

# Virtual Table Top Exercise (VTTX) - Long Term Power Outage

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## Situation Manual

15, 16 & 17, January, 2019

This Situation Manual (SitMan) provides exercise participants with all the necessary tools for their roles in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, facilitators, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the SitMan.

## EXERCISE OVERVIEW

<b>Exercise Name</b>	Virtual Table Top Exercise (VTTX) Long Term Power Outage
<b>Exercise Dates</b>	15, 16 & 17, January, 2019
<b>Scope</b>	This is a discussion-based exercise, planned for four hours hosted by the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and conducted with multiple remote VTC sites.
<b>Mission Area(s)</b>	Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, Recovery
<b>Core Capabilities</b>	Planning.
<b>Objectives</b>	This VTTX was written with no SMART objectives listed. SMART objectives are the responsibility of the agency taking part, if they wish to do so. As a discussion-based exercise, participating agencies discuss practicing group problem solving, familiarizing senior officials with a situation, conducting a specific case study, examining personnel contingencies, testing group message interpretation, participating in information sharing and assessing interagency coordination.
<b>Threat or Hazard</b>	Long Term Power Outage
<b>Scenario</b>	This VTTX was designed to simulate loss of power generation and grid systems.
<b>Sponsor</b>	FEMA – Emergency Management Institute (EMI)
<b>Participating Organizations</b>	Federal, State, tribal or local levels of government agencies while utilizing the whole community approach of including applicable representative organizations (such as private sector partners, voluntary agencies, school districts, etc.) within each jurisdiction.
<b>Point of Contact</b>	Douglas Kahn at <a href="mailto:douglas.kahn@fema.dhs.gov">douglas.kahn@fema.dhs.gov</a> or 301-477-7645 General Inquires: <a href="mailto:fema-emi-iemb@fema.dhs.gov">fema-emi-iemb@fema.dhs.gov</a> or call 301-447-1381

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned core capabilities are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
Assist participant's knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively conduct all-hazards emergency response and recovery.	Planning
Enable participants to better coordinate response operations with counterparts from Federal agencies, State governments, local governments, private sector organizations, and nongovernmental agencies.	
Allow participating locations to share real-time Long Term Power Outage related preparation, response and recovery solutions with all participants.	

**Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities**

### Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players.** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Observers.** Observers do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development of player responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.
- **Facilitators.** Facilitators provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required. Key Exercise Planning Team members also may assist with facilitation as subject matter experts (SMEs) during the exercise.
- **Evaluators.** Evaluators are assigned to observe and document certain objectives during the exercise. Their primary role is to document player discussions, including how and if those discussions conform to plans, policies, and procedures.

## Exercise Structure

This exercise will be a multimedia, facilitated exercise. Players will participate in the following modules:

15 Minutes	Introductions
60 Minutes	Module 1 – Initial Response Preparedness
60 Minutes	Module 2 – Extended Response
60 Minutes	Module 3 - Recovery

## Exercise Guidelines

- This exercise will be held in an open, low-stress, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
- Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., you may use only existing assets) and insights derived from your training.
- Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your organization’s final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.

## Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise, and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation. During this exercise, the following apply:

- The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.
- The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.
- All players receive information at the same time.

## Exercise Evaluation

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the exercise objectives and aligned capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks, which are documented in Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs). Evaluators have EEGs for each of their assigned areas. Additionally, players will be asked to complete participant feedback forms. These documents, coupled with facilitator observations and notes, will be used to evaluate the exercise and compile the After-Action Report (AAR).

## MODULE 1: INITIAL RESPONSE

### January 2, 2020: 1300

This winter has had a toll on the community already, three large snow and ice storms have hit this season. Some of the past events from these storms included, shut down of schools, stranded motorists, gas stations closing, supermarkets running out of food (bread, milk and water), and even the Governor asking people stay off the streets.

