

SUMMER 2021

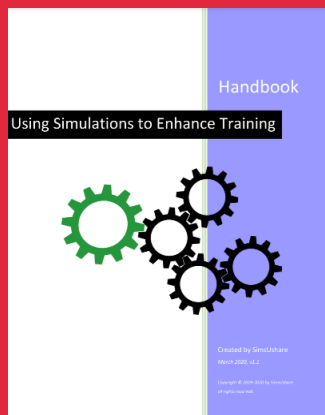
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WHERE DO I START WITH SIMULATION TRAINING?

When you begin using a simulation system, you likely focus on the technical aspects of creating or deploying simulations. Something that is often overlooked however, is how do the simulations fit into training programs.

To help fill this gap, we created a handbook of ideas collected from various sources within the fire service. The handbook is divided into two parts:

Part I explores typical training areas where simulations fit nicely; and Part II is a 'how-do-I-get-started' guide with suggestions to help you enhance your own program.



PDF | HTML

Adrenaline Junkies

Photo by Mike Ekern

If you ask first responders why they do what they do, they may give you a variety of reasons or motivations such as the ideals of service and wanting to help others. One reason that may not get mentioned until you're enjoying a cold beverage with them after work is the adrenaline rush when answering a call. Although most first responders spend long hours on call or performing routine duties, the suddenness of responding to an emergency can awaken every fiber in a person's being—and that can be an empowering feeling.

What is adrenaline and what role does it play in an emergency? Adrenaline (or epinephrine) is a hormone secreted by the adrenal gland in moments of crisis; it causes the heart to beat faster and work harder, increases the flow of blood to the muscles, causes an increased alertness of mind, and produces other changes **that prepare the body to meet an emergency.**

There is anecdotal (and some empirical) evidence that adrenaline can substantially increase a person's strength; that it may stop the feeling of pain for some time even if your body is suffering from a severe injury; that senses like vision, touch, hearing might get dramatically heightened; and that it may substantially boost

your energy level. All of these can potentially benefit a first responder in the heat of battle.

Adrenaline is high octane fuel for younger first responders. I say younger, because as we age, the body's response to strong adrenaline rushes may not be as positive as it once was. When it comes to the effects of adrenaline, even younger first responders need a break from it. An adrenaline rush at work followed by an adrenaline rush at play may not give the body the time it needs to adjust.

Relaxing low stress activities are a good counterbalance to high stress work situations. Think of it as releasing the tension from a tightly wound spring, the spring being you. Be careful if you begin to find that the adrenaline high doesn't ebb and recede after the event that caused it. If sleep patterns get out of whack and don't come back due to ongoing stress, or you start to experience other negative side effects, speak to a health care professional.

Adrenaline is a natural response to unnatural situations. It can help you do your job but only if the ON/OFF switch works properly. Enjoy the rush but be aware that it can burn out of control if you ignore any lingering hot spots. 🔥

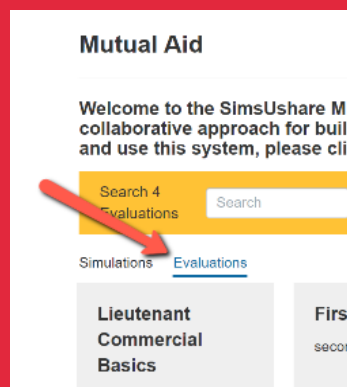
<https://news.stthomas.edu/risk-rescue-perils-female-firefighter/>

MUTUAL AID NOW INCLUDES SIMSUSHARE EVALUATIONS!

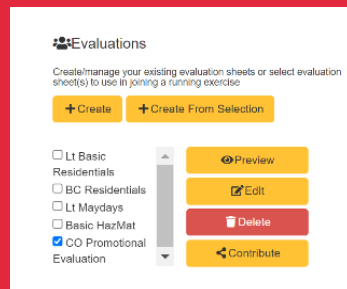
It was only a couple of months ago that we introduced the SimsUshare Mutual Aid database, a simple and effective way for customers to share with and benefit from the sim developer community.

With the introduction of SimsUshare Tactical Evaluation sheets (see the main article on this page), you can now share evaluation sheets just as easily as you share simulations.

HERE'S HOW:



Create or edit your Evaluations in the Exercises tab.



