



ARKANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Fall 2023 Fire Drills

After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

November 09, 2023

This After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine and related frameworks and guidance. This AAR meets Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) guidelines. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Fall 2023 Fire Drills
Exercise Dates	October 9, October 19, October 24, 2023
Planning Date	September 20, 2023
Hotwash Date	October 30, 2023
Scope	This exercise is a drill, planned for approximately 5 minutes at each residence hall. Exercise play is limited to activating the fire notification system in each building, monitoring the receipt and response by occupants, examining the notification system for any failures, and documenting all observations.
Focus Areas¹	Protection, Mitigation, Response
Capabilities²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Resilience ▪ Infrastructure Systems ▪ Operational Coordination ▪ Planning ▪ Public Information and Warning
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine the operational status of fire notification systems ▪ Examine the ability of occupants to recognize hazard communication messaging ▪ Examine the occupant's response to hazard communication messaging ▪ Examine the ability of staff to encourage and guide evacuation efforts ▪ Evaluate the effectiveness of previous public information programs ▪ Examine for hazards that may compound fire risk/consequence
Hazard	Uncontained Fire
Scenario	Fire alarm activation signaling the potential for a fire in the respective residence hall or living quarter.
Sponsor	Arkansas State University
Participating Organizations	Environmental Health & Safety, Office of Emergency Management, University Housing
Point of Contact	Wyatt Reed , Emergency Operations and Occupational Safety Specialist Office of Emergency Management Arkansas State University WReed@AState.edu or (870) 972-3352

¹ Selected from National Preparedness Goal's Five Mission Areas (DHS, 2015)

² Selected from National Preparedness Goal List of Core Capabilities (DHS, 2015)

Analysis of Capabilities

Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned capabilities, and performance ratings for each capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Capability ³	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Determine the operational status of fire notification systems	Community Resilience	X			
	Infrastructure Systems	X			
	Public Information and Warning	X			
Examine the ability of occupants to recognize hazard communication messaging	Community Resilience	X			
	Infrastructure Systems	X			
	Planning	X			
	Public Information and Warning	X			
Examine the occupant's response to hazard communication messaging	Community Resilience	X			
	Planning		X		
Examine the ability of staff to encourage and guide evacuation efforts	Community Resilience		X		
	Operational Coordination		X		
	Planning		X		
Evaluate the effectiveness of previous public information programs	Community Resilience	X			
	Planning	X			
	Operational Coordination	X			
Examine for hazards that may compound fire risk/consequence	Community Resilience	X			

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

³ Selected from National Preparedness Goal List of Core Capabilities (DHS, 2015)

Rating Definitions:

Performed without Challenges (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. The performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

Performed with Some Challenges (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. The performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.

Performed with Major Challenges (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

Unable to be Performed (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Capability Definitions:

Community Resilience: Enable the recognition, understanding, communication of, and planning for risk and empower individuals and communities to make informed risk management decisions necessary to adapt to, withstand, and quickly recover from future incidents.

Infrastructure Systems: Stabilize critical infrastructure functions, minimize health and safety threats, and efficiently restore and revitalize systems and services to support a viable, resilient community.

Operational Coordination: Establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.

Planning: Conduct a systematic process engaging the whole community as appropriate in the development of executable strategic, operational, and/or tactical-level approaches to meet defined objectives.

Public Information and Warning: Deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard, as well as the actions being taken and the assistance being made available, as appropriate.

Residence Hall Breakdowns:

This area will identify the strengths and weaknesses of each residence hall as it relates to exercise objectives and core capabilities.

Living-Learning Communities (LLCs)

Honors #1

Time: 2:45 | **Number Evacuated:** 12

- **Observations:** Stairwell doors with a fire rating were propped open.
- **Response:** Work with stakeholders to prevent the propping of these doors.

Honors #2

Time: 2:07 | **Number Evacuated:** 19

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Living-Learning Community (LLC) #3

Time: 3:06 | **Number Evacuated:** 19

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Honors #4

Time: 3:01 | **Number Evacuated:** 24

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements. RAs did an outstanding job!

ROTC/STEM

Time: 3:50 | **Number Evacuated:** 14

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements. RAs did an outstanding job!

Griffin Business

Time: 2:57 | **Number Evacuated:** 22

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements. RAs did an outstanding job!

Miscellaneous Residence Halls

Arkansas Hall

Time: 6:53 | **Number Evacuated:** 64

- **Observations:** The timing was better than the previous semester. However, residents did not evacuate to the correct assembly area. Residents were observed exiting with electric scooters, which are prohibited by policy in residential areas due to the fire hazard they pose.
- **Response:** Residents do not seem to be comprehending where their evacuation assembly area is for this complex. Hotwash participants identified sending an email to Arkansas Hall residents with the assembly area map attached as a proactive solution. As for scooters, additional reminders should be included in Fire, Health, & Safety emails.

