

Intermodal Security Training and Exercise Program (I-STEP)



Background

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA), in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), developed the Port Security Training and Exercise Program (PortSTEP) as a joint program to help meet the mandates of the 2002 Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA). PortSTEP existed as a pilot program to develop the Intermodal Security Training Exercise Program (I-STEP) for TSA's Transportation Sector Network Management (TSNM).

I-STEP VISION

To strengthen the Nation's ability to prevent, respond to, and recover from a transportation security incident (TSI) within the nation's surface transportation sector network.

TSA is applying the highly successful processes created under PortSTEP to the multi-modal transportation sector through I-STEP. TSA developed I-STEP in an effort to enhance the preparedness of our Nation's surface transportation sector network. I-STEP is designed to address the unique transportation security issues found in the intermodal environment of the nation's transportation security network.

PortSTEP, which began in August 2005, by design allowed the government and industry to develop a program which met the Security Sensitive Information (SSI) regulations. PortSTEP used the ports with variances in size and complexity, and mixture of modes of transportation to provide the program an environment to test concepts for security exercises. PortSTEP was able to capitalize on the wide range of variations of port characteristics to provide the right combination of tools and exercise types to develop I-STEP.

Program Goals

Our Nation's transportation sector networks are vital to the economic health of this country. I-STEP will provide surface transportation and their respective communities with meaningful evaluations on issues associated with prevention, preparedness, and the ability to respond to a terrorist-related incident. I-STEP's goals include:



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- promoting stakeholder awareness and involvement through an outreach program;
- encouraging stakeholder participation in program development;
- encouraging program alignment with national standards and requirements;
- conducting exercises relevant to stakeholders' challenges and risks; and
- refining the program through evaluation and continuous improvement.

I-STEP MISSION

We will develop and implement an intermodal transportation security exercise program for use by our Nation's transportation sector network communities. The program will align with the Nation's infrastructure protection policies and programs. Through outreach, we will engage all modes of the intermodal transportation community to continuously improve readiness. Our innovative and comprehensive system of tools and services will provide a foundation allowing stakeholders to strengthen their transportation sector network security postures as they consider the economic impacts of a TSI on affected industries and the movement of people and commerce.

Exercise Scope

I-STEP provides tools and services for security exercises to modal operators through the TSNM General Managers that included software for exercise design, evaluation and tracking, and the ability to support a mix of Basic Tabletop, Advanced Tabletop and Functional Exercises. The TSA centric and modal specific objectives with Target Capabilities of I-STEP are aimed at improving the intermodal transportation industry's ability to prepare for and contend with a TSI. These objectives were centered on increasing awareness, improving processes, creating partnerships, and delivering security training through the exercises. I-STEP leverages the accomplishments of PortSTEP to implement the program to all modes within TSNM.

I-STEP delivers the following exercise support documentation and services:

- **Facilitation** of all planning meetings and exercise activities;
- **Objectives & Scenarios** that drive exercise discussion;
- **Exercise Plans** that addresses exercise scope and objectives, and assign tasks and responsibilities;
- **Situation Manuals** that contains either a chronologically sequenced scenario or a partially pre-scripted narrative to be driven by player actions during the exercise;
- **Controller and Evaluator Handbooks** that describes the roles and responsibilities of exercise controllers and evaluators;
- **Exercise Evaluation Guides** that will provide evaluators a means to record their observations, and questions to consider after the exercise;
- **Master Scenario Events Lists** that contains a chronological listing of the events;
- **Media/Public Information Kits** that notifies local media prior to the exercise; and
- **Logistics Plans** that allows for a smooth, seamless exercise

Security Partner Involvement

The participation of security partners in the design and execution of I-STEP is critical to successful exercise preparation and execution. The program aims to increase the awareness of the intermodal transportation security community of the critical processes, issues, and activities that arise during and following a TSI. In addition, the program fosters and supports institutional relationships within the port environment including the transportation industry, transportation security managers, emergency managers, law enforcement, medical professionals, media, and security personnel, and all others involved in preventing, preparing for and responding to a TSI. Modal operators are encouraged to consider whether participation satisfies their internal exercise obligations.

Information Technology

The Exercise Information System (EXIS) is an Internet-accessible knowledge-management system, serving all stakeholders: industry, port authorities, Federal agencies, and State and local governments. It integrates all components of I-STEP at the SSI level and provides stakeholders with valuable exercise information tailored to the transportation industry, allowing exercise developers to leverage past work and best practices. The EXIS provides transportation industry stakeholders with the ability to choose scenarios and/or objectives based on their particular needs, such as transportation mode, or focus area of the taxonomy.

All exercise elements are able to be customized and saved to the user's page. The EXIS is designed to be adaptable to the changing needs of exercises, tracking, and reporting as they mature and evolves and to support additional exercise elements that may be developed in the future.

The I-STEP program has designed and field tested the Exercise Evaluation System (EES) as a supplemental tool for exercise evaluation design and conduct. EES breaks down an objective to assist the evaluator with the "plan path" and expected outcome. An evaluator is able to document deviations from the security plan and the results. Although EXIS provides for the "upload" of exercise evaluation information, the EES operates as a stand-alone tool to capture evaluation data during an exercise based on the objectives. The tool provides correlation of notes and data captured during the exercise with a time/date stamp. The tool is designed to give immediate feedback for the Hotwash. All hand written objective specific notes are attached to each objective with the option to convert to text. The Evaluation Director is able to correlate multiple objectives from multiple evaluators and sites electronically to develop the After Action Report with EES.

Program Team

TSA has a Program Team to provide strategic support, planning, and analytical and technical services for the program, exercise mechanics, and transportation security training exercises. This team is comprised of government agencies and commercial vendors that have significant expertise in the transportation domain and in exercise program development and delivery. Federal Government participants may include: DHS entities - TSA; US Coast Guard; Customs and Border Protection, and Federal Emergency Management Agency, as well as the US Department of Transportation Office of Emergency Transportation.

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