Arizona Boys State After Action Report

Program improvement for routine and incident responses with an Arizona Boys State After Action Report system. This basic project, similar to the rest of the learning format, is an evolving program built with the fact that the staff can materially change year over year based on the volunteers who report for staffing as well as improvements made to perennial activities led by experienced staff.

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When faced with an incident—be it a campus emergency, natural disaster, act of violence, or significant program disruption—we can only act with the resources and plans we have in place. There is rarely time to learn a new technology or prepare a new response strategy in the thick of a crisis.

Prepare as much as possible beforehand to avoid unnecessary challenges.

We want to make sure that key personnel learn from the experience, that our processes encourage information sharing, and that we capture areas of improvement so that our organization is better prepared for the next incident or incident.

An After Action Report will detail the incidents of the incident itself, how our program responded, what went well or poorly, and then lay out an action plan for improving our preparedness and response for next time.

What Is an After Action Report (AAR)?

An After Action Report is a strategic document used by internal stakeholders to summarize observations and key takeaways following any actual incident that impacts the program. It lays out vital details such as how the exercise went, what went well, areas for improvement, and suggests a concrete plan for improving the response should another similar incident occur. It will allow our organization to identify gaps in our response plans, learn from mistakes or oversights, and be better prepared before we are in the midst of an actual incident.

The After Action Review process, details an incident and discusses the response. However, where reviews are usually kept to just a meeting—either formal or informal—and discussion, an After Action Report entails an actual document put together that breaks down action items and response plans.

FYI: These reports were initially used in the military to analyze incidents and adjust responses after training exercises and battle engagements. The government later adopted these reports as the primary way to deliver feedback, and they've since become a standard review process in the U.S. Army.

Today, After Action Reports are used commonly in many organizations, primarily by safety and program continuity professionals. They are an essential tool used to reflect on preparedness exercises and support incident management by ensuring that the program is ready and has learned from past mistakes before an incident occurs.

Why After Action Reports Should be Standard Protocol

Nearly every program will experience an incident or unplanned incident at some point that impacts employee safety or the bottom line, which is why incident preparedness and program continuity are foundational components of organizational resilience planning. By planning our response before we need it, we set ourselves up for significantly lowering impact and even some level of incident prevention, depending on the incident. And when we practice and reflect on our actions, we can stop ourselves from making the same mistakes over and over.

The benefits of an After Action Report, is that the AAR process goes beyond general reflection and includes a very TACTICAL plan for how to prepare our program for action the next time. These action items should list specific responsible parties and due dates so that they are simple to follow through on and provide a thorough look at what should change.

If we see the same problems coming up repeatedly, we know we need to pay special attention to improving that aspect of our response plan.

Writing our After Action Report

While evolving our report, remember to;

- Follow a few preparation steps before meeting as stakeholders.
- Four steps to review each incident, writing down our observations
- List out the specific action items along with who is responsible for them.

Preparing for our After Action Report meeting

1. Establish the intent of the report

Before answering questions, we need to know what we want the end goal to be. Are we able to PREVENT this type of incident from happening again? Are we trying to understand the cause of a misstep or breakdown in supervision? Are we trying to quantify how much time was required so we can accelerate response times in the future? Knowing what we hope to accomplish will help we give more impactful answers in our report.

2. Identify stakeholders

Critical stakeholders
Collector of data or evidence for (location, scale, and impact)
Counselor of City affected.
Supervisor who activated the response.
Medical
Decision maker
Decision Ratifying Official
Moderator
A Moderator will represent/communicate on behalf of the **Incident Activity Report (Appendix B)** and initial satisfactory detail for each item to post to the After Action Report. (make notation of initials on right margin of the original report.

3. Meeting logistics (Time/Place)

The stakeholders relevant to this document are authorized to meet in-person or virtual. The exercise or incident thoroughly, ask probing questions to identify the root cause of issues, and document lessons learned before adjourning.

4. Set Ground Rules

When discussing critical incidents—particularly incidents that impacted personal safety or caused prolonged disruptions—it's vital to have ground rules in place that facilitate an open and honest discussion. A few examples might include setting the expectation that:

- All answers will be taken seriously
- Participants should be honest and respectful
- All quotes will be kept anonymous
- No ideas should be discounted or shut down without posing alternative solutions.

Document and distribute these rules to all participants involved in the discussion, and go through them before starting the meeting.

Building our AAR

Once we are ready, schedule time for our retrospective meeting with all team members involved in executing the response plan and discuss each of the four components below:

1. Post-Incident Recap - In this scenario, what was expected?

The first thing we should go through is the post-incident recap. In this stage, we want to discuss what was expected from our team leader and project team and the exercise (or if we are analyzing an incident itself, what we expected to happen in this kind of scenario). Ask questions like what resources we had available, whether we could predict this incident beforehand, and anything else we need to measure how ready we were.

2. Incident Review - What actually occurred?

What actually happened. 5 "W's"; everyone in the meeting should share their experience. If minors discussed: Avoid use of full identity.

3. Incident Analysis - What went well, and why?

Was there one staffer who went above and beyond? Was there one particularly helpful piece of technology? Find the things that went well so that we can replicate or expand that response for the future.

