

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Food and Feed Safety Division**

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Version #: 1	Effective Date: 06/10/16
Title: After Action Review (AAR) SOP	

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1. PURPOSE

This document describes the procedures for completing an After Action Review (AAR) and report at the conclusion of an event, incident, or special investigation with applicable programs and partners.

2. SCOPE

This document applies to investigations when the Rapid Response Team (RRT) is actively involved in investigating an event or incident. After a significant incident has occurred, a review and report should be generated to detail successes, lessons learned, and develop a list of actions required to address specific needs and improve future responses. Suggested trigger points for determining if an incident is “significant” include complexity (multiple jurisdictions, multiple products) and impact (public health impact, impact on industry, program and resource impact, environmental impact, fiscal impact, and consumer impact). All investigations requiring the activation of the Incident Command System (ICS) must be followed with an AAR. This document is not intended to be applied to routine inspections or enforcement actions.

3. BACKGROUND

Outbreak and other special investigations typically require coordination among multiple regulatory agencies and/or programs. Effective communication and coordination are required for successful investigations. A review of the incident and response process provide the opportunity to identify successes and determine areas for improvement in the response network and affected system, facility or product. Closing the loop on outbreak response and special investigations is a vital part of sustaining a collective local, state, and federal rapid response. Trends can also be noted from multiple reviews to determine the effectiveness of changes to the response network and applicable regulatory programs.

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4. RESPONSIBILITY

Division Director, Assistant Director, and Management – The FFSD Division Director, Assistant Director, and Management should participate in all AARs in relation to their involvement in the response.

RRT Coordinator – The RRT Coordinator or designee will ensure that the AAR, AAR Report, and Improvement Plan are completed and that the items identified in the Improvement Plan are implemented. The RRT Coordinator is also responsible for the distribution of the AAR Report and Improvement Plan. The RRT Coordinator reports to the Response, Training and Outreach Supervisor.

RRT Investigator – The RRT Investigator will be responsible for assisting the RRT Coordinator with completion of AAR documentation. When requested, the RRT Investigator may complete the AAR Report and Improvement Plan. The RRT Investigator reports to the Response, Training and Outreach Supervisor.

Facilitator – It is recommended that the facilitator be a person who was not involved in the day-to-day management of the response, but was familiar with the event. It is recommended that the facilitator be familiar with ICS structure and the protocols/procedures of participating agencies. The facilitator leads participants through the AAR process.

Participants – All staff involved in the day-to-day management of the response, including command staff, general staff, and field staff will participate in the AAR. Any participant, internal or external to the jurisdiction, at any level, can and should contribute to the AAR; this could include the division director, inspectors, inspection supervisors, epidemiologist, subject matter experts, liaisons, public information officers, and laboratory staff.

5. DEFINITIONS

After Action Review (AAR) – A no-fault process whereby everyone involved in the response/event collectively evaluates the response. The emphasis should be on identifying strengths and weaknesses of the jurisdiction's or multi-agencies plans, protocols, procedures, and the tactics utilized to achieve the strategic goals.

After Action Review (AAR) Report – The purpose of the report is to analyze results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions. The report includes a summary of the incident, review of the response process, timeline of the events, strengths and areas for improvement observed during the response, and an Improvement Plan (IP).

Improvement Plan (IP) – A formal document that lists responsible entities to be accountable for agreed-upon improvements to a response process within a designated time frame. The IP should include a clear description of recommendations for improvement, who the responsible part(ies) will be for implementing each recommendation or corrective action, and a timeframe for completion.

