

Template for observer reports of crisis

The use of a common template for those performing observer studies is a way of structuring the experiences gained from observer studies. This facilitates the comparison of reports both within ones own field of activity as well as between different fields of activities. It also facilitates the implementation of joint observer activities and joint observer reports.

The structure presented here has had as a basis a method of studying disasters in the field of disaster medicine: "Health Disaster Management: Guidelines for Evaluation and Research in the Utstein Style" (<http://pdm.medicine.wisc.edu/utstein.htm>), which is the result of an extensive development that has taken place during recent years within the framework of WADEM (World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine). This work has been revised and modified within the framework of the Swedish Emergency Management Agency network of observers.

In principle, observer reports are products of "lessons identified". "Lessons learned" is the resulting process carried out by each authority involved to gain from lesson identified, which leads to a number of activities that will ameliorate actions in future events.

All headings below should be included, but in certain situations it might be relevant only to state that the heading is superfluous since it was not possible or warranted to study this specific subject.

Under each heading it is often warranted to include one or several subheadings, which may vary depending on the subject being studied. For example under the headings Damage and Disturbances one or several of the subheadings Health, Environment, Property and Politics may be relevant.

Where possible comments and observations should be included after each heading (subheading) where the experiences gained are described, including their relevance for Swedish conditions. These comments and observations constitute the basis for the text which will be presented under the heading Experiences. The comments and observations may be presented as a fact box in order to be clear and easy to find.

Title

The title should include type/place/location/country and year of the event. A subtitle including the expression "observational study" is appropriate (unless already is included in the main title) in order to enable finding the report(s) electronically.

Preface

The preface is designed in accordance with the respective authority policy. The preface can replace or supplement the Introduction.

Observers and Authors

The presentation is designed in accordance with the policy of each authority.

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Summary and Experiences

The extent of the summary varies due to the event. If the summary is translated into English it might be wise to make it relatively extensive.

In Experiences it is always important to include the relevance for Swedish conditions and if possible "local" experiences can be made general.

In general this section is translated into English. However, exceptions may be made if the report is only of interest for Swedish speaking readers. It may be relevant only to publish the English translation on the web page. In this case the title and authors should always be included on the front page.

Introduction/Material and methods

This heading can be excluded if the relevant information is present in the Preface.

The reason for, area of focus, and delimitation of the study should be included here as well as the description of the commission and what method(s) has been used. Reflections and analysis of the study (method etc) may be included here where appropriate.

Hazard

Why and how the event occurred should be described here as well as how and why it led to the actual consequences. What was the threat (hazard) and what were the organizational/social/political/ technical circumstances (vulnerability) putting humans and organizations at risk and what made the actual accident/disaster happen. Each authority should choose what it regards as being relevant to study, and also what relevant vulnerability factors the observers find.

Background

This section should describe relevant background information that may vary considerably depending on the type of incident/part of incident studied.

The section should at least include the following subheadings: Pre-event status and Preparedness.

Pre-event status

The situation prior to the event should be described here.

Preparedness

The preparedness available for handling the actual event should be described here, including legal prerequisites, organization etc. Where appropriate, any structures (or corresponding) resulting from lessons learned from earlier events should be described.

Possible organizational charts should preferably be presented as an appendix.

Event

The course of the event(s) should be described here. How this section is designed depends on the character of the event. The description should be comprehensive. Details (detailed time

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course etc) should preferably be presented in appendices. Where it happened (if possible with gps coordinates) should be described here.

Damage

What and/or who was damaged should be described here, but disturbances (the consequences of the damage) should be described under Disturbances.

Disturbances

The consequences of the damage for humans and the environment should be described here.

Example

Damage (human)

bone fracture

Disturbances

impaired mobility

Damage (environment)

Ruptured water pipe

Collapsed bridge

Collapsed building

Flooding of farming fields

Disturbances

impaired water supply

transportation impossible

lack of shelter, lack of lodging

impaired production and distribution of food

Responses

Actions being undertaken against both damage and disturbances. Where appropriate these may be described separately. Details of time course etc. should be presented in appendices.

Recovery and development

How the society and organization etc. have been restored to the pre-event status and have recovered should be described here as well as possible developments and what experience(s) have already become lessons learned.

Discussion

Analysis of findings and what lessons have been observed should be described here and, where appropriate, how should they be made into lessons learned.

References

The presentation is designed in accordance with the policy of each authority.

Appendices

Detailed time courses and organizational charts etc should be presented in Appendices.

Key words

Relevant key words should be listed here.

Index

Words of interest should be indexed.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations being used in the report should be listed here.