The National Oceanic and Astronomic Administration (NOAA), part of the National Weather Service (NWS) has just released a report that another major storm will be hitting the area in less than 36 hours. A Winter Storm Watch is posted for the local area. The Weather Channel broadcasts are calling for this storm to dump up to 12'' of snow in first 8 hours, with a total snowfall of 38'' over the course of the storm.

### 1700

It has been 4 hours since the first weather forecast has been released, now local supermarkets are reporting long lines and selling out of a few items, but expects to have shipments in and restocked before the storm hits. Several hospitals, nursing homes, government facilities and local homeowners have been contacting local propane and heating oil distribution outlets to stock up their storage tanks. However, not all that have called will be able to receive service and storage facilities are not expected to refill their own stocks.

### 1900

Local homeless shelters have called civic leaders to ask for help to stock up on supplies and ensure that they will stay open during the storm. Civic leaders are now turning to emergency management to ask for advice and to review their winter storm plans.

### 2200

NWS upgraded this from a Winter Storm Advisory to a Winter Storm Warning. Late night TV news and The Weather Channel (TWC) are now calling this storm "Olaf". Several social media posts are from citizens to local governments and asking what to do in case this storm does hit the area hard. Up to this point, there has not been any release of information from local Public Information Officer (PIO) and/or local government officials.

### January 3, 2020: 0300

First police unit advises that snow is starting to fall in the community. The snow is not sticking, but it is blowing and streets are drivable. The school administrator makes the decision to open schools today. School busses will start to on their applicable routes to pick up children at 0630.

## Key Issues

- Winter Storm Advisory issued
- Storm upgraded to Winter Storm Warning
- Supermarkets running out of daily needs

- Local fuel deliveries hindered and possibly will run out
- Life Safety is the top priority

## **Questions**

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 1. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

1. What are the known facts right now?
2. Should an EOC be staffed?
3. What are some reasonable assumptions and what assumptions should be avoided?
4. What warning and notification systems are available for the community?
5. How do you validate information?
6. What agencies need to be involved at this point?
7. What are the incident and resource priorities?
8. What do the utilities need from Emergency Management?
9. Do GIS maps need to be prepared in advance for distribution, in case of power outage or will they be produced as needed?
10. What roads need to be opened first for the hospitals, special needs populations, and nursing homes?

## MODULE 2: RESPONSE

### January 3, 2020: 0400

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE CENTRAL CITY  
0400 AM EST MON JAN 3 2020

...POWERFUL WINTER STORM TO AFFECT THE REGION...

AN INTENSE WINTER STORM WILL MOVE THROUGH THE AREA IN TWO PHASES BEGINNING TODAY AND ENDING TOMORROW EVENING. SNOW WILL DEVELOP ACROSS THE AREA EARLY THIS EVENING WITH A MIX OF SLEET AND SNOW. SNOW ACCUMULATIONS TONIGHT WILL BE GENERALLY 12 TO 15 INCHES...WITH GREATER AMOUNTS WHERE THE MIX OCCURS AND IN THE FAR NORTH. WINDS WILL INCREASE EARLY WITH BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW...

HEAVY SNOW WITH SIGNIFICANT BLOWING AND DRIFTING IS LIKELY BY LATE AFTERNOON. VERY HEAVY SNOW WILL CONTINUE TONIGHT INTO TOMORROW MORNING...ENDING BY TOMORROW EVENING. SNOWFALL RATES OF 3 TO 5 INCHES PER HOUR. SNOW MAY MIX WITH OR CHANGE TO SLEET OR FREEZING RAIN WITH SIGNIFICANT ICING POSSIBLE. ICE ACCUMULATIONS WILL LIKELY BE BETWEEN ONE QUARTER AND ONE HALF INCH...WITH HIGHEST ICING POTENTIAL NEAR AND SOUTH OF A LINE FROM YOUR COMMUNITY TO CENTRAL CITY (GENERIC CITY NAME, REPLACE WITH LOCATION OF YOUR CHOICE). SNOWFALL AMOUNTS OF UP TO 18 INCHES WILL BE POSSIBLE WITH THIS SYSTEM...WITH LOCALLY HIGHER AMOUNTS OF OVER 20 INCHES NOT OUT OF THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY. THESE HIGHER SNOWFALL AMOUNTS WILL BE ACROSS FAR NORTHERN PARTS OF YOUR STATE AND SOUTHWEST LOWER MICHIGAN.

