

7-1-7 Early Action Review checklist

- This checklist provides a simple summary of what is needed to plan and facilitate an effective Early Action Review (EAR) using the 7-1-7 target. It is designed specifically for 7-1-7 coordination teams or surveillance and response staff. For comprehensive, detailed guidance on conducting EARs, refer to the [7-1-7 Digital Toolkit](#) and the [World Health Organizations' Early Action Review guidance](#).
- An EAR is a facilitated learning exercise conducted during an ongoing outbreak or public health event to understand when detection, notification and early response happened, what worked well, and what can be improved. It uses a non-punitive, systems-focused approach that looks at processes, coordination, resources, and capacities rather than individual performance. The goal is to agree on practical actions that strengthen the current response and preparedness for future outbreaks.

When to conduct the Early Action Review

Conduct the EAR as early as practical during an outbreak or public health event. Early reviews allow teams to identify bottlenecks, adjust operations, and improve response performance while the event is still ongoing. The EAR should be revisited and updated later if new information emerges.

Preparing for the Early Action Review

Planning

- ☐ Confirm the EAR purpose, scope, and objectives with public health leadership (National Public Health Institute, Emergency Operations Center, Ministry of Health, etc.).
- ☐ Identify the facilitator(s) and note taker for the EAR.

Ideally facilitators are part of the 7-1-7 coordination team or relevant public health institution. In some instances, they may be external.

Participants

- ☐ Select participants representing:
 - ☐ Detection/surveillance
 - ☐ Laboratory
 - ☐ Notification/reporting
 - ☐ Response coordination
 - ☐ Clinical services
 - ☐ Risk communication/community engagement
 - ☐ Relevant partners/sectors
 - ☐ Sub-national/national as relevant.
- ☐ Ensure participation of decision-makers who can support action implementation.

Prepare data

- ☐ Compile available epidemiological and operational information.
 - ☐ Collect background epidemiological information.
 - ☐ Prepopulate the event timeline, including dates of emergence, detection, notification and any known information on early response actions.
 - ☐ Ensure participants review relevant information before the meeting.

The [7-1-7 Milestone Reference Guide](#) and [the 7-1-7 Assessment Tool](#) provide guidance on collecting milestone dates, epidemiological information, and the 7-1-7 timeliness metrics.

- ☐ Confirm whether the EAR will be conducted:
 - ☐ Within existing response meetings or coordination structures, such as weekly incident management meetings or technical working groups
 - ☐ Or as a standalone session; sometimes relevant for high-visibility events.

Conducting the Early Action Review

Introduce the EAR

- ☐ Leaders and facilitators should ensure that internal and external stakeholders understand the purpose of the EAR.

Key message: The goal of the EAR is to understand what happened, what worked well, what challenges occurred, and what actions can strengthen the current response and future preparedness. The focus is on systems and processes, not individual performance.

Review and validate the timeline

- ☐ Present the event timeline and validate key dates with EAR participants.
 - ☐ Is the emergence date accurate?
 - ☐ Is the detection date accurate?
 - ☐ Is the notification date accurate?
 - ☐ Identify missing information or important decisions.

The [EAR event review](#) presentation provides a template for this.

Review early response actions

If the EAR is conducted early, early response actions may be ongoing or still to be determined at the time of the EAR. Participants should review which early response actions have occurred and which are delayed/pending.

- ☐ **Initiate investigation:** Deploy investigating or rapid response teams.
- ☐ **Conduct epidemiological analysis:** Assess the burden, severity, and risk factors of the outbreak.
- ☐ **Obtain laboratory confirmation:** Identify the specific etiology of the outbreak.
- ☐ **Initiate case management & IPC:** Establish proper patient care and infection prevention and control (IPC) in health facilities.
- ☐ **Initiate public health countermeasures:** Apply protective measures in the affected communities.
- ☐ **Risk communication & community engagement:** Start appropriate public awareness and engagement activities.
- ☐ **Establish coordination mechanism:** Put coordination structures in place for local, regional, or national response teams

Calculate 7-1-7 performance

- ☐ Calculate the 7-1-7 timeliness metrics and performance
 - ☐ Time to detect = date of detection – date of emergence [target: 7 days]
 - ☐ Time to notify = date of notification – date of detection [target: 1 day]
 - ☐ Time to complete early response actions = date of early response action completion – date of notification [target: 7 days]

Identify bottlenecks, enablers, and corrective actions

Documenting the bottlenecks (barriers, challenges, delays) and enablers of system performance is critical for identifying best practices and the specific systems or processes that require strengthening.

Identify bottlenecks

- ☐ Determine and record the bottlenecks for each of the timeliness metrics.
- ☐ Identify the underlying root causes for each bottleneck.

Identify enablers

- ☐ Identify actions that contributed to timely detection, notification, or response, discuss why they were successful, and how they could be maintained or replicated.

Bottlenecks and enablers should be specific, actionable, system-focused, and linked to root causes.

Agree on corrective actions

- ☐ Surface immediate actions to address each bottleneck.
- ☐ Agree on priority actions with relevant stakeholders.
- ☐ Assign the responsible person/organization/team, timeline, and required resources to each action.
- ☐ Identify longer-term actions requiring additional funding, staffing or policy changes.
- ☐ Ensure longer-term actions are incorporated into appropriate planning processes (for example, annual operational planning.)

Closing the Early Action Review

- ☐ Reconfirm responsibilities and timelines with all participants.
- ☐ Schedule a follow-up meeting no more than two weeks after the EAR.
- ☐ Identify indicators or milestones which may help to monitor implementation and progress.

After the Early Action Review

- ☐ Share findings and recommendations with leadership and relevant stakeholders.
- ☐ Monitor implementation of agreed corrective actions.
- ☐ Review progress at regular intervals and update action plans as needed.
- ☐ Revisit the EAR if additional evidence becomes available or significant new information emerges.

Revisiting milestone dates in successive EARs ensures that findings reflect the best available information and that improvement actions are based on an accurate understanding of outbreak performance.

- ☐ Document lessons learned and incorporate them into preparedness planning and future outbreak responses.