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6. PROCEDURES

6.1. AAR Preparation – RRT Coordinator

- 6.1.1. Notify all incident participants at the beginning of the response that they will be asked to participate in an AAR.
- 6.1.2. Establish points of contacts and solicit input and/or participation in the AAR from contributing agency leads that are available and others as needed.
- 6.1.3. Request participants record strengths, areas for improvement, and recommended ways to improve while response is ongoing.
- 6.1.4. Create a summary of the incident. The summary should:
 - a. Begin with the first notification and finish with the final outcome or current status of the incident.
 - b. Identify the major response concerns along with the commodity and suspected/confirmed agent.
 - c. Identify the findings and/or outcome of the incident.
 - d. Include what agencies participated in the response, what type of incident command structure(s) was used to facilitate interagency work, key tasks involved and state what the objectives were.
 - e. Describe possible root cause and possible mitigation steps including why/how the situation occurred.
 - f. Be clear and concise.
 - g. Be pulled from the Investigation Summary for the response, which is posted on SharePoint at the initiation of the response.
- 6.1.5. Create a timeline of the events. The timeline can be developed in multiple formats depending on the complexity of the incident and should help others to understand the sequence of events/actions.
- 6.1.6. Determine if any information listed in the AAR Report Improvement Plan is considered sensitive for any agency. Consider this issue before public distribution of the report or limit its distribution. Consult with legal counsel if appropriate.

6.2. AAR Process – RRT Coordinator

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- 6.2.1. Determine how the AAR will be conducted. The AAR can be conducted through a written survey, an in-person meeting, or through a group meeting/conference call.
- 6.2.2. Identify and assign a facilitator for the AAR.
- 6.2.3. Schedule the AAR or share the AAR survey (see 6.2.1).
- 6.2.4. Hold the AAR meeting or collect the AAR survey results. Participants must be able to speak freely or anonymously in writing through a survey or some other form of written feedback. The overall goal is to improve future responses. The discussion is to be focused on activities, actions, or systematic issues, and not on individuals.
- 6.2.5. During the AAR meeting, create an Improvement Plan on what can be done to improve policies, procedures and resources for future responses. Focus on items that can be improved and suggest solutions to identified problems. Assign a specific person responsible for implementing the suggested recommendation or corrective action with a designated timeline for completion.

6.3. Follow-up and Full Summary (AAR Report and Improvement Plan) – RRT Coordinator

- 6.3.1. Write and compile the full summary. The full summary is comprised of the incident summary, process review, timeline, flowchart, and Improvement Plan. The report should be distributed to all involved parties in the incident.
- 6.3.2. Ensure the improvement plan captures any requirements of modifications to existing protocols, procedures, or trainings. Identify who is responsible for the revisions and the timeframe within which these revisions will be completed.
- 6.3.3. Request review by legal counsel before releasing a final AAR report to the public.
- 6.3.4. Follow up with the designated agencies/individuals responsible for implementing the suggested improvements within the time frame specified and report back to the participating agencies.

6.4. After Action Review – RRT Investigator

- 6.4.1. Assist RRT Coordinator with procedures described in 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3. Tasks may include scheduling the AAR, compiling documents for the AAR, creating the incident summary, facilitating the AAR meeting, assisting in writing and compiling documents for the full summary.

6.5. After Action Review – Additional FFSD Staff

- 6.5.1. Participate in AARs in relation to involvement in the response.

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6.5.2. Implement suggested improvements from the Improvement Plan within the time frame specified, as assigned.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS (includes References, Attachments)

Review of the Response Process Template (Hot Wash Template)
Incident Timeline Template
After Action Review Guidance Document

8. EQUIPMENT/MATERIALS NEEDED

N/A

9. SAFETY

N/A

10. CIRCULATION

This document is circulated to the following: FFSD Inspection Staff and FFSD Inspection Staff Supervisors, RRT Staff, FFSD Program Managers, and the FFSD Division Director.

11. APPROVAL/DOCUMENT HISTORY

Document History		
Version #	Status (I, R)	Change History
1	R	Previous version FOOD.50.03 – After Action Review SOP transferred to Response (RESP). Updates due to changes in procedures and division structure changes from DFID to FFSD.
Approved By:		Date
Approved By:		Date

I = Initial document; R = Revised document