SUSTAINED WINDS OF 15 TO 30 MPH WITH HIGHER GUSTS...WOULD SUPPORT WIDESPREAD BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW...WITH DRIFTS POTENTIALLY REACHING SEVERAL FEET IN SOME LOCATIONS. BLIZZARD TO NEAR BLIZZARD CONDITIONS ARE ALSO POSSIBLE IN MANY AREAS...ESPECIALLY ACROSS FAR NORTHWESTERN YOUR STATE AND SOUTHWEST LOWER MICHIGAN. VISIBILITIES COULD BE DOWN TO ZERO AT TIMES TRAVEL WILL LIKELY BE DIFFICULT TO IMPOSSIBLE IN MANY AREAS...WITH ROAD CLOSURES POSSIBLE.

LISTEN TO NOAA WEATHER RADIO OR YOUR LOCAL MEDIA FOR UPDATES ON THIS DANGEROUS WINTER STORM...ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE PLANNING TRAVEL IN THE REGION.

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/O.UPG.KIWX.WS.A.0001.110201T0000Z-110203T0000Z/  
/O.NEW.KIWX.WS.W.0001.110201T0000Z-110203T0000Z/  
YOUR COMMUNITY...CENTRAL CITY... (YOUR LOCAL NWS STATION)  
0406 AM EST DEC 31 2020

...WINTER STORM WARNING IN EFFECT

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN YOUR AREA HAS ISSUED A

WINTER STORM WARNING FOR A MIX OF SNOW...SLEET AND FREEZING RAIN...WHICH IS IN EFFECT FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM EST TOMORROW. THE WINTER STORM WATCH IS NO LONGER IN EFFECT AND IS NOW AN WARNING.

- \* TIMING...SNOW WILL DEVELOP TONIGHT. AFTER A SHORT LULL IN THE SNOW TUESDAY MORNING...THE SNOW WILL EXPAND IN COVERAGE AND INTENSIFY LATE TODAY. SNOW MAY MIX WITH OR CHANGE TO FREEZING RAIN AND SLEET LATE TONIGHT INTO TOMORROW MORNING. SNOW WILL CONTINUE INTO WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON...ENDING WEDNESDAY EVENING.
- \* MAIN IMPACT...12 TO 15 INCHES OF SNOW WILL BE POSSIBLE BY TODAY. ADDITIONAL HEAVY SNOW AND SLEET ACCUMULATIONS OF 4 TO 8 INCHES ARE POSSIBLE TUESDAY AFTERNOON THROUGH TOMORROW. IF PRECIPITATION CHANGES TO FREEZING RAIN OR SLEET...MUCH LOWER SNOWFALL AMOUNTS WOULD BE EXPECTED BUT SIGNIFICANT ICING WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITH EXTENDED POWER OUTAGES. ONE QUARTER TO ONE HALF INCH OF ICE ACCUMULATION IS POSSIBLE.
- \* OTHER IMPACTS...SUSTAINED WINDS OF 15 TO 30 MPH WITH HIGHER GUSTS WOULD SUPPORT WIDESPREAD BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW... HIGHLY IMPACTING TRAVEL. THESE WINDS WOULD ALSO CAUSE TREE LIMBS AND POWER LINES TO FALL IF SIGNIFICANT ICING OCCURS.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

A WINTER STORM WARNING MEANS SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF SNOW... SLEET...AND ICE ARE EXPECTED OR OCCURRING. STRONG WINDS ARE ALSO POSSIBLE. THIS WILL MAKE TRAVEL VERY HAZARDOUS OR IMPOSSIBLE.

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## 1000

The weight of the snow and ice has brought down several transmission poles, with the local utility company is reporting over 3,000 homes woke up this morning without power. There are conflicting reports, which power lines are out in your community, and several civic and private agencies (daycares, hospitals and supermarkets) are requesting priority to get their power restored.

