



The Functional+ Exercise – Maximum Collaboration | Minimum Line Resources

Presented by: **LT. Carrigan Bennett, Aurora, Colorado Police Department, Homeland Security Section Commander**

Presentation Abstract: We know that a huge benefit of full-scale exercises is that we get to evaluate our training, equipment, and procedures at an individual level as it interacts with a bigger system. What we often discover is difficulties with coordination, communication, and collaboration in the system of systems. Many times, the individual unit performance at their particular job is quite good, especially if we have been doing our jobs to create an exercise series where the capstone event is the full-scale exercise. The downside of full-scale exercises is they are very expensive and resource intensive. In a time where agencies struggle to put enough cops and firefighters on the street just to handle calls for service, it is very difficult to get enough line level staff to make a realistic and worthwhile full-scale exercise. To work through this, I created what I call a “Functional Plus” exercise. I asked for participation by the decision makers in various systems like police patrol, police tactical units and investigations, fire department battalion chiefs, ambulance companies, IT and emergency management. We gave them realistic rosters of their resources available to play. Our sim cell drove play through making 911 calls, incorporating the

often passed over in exercises dispatch center. Leaders in modern disasters frequently make decisions remotely based on computer aided dispatch and common operating picture tools, not by constant direct observation of their people in the field. The Functional Plus allows us to really target our evaluations to the interactions of systems and our policies overall. Perhaps more importantly our first response leaders get experience with real-time decision making with realistically limited vision of what is occurring in other areas.

Speaker Bio: Carrigan Bennett, currently the Traffic Section Commander for the Aurora, Colorado Police Department, has over two decades of experience in the fields of emergency management, security, and law enforcement. He has command post and emergency operations center experience in a wide range of disasters including wildfires, floods, hurricanes to active shooter response and recovery. He builds dynamic exercises that challenge and educate participants. Carrigan is passionate about breaking down silos and expanding our capacity to respond effectively to emergencies together.