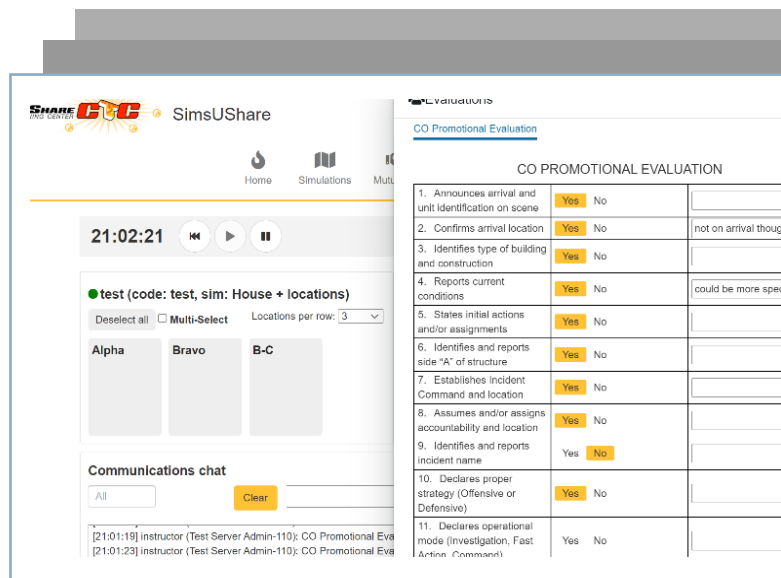
Mutual Aid works best when simulations and now evaluations are shared, so please consider contributing a few of your own. It is easy to do and can have a huge impact on helping others with their training as well as encouraging them to contribute their sims and evaluations as well.



INTRODUCING SimsUshare Tactical Evaluation Sheets

SimsUshare CTC is great for training your students using localized incident simulations based on your first-due photos, or other sims you may have imported from our Mutual Aid customer sim database. Up until this point, SimsUshare was aimed at essentially displaying and coordinating the simulations, apart from the task of evaluating participants. However, to help with evaluations we took a small step to assist with recordkeeping during exercises by including a timestamped transcript of all actions taken by participants. The transcript can be used for comparing assignments and events in post-exercise reviews, and, most importantly, serving as a 'written' record of participant movement during promotional exams for placement in a candidate's file.

We are now taking a bigger step by providing a new mechanism we call "SimsUshare Evaluations". Evaluations are simple tactical evaluation sheets that you create in the Exercises tab of the CTC, or import and adapt from community evaluation sheets (available in the Mutual Aid section of the CTC).



When you join an exercise as an instructor, you choose which evaluation sheets you want to display during the exercise. Once in the exercise, you call up the sheets and simply click on any of the answers. As the picture illustrates, you also have a handy text box next to each question in which you can add specific comments. When you click on an answer, or press <Enter> in one of the text boxes, SimsUshare adds the answer to your transcript, with a timestamp, as well as highlighting your answer. This makes it super convenient to record your observations and evaluations while the exercise is in progress. When you have finished, you can print the sheets or simply copy the contents of the transcript to add to your candidate's evaluation.

Check out our new [Evaluations page](#) that covers the essentials of SimsUshare Evaluations! 🔥

QUARTERLY TIP: BACKING UP YOUR SIMULATIONS

SimsUshare saves your sims automatically in a Documents folder that it creates called "SimsUshare." Inside this folder is a sub-folder where your sims are arranged in folders that mirror the simulation name.

Like other important files, It makes sense to copy/backup your simulations periodically. We suggest doing this every couple of months, or after you have completed a set of new simulations. You can backup your sims to a USB drive, Dropbox, or other cloud storage.

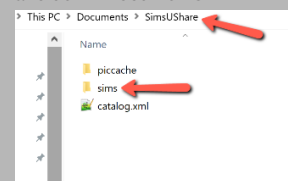
To change the location of your default sim storage to a folder that is automatically backed up by your

IT department, go to the menus on the main screen and select "Choose Main Sim Folder", then navigate to the place you want to store your simulations.

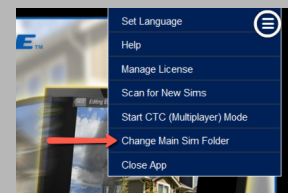
How about iOS?

Apple does not allow you to access a My Documents folder, so making a backup requires saving them to iCloud. We recommend using the SimCloud to transfer your sims from your iOS or frankly any device to the cloud account, then downloading the sims on a Windows or Mac computer (and copying the Documents/ SimsUshare folder) for safekeeping.

SimsUshare automatically creates a folder in Documents



Change the default sim folder location via the main screen menu



NEW FEATURE! PROFILES



Our newsletter will periodically feature a profile of one of our many subscribers who are expanding the ways SimsUshare can be used. In this issue we'll visit **Great Oaks Career Campuses**, one of the largest career and technical education districts in the United States.

Among their course offerings is the **Great Oaks: Command and Operations Management School (GOCOMS)**, a 40-hour Incident Command Lab. We asked lead instructor, Chip Rielage, why this course was developed, how is it different, and what simulations add to the learning experience.

CHIP: "First of all, we are very proud of the fact that we are officially the only ProBoard or IFSAC Certification of NFPA 1026 to Incident Commander in the world! GOCOMS makes affordable and attainable incident commander training available to a larger audience. The program was developed by fire service professionals working within the Great Oaks Fire Academy. Our focus was on creating realistic, affordable, and applicable training. A key objective is to train officers to make recognition primed decisions to improve coordination on emergency scenes when seconds count."

SUS: What if someone bought into another command system that is not accredited? Would this course benefit them?