News reports are stating over 20,000 people do not have power effecting over 7,000 homes and businesses. CNN is starting to criticize state government officials' for not being ready for this storm and a slow response.

Utility crews have been working on power lines for the past 4 hours with little success. All available crews are working to reinstall poles, fix lines and troubleshoot system failures.

First responders are failing to make calls in a timely manner, roads are not plowed to call locations and unsure of open/closed roads. Some ambulances cannot even make it out of their station due to volume of snow/ice. Air Evac is not available and grounded until end of the storm.

Street signals are not working, causing excessive traffic backup, road rage and several traffic collisions (with entrapment and entanglement). State Police are in the area and responding, but will only stay if there is an injury. Police resources are overtasked and on 12 hour shifts.

There is a lack of public works, and state highway plowing crews throughout the area. Several key people could not even make it into work.

Some rumors spreading include:

- The mayor had his street plowed first.
- Police are not responding to calls.
- The utility company will pay for hotels and discount bills.
- The low-income areas are not having their lines fixed, because they do not pay bills on time.

Undocumented (illegal) aliens will be arrested and deported.

### **1300**

The Governor has held a news conference from the State EOC, asking for people to conserve power, if your power is not working go to a local heated shelter, stay off the roads, asked businesses to stay closed and has also activated the National Guard.

Locations of shelters have been posted to social media, radio and television. Cell phones and laptop computers are starting to lose charging capabilities.

Five deaths have been reported, a suburban family had a generator running with-in their garage (carbon monoxide poisoning) and an older person found frozen in a house without power.

Some schools lost power during the day and children had to be bussed to other area schools. The school board and superintendent have not tracked the children very well and are scattered among other student classes. Parents want to pick up their children, but do not know what school to go to or if they can drive on roads.

### **1500**

Some parents are frantic, trying to find their children. Shelters are over capacity with little food.

Meals on wheels have not been able to make deliveries to needed people.

Utility have asked for outside help. The utility workers are members of the Utility Workers of America (AFL-CIO) and the local chapter has stated they will not accept help from non-union utility workers, and warned them not to come here.

### **1700**

Utility customers are becoming more frustrated, at the lack of response to fix the power. Several have been on the news and radio complaining. Most have been without power for over 18 hours.

State public health officials are concerned that food is beginning to spoil due to no electricity in freezers and refrigerators.

## Key Issues

- Wide spread power outage, up to 18 hours
- Several deaths due to lack of power
- Traffic in surrounding area is getting congested and traffic collisions increasing
- Unknown status of shelters
- Union activism

## Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 2. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

1. How is situational awareness at this point? How to you improve SA? How will a common operating picture be maintained within the incident command structure?
2. What types of communications and coordination with law enforcement, EMS, fire, hospitals and other agencies would occur?
3. What information should be released to the public?
4. How are students, parents and teachers being evacuated from school property tracked?
5. How are students and parents being reunited? How is that publicized (without power)?
6. What additional resources are needed to restore power?
7. Who is designated as the Public Information Officer (PIO) to handle both local and national news inquiries?
8. How are communications and emergency instructions to the public being handled? What steps are being taken to deal with rumors?

## MODULE 3: EXTENDED RESPONSE/RECOVERY

### January 10, 2020: 1415, 7 days past storm

Approximately 1,000 homes that include 5,000 people are still without power since the storm hit 7 days ago.

There are still 45 poles that need to be replaced, miles of line to be strung and energized. Replacement poles and wires will not arrive for another 24 hours.

A state and federal disaster declaration was approved, with 400 utility workers and 60 heavy repair vehicles have descended on your area. These workers are expected to stay another 7-10 days. Many have not had a day off in over a week of 12-hour shifts. Worker safety is paramount. Most of these crews were airlift here by the Air National Guard from the western and southern US. A local airport was set up as a Reception, Staging and Onward Integration (RSOI) site housing 95% of the crews.

