

# KYEM-KYARNG Flooding Table Top Exercise

January 16, 2025

KYEM Emergency Operation Center, Frankfort, KY



Each month since October 2023 a readiness exercise has been conducted in partnership between Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM) and the Kentucky Army National Guard (KYARNG) in Frankfort, KY. KYEM Assistant Director of Operations, Dustin Heiser welcomed participants to this January's exercise, which used a much too familiar topic for Kentuckians, flooding. This 2-hour table-top (TTX) exercise is just one variation in a series of monthly exercises KYEM has been hosting at their State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) since the fall of 2023. The exercise is a collaboration between the KYARNG and KYEM with various state partners invited each month to participate depending on the specific exercise scenario.

Photo: Exercise participants at the State Emergency Operations Center in Frankfort, KY

Dr. Charlie Harris, one of the exercise directors, said these monthly exercises were initiated to address topical threats and issues within Kentucky, in a flexible manner that would accommodate inviting various partners. The exercise objectives this month included reviewing historical flooding patterns in Kentucky; discussing and sharing organizational emergency response plans and capabilities; and identifying response best practices, resource requirements, capability gaps, and areas for improvement.



Photo: Dustin Heiser, Assistant Director of Operations, Kentucky Division of Emergency Management

One of the main reasons flooding was selected as the scenario for this table top is due to the fact flooding ranks third nationally in terms of the number of federally declared disasters between 1953-2025. Flooding can be caused by multiple factors, including but not limited to dam failure, excessive rainfall, snow melts, and ice jams.



The first presentation of the afternoon featured Andrea Schoettmer, Senior Service Hydrologist and Meteorologist with the National Weather Service (NWS) out of Louisville, KY. Andrea presented various topics about Flooding in Kentucky.

Photo: Andrea Schoettmer, Senior Service Hydrologist and Meteorologist with NWS

This presentation included a review of the types of flooding that occur in the Commonwealth, as well as historical floods that have affected Kentucky. Rainfall amounts that have caused some of the worst floods in Kentucky were integrated into the presentation for reference to past and future flood events. NWS communication methods and alerts were presented to ensure those present at the TTX have the latest methods on how to exchange critical flood information with the NWS. New NWS Flood Tools, including the new National Water Prediction Service (NWPS) website and NWS Flood Inundation Mapping (FIM), were introduced. Finally, Andrea gave an example flood scenario including briefing slides to aid further understanding of what kind of briefing to expect from the NWS during a real flood event.

Mr. Brian Stafford, the Kentucky Director of Military Support (DOMS) Plans & Operations Officer, provided a short presentation. During the 2022 Eastern Kentucky floods, the Kentucky National Guard's search and rescue teams performed exceptionally. However, exercises between the KYNG and KYEM are crucial for refining our plans.

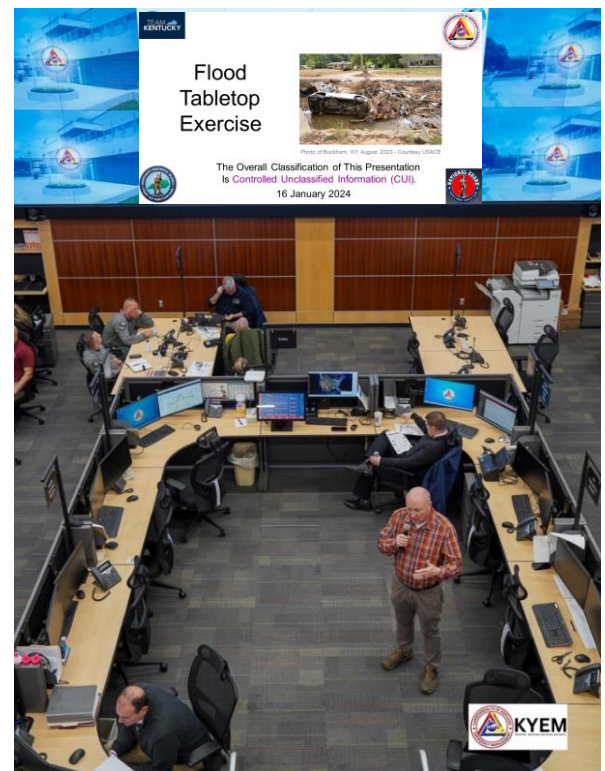


Photo: Mr. Brian Stafford, KY DOMS Plans & Operations Officer

The learning goal for this exercise was to ensure faster ground evacuations and reduce the time rescued individuals spend on air or water transport. With the KYNG and KYEM working together, we simulated our deployment of specialized KYNG response teams like High Axle, Transportation, and Points of Distribution (POD). A key takeaway from the training, and from that of the 2022 floods, is the importance of earlier coordination with local emergency management to establish transfer points which improves rescue efforts and safeguards lives.

The exercise afforded participating agencies time to share recent updates to their flood plans. The participants also worked through various scenarios, including getting ready for a major flood in the Commonwealth. From the scenarios, agencies developed lessons learned and things to work on to be better prepared for the real event.

***“Exercises like this one allow agencies to coordinate and sharpen plans before actual implementation.” - Dr. Charles K. Harris, In Service Training Supervisor, Kentucky Emergency Management***

Thirty-one members from eleven different responder agencies in Kentucky participated in the two-hour table-top exercise. Kentucky Agency participants included

- 123rd Special Tactics Squadron (KYANG)
- 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade (KYARNG)
- Kentucky Director of Military Support (DOMS)
- Kentucky Air National Guard (KYANG)
- Kentucky Army National Guard (KYARNG)
- Kentucky CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (KY CERFP)
- Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM)
- Kentucky State Police (KSP)
- Kentucky Task Force 1 (KY TF-1) (Urban Search & Rescue: US&R)
- National Weather Service (NWS) Jackson
- National Weather Service (NWS) Louisville