

VRC Exercise Set-up, Briefing & Play

Exercise Set-up (before participants arrive)

- Arrange VRC Station tables and chairs for smooth flow of people through separate entrance and exit if available
- Distribute pre-packaged envelopes of materials needed at each Station
- Tape signs on walls over the VRC Stations
- Tape Job Descriptions to tables at each Station
- Place a hat or flag (to summon Runners) at each Station
- Tape portable whiteboard (laminated 3'x8' sheet of poster paper) on a wall. (Masking tape is safest.)
- Write some of your volunteer requests (in alternating colors) on the whiteboard. File those request forms in the "Open Requests" file. This gets the play started more quickly. New requests are added as old ones are completed.

Briefing

- As participants arrive, ask them to fill up the chairs at the Stations first, then those in the middle of the room. Ask those at the Stations to read the Job Descriptions taped there.
- Pass out disaster scenario sheets and Station badges
- Explain the premise of this training: Disaster volunteers will come to help, whether you have planned for them or not. Hundreds or thousands of unaffiliated (and unplanned for) volunteers will hinder rather than help the traditional response agencies.
- Discuss who will/could operate a Volunteer Reception Center, if one is needed locally.
- Review signs and ask someone seated at each VRC station to explain what happens at their station.
- Discuss the need for accurate record keeping. (Liability, proof that safety and job training were provided, and local match for FEMA reimbursement)
- Explain why the VRC doesn't do background checks on volunteers and that such checks are the responsibility of the receiving agency.
- Pass out volunteer registration forms. Ask each person to fill out one with their real-life information, and a second for a new persona (be creative!) with new skills. (*You may or may not want people to go around twice. Extra discussion time might be more valuable.*)

Begin the role play exercise

- Begin processing volunteers, watching to be sure Runners respond as needed.
- To keep the play moving smoothly, VRC Director should respond quickly to raised hands, confused expressions and any signs of frustration in your participants. (*Someone else with experience could help as a facilitator.*)
- If a question pertains to only that one Station, such as clarification of the Job Description, try to answer it on the spot.
- For questions that seem to involve more than one Station, say something like "That is a valid question and a very important point. Could you please bring it up again when we stop the play to discuss some of these issues?"
- Pause the play once or twice as needed. Encourage participants to ask their questions, voice concerns, etc. (Often the problems are caused by forms not being completed properly.) Ask participants to suggest solutions and engage the group in solving the problems. (Some suggestions will be impractical for reasons beyond participants' knowledge.)
- Stop play 15-20 minutes before the scheduled end of your training. Lead a discussion of the Post Exercise Questions if they are appropriate to your trainees. Answer participant questions.
- Discuss the importance of having similar operations in order to support one another.