

Mills County ARES® SIMULATED EMERGENCY TEST PLAYER HANDBOOK



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MCARES - EC

Participants Handbook

Purpose

This handbook provides the exercise participants with information required to participate effectively in the exercise. This information is also discussed at the participants briefings/orientations conducted prior to the start of exercise. The participants are free to ask questions concerning their roles and responsibilities and the rules of exercise.

SCOPE

The exercise is intended to test and demonstrate communications capabilities of Mills County ARES (MCARES) in support of our served agencies in their service of an emergency situation.

Exercise will be on 23 October beginning at 8:00 AM and ending before or at 12:00 as determined by the exercise leader.

Exercise may end before this if the exercise leader determines that all objectives and performance criteria (anticipated actions) have been sufficiently addressed. The exercise will be limited to Mills County, Iowa.

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...”

Concept of Exercise

The scenario will require activation of the EOC at the time of the start of the exercise. MCARES may be required at Emergency Operations Center (but not required), and several served agencies' locations as needed. Deployment of MCARES members is expected at the beginning of the exercise.

Scenario Narrative

The exercise scenario will be a cyber attack bringing down much of the power and communications infrastructure of Mills County. Participants should be prepared to participate in an exercise that tests their ability to meet the Exercise Objectives stated below. You should anticipate the involvement of emergency power and interactions with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

More details of the scenario will be disclosed as the exercise progresses.

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Exercise Objectives

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

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

In addition to the SET purposes outlined on the ARRL website we will establish the following specific Exercise Objectives:

- (1) Establish emergency communications (both voice and data) within and between the locations of our served agencies participating in the exercise – to include fixed, mobile, and field-deployed stations.
- (2) Encourage the use of emergency power (battery, generator, and/or mobile) by all stations during the exercise.
- (3) Maximize the number of amateur radio participants.
- (4) Identify critical gaps in our coverage area and responsiveness to agencies' needs, including digital messaging among stations.
- (5) Pass appropriate traffic via section net and regional NTS/RRI relays.
- (6) Incorporate appropriate elements of NIMS/ICS to the degree possible.
- (7) The exercise is designed to stress our system. Failures may occur by design or by circumstances of the exercise, and our abilities to react appropriately to achieve communications is to be recorded.

Exercise Artificialities

It is recognized that certain artificialities and constraints detract from exercise realism. However, exercise participants are to accept the following artificialities as a means of facilitating the accomplishment of the exercise objectives and performance criteria.

- The exercise will be playing in real-time with the exception of the EOC being activated and staffed at the start of the exercise.
- Many of the alert, notification, and initial activation activities will be a part of the exercise.

Exercise Simulation

Simulation during this functional exercise is required to compensate for non-participating organizations, individuals, and field units that would actually be deployed in a real-world response. Although simulations may detract from exercise realism, the simulated incidents, (messages from and to simulated entities) provide the means to facilitate exercise and provide for the testing of exercise objectives and performance criteria. All persons, agencies, response units, and citizens of the community, and various levels of government, will be represented as needed, by the exercise simulation articles. As the exercise is being experienced in a real-time environment, the simulation team will advise the participants of information such as when the resource(s) arrives on site, the situation found upon their arrival, and so on.

Scripts for participants to use in their respective assignments may be provided for simulation of events and needs consistent with such emergency responses of our drill.

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Participants Procedures and Responsibilities

Primary participants in this exercise will be licensed amateur radio operators providing emergency communications support in accordance with the protocols, procedures, frequency plans, and other guidance as detailed in the Mills County ARES® Emergency Operations Plan.

All voice exchanges should begin and end with the phrase “**This is a drill.**” Written messages should contain the word “**Test**” as part of the precedence, e.g., Test Priority, in the message preamble. Written messages should also include the phrase “**This is a drill**” as the first words in the text (or body) of the message.

Should an actual emergency occur at any time during the exercise that dictates that the exercise should stop, the phrase “**Real World**” (preferably repeated three times) shall be used to indicate that exercise is suspended until further notice or until the emergency is resolved.

Safety and Security

Participants should observe reasonable personal safety procedures and refrain from anything close to dangerous operations in the exercise situations. **THIS IS A DRILL.**

Communications

The MCARES net will be called on the 145.29MHz repeater as usual for an emergency situation/training at the beginning of the exercise. (8:00 AM)

If the repeater becomes unavailable during the exercise, the established Tactical simplex frequencies, such as Mills County emergency frequency (147.435 Mhz), will be used to carry on the net.

Net Control duties will be passed around the check-ins as necessary.

When checking in, stations will indicate if they have emergency power and if they can be deployed with mobile/portable radios for the emergency.

Tactical call signs will be assigned and used to facilitate message handling, e.g. “net control”

Digital message handling will use Winlink Express to send and receive exercise traffic between stations and via HF or VARA HF to stations outside Mills County via Internet email available in the system.

Stations deployed must maintain communications with NCS, or designee, throughout the exercise and including a final contact as they arrive at their home QTH following all exercise activities, to ensure their safety.

Reporting

Stations participating should keep written logs of activity including evaluations and observations that will be valuable in improving MCARES performance in future drills or real exercises. These data will be collected and discussed in a scheduled Zoom meeting.

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Attachments:

ASSIGNMENTS/DEPLOYMENT

INCIDENT ACTION PLAN:

INCIDENT FORM 201

INCIDENT FORM 205

INCIDENT SAFETY BRIEFING

INCIDENT MAPS