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2006 Western Washington Simulated Emergency Test 7 October 2006 1000 to 1400 hours local time

Scope

The exercise will last 4 hours beginning at 1000 and ending at 1400 local time; simulating two 12 hour shifts, each shift lasting 2 hours – to allow for shift change and rest periods. The areas involved will be all Districts/Regions in Western Washington. This Exercise could possibly involve over 1,300 ARES/RACES/ACS/WWa Medical Services Team (District M) personnel, as well as American Red Cross and other agencies.

Goals

Measurable goals will be:

1. Call out procedures – this can mean a call out in advance of the exercise
2. Establishment of local, regional and section nets.
3. Use of the Washington State RACES Plan/Western Washington Emergency Communications Plan for **effective traffic handling**; including within each District/Region by using Regional and Section Nets.
4. Shift planning
5. Development and filing of situation reports with SEC; Districts 2 & 4 at 15 minutes past the hour; Districts 1 & 6 at 30 minutes past the hour; Districts 3, 5 & M at 45 minutes past the hour.
6. Use of simplex, FRS and CB to augment existing systems
7. Completion of required SET report form

Exercise Cancellation

If for any reason the SEC determines that the exercise must end early, the following message will be broadcast on all nets: ALL STATIONS THIS NET THIS IS (CALL SIGN) : ECHO ECHO ECHO – THIS EXERCISE HAS BEEN CANCELED ECHO ECHO ECHO THIS EXERCISE HAS BEEN CANCELED THIS IS (CALL SIGN) OUT

Hot Wash (after action review)

Each District should conduct a Hot Wash that should take place at as soon as possible after the conclusion of the exercise ~~or the following day at a pre-arranged time and place or frequency~~. DEC's and SEC will debrief ~~at a DEC meeting; time and place to be announced~~ after the Districts have completed their debriefs. These debriefs do not need to be face to face meetings, but can be conducted via conference call or email.

Exercise Directions

- At 1000 hours local time, establish your local and regional nets
- WSEN will be established at 1030
- Pass traffic back and forth within your team, to other teams and nets. (Make up your own traffic or get your customers to do it for you.)
- Pass traffic to your DEC including your hourly situation report (make sure you get it to the DEC in time for DEC to make up a Region/District report for the SEC. Make sure that all tactical and formal traffic include the words “**this is an exercise message**” at the beginning and end of each message.

- All formal traffic must have one of the following precedence's:
 - EXERCISE ROUTINE
 - EXERCISE PRIORITY
 - EXERCISE EMERGENCY*

*** - A precedence of EMERGENCY denotes imminent danger to human life!!**

NOTE: ANY FORMAL TRAFFIC WITH OUT ONE OF THE FOREGOING WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BY CAMP MURRAY OR REGIONAL NETS.

NOTE: If your customers do not use prioritized traffic, please ask them to add a precedence using the above guidance.

- When listing traffic with a net, your must give the number of items and precedence of each.

- When passing traffic to the State RACES Station at Camp Murray, remember that only EXERCISE EMERGENCY traffic may go direct to CAMP MURRAY. All EXERCISE ROUTINE and EXERCISE PRIORITY traffic MUST be passed to your Regional Net and only Regional Nets will deliver such Traffic to CAMP MURRAY.
- Use of Tactical Call Signs is encouraged
- **Regional Nets:** DEC's will establish a Regional Net to receive formal traffic from the Counties within that Region/District. The DEC will provide the frequency of that net, to the WSEN Net Control, when checking in to WSEN. The DEC will assign Net Controls for the Regional Nets. Regional Nets will receive traffic, determine its precedence and route it to the agency it is addressed to. If there is any question as to how to get the traffic to the correct agency, check with WSEN Net Control.
- **WSEN:** WSEN is not a traffic net! This net will, however, coordinate and direct traffic to the appropriate frequency.
- **COMMAND NET:** SEC, ASEC's, DEC's and ADEC's will establish a command net on 147.20. This net will be used to answer any questions, coordinate mutual aid, and/or pass SITREPS to the SEC and SRO
- If you have problems getting your Regional Traffic to CAMP MURRAY, contact WWa SEC on the Command Net. WWa SEC can send traffic to CAMP MURRAY.
- Give all of your team members a chance to send and receive formal traffic using the State RACES form.
- Schedule rest periods and shift changes. This is a four hour exercise – try to simulate two 12 hour shifts.
- Get as many team members as possible involved, especially your new hams!!!!
- **Agency Participation:** Any agency (EMD, Salvation Army, American Red Cross, National Weather Service, etc.) participation in this exercise or any real event, will may check into WSEN or a local net and give the Net Control Station the frequency on which that the agency will be accepting traffic. The

