

## Handout 7-2: After-Action Review Tips

### Overall Tips

- Schedule an After-Action Review as soon after the incident as possible.
- Keep it short and focused.
- Focus on WHAT, not WHO.
- Establish clear ground rules: encourage candor and openness (this is dialog—not lecture or debate); focus on items that can be fixed; keep all discussions confidential.
- Use a skilled facilitator to conduct the After-Action Review.

### After-Action Review Process Steps

Use the following questions to facilitate the After-Action Review process:

- 1. What did we set out to do?**
  - Establish the facts.
  - Determine purpose of the mission and definition of success:
    - Identify key tasks involved.
    - Specify conditions under which each task may need to be performed (weather, topography, time restrictions, etc.).
    - Define acceptable standards for success (explain what “Right” looks like).
- 2. What actually happened?**
  - Continue to establish the facts.
    - Students should come to agreement on what actually happened.
    - Pool multiple perspectives to build a shared picture of what happened.
- 3. Why did it happen?**
  - Analyze cause and effect.
    - Focus on WHAT, not WHO.
    - Provide progressive refinement for drawing out explanations of what occurred. This will lead into developing possible solutions.
- 4. What are we going to do differently next time?**
  - Solutions will arise naturally once problems are identified and understood.
    - Focus on items you can fix, rather than external forces outside of your control.
    - Identify areas where groups are performing well and that should be sustained. This will help repeat success and create a balanced approach to the After-Action Review.

Areas To Sustain/Maintain Strengths:

Areas To Improve:

**5. Are there lessons learned that should be shared immediately?**

- Identify the process for sharing lessons learned.
  - Option 1: Document the Issue, Discussion, Recommendation
  - Option 2: Document the Concept of the Operation, Results, Trends, Recommendation
- Determine and describe the most notable successes from the incident.
- Determine and describe the most difficult challenges faced and how they were overcome.

**6. What followup is needed?**

- Be specific about actions, timelines, and responsibilities.
  - What changes, additions, or deletions are recommended to SOPs, plans, or training?

What issues were not resolved to your satisfaction and need further review?