CHIP: "Yes, indeed. Those ideas and methods can be readily applied in GOCOMS, plus successful students receive ProBoard Certification to NFPA 1026: Incident Commander. Additionally, there are no ongoing expenses with this course, no hours sitting on a computer, and continuing education is available at their discretion."

SUS: Could you tell us more about how GOCOMS differs and what role simulations play?

CHIP: "GOCOMS mimics the real world with calls you would see in your career: types 4 and 5 structure fires, HAZMAT, Technical Rescue, Mayday, and Mass Casualty Incident. GOCOMS differs from other programs on the market because it packages a strategy and tactics review into simulations without forcing the student to select from a menu. SimsUshare makes this program scalable and customizable for the needs of the customer. In fact, simulations that are built into the program can be from the student's district! No cookie cutter simulations, no ongoing maintenance costs, and no commercialization."

"We developed our program using FEMA/EMI's "Central City" resources which provides a perfect training backdrop for students from a wide variety of jurisdictions. GOCOMS is a beautiful integration of unique realistic simulations created using SimsUshare into the Central City setting. Responding from 11 fire stations and 20 different companies, no simulation is the same. Students must think through these simulations and every participant must be actively involved to bring about a successful conclusion. With over 90 simulations the fire officer will be involved in every scenario and in command at least 15 times."

SUS: The course and the way it is formatted sounds fascinating, Chip. Thanks for explaining how it works!

Go to <https://gocc.axstudent.com/#/category/nD> to see what other options the school can offer you. 🔥

TYING BASIC KNOTS

A useful skill for everyone but especially first responders.

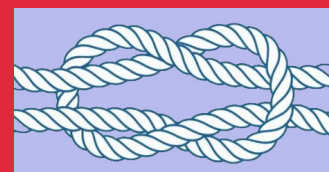
Here are five you can practice in your spare time:



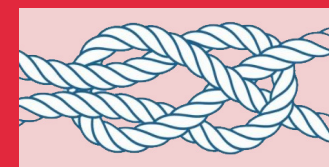
Use a **Bowline** to tie a very strong, non-jamming loop such as at the end of a piece of rope. A true multi-purpose knot.



A **Figure 8** is used when you need a stop knot on the end of a rope or a non-jamming loop in the middle of a rope.



A **Square Knot** is used to join two similar ropes together to make one longer rope. Especially useful where safety is critical.



A **Sheet Bend** is recommended for joining two ropes of unequal diameters, but it works equally well if the ropes are of the same size.



A **Half Hitch** is great for securing lines to poles, stakes, railings, etc.



Quality Simulations *Start* with Good Background Pictures

Just as an artist cannot paint without a canvas, you cannot *create* an emergency simulation without a background picture. Taking pictures has never been easier since even less expensive mobile devices now come with impressive built-in cameras. However, taking pictures that can be easily adapted to a variety of simulation scenarios does require a little forethought. Here are few things you might want to keep in mind.

- 1) Try to capture as many sides of the building as possible. Even if you only intend on creating a quick and easy simulation using Alpha side, having views of Bravo, Charlie, Delta on file can prove invaluable later. Since you are already there, take a moment to walk around the building, if possible, and get some extra pictures.
- 2) Take at least one picture of the entire side of the building. You may have good reasons for taking a closeup picture of a particular feature like an entranceway or a storage shed but having a view of the entire side provides context and proportion.
- 3) Try to position yourself so that there are no (or few) obstructions such as trees or vehicles between you

and the building. Remember, you are not trying to frame the building the way a real estate agent would with lots of greenery in the foreground. SimsUshare has a masking tool but trees and bushes can be a bit of a headache especially if moving a few feet to the right or left would have taken the obstruction out of the picture altogether.

- 4) Go through your pictures soon afterward and get rid of duplicates and those that lack sharpness or purpose. One good quality picture of each side of the building is likely sufficient for most scenarios you will want to create. Rename your pictures while you still remember what they are so that they can be identified later (i.e. Alpha, or Alpha-Bravo, etc.)

- 5) Place each set of pictures (those for one building) in a separate file labeled with a simple descriptive title such as Commercial-Auto Repair Shop. You may decide to group files by building type in separate folders. The point is to be able to find them and identify them later when you need to create a simulation.

Stay tuned for articles in future editions of Take Command on taking pictures for simulations. 🔥

HOW ABOUT A FREE (ONLINE) "BUILDING SIMULATIONS" WORKSHOP FOR YOU AND YOUR MUTUAL AID DEPARTMENTS?

Contact Us to make arrangements!

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Fire-Rescue International 2021
July 28-30, 2021
Charlotte, NC
Booth #5089

FDIC 2021
August 4-7, 2021
Indianapolis, IN
Booth #13036



"We are glad to be hitting the road again. See you in Charlotte and Indianapolis!"



RECENT WEBINARS

Hazmat (May, 2021)

Visit: <https://simsushare.com/ctc-webinars> for recordings

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