# Exercise Tangaroa - Business Continuity Management Tabletop Exercise Guide

When participating in emergency response exercises we often ‘play’ as if we ourselves are not affected by the event. We work from our offices with full communications; bring in/roster on extra staff or rely on resources that may not be available in a response. We respond to what is happening around us but don’t consider what is happening to us. The Exercise Tangaroa business continuity tabletop exercise will give your organisation the opportunity to look at the internal impacts and challenge assumptions. It is suitable of all organisations, regardless how much business continuity planning you have done.

The tabletop exercise will take the form of a facilitated discussion and will lead participants through the Exercise Tangaroa scenario prompting them to examine their plans, policies, and procedures. It allows for a facilitated discussion of roles, procedures and responsibilities in the context of a simulated emergency scenario.

Exercise Overview

Exercise Tangaroa, will take place over three days – on 31 August, 14 September, and 28 September 2016 and will be based on a regional source tsunami scenario. This tabletop exercise could be held on any of the three days depending on participant availability or anytime between 31 August and 28 September. However due to access to scenario information it is recommended on or after 14 September.

To simulate an actual event, this tabletop exercise begins with an initial scenario description and proceeds with scenario updates. Each phase of the scenario includes discussion questions to allow participants to focus on problem solving as a team in a low-stress, consequence-free environment. This exercise is not meant to assess individual performance, but, rather, it is an opportunity to identify gaps and determine options to and resolve problems, i.e. testing the plan and exercising the people.

**Scenario descriptions and updates are not provided in this document in order to ensure Day One (31 August) exercise play is not compromised. Instead exercise writers will be provided with an exercise facilitation slide pack on 12 September, which will allow the slide pack to come with a copy of the NCMC National Situation Report that is being produced on 8 September. The slide pack will contain all required scenario information, though you may wish to customise this e.g. add local tsunami inundation maps. If you are looking to complete this discussion exercise on Day One live injects can be used to provide scenario detail.**

**You may also wish to consider using this exercise template with your own scenario details in advance of Exercise Tangaroa to assist with you preparation, or as a basis for other independent exercises.**

Exercise Objectives

The goals for this part of the exercise are to:

* Assess your organisation’s ability to respond using your current plans, policies, capabilities, and resources; and
* Help identify improvements that could make the difference in keeping your people safe and your organisation functioning during and after an emergency.

This tabletop exercise is designed to help your organisation identify strengths and weaknesses in ensuring critical business services and functions continue in an adverse event or business disruption, with particular focus on the following areas:

* **Facilities:** use of alternate facilities and the ability to relocate to a functional environment if required.
* **Work load prioritisation:** essential business functions are identified, timeframes for recovery and a minimum level of service are established.
* **Resources:** essential resources needed to continue essential business functions are identified and contingency is in place to access minimum requirements (e.g.: critical information, technology, equipment, third party suppliers).
* **Human Resources:** individuals with critical business roles are identified and contingency is in place if they are unavailable; all employees can be keep informed of impacts and expectations; employee (and contractor) health, safety and wellbeing considered (including continued payroll).
* **Leadership and continuity plans:** Identified leadership succession is in place to allow decisions to be made if individuals are unavailable.

Time commitment

The tabletop exercise should last approximately 2.5 hours, though this will depend on the amount of discussion and breaks needed. This includes time for introductions, an overview of the process, the table top exercise, and debrief.

Facilitators Guide/ Table top exercise planning

This guide provides some advice on how to prepare your organisation tabletop exercise.

Getting started

Follow the steps below to help your organisation get the most value from the exercise.

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| **Action** | **Description** |
| Select a planner | The lead planner is responsible for executing the exercise, including working with the senior leadership team to select participants, customise the scenario description and questions to fit your region and organisation, and planning logistics. The lead planner serves as the primary point of contact for participants who have questions about the exercise and materials. |
| Select a facilitator | The facilitator leads the exercise discussion, provides scenario updates, and prompts participants to interact. A facilitator who understands the scope of your organisation’s operations may have greater success in stimulating a productive discussion. |
| Identify who should participate | To examine your organisation’s operations during the tabletop exercise, you need to include representatives from across your organisation. Consider key decision makers and subject matter experts from all departments, including senior leadership, facilities management, communications and public affairs, information technology (IT) services, corporate security, human resources, and legal. You may wish to include third-party vendors such as phone, IT, data back-up, food and other critical services.  There are different roles for participants in an exercise as outlined below.  **Participant:** Someone with decision-making authority (or a designated proxy), who has authority over a component of operations. Participants should sit at the table, answer questions, and make decisions during the exercise.  **Observer:** Someone who benefits from attending the exercise because his or her role in the organisation may include implementing identified recommendations. To keep the number of speakers manageable, observers do not participate in the exercise, but are encouraged to take notes and provide feedback at the end.  **Note-taker:** Someone who can record the discussion during the exercise and summarise the main points as a follow-up report. You may even want to have the main points recorded on a whiteboard or projector screen. Encourage participants and observers to take notes during the exercise for the debriefing following the end of the exercise. |

