An Introduction to AuxComm by KD5BJ

Recently I have taken for the second time the AuxComm class offered by CISA (Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency) through TDEM (TX Division of Emergency Management).

The role of Auxcomm are for those Ham radio operators like us who support their communities through local government agencies. AUXCOMM encompasses amateur radio, RACES, CERT Team communications, citizens band, and other non-public safety communications services.

While AUXCOMM stands for Auxiliary Communications, it is considered a Primary Emergency Communications asset and is overseen by qualified amateur radio personnel.

An AuxComm operator can be asked to perform many different tasks associated with emergency communications in a FEMA Emergency Communications Unit, in an Emergency Management Agency Communications Unit, in an Emergency Operations Center, or in various types of public service events

Trained Auxiliary Communicators are a valuable resource tool that can be used by local, county, regional, tribal or state agencies/organizations. They are given the Auxiliary Communicator Position Task Book to be complete as the Communicator responds and works at deployment to incidents or events.

We AuxComm communicators operate under ICS structure and serve the Communication Leader in the Logistic Section. We are considered technical specialists.

In the Communications structure, generally speaking, there may be many roles for communicators:

The COMC (Communications Coordinator) who coordinates across multiple incidents when there are multiple requests for communications resources.

The COML who works with the COMC to coordinate communications/notifications and plans. The COML manages the technical and operational aspects of the function during an incident. The COML prepares the ICS 205 (Incident radio communications plan), establishes the Incident Communication Center (ICC), orders and manages personnel and equipment, establishes needed capabilities, and participates in incident action planning.

The Communication Technician (COMT), the Incident Communication Center, Radio Operators and Technical specialists are all subordinate roles to the COML.

AuxComm radio operators are lead by the Auxiliary Communications Manager (ACM). This person manages the operational and technical aspects for the AuxComm communicators and resources; establishes and maintains the AUXCOMM network; establishes and/or staffs the auxiliary Communications area of operations; supervises AuxComm personnel serving as radio

operators, technicians, or other support personnel. And, finally, this individual serves as single point of contact for information between Auxcomm personnel and the COML.

The AUXCOMM Manager manages not only the ham radio communications, but also the communications of CERT, Red Cross, and others groups. AuxComm operators may be asked to become COMT, to be able to use Voice over IP, Radio over IP, satellite phones etc.

The ACM must make sure with the COML that information is correct. Although not invited generally to the tactics or planning meetings, the ACM can ask to be there as a shadow of the COML.

As previously said, we serve in the Communication Unit of the Logistic Section as technical specialists.

Auxcomm radio operators' responsibilities are:

1. Family preparation. We must prepare our families with a disaster plan, including home emergency supplies, evacuation routs, Go bag survival kits, Point of contact out of state – You cannot serve if you know your family is left unprepared and alone to face a disaster.
2. Undertake tasks only and after directed to do so by incident supervisor

AUXCOMM Communicator's tasks are, but not limited to:

1. Obtain incident name, and number, reporting time and location, gear requirement, transportation arrangements/travel routs, and contact procedures upon mobilization (via radio or other alternate ways if phones do not work).
2. Arrive properly equipped in a timely manner as possible
3. Obtain briefing from the ACM or the COML
4. Install and test Auxcomm equipment such as communications with aircrafts, or other special needs; repeaters, etc. per discussion with COML
5. Obtain installation priorities
6. Cloning or programming radios
7. Assist with distribution of equipment
8. Establish area of operation for auxiliary communicators, keeping away from generators and/or source of electronic interference
9. Perform duties within the AUXCOMM area of operations, such as directing and documenting radio or phone traffic to proper destinations.
10. Identifying AUXCOMM system problems, both technical and operationl
11. Notify ACM of personnel or equipment deficiencies or excesses, and resources.
12. Initiate and maintain accurate records of all AUXCOMM equipment, including location, accountability, ensuring return to proper location.
13. Perform operational tests of AUXCOMM Equipment
14. Interact and coordinate with appropriate AUXCOMM operational personnel

15. Maintain ICS 214, including in it equipment location, medical evacuation, personnel changes, meetings and briefings, and personnel issues.
16. Demobilization
17. And other tasks. Always be ready to ask adequate questions and assume nothing.

The AUXCOMM Manger has all the list above plus
1. obtain and assemble go-kits prior to receiving the assignment including critical items for the first 72 hours and documentation and Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans.
2. The ACM must maintain positive interpersonal working relationship by coordinating with the COML and other Communications Unit leaders and creating an environment of opportunity for all AUXCOMM personnel
3. Ensuring adequate rest for the AUXCOMM personnel
4. Receive and Review the IAP
5. Organize, add and remove personnel, supervise personnel, promoting teamwork, establishing timeframes and schedules
6. Use chain of command, inform personnel, manage and delegate responsibilities, ensure proper demobilization, give assignments, prepare communication plans, and other tasks.

This was just a quick summary of part of Unit 1 and Unit 2 of the Auxcomm class. Resources available to all are the Auxiliary Communications Field Operational Guide (or AUXFOG) and the National Interoperability Field Operation Guide or NIFOG downloadable on both Androids and IPhones.

Thank You NC, This training will be uploaded on our website. This is KD5BJ back to net.