



Tips and Exchange Structure for Fire Department Exchange Host Agency

Departments from across the country have begun to recognize the benefits of peer-to-peer exchanges. These exchanges promote the free flow of ideas and best practices between participants. Peer-to-peer learning uses guided conversation to promote the exchange of ideas between participants. While short presentations may be helpful to evoke thoughts, the principal learning tool is peer-to-peer conversation. The key to successful exchanges is common interests and prior planning. There is no set size for peer-to-peer exchanges, however, be mindful of the importance of participant engagement in conversations – keeping the group smaller helps facilitate increased participation. Below is a brief checklist for departments to consider when hosting their own peer-to-peer learning exchange.

PLANNING

- Identify a topic of common interest among local or regional partners and create a theme to guide conversation at your exchange
 - Themes can be very broad such as wildfire response or could be very specific to a single part of a department's wildfire program
- Include chief officers/senior staff and local stakeholders
 - Accept/solicit help in planning and implementation
- Consider aligning exchanges with local targets of opportunity, such as stakeholder meetings or relevant events
- Identify and target specific departments or groups to participate in your exchange to ensure each department has areas in which they seek to learn as well as areas in which they can share their strengths, so that every participant can benefit from one another
- Plan for logistical support of exchange
 - This could be as simple as finding a location to host the exchange to as elaborate as planning travel, meals, etc.
- Exchanges may be as short as a few hours or could last up to a week. Consider the desired learning outcomes when planning appropriate time for the exchange.

AGENDA

- Send out a draft agenda 2 weeks in advance to solicit feedback
- Consider including time for non-formal interactions such as during breaks or meals
- Provide a balanced mix of group, classroom-style teaching and discussions, with outdoor field tours and excursions unique to your theme
- Breaking out of the classroom, such as hosting a lunch outside gives participants a mental break and may allow them to be more focused over the course of a day
- As relevant, invite key, local stakeholders and fire service personnel to participate in the discussions

IMPLEMENTATION

- Create an environment where participants feel free to share experiences and ask engaging questions
- Take frequent breaks and ensure enough informal interaction time during breaks. Having informal gathering time allows participants time to discuss items in greater depth.
- Facilitate discussion following the agenda allowing freedom to explore ideas that the group finds valuable. Conduct a group after-action review to identify what was valuable in the exchange as well as ways to improve future exchanges
- Identify any next steps or future actions that the participants would like to take as a result of the exchange

FOLLOW-UP

- Evaluate department policies and programs and identify potential future improvements
- Formulate ideas and identify collaborative capacity
- Implement practical changes and initiatives
- Present/share exchange information at conferences/meetings
- Identify ways for participants to continue to share ideas in the future
- If possible, schedule follow-up meetings or trips to visit other locations and projects

LESSONS LEARNED

- Make sure you have the right participants in the group. If topics are technical in nature having subject matter experts involved adds depth. If topics relate to budgets, staffing or policy having decision-makers participate provides different perspective.
- Ensure you have adequate logistical support for the event. Having non-participants help with logistics allows participants and facilitators to focus on the exchange content.
- Start the planning early and work with a team to share the load. Anticipate that planning may take more time than the actual exchange.
- Informal gatherings during breaks, meals, and after-hours are where a lot of information is organically exchanged and leads to deeper more meaningful participant relationships. This may need to be scheduled to get participants talking.



Sample FDX Steering Group Agenda

Vail FDX Steering Group Agenda
June 6-10, 2022

Monday June 6th

7:00 pm (120 min)	Informal Meet and Greet in Hotel Lobby	Trivia Game – Questions about Department Videos and Vail	Facilitator 1/2/3
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Tuesday June 7

Breakfast on own

7:45am (15 min)	Meet in lobby	Travel to Fire Station 3	Bus
8:00 am (15 min)	Welcome Chief's Welcome	Introduce the Fire Chief to welcome IAFC, Steering Group, and Participants to Vail	Facilitator 1 Chief
(15 min)	IAFC Welcome	Introduce IAFC rep to welcome everyone and introduce the Fire Department Exchange	IAFC
(15 min)	Introductions	Participating Department Introductions <i>What are you hoping to gain from the exchange?</i>	Facilitator 1
(15 min)	Agenda Review	Overview, PEAP, Podio, AMS	Facilitator 1 /IAFC
9:00 am (90 min)	Cooperative and Collaborative Partnerships	Participating Department Presentation <i>Objective: Identify current and potential partnerships that participants can engage with to accomplish their Post Exchange Action Plans</i>	Facilitator 2
	Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 4, All 	Participating Department 1
	Facilitated Discussion	https://www.liberatingstructures.com/1-1-2-4-all/ Listing broad groups that they may or may not engage with currently. Write down all the groups on a board to display to everyone	
	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name specific partners – index cards to everyone and they write down their specific partnerships to use later on their PEAPs 	
	Exercise		
10:30 am (15min)	BREAK		
10:45 am (15 min)	PEAP	PEAP time for Cooperative and Collaborative Partnerships	Facilitator 2