Exercise Preparation Check List

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| **Action** | **Check** |
| Review the objectives and ensure exercise discussions will meet all objectives. |  |
| Customise the scenario and/or questions so that they are specific to your organisation, your facilities and the services you provide. If the days or times provided affect how your organisation would respond to the event, consider different times and days as you discuss the scenario. Review the scenario and follow-up questions and add any additional questions or issues specific to your organisation’s staff, organisation structure or facilities. |  |
| Review the list of participants and make sure you know their role in the organisation. |  |
| Ensure all logistics are taken care of, including: seating for all participants and observers nametags or table tents, and handouts. |  |
| Discuss the exercise with the note-taker(s) so that they are prepared for the topics to be addressed in the discussion. |  |
| Ensure the room has been properly set up so that all participants, observers, and note-takers have adequate visibility of the screen and can hear the discussions. |  |

Follow-up is critical

After the exercise, be sure to follow through with addressing the gaps and recommended improvements identified by participants in a timely fashion. Your organisation’s leadership should create a plan that lists what items need to be addressed, who is responsible for executing those tasks, and when resolution is expected. Develop or update your organisation’s emergency operations plan and test it at least annually. The investment to prepare and to routinely review policies, plans and communications will strengthen your organisation and build resilience to the challenges and events that may lie ahead.

Table Top Exercise

Introduction and Overview (suggested time 10 minutes)

Welcome and Introductions

* Introduce yourself and your role as the facilitator
* Self-introductions, name role and business continuity experience of all participants
* Fire exits, toilets, what to do in an emergency; earthquake (drop, cover, hold) and tsunami (evacuation?).

Exercise Tangaroa

Exercise Tangaroa is a regional source tsunami exercise that aims to test New Zealand’s arrangements for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a national tsunami impact.

Exercise Tangaroa is the first full-scale exercise to be held as part of the Interagency National Exercise Programme and represents the ‘first step’ in assessing and planning for one of New Zealand’s largest life safety risks (according to expected casualties and damage to infrastructure).The exercise aims to address and evaluate the current state of national responses when faced with a large-scale and time critical event.

The exercise is taking place over three days, Day One of the exercise will be a full scale functional exercise; days Two and Three are focused on table-top discussion exercises. Today’s table top is recommended to be part of Day two of the exercise.

**[Provide details of your organisations participation on Day One, any particular objectives and any lessons identified at this point. Detail any resource assumptions on Day One that would be useful for participates in this discussion exercise]**

Purpose of this discussion exercise

This exercise provides an opportunity to look at the impacts of a tsunami on us as an organisation. To do this we need to look past our externally focused response to a tsunami event and focus on how we as an organisation would continue to operate.

Keep in mind – this is not a test, you are not being marked and do not pass or fail, we are testing our plans.

*Initial prompting rhetorical questions*

How do we respond to an event when we are affected ourselves?

How do we scale up our activities when we need to scale down due to staff availability?

How do we fulfil our customer, community, shareholder and legislative obligation when our organisation is under increased pressure?

Exercise and Discussion (suggested time 1.5-2 hours)

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| **Facilitator Notes/Reminders**   * Be aware you may not get through the full discussion exercise. This will depend on the maturity of your organisation’s business continuity planning. For example, a discussion on your organisations critical functions could involve reviewing analysis and planning documents you have completed in the past, or a more general prioritisation discussion if you have not. * The discussion should address the specifics of your organisation – your workforce, your facilities, and your functions. To provide context, reference actual events that have occurred in your region. For example, Wellington may reference the Seddon Earthquakes that caused grid lock on the motorways or Dunedin a particularly bad snow event.   **Facilitator tips**   * Exercise facilitation – if at any point priorities or critical functions become a point of contention pick a few that are clear and continue the conversation. * Ask open-ended questions, using the words ‘what, when where, how and why’. If necessary, direct questions to specific participants or areas of the organisation. * Encourage conversation and give extra encouragement to those who may be hesitant to participate in the conversation. * Involve all participants. Do not let one or two participants monopolise the discussions. * Avoid the temptation to jump in with the solutions when participants are struggling and, instead, try to draw out the answers from them. * Watch for signs of frustration or conflict. Remember that the exercise is not a test, but an opportunity to identify areas for improvement. If you see mounting frustration or conflict, pause the exercise and suggest a break. * Monitor the time per module. If the discussion is relevant and meaningful, consider continuing the discussion past the agenda time, and make up time in the next module. * Ensure that discussions remain within the scope of the given discussion area. Sometimes the conversation may begin to drift to topics more appropriate for discussion in later periods of the exercise, or the conversation may get stuck on a problem area that will need to be resolved later. To keep the discussion moving, use a ‘parking lot’ technique to record difficult issues that can be discussed more fully later. * The discussion will likely highlight gaps and ideas for how to improve planning – ensure that these ideas are also captured for follow up later.   Begin by introducing the scenario and answering questions. Read the scenario aloud, and provide a handout of the scenario if required. Explain that to simulate a real event, the scenario will unfolds through updates. Each update includes an additional set of questions for participants. |

Scenario Part One – Notification of Potential Tsunami

Additional scenario details cannot be provided until the completion of day One of the exercise. Supplementary details will therefore be provided for those completing this discussion exercise on day Two or Three.

