



Facilitator Resources

Here is a compilation of facilitation best practices that can benefit the facilitator chosen to oversee the discussion-based activity.

Facilitation Tips

The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) developed two videos that may be useful for the facilitator:

1. [Facilitator 101](#) – This video defines the roles and responsibilities of a facilitator before, during, and after the exercise.
2. [Start with Smart Exercise Planning](#) – This video discusses the core components of exercise design, such as establishing exercise purpose, defining scope, and setting objectives.

Links to other FEMA videos on exercises and evaluation can be found on this [YouTube playlist](#). Also, FEMA's [Exercise Best Practice Guides](#) may be helpful.

Purpose: The Accessible Meeting Tip Sheet, adapted from The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, explains factors that make meetings accessible to all members of the partner network.

Instructions: Review the Tip Sheet to ensure all partners can fully participate in meetings and other activities.

Accessible version: [Access and Functional Needs Toolkit](#)

Accessible Meeting Tip Sheet¹

For meetings to be successful, everyone involved must have an equal opportunity to participate. Three components are essential for hosting meetings that are accessible to all partners, including people with disabilities and others with access or functional needs: location, room arrangement, and meeting discussion.

Location

Meeting location accessibility is of primary importance. A location that is accessible by most people with disabilities has at minimum these accessible features:

¹ From Accessible Meeting Tip Sheet in [Access and Functional Needs Toolkit](#) (pages 76 and 77) by CDC

- Parking, including van accessible handicapped parking and passenger drop-off areas
- Accessible routes to the building entrance
- At least one accessible building entrance connected to an accessible route
- Accessible routes to the meeting space
- An accessible meeting space floor plan
- Accessible restrooms available to participants with disabilities

Room Arrangement

Accessible meeting room floor plans make participants comfortable. An accessible floor plan is one in which people who use mobility devices can easily maneuver; people who are blind or have low vision can safely navigate; and people who use assistive listening systems can clearly see speakers, interpreters, and captioning.

- Set up the meeting room to provide access to all participant seating locations, the speakers' area, and refreshments.
- Aisles should be at least 36 inches wide and have enough turning space (e.g., a 60-inch diameter circle) in key locations throughout the room. These dimensions allow people using mobility devices to enter, exit, and participate safely.

Meeting Discussion

- At the beginning of the meeting, ask all participants to introduce themselves. This not only serves as an icebreaker, but also lets people who are blind or have low vision know who is at the meeting.
- Ask participants to speak one at a time and identify themselves during the discussion so that participants who are blind or have low vision know who is speaking.

Audiovisual Presentations

An accessible meeting presentation ensures that all participants have equal access to the meeting's content.

- If a presentation includes audiovisuals (e.g., computer presentation, video, charts, graphics), describe them for people who are blind or have low vision. Audio description does not have to be presented separately. The speaker can describe visuals as part of the lecture. If the presentation is provided to participants in print, the handouts must also be accessible.
- Caption or interpret the narration on the audiovisual for guests who are deaf or have hearing loss. If the audiovisual has no captioning, interpreters or real-time captioners can supply the text.

- Accessible exchange of information for people who are blind or have low vision may require that printed materials are provided in alternate formats (e.g., Braille, large print, on CD) or that notetakers are provided. The auxiliary aids and services needed at any one event will depend both on the participants and the meeting's format, content, and handouts.

The information on setting up an accessible meeting is summarized from the U.S. Department of Justice [Accessible Information Exchange: Meeting on a Level Playing Field](#) website.

Integrating Community Partners²

In 2021, CDC published [Access and Functional Needs Toolkit: Integrating a Community Partner to Inform Risk Communication Strategies](#). The purpose of the toolkit is to assist public health professionals in planning risk communication messages and dissemination strategies effective for the whole community. The toolkit contains two sections:

- Section 1: Communication planning to address access and functional needs
- Section 2: Framework for integrating community partners

Both sections include information and resources to support planning and address emergency communication needs. The sections can be used individually or concurrently to develop, review, and improve communication strategies.

Planning Team

As mentioned earlier in this discussion guide, the first step in organizing the discussion-based activity, is to form a planning team. Members of the team should be people who are committed to open communication with all response partners as well as a defined period of work (e.g., 3–6 months). Team members should represent the partners that would make public health decisions or support public health decision-making in a nuclear/radiological emergency. We recommend the planning team include the following:

- Coordinator
- Facilitator
- Subject matter expert
- Note taker
- Other response partners

Each of these positions is explained below.

