



**Featured Case Study:
Preparedness**

Los Angeles World Airports

**Crisis Leadership Team Hybrid
Workshop and Tabletop Exercise**

**Be
stronger
than
before**



Training for crisis situations

Exercises are crucial to help facilities, communities and governments prepare for unforeseen disasters of any kind. One of the keys to successful preparedness and response is well-trained leaders equipped with the proper tools to minimize adverse impacts during crisis situations. Training executive staff to respond properly to a situation that activates emergency plans is essential to successfully weathering an incident.

Experience gained during exercises is the best way to prepare teams to respond effectively to an emergency

Creating a successful partnership including all levels of stakeholders

Program Overview

In April, 2023, the Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), the City of Los Angeles, and other federal partners, participated in a hybrid workshop tabletop exercise facilitated by Tidal Basin Government Consulting (Tidal Basin) preparedness experts. LAWA required a consultant to create an exercise addressing multiple scenarios focused on intentional acts designed to cause harm to the airport, personnel, and passengers.

The exercise was held at the LAWA Police Facility Community Room with a team of participants called the Crisis Leadership Team (CLT). This group included 33 players, 10 observers, and nine exercise staff and partners from the following organizations:

- **LAWA:** executives and supervisors
- **City partners:** Los Angeles Fire Department, the Mayor's Office, Los Angeles Emergency Management Department
- **Federal partners:** Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Customs and Border Protection, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Tidal Basin conducted an exercise that was divided into three modules, with each module focused on a different objective to ensure proper retention and understanding of the exercise outcomes. These modules were designed to be interactive and unique, with elements expanding beyond a standard tabletop exercise (TTX). The selected CLT members were expected to have a general familiarity with the day-to-day roles and functions of participating agencies. Tidal Basin stressed that each department or agency was a critical component to the exercise since each of them enable LAWA to cope with and respond to unforeseen emergencies.





35+ years

Tidal Basin's experience providing workshops, exercise training sessions and after-action reports helped influence the success of this project

The Challenge

LAWA required a consultant to enhance resilience throughout the airport facilities, encompassing both employees and passengers. The organization wanted to train senior executives and leadership members, ensuring a complete knowledge of proper preparedness planning across all levels. Core capabilities validated during the TTX included:

- Planning
- Operational coordination
- Operational communications
- Intelligence and information sharing
- Situational assessment

Tidal Basin and LAWA identified several objectives as areas to address to create an effective response when disaster strikes.



Validating roles and responsibilities



Executive communication during emergencies



Identifying key decision points



Tidal Basin's innovative and professional approach to our executive exercise was refreshing and valuable to all who participated. Our airport leaders are better prepared for an emergency due to Tidal Basin.

Justin Pierce
Director, Emergency Management Division
Los Angeles World Airports

The Solution

Tidal Basin proposed a solution that incorporated various components and multiple levels of stakeholders for emergency preparedness, including community leaders, LAWA staff and leadership, and government partners and facilities. This holistic approach ensured the relevant information was received and any issues related to multiple threats/hazards were addressed.

Our experts developed a hybrid exercise addressing multiple scenarios focused on intentional and accidental acts that were designed to cause harm to the airport, personnel, and passengers.

The workshop was broken out into three modules to be sure the information was distributed in a way that made sense to the overarching needs of LAWA. The specific modules and their features are outlined on the next page.

“When you get executives dedicating several hours out of their busy day, and actively engaged in the exercise and conversations being had, you build confidence in your teams. The unique interactive exercise helps to foster that connection between stakeholders,” said Tidal Basin’s Stephanie Murphy, Vice President of Preparedness, Resiliency, and Emergency Management.



Tidal Basin addressed the following threats and hazards in the exercise:

- Aircraft incident
- Organized protest
- Cyber attack
- Construction accident
- Coordinated attack
- Active shooter



Tidal Basin’s hybrid exercise for LAWA consisted of a discussion-based exercise with interactive functional elements delivered in mini-scenarios during module presentations.



Stakeholders

These are just some of the large, diverse group of stakeholders and players that came together to make this a successful exercise for LAWA:

Airport Management

Airport Operations

Airport Police Department

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Customs and Border Protection

Emergency Management Division

Facilities Management Division

Federal Aviation Administration

Guest Services Division

Hartsfield Jackson International Airport

Information Technology Division

Los Angeles Fire Department

Los Angeles Mayor's Office

Public Relations Division

Transportation Security Administration



Customized Exercise Modules

Module One

The first module included a brief overview of the current LAX Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and the CLT roles and responsibilities. We developed interactive polling questions to solicit anonymous feedback from participants.

Module Two

Module two focused on communication between the CLT members. After randomly assigning groups, participants were encouraged to engage with the scenario and each other with various communication limitations, simulating real-world communication barriers.

Participants were then provided information on an emergency scenario in four different simulated platforms with varying delays from the start of the incident. Communication platforms included one phone call, one text, an email, and social media posts. Conflicting information and misinformation were intentionally provided as well. The objective was for every CLT member to be notified of the incident, share information, and coordinate physically in one location for a simulated conference call.

Module Three

Tidal Basin's third module concentrated on decision-making during an emergency. Five stations were set up, each with a different scenario. Seven to 10 index cards were provided containing decisions that should be made to address an incident. Participants were allowed to ask questions for Essential Elements of Information (EEI) to facilitators, to which the facilitator provided updated information regarding the questions to assist their decision-making process.

Participants rotated through each station identifying critical decision points as indicated by the scenario and EEIs. Each group was encouraged to discuss their reasoning behind decision making, which command and control element was responsible for the decision (CLT, incident command, or incident support), and any gaps that could be closed with identifying different decisions to be made during the scenario-specific exercise.

Resilience Delivered

Tidal Basin's strong hands-on experience in performing work for a range of airports, local and federal critical infrastructure and transportation agencies, and California municipalities contributed to a successful workshop and exercise program for LAWA. The inclusion of leadership stakeholders made it a unique process.

Chances of getting buy-in and interaction by executive team members are increased when creating customized exercises. Having conducted hundreds of exercises with governments, critical infrastructure providers, and international groups, Tidal Basin creates concise, insightful, and value-added programs that attract executives to the table to provide their insight as well as an opportunity for them to learn about their roles during emergencies. Typically, this may happen 5% of the time; however, with our unique interactive and hybrid exercises we aim to increase that interaction during each exercise we offer with our clients.

Helping you be stronger than before



Preparedness



Response



Recovery



Mitigation

Tidal Basin prides itself on the support we provide while guiding our clients through the comprehensive emergency management and disaster recovery process. We work side-by-side with your team to provide a comprehensive range of services and customized approaches to manage your preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation needs.

Since many of our team members have sat in our client's shoes as former federal, state, and local government emergency leaders themselves, we bring a unique understanding of the needs and challenges our clients face following devastating events. We are committed to serving you through shared expertise and the transfer of our knowledge to build your capacity.

For more information on this project or any other programs, contact us today.

Visit tidalbasingroup.com/lawa-aar to read more.



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