



Lessons learned and unexpected surprises with combined in-person / virtual hybrid exercises

Presented by: **Derek Rowan, President, Ascenttra Training and Exercise Specialists**

Presentation Abstract: Hybrid exercises are those in which there is an in-person component and an online virtual component – simultaneously. While hybrid exercises have been around for years, they saw a resurgence in 2020 and 2021. While we all probably attended too many virtual only exercises, the hybrid exercise is where you have an in-person component and a virtual component. Often the virtual aspect is for observers only, remote evaluators, remote simulators, or perhaps you are using the technology to “link” multiple sites together. Regardless, hybrid exercises have the risk of being done poorly for both in-person and virtual participants! They are different and must be treated differently than either an in-person or a virtual exercise.

Let me share the dozens of lessons learned and errors made from the conduct of many hybrid exercises. I'll share stories and the scars they have earned from issues such as lack of body language, poor audio, last minute VIPs unable to login, inadequate evaluation, and more. I'll also share unexpected successes like virtual remote simulation cells, outstanding interaction collaboration, and the unexpected bonus of senior leaders being able to watch performance across multiple venues remotely.

This session will talk about the various components required to effectively design, develop, conduct, and evaluate a hybrid exercise from technology platforms, audio, video, security, registration considerations, staffing, evaluation concerns, and more!

Speaker Bio: Derek Rowan has 37 years of emergency management exercise design experience across first response, incident management, local, state, and federal government agencies, international governments, healthcare, universities, and the private sector. Over the last 15 years, he and his company have designed over 850 custom training and exercise events around the world including a variety of both virtual and hybrid exercises. Last year of the 53 custom training and exercise events conducted, 35 were conducted virtually or hybrid across all major platforms. Derek is also a contributing author on exercise design for several emergency management books and has developed many advanced exercise design clinics.