WSEN Net Control will act as a “traffic cop” to the stations connected in some way.^[EB1]

Scoring and reporting

You all have been ~~send~~sent forms and instructions for scoring and reporting. (If you do not have them, they are available from the ARRL Web Site at http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/#ec_set Once you have completed your form, send it directly to HQ with a copy to your DEC, SEC and SM. PLEASE fill out your reports completely, ~~and~~ right after the SET; this way, everything gets in on time and more accurately, as it is still fresh in your mind.

Scenario

This year’s SET will not be scenario based. Instead, we will be concentrating on the “effective” passing of traffic as we learn how to use the message traffic flow in the Washington State RACES Plan, which is also our Western Washington Emergency Communications Plan. However, DEC’s are free to develop their own scenarios.

When you make up your messages, you may be creative; the idea is to effectively pass traffic – so have fun. We are not so concerned with content as much as we are the preamble and how you deliver the message ... so if you want to be silly in the body of the message, go for it.

Summary

This SET is designed to exercise the tasks that will be necessary during any emergency in Western Washington, especially passing traffic. Our goal is that all team members become familiar with setting up nets and passing formal traffic, so that when the balloon really goes up, everyone will react automatically. Let’s get everyone involved by giving them some training and experience now ... So that everyone will be an asset to the team when we *are* activated. There is an old adage that says: “practice makes perfect” which isn’t quite correct. Actually, “perfect practice makes perfect”.

Please review the ARRL SET instruction on the following pages and keep them in mind as you prepare your SET Plan.

Finally, there is no reason that we can’t have fun planning and participating; and you never know what the SM/RO or SEC might be up to during the exercise. If you have any question, let me know now.

Expect to have problems during the exercise. These are the tasks and procedures that we need to work on in the coming year to improve our readiness.

73, Ken, K7TAG

2006 Simulated Emergency Test

October 7 - 8

The ARRL Simulated Emergency Test is a nationwide exercise in emergency communications, administered by ARRL Field Organization Leaders including Emergency Coordinators, District Emergency Coordinators, Section Emergency Coordinators and Net Managers. Many other Section Leaders like the Section Manager and the Section Traffic Manager may have a hand in planning the exercises and/or reviewing the results. Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), National Traffic System (NTS), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) and other public-service oriented groups can be involved. The SET weekend gives communicators the opportunity to focus on the emergency-communications capability within your community while interacting with NTS nets. Although the main SET weekend this year is October 7 -8, local and section-wide exercises may be held throughout the fall season.

During September, the ARRL will be among dozens of organizations and agencies taking part in National Preparedness Month. "The Ready Campaign," produced by the Ad Council in partnership with the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is aimed at making citizen preparedness "a priority for every city, every neighborhood and every home" in the US. The ARRL encourages you to consider this year's Simulated Emergency Test and preparations for it as a demonstration of Amateur Radio's readiness and as an active participant in National Preparedness Month.

<http://www.ready.gov/>, & <http://www.ready.gov/npm/index.htm>

Purpose of SET

1. To find out the strengths and weaknesses of ARES, NTS, RACES and other groups in providing emergency communications.
2. To provide a public demonstration--to served agencies such as the American Red Cross, the emergency management agency and through the news media--of the value to the public that Amateur Radio provides, particularly in time of need.
3. To help radio amateurs gain experience in communications using standard procedures and a variety of modes under simulated-emergency conditions.

Format

The scoring format reflects broad objectives and encourages use of digital modes for handling high-volume traffic and point-to-point Welfare reports out of the affected simulated- disaster area. Participants will find SET an opportunity to strengthen the VHF-HF link at the local level, thereby ensuring that ARES and NTS are working in concert. The SET will give all levels of NTS the chance to handle exercise-related traffic. The guidelines also recognize tactical traffic on behalf of served agencies.

Test messages should carry the word "TEST" before the precedence; that is, "Test Priority" on phone and "TEST P" on cw. The text of such messages should also begin with the words "TEST MESSAGE."

ARES units and other groups are free to conduct their emergency exercises anytime between September and December if an alternative date is preferred. The activity period should not exceed 48 hours.