Kays Hall

Time: 5:13 | **Number Evacuated:** 97

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements. RAs did an outstanding job!

University Hall

Time: 4:43 | **Number Evacuated:** 93

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Northpark Quads

Northpark Quad #1

Time: 6:30 | **Number Evacuated:** 51

- **Observations:** Bedroom was noted as having a smoke detector detached from the base, and this is a recurring issue.
- **Response:** Will follow up with FM and the Office of Student Conduct as needed.

Northpark Quad #2

Time: 6:10 | **Number Evacuated:** 34

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Northpark Quad #3

Time: 6:52 | **Number Evacuated:** 41

- **Observations:** Resident was observed exiting with electric scooter, which is prohibited by policy in residential areas due to the fire hazard they pose. Numerous individuals did not use the evacuation assembly area, and Housing staff did not redirect them to the correct area. Many were sitting on the tailgate of a pickup truck near the building.
- **Response:** Individuals observed violating safety policy should be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Procedural violations should be attempted to be corrected by Housing staff members. Hotwash participants identified sending an email to Northpark Quad #3 residents with the assembly area map attached as a proactive solution. As for scooters, additional reminders should be included in Fire, Health, & Safety emails.

Northpark Quad #4

Time: 6:40 | **Number Evacuated:** 53

- **Observations:** A resident was observed entering with an electric scooter, which is prohibited by policy in residential areas due to the fire hazard they pose.
- **Response:** Individuals observed violating safety policy should be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. As for scooters, additional reminders should be included in Fire, Health, & Safety emails.

Northpark Quad #5

Time: 6:36 | **Number Evacuated:** 35

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Pack Place

Pack Place #1

Time: 4:27 | **Number Evacuated:** 39

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements. RAs did an outstanding job!

Pack Place #2

Time: 6:50 | **Number Evacuated:** 36

- **Observations:** Timing is bordering on an unacceptable range. Some residents refused to evacuate. A few residents did not evacuate to the correct assembly area and had to be corrected by the RAs, although most were compliant after being confronted.
- **Response:** Increased outreach should be performed so that students understand where their assembly point is and the importance of being prudent in reaching it. Housing officials should send an email out to Pack Place #2 residents highlighting the appropriate evacuation procedures, the identified assembly area, and the consequences for not following procedures.

Red Wolf Den

Red Wolf Den #1

Time: 3:36 | **Number Evacuated:** 16

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Red Wolf Den #2

Time: 3:43 | **Number Evacuated:** 12

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Red Wolf Den #3

Time: 5:18 | **Number Evacuated:** 13

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Sorority Houses

Zeta Tau Alpha

Time: 1:42 | **Number Evacuated:** 4

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements. Residents utilized the assembly area well!

Alpha Gamma Delta

Time: 1:48 | **Number Evacuated:** 9

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Alpha Omicron Pi

Time: 0:47 | **Number Evacuated:** 0

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Chi Omega

Time: 1:12 | **Number Evacuated:** 1

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

Delta Zeta

Time: 0:47 | **Number Evacuated:** 3

- **Observations:** Residents did not use evacuation assembly areas.
- **Response:** Increased outreach should be performed so that students understand where their assembly point is and the importance of being prudent in reaching it.

The Circle:

The Circle Building #1

Time: 5:01 | **Number Evacuated:** 7

- **Observations:** Some residents reported trouble hearing the alarm.
- **Response:** Increased monitoring of issues from this residence should be followed up on in the Spring 2024 drill.

The Circle Building #2

Time: 5:15 | **Number Evacuated:** 10

- **Observations:** Exercise excelled all requirements.

The Circle Building #3

Time: 7:00 | **Number Evacuated:** 14

- **Observations:** Resident did not initially evacuate and refused to follow procedures when requested.
- **Response:** University Housing reported the resident to the Office of Student Conduct for this matter to be handled internally.

The Circle Building #4

Time: 4:30 | **Number Evacuated:** 11

Observations: Exercise excelled all requirements.