11:00 pm (60 min)	Regulations and Planning	Participating Department Presentation	Facilitator 1
	Presentation	Objective: Identify what planning tools and codes options exist and what authorities' departments have to use them.	Participating Department 2
	Facilitated Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include discussion on partners that may be critical to success 	
12:00 pm (60 min)	LUNCH	Catering at Station 3 or Park	
1:00 pm (30 Min)	Regulations and Planning- Cont.	15% Solutions: https://www.liberatingstructures.com/7-15-solutions/	Facilitator 1
	Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your 15% solution to developing, strengthening or implementing your existing wildfire planning and regulations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on what you can do at your level within your existing structures. 	
(15 min)	PEAP	What actions can you take now, in the next 3 months, 6 months and year to improve planning and regulation in your community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you engage with your leadership (dept and community) 	Facilitator 1
1:45 pm (15min)	BREAK		
2:00 pm (90 min)	Outreach and Education	Participating Department Presentation	Facilitator 2
	Presentation	<i>Min Specs</i> https://www.liberatingstructures.com/14-min-specs/	Participating Department 3
	Facilitated Discussion Introduction	<i>Objective: Identify the bare minimum required to create an effective Outreach and Education program/campaign. Identify possible Outreach and Education programs/campaigns</i>	
	Exercise		
3:30 pm (15 min)	BREAK		
3:45 pm (15 min)	PEAP		Facilitator 2
4:00 pm (30 min)	Daily Parking Lot	<i>Take the time to build or discuss any parking lot items that come up during the day</i>	Craig
4:30 pm 15 (min)	Daily Debrief	<i>What went well? What inspired you? What could be improved?</i>	Craig
	Logistics	<i>Tomorrow's activities/Dinner</i>	
4:45 pm (10 min)	Depart Station 3	Travel to Hotel	Bus
6:00 pm	Meet for Dinner		

Wednesday June 8

		Breakfast on own	
7:45 am (75 min)	Meet in lobby	Travel to Buffalo Mountain Fire (Silverthorne)	Bus
9:00 am (15 min)	Arrive at Buffalo Mountain Fire		
9:15 pm (160 min)	Buffalo Mountain Fire Tour	Buffalo Mountain Fire response and successes from prior mitigation	Facilitator 1
11:50 pm (80 min)	LUNCH/Travel to Emergency Management Office	Deli Belly's Lunch (Eat at County Commons)	
1:00 pm (120 min)	Safe and Effective Response	Participating Department Presentation	Facilitator 3
Break as needed during time	Presentation	<i>If you were King/Queen for the day what would be the number one change you would make to improve the national wildland fire response to be safer and more effective?</i>	Participating Department 4/
	Facilitated Discussion	<i>Variation of 25/10 crowd sourcing.</i>	Participating Department 5
	Introduction	<i>What is an effective response for each of your organizations? IA, extended, large fire?</i>	
	Exercise	<i>How are you dealing with responder safety? Public Safety?</i>	
3:00 pm (15 min)	PEAP		Facilitator 3
3:15 pm 30 (min)	Daily Debrief/ Daily Parking lot	<i>What went well? What inspired you? What could be improved?</i>	Facilitator 3
	Logistics	<i>Tomorrow's activities/Dinner</i>	
3:45 pm	Depart		Bus
4:30 to 4:45 pm	Arrive at Hotel		
6:00 pm	Meet for Dinner		

Thursday June 9

		Breakfast on own	
7:45 am (15 min)	Meet lobby	Travel to Vail Library	Bus or walk

8:00 am (120 min) Break as needed during session	Fuels Management – Mitigation	<i>Participating Department Presentation</i>	Facilitator 1
	Presentation	<i>Mitigation is Hard</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discussion on hurdles</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Project development</i> ○ <i>Assisting roles- not my job</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Capacity</i> ▪ <i>Meeting the community's needs</i> ○ <i>Technical expertise</i> ○ <i>Variety of treatments</i> ○ <i>Time commitments</i> ○ <i>Risk aversion</i> 	Participating Department 6
	Facilitated Discussion Introduction	<i>What is the purpose of mitigation?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agency/ owners management objective</i> 	
		<i>How do you know if your mitigation is effective?</i>	
	Exercise (Modified 1-2-4 all for each bullet)	<i>Why should a response focused organization engage in mitigation and fuels management?</i>	
		<i>How does mitigation make response more effective?</i>	
		<i>Elevator speech- Develop your sales pitch</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What risk does wildfire pose to your community?</i> • <i>Your department's strategic management objective?</i> • <i>Why engaging in mitigation before a fire will make the department more effective</i> • <i>What success looks like</i> 	
10:00 am (15 min)	PEAP	<i>Consider your sales pitch and develop a statement of what your department's role is in mitigation, who are your most important partners and how you can change your pre-fire environment to improve your fire response.</i>	
12:00 pm 1:30 (150 min)	LUNCH Parking Lot Items + PEAP+ Interviews	<i>Use this time for Evacuation discussion or other parking lot topics</i>	Walk Facilitator 3
3:30 (30 min)	Debrief	<i>What went well?</i> <i>What inspired you?</i> <i>What could be improved?</i> <i>Travel arrangements</i>	Facilitator 3
4:00	Adjourn		