



What is the SSTEP?

The Sector-Specific Tabletop Exercise Program (SSTEP) is a tool allowing critical infrastructure partners to develop interactive, discussion-based exercises for their communities of interest, be it at the sector or a facility level. The SSTEP affords the opportunity for public and private critical infrastructure stakeholders and their public safety partners to exercise information sharing processes and incident management plans, programs, policies, and procedures in order to address potential gaps, vulnerabilities, and other pertinent issues.

The SSTEP allows users to leverage pre-built exercise templates and tailor them to their communities' specific needs in order to assess, develop, and update plans, programs, policies and procedures within an incident management functional area.

- The SSTEP is an all-hazard risk management tool that has been tailored and utilized by several U.S. critical infrastructure sectors, including the Dams Sector, the Chemical Sector, and several versions for the Commercial Facilities Sector.
- The SSTEP materials provide a model exercise and support documentation that can be refined and further developed to exercise and evaluate specific areas of concern for critical infrastructure owners and operators.

The SSTEP is a flexible tool that is most beneficial when personalized and developed by the primary user with considerations to the specific nuances of the specified community.

- It is used to develop a culture of improved information sharing capabilities within and between public and private sectors at the facility, community, or sector level.
- It promotes partnership development through the collaboration of sector-specific experts and the use of integrated resources.
- It enables the development of after-action reports that support mitigating risks and increasing the resiliency of critical infrastructure.

The SSTEP:

- Includes prepackaged exercise materials
- Can be tailored to meet needs and expectations
- Supports improved information sharing
- Provides a mechanism to foster effective partnership building
- Saves time and money



What does the SSTEP provide?

The SSTEP provides templates and materials that can be refined and detailed to meet the specific needs of any critical infrastructure community. The draft materials provided include:

1. Welcome Letter
 - a. The official introduction letter of the SSTEP
 - b. Includes a brief description of the included documents
 - c. Includes a point of contact from the host party
 - d. Signed by the senior official authorizing the approval of its use
2. Invitation Letter
 - a. Professional letter to the participants
 - b. Includes brief explanation of the purpose of the tailored SSTEP
 - c. Includes the exercise's location, date, agenda, contact information, and official signature
3. Exercise Planner Instructions
 - a. Special "how-to" instructions for the Exercise Planner
 - b. Introduction to each specified job description
 - c. Clarification and familiarization to the SSTEP
 - d. Step by step instructions on conducting a thorough SSTEP project
4. Facilitator and Evaluator Handbook
 - a. Specified information for the Facilitator's and Evaluator's use
 - b. Introduction to the SSTEP project
 - c. Expanded and detailed Situation Manual (the players' reference for the exercise)
5. Situation Manual
 - a. Details regarding the SSTEP project for the participants
 - b. Includes the: introduction; purpose; scope; exercise objectives; agenda; timeline; exercise modules; exercise questions, and; various appendices for player reference
6. Presentation Slides
 - a. A presentable Situation Manual summary for use during exercise execution
 - b. Information explaining the Situation Manual to the participants
7. Reference Material
 - a. Various documentation, links, files, and folders that are beneficial to the recipients of the SSTEP
 - b. Additional relevant information and data
8. Participant Feedback Form
 - a. A survey form to receive feedback from the participants to assess the areas for improvement and areas of quality for their sector discovered via the SSTEP process
9. Exercise Planner Feedback Form
 - a. A survey form to receive feedback from the Exercise Planner's to determine the areas for improvement and success in the development and execution of the exercise



Completed SSTEPs

Retail Subsector Feb 2010

Lodging Subsector Feb 2010

DAMS May 2011

Workplace Aggression Jun 2011

Major Earthquake Nov 2011

Chemical Dec 2011

Sports Leagues Subsector Feb 2012

Upcoming SSTEPs supported by NPPD/IP Readiness

Supply Chain SSTEP

Outdoor Events Subsector

Retail Subsector

For more information

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Please note that the material in this document is subject to change as the planning and development of this exercise series continues. Updates will be reflected on the [IP Exercise HSIN portal](#).