Links to SET reporting forms and the EC Annual Report may be found at <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/>. You may e-mail your SET summaries to ARRL Headquarters via sewald@arrl.org. If you mail them to ARRL via the postal service, the address is: ARRL Headquarters, 225 Main Street, Newington, CT 06111-1494. January 31, 2007, is the receipt deadline.

Preparation is Important

Steps for the Emergency Coordinator

1. Sign up all available amateurs in the area under your jurisdiction and work them into your SET plans.
2. Call a meeting of all ARES members and prospective members to briefly outline (no details!) SET activities, and give general instructions. Do not divulge the exact time or nature of the test to them at this time. This should come as a surprise. Take this opportunity to register new ARES members and get up-to-date information on others. Hold an on-the-air meeting if it's not possible to meet in person.
3. Contact served agencies and explain the intent and overall purpose of the SET. Offer to send test messages to other branches of their agencies, and invite officials to your ARES meetings and SET operating sites.
4. Contact officials of any adjacent communities having no active amateurs and offer to provide representation in amateur networks for them as well.
5. Arrange publicity in consultation with an ARRL Public Information Officer in local newspapers and radio/TV stations by preparing an announcement and/or inviting the press to observe your group's SET operation.
6. Set up liaison with one or more NTS local/section nets (if you don't already have liaison) so you will have an outlet for all messages out of the local area.
7. Formulate your plans around a simulated disaster. Possible "plots" include: a flood, a serious fire, an ice storm, a missing person, a serious accident (automobile, bus, aircraft, for examples), a broken gas line, and so forth. Elaborate on the situation by developing a scenario, but please be realistic.

During the SET

1. Announce the emergency situation. Activate the emergency net. Dispatch mobiles to served agencies.
2. Have designated stations originate messages on behalf of served agencies. Test messages may be sent simulating requests for supplies. Simulated emergency messages (just like real emergency messages) should be signed by an authorized official.
3. Emphasize tactical communications for served agencies.

4. As warranted by traffic loads, have liaison stations on hand to receive traffic on the local net and relay to your section net. You should also be sure that there is a representative on each session of the section net to receive traffic going to the local area.

5. Operate at least one session (or substantial segment of a session) of the local net on emergency-only basis. Or, if a repeater is on emergency power, allow only emergency-powered stations to operate through the repeater for a certain time period.

After the SET

An important post-SET activity is a critique session to discuss the test results. All ARES (and RACES) members should be invited to the meeting to review good points and weaknesses apparent in the drill. Emphasize ways to improve procedures, techniques, and coordination with all groups involved. Report your group's effort using the appropriate forms and include any photos, clippings and other items of interest.

The Role of NTS

The main function of the National Traffic System in an emergency situation is to tie together all of the various local activities and to provide a means by which all traffic destined outside of a local area, section or region can be systematically relayed to the addressee.

Normal NTS routing should be followed. A valid exception is the handling of emergency traffic that should be routed as rapidly and efficiently as possible, bypassing various levels of nets when delivery can be expedited. Another exception is when one station is loaded down with traffic for one region or section. At the discretion of the Net Control Station (NCS), the station may be directed to bypass a normal channel and go directly to a lower (or higher) echelon net.

The interface between NTS and ARES lies in the liaison function between local nets and other NTS nets, particularly at the section level. Responsibility for representation of the local network on the section net lies with the local net manager who may or may not be the EC. Although we usually think of ARES members being the representatives in section nets, it is equally valid to expect NTS personnel to act as liaison to local nets.

At least one net session or substantial segment of a session should be conducted on emergency power. Plan a surprise session or two. Advise the NCS just before net time. If NCS is unable to operate on emergency power, then someone else must be net control. Only stations operating on emergency power may report in during this time.

Summary

One of the first steps on the way to a successful SET is to try to get as many people involved as possible, and especially new hams. In a real emergency, we find amateurs with all sorts of varied interests coming out of the woodwork. Let's get them involved in SET so they will know more about how emergency communications should be handled. Promote SET on nets and repeaters, and sign up new, enthusiastic radio amateurs. Many of those offering to help will be inexperienced in public-service activities. It's up to you to explain what's going on to them, and provide them with useful roles. They may like it so much that they become a permanent fixture in your ARES or NTS group. For a review of last year's nationwide Simulated Emergency Test, read the article in July, 2006, *QST*. Thanks to your efforts, the public service tradition in Amateur Radio continues!

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