we use sample phases for a biological threat agent incident: Detection, Characterization, Control and Recovery/Remediation. Objectives may change throughout these phases; it’s important to capture changing objectives to more nimbly manage the response. Finally, to make sure the different players in the response work together, you should decide on just a few “Major Functional Lines”. The Army calls these “Lines of Effort” – they are essentially the big pushes that your response is engaged in. We argue that public health response generallly has three Major Functional Lines: We **conduct an Investigation**, **intervene for public health**, and **produce guidance**. You may need different functional lines or want to rephrase these.

The chart below is based on the Comander’s Intent diagrams used in Army Planning Directives. It does a couple of things. First, it shows the response organization, with colors that show how everyone is divided into Functional Lines. Then, it should map the numbered Objectives to the time phases. Make sense? When it’s done, it’s a one stop picture of the whole response, showing how everyone is connected and how things should progress over time toward the end states. If you get stuck, contact us for help.



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| **Major Functional Lines** | Objectives / Incident Phases | End State |
| Detection | Characterization  | Control | Recovery/Remediation | * Language defining your end state goes here.
 |
| **Conduct an Investigation**(I&D Section) |  |
| **Intervene for Public Health**(Ops Section) |  |
| **Produce Guidance**Incident Organization (with major functions color-coded)(PIO, PSA) |  |

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

Objective Name

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| Mission Narrative  |
| This narrative walks through the major courses of action which should be planned for a BTA response, numbered by objective.  |

This is the real meat of your plan design. For each objective, write few sentences (*Maxmimum* 150 words) describing what needs to be done to accomplish that objective. This narrative is the ‘story’ of your response. It is meant to explain to everyone outside the planning team what the response will accomplish.

The Army War College recommends a specific format for these, which we’ve found very effective (Kem 2009). It works like this:

1. **Conditions –** Describe the conditions of the hazard that make the objective necessary.
2. **Opportunities ­ -** What inside the hazard makes it possible for us to change the situation. This sentence should reference the objective directly.
3. **Key Actions –** Two or three key actions that will be taken should be specifically spelled out.
4. **Payoff** – This is the most important part. Descirbe how the actions will change the original condictions in a way that external stakeholders will understand.

Here’s one example from a coastal storm response, given for format and not for substance.

The storm will cause widespread flooding that will force evacuations (Conditions). The response will use government staff and school locations to **open shelters (Obj. #)** in order to care for victims (Opportunities). Shelters will be sited in order to decrease travel time (Key Actions). Special needs patients will be accomodated (Key Actions). One shelter will accommodate pets(Key Actions).. In this way, victims will be cared for and will be able to return to their homes as soon as possible (Payoff).

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| RESOURCES by Major Functions |
| Specific resources needed in order to accomplish all of the listed objectives. These are in addition to all-hazards resources generally needed by each ICS area. Objectives numbered per the master Objectives chart on Page 2. If an Objective is empty only ALL-HAZARDS (i.e., typical) resources are required. |

This page is an initial chart of the resources which the planning team thinks are needed to get the job done. It’s organized by the Functional Lines on the previous page. For each Functional Line, it lays out resources needed to accomplish each Objective. Sometimes the numbers skip around because every Functional Line doesn’t do every Objective. Remember, this chart isn’t a commitment of resources. It should lay out everything needed without regard to where the resources will come from or who owns them.

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| Investigations |
| **Objective Name (Objective #1)***
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*
 |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #2)** |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #3)***
*
*
*
*
 |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #4 )** |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #11)** |

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| Operations Section |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #2)** |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #7)***
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| **Objective Name (Obj. #8)** |
| **Objective Name Obj. #9)***
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| **Objective Name (Obj. #10)** |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #11)***
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| **Recovery Support (Obj. #12)** |

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| PIO / Guidance |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #2)***
*
 |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #5)** |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #6)***
*
 |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #10)** |
| **Objective Name (Obj. #12)** |

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| Knowledge Gaps/Organizational Learning  |
| What don’t we know, both solvable prolicies and fundamentally unknowable information, plus a process for solving.  |

Key elements to address right up front during a planning proces are the unknowns, whether you think you can solve them or not. This page should be a list of key policy issues and critical unknowns. These can be local conditions (e.g., not sure where the facilities can be located) or difficult decisions to be made in the moment (e.g., do families of staff members get medication). They should be numbered for tracking (and resolution, if possible) during the planning process.

You also should determine a clear process for solving these issues. A sample is given below, but the most important thing is that the process is agreed on by all involved and that it works in your planning situation.

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| Organizational Learning |
| Process for solving those questions we are able to solve.  |

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| Scenario Breakdown (PROBLEM FRAME) |
| Frames the specific threat posed by the problem, and the scenarios in which the problem would occur. Used in developing the mission narrative.  |

To this point, this document has contained the elements of a Planning Directive. These last two sections (Scenario Breakdown and Problem Frame) contain analyses that go into creating the Plan Design, but may not be included in the final Planning Directive for leadership.

In military design parlance, a Problem Frame outlines the specific areas that must be addressed in order to transform the situation. Here, we accomplish that by examining briefly several different scenarios within the larger problem. In one column, give the specific hazards or features of a given scenario (e.g., a Category 3 vs 4 storm, a Mild vs a Sever Pandemic. In the other, give those factors that might assist the response to the given problem. These might be mitigation efforts (e.g., a new floodwall, a strong CERT program) or opportunities presented by the scenario itself (e.g., anticipated volunteerage).

|  |  |  |
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| **Scenarios** | **Features/Hazards** | **Mitigating Factors/Opportunities** |
| **Scenario 1** |  |  |
| **Scenario 2** |  |  |
| **Scenario 3** |  |  |

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| Community Systems Impact (Environmental Frame) |
| A systems analysis of the NYC environment for potential impacts and known operational risks (Political, Response, Economic, Social, Information, Infrastructure, Physical Environment and Time).[[6]](#footnote-6) Used in developing the Mission Narrative.  |

During military plan design, the Environmental Frame is the big picture analysis of current conditions. Here, we adapt that by charting out the anticipated impact conditions of the problem you’re addressing. This describes your starting point – the way things will be when you beging your mission.

In this section, you can distill the work done for the Operational Environment Systems worksheet (Section 2), using the instructions in that document. Keep the most important characteristics and risks here, the ones you need to make sure the plan will address.

This section can contain a summarized version of the work done in the *Operational Environment Worksheet.*

| Systems | **Significant Characteristics**  | **Operational Risks** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Political |  |  |
| Response Capacity |  |  |
| Economic |  |  |
| Social |  |  |
| Information |  |  |
| Infrastructure |  |  |
| Physical Environment |  |  |
| Time |  |  |

1. Note that end state should include priorites [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This table and much in the following document owes a debt to Kem, J. *Design: Tools of the Trade.* U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Except where noted, the definitions here are from FEMA’s *Developing and Maintaing Emergency Operations Plans: Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Taken from FM 3-0. *Operations.* U.S. Department of the Army, 2008. 6-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kem, 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Based on Joint Planning Doctrine and Army Field Manual 3-0 for Operational Planning. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)