NZSAR SAREX

Evaluation Guideline

The purpose of this guideline is to provide guidance and assistance to SAR people when they are required to evaluate and assess the conduct of search and rescue exercises. It is designed to prompt and assist as a form of aid memoir for SAR planners and organisers. Variations can and should occur according to local needs, knowledge and requirements.

This guideline is intended to work closely with the SAREX planning and debriefing processes. The evaluation should closely align to the identified learning objectives and key performance indicators. The information collected by evaluators will feed into the post training documentation.

Appoint a Lead Evaluator (to manage throughout)

Before the SAREX / Training

- Develop evaluation requirements and associated documentation
- Selecting, assigning and training evaluators
- Preparing an evaluation plan
- Compiling evaluator packs – maps, documents, duties, objectives / KPI's / check list

During the SAREX / Training

- Ensures evaluators are in the right place, right time, have the correct documentation, are briefed and skilled to go
- Oversees all the activities of the evaluators
- Provides input to the SAREX / Training Planner (IC)
- Collates incoming data
- Provides input to the SAREX/Training planner on attainment of Objectives/KPI's

After the SAREX / Training

- Oversees the analysis of data collected from the evaluation team
- Coordinates the involvement of the evaluators in any post SAREX / Training meetings
- Coordinates and reviews the preparation of written reports
- Oversees the development of After Action Report (AAR) and includes feedback through to the Training Planner
- Guides the development of an improvement plan

STEP 1

Plan and Organise the Evaluation

Develop your Evaluation Requirements

- Plans, documentation, and the personnel required to carry out evaluation – to effectively observe, collect data and analyse information
- Evaluation requirements based on specific capabilities to be tested throughout SAREX / Training
- Objectives / KPI's checklist

Draft your Evaluation Documentation

- Draft evaluation plan
  - Assists evaluators to understand their roles and responsibilities
  - Supports evaluators to conduct effective analysis of the SAREX / Training
  - Supports evaluators in writing a comprehensive AAR and Improvement plan

Confirm and Train your Evaluators

- Evaluators should have expertise in a functional area of the SAREX / Training
- Evaluators should have ability in carrying out evaluation responsibilities
  - Observing and recording the discussions or actions of participants during SAREX / Training
  - Assessing activities against objectives
  - Participating in information analysis and drafting AAR and Lessons Learned
- Developing and maintaining a pool of trained evaluators to discharge their responsibilities they should:
  - Be experts in the activities they evaluate
  - Be familiar with the organisation / agencies / authorities plans, policies and SOP's
  - Be familiar with the evaluation system
  - Not be burdened with exercise responsibilities other than evaluation
- Evaluator training should occur prior to the event and include:
  - All aspects of the exercise including goals, KPI's and objectives
  - Exercise players – group composition and experience
  - Evaluator roles, responsibilities and assignments
  - Analysing information collected

Finalise your Evaluation Plan

- The evaluation plan should include the following:
  - SAREX / Training specific information
  - Evaluator team organisation, assignments and location
  - Evaluator instructions
  - Evaluation tools – check sheet for Objectives / KPI's

Brief your Evaluation Staff

- Confirm roles, responsibilities and assignments
- Walk through of SAREX / Training area (where practicable)

STEP 2

Observe the Training and Collect Data

Occurs during the SAREX / training

- Evaluation team collect data
  - Objective / KPI check sheets
- Record data
- Collect data from records and logs

STEP 3

Analyse Data

Identify Issues in Operational Exercises – (Objective / KPI through evaluation list / sheet).

- Seek to answer the following:
  - What happened?
  - What did the evaluators see?
  - What was supposed to happen based on SOP's and plans?
  - Was there a difference – why or why not?
  - What was the impact?
  - Were the consequences of the action (or inaction or decision) positive, negative or neutral?
  - What should be learned?
  - What are the recommendations for improvement or corrective action to remedy deficiencies?

Determine the Gap

- Between what happened and what should have happened

Develop Recommendations for Improvement

- Identify areas to sustain or improve
- Address both short and long term solutions
- Be consistent with other recommendations
- Identify references for implementation

Capture Lessons Learned

- A 'lessons learned' is an innovative practice or a piece of knowledge gained from experience
- This knowledge provides guidance for approaching a similar problem / activity in the future
- Lessons learned allow groups / organisations to build on both past experiences and experiences from one another
- For this reason they save time, money and accelerate preparedness
- Any lessons learned applicable to other agencies / organisations should be included in the AAR (AAR shared widely within sector)
- All lessons learned should be maintained centrally with NZSAR

STEP 4

Develop the Draft After Action Report (AAR)

- Information from hotwash and evaluation debrief, check sheets for objectives / KPI's, participant feedback forms
- What happened on the SAREX / training / course
- Issues to be addressed
- Best practice
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations for improvement
- Initial feedback through to the Training Planner

STEP 5

Conduct Cold and Formal Debrief Meeting

- Evaluation team, organisational representatives, observers as required
- Review draft after action report
- Define actions for improvement of performance
- Reinforce actions done well and to best practice
- Validate recommendations

STEP 6

Identify Improvements to be Implemented

- Identify corrective actions and lessons learned that address the areas for improvement and recommendations listed in the draft AAR

STEP 7

Final Report

- Exercise planning and evaluation teams incorporate corrections, clarifications and other participant feedback into AAR
- Reinforce actions done very well and to best practice
- Presented to the Training Planner for inclusion in his wider training documentation
- Shared with internal and external audiences

STEP 8

Track Implementation

- Each organisation monitors corrective actions identified in the finalised AAR through further SAREX and Training opportunities, but most importantly Search and Rescue Operations (SAROPS)

NZSAR
New Zealand Search
and Rescue