² Adapted from [Access and Functional Needs Toolkit: Integrating a Community Partner Network to Inform Risk Communication Strategies](#)

Coordinator

The coordinator runs the show. They are akin to a project manager. They oversee planning and conducting the activity. The coordinator, in consultation with others, chooses the facilitator, subject matter expert (SME), note taker, and, most importantly, the participants in the discussion-based activity.

Facilitator

The facilitator leads the discussion and is responsible for ensuring that it stays focused on the exercise objectives and that all issues are explored as thoroughly as possible within the available time. The facilitator and participants work through the situations and corresponding sets of questions they select for discussion. They are not required to address all of them or to address them in any specific order.

The facilitator, in consultation with the coordinator, chooses which of the following options is more appropriate for the group *prior* to the activity:

1. Distribute the selected scenario and corresponding discussion questions to participants 1 or 2 weeks beforehand and instruct them to bring their completed responses to the meeting. This option provides participants the opportunity to get a head start on the discussion questions and to delve deeper into the known gaps and issues prior to the meeting.
2. Do not distribute the selected scenario and corresponding discussion questions to participants prior to the activity. Instead, use the session to identify and assess current gaps in decision-making. This option may require a follow-up session to complete all discussion questions.

The coordinator also can serve as the facilitator, but only if they meet the prerequisites for the role.

Subject Matter Expert

The SME is a person with thorough knowledge of community dynamics as it relates to nuclear/radiological concepts and exposures. The SME helps to ensure that the discussion is plausible and the accompanying discussion questions help accomplish the objectives of the discussion. The SME may participate in the exercise and help guide discussion, such as asking probing questions on topics with which the facilitator may not be familiar or to provide relevant information related to the topic being discussed.

Note Taker

The note taker is a recommended role. The note taker records what is said during the discussion. This allows the facilitator, SME (if applicable), and participants to fully engage in the discussion (e.g., actively listen, ask follow-up questions).

Participants can also take their own notes for their own post-activity use.

Many virtual platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WebEx) allow meeting recording and can provide transcripts. However, prior to the activity, you must get permission from each participant to record the discussion session.

Discussion Partners

Discussion partners can be broken into two groups: core partners and other partners.

Core Partners

Core partners are those entities that would be involved in the response to any nuclear/radiological scenario that is chosen for the discussion-based activity, such as the state radiological control agency/program, healthcare organizations, emergency management agencies, and EMS. They bring awareness and knowledge that may be needed to make public health decisions or support making public health decisions during a nuclear/radiological emergency. When selecting these partners to be on the planning team, make sure that they will be the ones making the decisions or supporting decision-making. Table 1 below provides a listing of potential core partners.

Table 1. List of Potential Core Partners

Partner	Partner	Partner
Public health agency	9-1-1 Call Centers	Fire/police
Hospitals	Pharmacies	Fatality management
Other healthcare providers	Primary care providers	Local government
Emergency management agency	Urgent care clinics	Long-term care
Emergency medical services	Emergency operations center	HazMat response team
Joint information center/PIO personnel	Mutual aid organizations	Organizations supporting groups at higher risk (e.g., economic instability)*
Health physicist/radiation control**	Faith-based organizations	State and federal partners
Community-based organizations	Public Health Laboratories	-

*See CDC's [Glossary Terminology Considerations](#) for preferred terms for groups at higher risk.

** See <https://crcpd.org/radiation-control-programs-and-directors/> for a list of Radiation Control Programs and Directors.

Other Partners

Other partners are those partners who have the knowledge and expertise needed to make decisions or support decision-making in a particular nuclear/radiological scenario. The desired trait of each participant is that they are decision makers or will directly support decision-making in a radiological/nuclear emergency. The scenario that you pick for discussion will guide you in deciding what other partners to include in the discussion.

Setting Audience Expectations

Send the following information to the participants prior to the discussion-based activity or distribute it in person prior to the activity to let them know what to expect.

You have been selected to participate in this discussion-based activity because

- you would make decisions or help make decisions for your agency or organization during a nuclear/radiological emergency or
- you would support your local public health department to make decisions during this type of emergency.

As the facilitator guides you through the discussion, remember that the focus is on public health decision-making, which includes decisions related to

- Public health protection
- Population movement
- Medical care and screening services
- The public health impact of disruptions in providing food, water, and timely communications and the impact of exposure to hazardous materials

Because of this public health focus, there may be times during the discussion when you—representing your agency or organization—would not be expected to get involved. Other discussion topics might heavily involve your agency or subject matter expertise. For example, a medical SME could have

- No or minimal role when discussing food transportation logistics
- A light role when informing communication SMEs addressing the public
- A heavy role when managing medical triage expectations

Variability is okay. You are not expected to be involved in every topic.
