SIMULATED EMERGENCY TEST

Williamson County Amateur Radio Emergency Service

2022 Player Handbook

SET 2022 Player Handbook

Purpose

This SET 2022 Player Handbook provides all exercise players with information required to participate effectively in the Williamson County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (WCARES) Simulated Emergency Test (SET). Players should feel free to ask questions and seek clarification concerning their roles and responsibilities and the rules of exercise play.

If you have questions not answered in this Handbook, please contact the WCARES Emergency Coordinator (EC) or the WCARES Exercise Director:

>EC – WB5WAJ Jeff Standifer wb5waj@arrl.net
>
>Exercise Director – KC1DWP Jeff Schwartz kc1dwp@arrl.net

Overview

The WCARES SET is a countywide emergency communications exercise intended to test our ability to provide communications for our primary served agency, the Williamson County Emergency Management Agency (WCEMA), as well as the National Weather Service (NWS).

Exercise play will begin on Saturday, 15 October 2022 at 0800 CST, end at 1100 CST, and conclude with a Hot Wash ("after-action" discussion and evaluation) at the EOC from 1145 to 1215. ARES and SKYWARN play will occur throughout the 3-hour exercise period from 0800 through 1100. The exercise will formally close at 1215 at the completion of the Hot Wash. The exercise will be led by the WCARES Emergency Coordinator.

Quoting from the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) website:

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.

Please note that we are seeking maximum participation from ALL radio amateurs, not just WCARES members!

Objectives

General guidelines for the SET displayed below are given at the following ARRL web link:

>http://www.arrl.org/public-service-field-services-forms#

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 demonstration--to served and partner 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.

Exercise Objectives

(1) WCARES will establish county-wide communications to include fixed, mobile, and field-deployed stations. Operational communication will be established between WCEMA EOC and first shelter within 3 hours of notification of need and shelter access. Initial operational communication (via mobile unit) between WCEMA EOC/Dispatch Center and first municipal agency within 2 hours of notification of need.

(2) Participants will demonstrate the use of emergency or alternate power supplies (i.e., battery, generator, solar, and/or mobile) as exercise situation dictates.

(3) Participants will establish Resource Nets and Tactical Nets as needed and will coordinate exercise play within the County. The first Resource Net will be held within 1 hour of exercise start.

(4) WCARES will coordinate activities between ARES®, and SKYWARN™ components.

(5) Participants will demonstrate the application of the appropriate NIMS/ICS elements.

Concept of Play

At exercise start, response personnel will be alerted and activation of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) begun. The WCARES EC will organize Resource, Tactical, Weather/SKYWARN™, and/or Traffic Nets as needed to execute the exercise plan.

Exercise Assumptions

That exercise responses will be coordinated by the EC (or his alternate).

That all participating agencies, departments, and organizations have in-place established emergency management plans, annexes, and procedures containing preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery elements.

That exercise players will respond in accordance with the existing plans, procedures, and policies. In the absence of these, players will use individual and/or team initiative to satisfy response requirements.

That a multi-agency emergency response will be required to support the various communities.

Exercise Limitations:

Certain artificialities and constraints detract from exercise realism. However, exercise players are to accept these to accomplish the exercise objectives.

We are using a compressed timeline to maximize participation by all radio amateurs in Williamson and surrounding counties. Some locations will be fully activated and staffed at the start of the exercise.

Although alert, notification, and initial activation activities will be an important part of the overall exercise, some pre-staging will be necessary.

Non-exercise use of some resources may remove them from play.

Exercise Simulation

Simulation may be required to compensate for non-participating organizations, individuals, and field units that would be deployed in a real-world response. Although simulations may detract from exercise realism, simulated incidents (including messages from and to simulated entities) provide the means to facilitate exercise play and allow testing of exercise objectives and specific performance criteria.

All persons, agencies, response units, citizens, and government officials not actually participating in the exercise will be represented as needed by simulation. When players need to deploy, recall, or otherwise task any resources, they must follow existing procedures and coordinate with the appropriate ARES®, SKYWARN™, or other leadership officials as in an actual response. As the exercise is being played in a real-time environment, the control team will provide the players any information that they need that would have come from other sources.

Exercise Scenario

The exercise scenario will be a plausible incident (or series of incidents) that creates an urgent need for establishing emergency communications countywide.

Players should be prepared to participate in an exercise that tests their ability to meet the Exercise Objectives stated previously. You should anticipate the involvement of ARES®, activation of SKYWARN™, as well as actual (or simulated) activities at Williamson County EMA, the NWS, and local municipal Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) and shelters.

Some specific scenario information will be provided prior to the start of the exercise. Details of the scenario will be disclosed as the exercise progresses.

Player Procedures and Responsibilities

Primary players in this exercise will be licensed amateur radio operators providing emergency communications support in accordance with the protocols and procedures detailed in the WCARES Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

Coordination and execution of the exercise plan within Williamson County will be the responsibility of the Emergency Coordinator (EC).

Safety and Security

All voice exchanges should begin and end with the phrase "This is an Exercise". Written messages should contain the phrase "This is an Exercise" in the message preamble and repeat "**This is an exercise."** **as the first words in the text of the message.**

Should an ACTUAL emergency occur at any time during the exercise, the phrase "**REAL WORLD**" **repeated three times** will be used to indicate that the exercise is suspended until further notice or until the emergency is resolved. Participants with knowledge of the actual emergency situation should inform the Exercise Director and the Emergency Coordinator (EC) of any pertinent details of the situation as soon as practicable.

Communications

Communications during the SET will be in accordance with the WCARES Emergency Operations Plans (EOP).

The Emergency Coordinator (EC) should ensure that Net Control Stations (NCS) are designated and prepared to conduct their respective Resource, Tactical, and/or Traffic Nets.

Countywide coordination and message handling will be accomplished through multiple redundant channels to include but not limited to:

- DMR TG 31476 (Support Function and Command Back Channel)
- WCARES wide area coverage VHF/UHF linked repeaters (WC4EOC repeater system)
- HF SSB on 3.815 MHz LSB and/or 7.190 MHz LSB (and 3.980 MHz and 7.238 MHz for messages addressed beyond the local Williamson County area)
- Winlink via VARA FM and VARA HF
- Landline (voice/fax) and cellular (voice/text) telephones (if available)
- Bobcat Ridge repeater 146.790 MHz, PL 114.8 WCARES back-up repeater (not linked)
- WCARES simplex frequencies **VHF: 146.505 MHz, UHF: 446.000MHz**

See the link below for additional WCARES frequency information

https://wcares.org/frequencies-and-net/

Reporting

Immediately after the conclusion of the exercise, the Emergency Coordinator and Net Manager should complete the appropriate SET Report form (link included below) – while the information is fresh.

The EC will then make the final submission to the ARRL on behalf of WCARES.

Electronic versions of the ARRL SET Report Form A (EC's) & SET Report Form B (NM's) can be downloaded from the ARRL website by following this web link:

http://www.arrl.org/public-service-field-services-forms#

Any logs or other records produced as part of this exercise should be retained by the responsible person or organization.

Administrative Details

Anyone with questions or comments about the 2022 SET should contact the WCARES Emergency Coordinator (EC) or the WCARES Exercise Director:

EC – WB5WAJ Jeff Standifer wb5waj@arrl.net

Exercise Director – KC1DWP Jeff Schwartz kc1dwp@arrl.net