

Hazard Scenario Development Instructions

The Hazard Scenario is a narrative description of a realistic hazard that may impact the community. This scenario provides workshop participants with context for their discussions and is used by the facilitator to focus participant conversations on an event that might damage Assets or disrupt the delivery of Goods & Services.

The Hazard Scenario should be structured as a general overview of a hazard or event impacting the community. It should provide enough detail that participants can think about impacts on the community but not so detailed that the results only pertain to one specific event.

To develop the Hazard Scenario, the community champion will need to complete three tasks:

1. Identify a relevant hazard,
2. Identify specific details about the hazard, and
3. Create a narrative using these details.

Step 1: Identifying a Relevant Hazard

To select a hazard, the community champion should identify a risk or event that threatens the community. The hazard should be realistic in that it could actually occur in the community; have some sort of impact that would result in residents requiring services from the local government; and ideally, will reflect the desires and objectives of the local government.

The easiest way to identify an appropriate hazard is to look at the community's Hazard/Risk/Vulnerabilities Analysis (HRVA) or comparable risk planning document. The HRVA will have identified high-ranking hazards, based on criteria such as impact and frequency. The community champion could be reasonably confident that the higher ranking hazards are appropriate to the community.

If the community doesn't have an HRVA, the community champion could consider basing the hazard on a recent emergency in the community. For example, if the community was recently impacted by a severe windstorm, this may be an appropriate selection.

Step 2: Identify Specific Details about the Hazard

Once the hazard has been selected, the community champion will need to identify details that describe the event. This can be done by answering the following questions:

- What is the hazard?
- What time of year does the hazard occur (if relevant)?
- What is the ranking/measurement of the hazard? For example, a magnitude 5.5 earthquake, a once-in-100 year flood, an F3 category tornado, a windstorm with sustained 60 km/h winds with gusts up to 100km/h
- What are some specific damages that might be caused by this event?

- Are there any other factors that are locally relevant?
- What is the timeframe that will be discussed?

This last question is particularly important as it gives participants an understanding of when resources may become exhausted.

Here's an example of someone working through this process:

- What is the hazard? *Windstorm*
- What time of year does the hazard occur (if relevant)? *In the past, the community has experienced severe windstorms primarily during the summer months – June to August*
- What is the ranking/measurement of the hazard? *Past windstorms have had sustained winds of 100 km/h winds with gusts up to 120km/h.*
- What are some specific damages that might be caused by this event? *Past storms resulted in downed power lines that took 2-3 days to repair; damage to a radio tower took 3 days to repair; blown over trees at major intersections took 1-2 days to clear; and lots of debris was blown into the reservoir. Main Street and First Avenue were blocked for hours, which meant traffic was at a standstill.*
- Are there any other factors that are locally relevant? *The windstorms typically come from out-of-the-blue, meaning the community has no warning or time to prepare. The storms end quickly, often within 30 minutes. Sometimes the windstorms are accompanied by rain but most often it is continuous gusts of wind. Additionally, the summer is peak tourist season for the community, which may have some influence on what is seen as critical.*
- What is the timeframe that will be discussed? *The first 12 hours of response, beginning 30 minutes from the start of the storm.*

Step 3: Create a Narrative Using These Details

The answers to these questions are worked into a one-to-two paragraph narrative. This step takes a bit of creativity as the community champion is writing a story about an event impacting the community. The narrative should include all of the details identified in the list of questions. Here is an example of a completed Hazard Scenario:

You should assume that 30 minutes ago, a windstorm blew through the community. The storm had sustained winds of 100 km/h with gusts up to 120 km/h. The windstorm knocked down power lines on Main Street and First Avenue. Power is now out to the eastern half of the city and won't be back on for the next 12 hours. Older trees have fallen over and completely blocked the highway. Debris was blown into the reservoir and clogged the drinking water intakes. Cell phone reception is down. You should assume the storm is dying down, however there are still periodic gusts of wind. We are going to look at the services the community will expect in the first 12 hours. If needed, we can add more detail to the scenario as we go along.

The Hazard Scenario is now ready for use. It can be distributed to workshop participants prior to the meeting or can be handed out at the start of the workshop. Either way, the scenario should be read out-loud by the community champion at the start of the workshop.