Strengths

Strength 1 (Fire Notification Systems): The fire alarm systems used in residence halls are generally high-quality systems that are well-maintained. The investment made by the University in upgrading and maintaining these systems leads them to be a reliable and fully operable mitigation and response tool, which leads to overall resilience. Most are integrated into the University Police dispatch center. **(Capabilities: Community Resilience, Infrastructure Systems, Public Information and Warning)**

Strength 2 (Staff Leadership): Overall, leadership by Housing staff has improved in relation to this exercise. It is noted that RAs are continually growing in their confidence in the appropriate action to take and the correct procedure to follow. Additional growth opportunities are available and will be explored, but overall this is a strength. **(Capability: Community Resilience, Operational Coordination, Planning)**

Strength 3 (Procedural Response): Fewer issues are being noted of failure to comply with established procedures and increased usage of assembly areas **(Capability: Community Resilience, Planning)**

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1 (Fire Prevention): Many fire prevention issues are continuing to be noticed or growing, including policy and code violations. From this drill, improper use of fire doors was noted which can lead to an overall failure of that safety system. Electric devices like scooters that are prohibited were documented during this drill and ultimately created a hazard that could be mitigated. **(Capabilities: Community Resilience, Infrastructure Systems)**

Area for Improvement 2 (Assembly Area): While the implementation of an assembly area has been a much-needed improvement, additional steps can be taken to ensure residents are aware of this area and to provide ease of access. Signage at the assembly area could be a helpful reminder, and for certain buildings, two assembly areas may be beneficial to residents. **(Capabilities: Planning, Public Information and Warning)**

Area for Improvement 3 (Communication): While public information and communication capabilities and follow-through have improved, there is additional work to be done to achieve the target capability. Increasing safety messaging in pre-established communication modes is vital, as is sending targeted reminders to areas identified as problematic in the hotwash. **(Capability: Community Resilience, Operational Coordination, Public Information and Warning)**

Appendix A: Improvement Plan

This IP is developed specifically for Arkansas State University as a result of the Fall 2023 drills conducted in October of 2023:

Area for Improvement	Corrective Item	Implementation Plan	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC
Fire Prevention	Code Compliance Checks	Certain basic fire code standards from the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code should be identified as most critical and be monitored by Housing staff in pre-established rounds. Any compliance issues can be remediated or reported as needed.	University Housing (Primary) Emergency Management (Secondary)	University Housing: Natalie Eskew or Jenny Keller Emergency Management: Wyatt Reed or Ronnie Gilley
	Policy Compliance Enforcement	University Housing policy on the mitigation of hazards should be enforced, including the usage of cooking materials, open flames, and electric devices. Corrective actions include increasing documentation during Fire, Health, and Safety inspections as well as reporting violations to the Office of Student Conduct when appropriate.	University Housing (Primary)	University Housing: Natalie Eskew or Jenny Keller
	Fire Safety Training	Fire safety training can increase for both residents and University Housing staff, both for fire prevention and response. Emergency Management will work alongside Housing and external partners to increase these.	Emergency Management (Primary)	Emergency Management: Wyatt Reed or Ronnie Gilley
	Safety Messaging	Safety messaging and information campaigns should increase, both proactively and reactively. This includes sending a consistent stream of preparedness and preventative information to residents as well as corrective information and guidance as needed.	University Housing (Primary) Emergency Management (Secondary)	University Housing: Natalie Eskew or Jenny Keller Emergency Management: Wyatt Reed or Ronnie Gilley

Area for Improvement	Corrective Item	Implementation Plan	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC
<p>Assembly Area</p>	<p>Additional Signage</p>	<p>While maps currently exist to communicate appropriate evacuation assembly areas, additional external signage would likely be beneficial. Emergency Management will coordinate with Facilities Management and Housing partners to evaluate this.</p>	<p>Emergency Management (Primary) University Housing (Secondary)</p>	<p>Emergency Management: Ronnie Gilley or Wyatt Reed University Housing: Natalie Eskew or Jenny Keller</p>
	<p>Evaluation of Additional Assembly Areas</p>	<p>Adding one additional assembly area for certain buildings would likely make evacuations simpler, safer, and more accessible. Emergency Management will coordinate with Housing to evaluate this need and add any areas necessary.</p>	<p>Emergency Management (Primary) University Housing (Secondary)</p>	<p>Emergency Management: Wyatt Reed or Ronnie Gilley University Housing: Natalie Eskew or Jenny Keller</p>
<p>Communication</p>	<p>Fire, Health, and Safety Blurbs</p>	<p>As identified in the previous AAR, increasing communication through the preexisting FHS emails would be helpful. Housing should coordinate with Emergency Management to determine the content of these reminders.</p>	<p>Emergency Management (Primary) University Housing (Secondary)</p>	<p>Emergency Management: Ronnie Gilley or Wyatt Reed University Housing: Natalie Eskew or Jenny Keller</p>
	<p>Post-Drill Communications</p>	<p>Areas that were identified as having significant issues (especially procedurally) in the hotwash should be sent a follow-up email from Housing communicating expectations and applicable policy/procedures.</p>	<p>University Housing (Secondary)</p>	<p>University Housing: Natalie Eskew or Jenny Keller</p>