Hotels are at 90% capacity from residents still without power. Shelters are open to the homeless and schools have reopened. Some residents left the area to stay with family members or took extended vacations.

Most business reopened and people returning to work. Calls for Police, Fire and EMS have curtailed to normal service.

### January 11, 2020: 1520

The Governor opinion polls are down 25% in the past week, mostly from the handling of the storm, preparation, response and blaming of others. The public is posting on Facebook/twitter that EOC leadership staff members should be fired.

Civic leaders are debating to fire several public safety personnel that did not report to work during the storm.

One lawsuit is in the works for lack of emergency services during the storm, resulting in a death.

FEMA has requested to set up a Joint Field Office (JFO) to assist citizens.

### January 11, 2020: 1830

During the storm:

- A total of 32 inches of snow fell
- Three city plows were destroyed and need to be replaced
- All of the sand and chemical deicing stocks were used
- Four city first responders were absent
- 10 people died from weather related events (collisions, natural causes and freezing)
- 45,000 people lost have power

## Key Issues

- Power still out for 5,000 people.
- Logistics of replacement equipment/supplies
- Utility crews staging/housed at airport.
- Loss of confidence in civic leaders.
- Media is still broadcasting live on government failures. Situation is now on national news networks.
- Return of utility assets to original location (demobilization).
- FEMA JFO

## Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 3. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

1. Who is paying for what?
2. What has the community learned about being better prepared?
3. What changes need to be made in plans and procedures to mitigate this situation?
4. How will demobilization be established/implemented?
5. Could your community support the establishment of a JFO?
6. Does the water & sewer department have back-up generators to run the system or are they shut down?

## APPENDIX A: EXERCISE SCHEDULE

Time	Activity
12:00 p.m.	Welcome and Opening Remarks
12:15	Module 1: Briefing, Caucus Discussion, and Brief-Back
1:30	Module 2: Briefing, Caucus Discussion, and Brief-Back
2:45	Module 3: Briefing, Caucus Discussion, and Brief-Back
4:30	Closing Comments



## APPENDIX C: RELEVANT PLANS

## APPENDIX D: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
AAR	After Action Report
ARC	American Red Cross
COP	Common Operating Picture
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DOE	Department of Energy
EDT	Exercise Design Team
EEG	Exercise Evaluation Guide
EMI	Emergency Management Institute
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOUO	For Official Use Only
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
IC	Incident Command
ICS	Incident Command System
MAA	Mutual Aid Agreement
MACS	Multi-Agency Coordination System
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
PD	Police Department
POC	Point of Contact
SA	Situational Awareness
SBA	Small Business Administration
SITMAN	Situation Manual
SME	Subject Matter Expert
TTX	Tabletop Exercise
UC	Unified Command
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
VTTX	Virtual Tabletop Exercise

## APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

Please enter your responses in the form field or check box after the appropriate selection.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Role:**    Player       Facilitator       Observer       Evaluator

### Part I: Recommendations and Corrective Actions

1. Based on the discussions today and the tasks identified, list the top three strengths and/or areas that need improvement.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Identify the action steps that should be taken to address the issues identified above. For each action step, indicate if it is a high, medium, or low priority.

Corrective Action	Priority

3. Describe the corrective actions that relate to your area of responsibility. Who should be assigned responsibility for each corrective action?

Corrective Action	Recommended Assignment

4. List the policies, plans, and procedures that should be reviewed, revised, or developed. Indicate the priority level for each.

Item for Review	Priority

## Part II: Assessment of Exercise Design and Conduct

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided below, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

Assessment Factor	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
The exercise was well structured and organized.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
The exercise scenario was plausible and realistic.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
The multimedia presentation helped the participants understand and become engaged in the scenario.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator(s) was knowledgeable about the material, kept the exercise on target, and was sensitive to group dynamics.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
The Situation Manual used during the exercise was a valuable tool throughout the exercise.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
The participants included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

## Part III: Participant Feedback

What changes would you make to this exercise? Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.

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