4. Improvement Areas - What can be improved, and how?

What did not meet expectations or standards for success? Breakdowns in communication or even problems in the response strategy itself. Be sure to discuss without assigning blame or attacking any of the stakeholders or staffers.

Once we have all of our observations and conclusions compile a list of action items and assign each one to a responsible party. These items can be as simple as updating documents or as vital as setting up an incident communication system. These corrective actions should support the measures discussed in the **incident analysis section** and prevent future failures from the **"improvement areas" section.**

Following up on our report

Even after putting in all the work to create the report, we can't assume everything will be done according to plan. Be sure to track progress on the changes and check in frequently with the responsible parties.

Additionally, we should continue to run regular exercises and iterate on our After Action Reports over many trial runs to make sure that our plans are up to snuff. Keeping on top of our report's follow-up means we'll be more prepared if an incident does occur or occurs again.

Conclusion

It can be easy to write off incident incidents as accidents or one-offs—something that probably won't affect our program moving forward. But without a concrete incident preparedness and response plan, we will likely be caught off guard and suffer program-altering repercussions from an incident. When we take the time to practice, reflect, and respond ahead of time, we'll develop better strategies and prepare resources for those moments when we need to act fast.

Arizona Boys State After Action Report Form

Appendix A

Incident number activating this record: ______________________________

(Circle) **Notify Director/Adjutant/** Date/Time ______________________________

Attest Receiving Officer Name/Initial: _________________________________

Start After Action Review Date/Time ______________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _________________________________

Writing our After Action Report

While evolving our report, use this form to track;

- Following preparation steps before meeting as stakeholders.
- Four steps to review each incident, writing down our observations
- List out the specific action items along with who is responsible for them.

Meeting Preparation Date/Time ______________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _________________________________

1. Establish the intent of the report____

2. Identify stakeholders

Critical stakeholders
____________________________________ Collector of data or evidence for
____________________________________ Counselor of City affected.
____________________________________ Supervisor who activated the response.
____________________________________ Medical
____________________________________ Decision maker
____________________________________ Decision Ratifying Official
____________________________________ Moderator
Attach copy of the **Incident Activity Report (Appendix B)** and initial satisfactory detail for each item to post to this After Action Report.

Meeting logistics (Time/Place) Date/Time ______________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _________________________________

Arizona Boys State After Action Report Form *(Continued)*

Ground Rules Shared Date/Time __________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _____________________________

Complete Post-Incident Recap Date/Time __________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _____________________________

Complete Incident Review Date/Time __________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _____________________________

Complete Incident Analysis Date/Time __________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _____________________________

Number each and reference to Action Items.

Complete Improvement Areas Date/Time __________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _____________________________

Number each and reference to Action Items.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTION ITEMS: ________

Action	**Analysis/Improve**	**Responsible Party**	**Date**
______________________	________	_______________________	______________

Attach additional page(s) as needed using these above fields for each Action Item. Reminder to match Action to Analysis/Improvement items. The Date can be either a follow up or Action completed entry.

Completed Full Report Follow Up Date/Time __________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _____________________________

Filed to Arizona Boys State Archives Date/Time __________________________

Attest Name/Initial: _____________________________

(Circle) Verified Director/Adjutant Date/Time __________________________

Attest Receiving Officer Name/Initial: _____________________________

Incident Activity Report *(Appendix B)*

Date_________________ Incident #__________ *(issued by HQ; notate attachments to match)*
(06121964001) (date followed by sequential number)

Reported by _________________ Coded Name (i.e., ********)

Staffer Reporting statement; Name/Statement Summary______________________
____
____
______________________________*(detail provided to supervisor when interviewed)*

Report to Next Level; (date/time)______________________

Documentation collection Start; (date/time)______________________

Advised Complainer (date/time)______________________ that the reported behavior is being taken seriously.

Confirmed that the parties involved have been separated; (date/time)_____________________

Advised applicable Staff Name _______________________________ to increase supervision of individuals/city.; (date/time)______________________

Response Initial by attesting Documenting Supervisor (Print & Script)

- _____________ Meet with the staff who reported the activity to Start Documentation.
  - Attach notes as obtained, and log as numbered addendums to this Checklist, Note here: _____________________________
- _____________ Review the steps taken by the staff on duty.
- _____________ Review the Document Reporting to confirm thorough and accurate
- _____DID or ___ DID NOT, Meet with parents/guardians of the students involved.
- _____________ Determine what actions taken to make sure there is no recurrence, including assessing the suitability of Boys State for the parties.
- _____________ If assault is an aspect of the incident notify the proper authorities.

- _______If egregious case, indicate here by Executive Officer attest, a recommendation to Director to expel the student perpetrating any abusing conduct.
- ______________________________, Executive Officer recommends expel.

(Print Name ______________________)

Director approves/declines expulsion_____________________________

(Print Name ________________________)

During any above point in gathering information about a report of suspicious or inappropriate behavior, a concern arises about possible abuse, contact the proper authorities, and file a report.

As appropriate, notify parents and/or guardians.