**Questions**

Suggested time: 45 to 60 minutes

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| **Step** | **Question** | **Discussion prompts** | **Notes** |
| **Tsunami notification** | | | |
| 1 | What are our priorities upon notification of a potential or actual tsunami? | Who, and what could be impacted?   * How will this tsunami potentially impact employees? * Could any workplace locations be impacted, and to what extent?   What are our immediate priority actions?   * How do we keep people safe? * Should we be evacuating, and if yes, where to? * What should we be communicating to employees, and how? | Remind players that prep time is not the norm – e.g. printing of latest contact lists would not be possible at the time of an event  Remind players to think broader than their organisation – what else could be impacted, that could in turn impact on them? |
| 2 | Could the tsunami impact on your ability to keep operating? | What critical functions may be impacted?  What alternative plans are in place to keep these functions running?  Who will be coordinating your response activity? | In discussions try to bring them back to the problem – what has been affected at this point?  What can be achieved in the short timeframe before the tsunami arrives? |
| **Tsunami arrival** | | | |
| 3 | What are our priorities upon tsunami impact? Have these changed from the warning period?  **What do we have to do and by when?** | Who and what has been impacted?   * Is this different from what we expected?   What are our immediate priorities? |  |
| 4 | Are we continuing to operate? | What do we have to do?   * What critical functions must we maintain - what are our non-negotiables? * What resources do we need to maintain these critical functions? (Consider: people, facilities, equipment, information, technology, third party suppliers) * Given the scenario, what level would we currently be operating at?   Do we have access to our leaders/decision makers?  Do we have access to our primary/critical locations?   * How long and at what level could we operate without access to these locations?   Are there services like power, water and road access that you need in order to resume operations? | In discussions try to bring them back to the problem   * What has been affected at this point? * What can be achieved with the plans and resources we currently have? * What could we do to enhance our ability to respond to an emergency of this kind? |
| 5 | Can we access copies of vital documents? | Do we have our insurance papers, financial information, and key business documents and records accessible? |  |
| 6 | Are we prepared to manage tsunami damage? | What steps are we talking to address the damage?  What resources do we need beyond what’s available at our facility(ies)?  Do we need additional help or guidance?  Who would we reach out to and what would be asking for? |  |

**Scenario Part Two – in line with Exercise Day Two**

How do our priorities change over time?

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Additional scenario details cannot be provided until the completion of Day One of the exercise (31 August 2016). Supplementary details will therefore be provided for those completing this discussion exercise on Day Two or Three.

**Scenario questions**

Suggested time: 45 to 60 minute

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| **Step** | **Question** | **Discussion prompts** | **Notes** |
| 1 | Now that you know the extent of the tsunami inundation and the picture of the damage is becoming clearer:  Can we continue to operate, and to what extent? | Consider   * Our people * Our facility * Our suppliers * Our infrastructure   How long can we continue to operate at this level?   * When will we tap out current resources? * Are there upcoming events/priorities that may require extra resources? * Who are we reliant on? | In discussions try to bring them back to the problem.   * What has been affected at this point? * What can be achieved with the plans and resources we currently have? * What could we do to enhance our ability to respond to an emergency of this kind? |
| 2 | What do your employees rely upon to be at work (e.g. power, transit, schools, day care etc.)? | What can we do if these requirements are not available for some time, even if our facility(ies) is/are operational?  Do we know how to find out when services will be restored? |  |
| 3 | How are you communicating with employees regarding their work status? | What are your expectations for employees who cannot work, either because your organisation is not operational or because they have suffered personal losses or access is compromised?  How are these expectations communicated?  Will employees be paid for time they cannot work due to the tsunami’s impacts?  How are we prepared to support individuals who express or experience anxiety or stress? | Make sure consideration is made both for the needs of employees and our expectations of them. |
| 4 | What is the long-term impact of this tsunami on your facility/organisation? | Do you have the resources/coverage in place to cover disaster related expenses?  Are there any steps we can take now to lessen the impact of an event like this in the future? |  |
| 5 | What can you do to support the community as it recovers? | Can we improve our network and relationships to be better connected to the community to prepare for future events? |  |

Debriefing and Next Steps (suggested time 20mins)

Once you have concluded the exercise, it is critical to debrief and establish follow-up plans. A debriefing is simply a review of the exercise and an opportunity to identify next steps. Keep this summary simple by asking for input to create a list of the areas identified as major strengths and areas for improvement. Prompts may include:

* What strengths and weaknesses did this exercise expose?
* Did any unanticipated issues arise during the exercise?
* Where any gaps in planning identified?
* What do you think are the high-priority issues that should be addressed first?
* Adding issues identified to a plan of action and assign who will do what?
* Do you have any new ideas or recommendations for improvement?
* Were the exercise objectives met?

Thank you and closing remarks

End the session by thanking everyone for their participation and feedback.

Provide detail on any feedback or follow up that will occur post exercise.