# EMERGENCY OPERATIONS DEPLOYMENT

The past few weeks we have had discussions of the recent hurricane and ARES deployment. Last week, Marida spoke of a real time training event and deployment exercise she participated in that not only presented issues to changing catastrophes in the operations exercise, but included interactions with various agencies, their equipment, incorporating her equipment into the plan. There was a lot going on there as it would be in a real time situation. A long exercise with a great after action she shared with us. This evening, I want to just add a little bit more to the topic of deployments. It's from these trainings, I think more about the topic and want to research more.

This evening's training will discuss the steps necessary to set up, begin operations in temporary locations, such as shelters in schools or churches, or temporary command centers at any location. I have gathered this information from various NET libraries. I'm just trying to build upon some of our recent trainings and keep the ideas fresh as this is always a possibility. Other trainings we might consider as topics in future might deal with actual operations while there and on demobilization. Yes, there are even ICS forms for that.

**Responding After Activation**

After you have gathered your equipment and are ready to respond, you may need to do several things, depending on local plans and the nature of the emergency. You may be asked to check in to a specific net to let them know you are enroute, and then periodically to report your progress, particularly if travel is hazardous.

In some cases, you may be asked to proceed to a "staging" area to wait for an assignment. This could take some time, especially if the situation is very confused. Often, the development of the response to the emergency is unclear and it will take some time to develop a uniform response plan for that incident. You should expect the situation to be fluid as each incident is unique and to respond accordingly. Be prepared to wait patiently for a determination to be made and an assignment to be given.

In other cases, such as the immediate aftermath of a tornado or earthquake, you may be forced to make arrangements as you go. Travel may be difficult or impossible, so you may need to do what you can, where you can. NET's may be established using whatever means available.

**Who is in charge?**
At each station, the EC or other emergency communications manager should appoint one member of the emergency communications group to take a leadership role as "station manager," with full responsibility for all operations at that site. This person serves as a point person for contact, information and decisions for the team, with the incident commander and with other groups aiding in the response. This helps avoid confusion and arguments.

When you accept a position as an emergency communications volunteer, you do so know that you will often need to follow the directions of another person. Cooperation and good teamwork are key elements that result in an efficient and effective emergency communications operation. As the situation arises, you may have to step into the role of a leader to keep the operation moving forward. These are key principles behind the success of the Incident Command System. Expect to work with others. Expect that there are times you are the follower. Expect that other times, you may be the leader.]

**Arriving at the Site**
If you are assigned to a facility operated by the served agency, such as a shelter, introduce yourself to the person in charge as an "emergency communicator" assigned to serve that location. They will be busy, so get right to the point:

1. Identify yourself and explain that you have been assigned to set up a communication station for that location, and by whom.
2. Inform them that you would like to set up your equipment and get on the air. Ask if another communicator has already arrived.
3. Ask if they prefer the station's location.
4. If you are the first communicator to arrive, be prepared to suggest an appropriate location, one that can serve as both an operating and message desk, has feedline access to a suitable antenna location, access to power and telephone, and is just isolated enough from the command center to avoid disturbing each other.
5. Ask if there are any hazards or considerations in the immediate area that you should be aware of, or cause you to relocate later.

If no building or other suitable shelter is available, you may need to set up your own tent, or work from your car. Choose a location that provides shelter from wind, precipitation and other hazards, and is close enough to the served agency's operations to be convenient, but not in their way.

**Being a Good Guest**

In many cases, you will be occupying a space that is normally used by someone else for another purpose. Respect and protect their belongings and equipment in every possible way. For instance, if you are in a school and will be using a teacher's desk, find a way to remove all the items from its surface to a safe place for the duration of operations. A cardboard box, sealed and placed under the desk usually works well. Do not use their office supplies or equipment or enter desk drawers or other storage areas without specific permission from a representative of the building's owners. Some served agencies will seal all filing cabinets, drawers, and doors to certain rooms with tamper-evident tape upon arrival to protect the host's property and records.

When installing antennas, equipment, and cables, take care not to damage anything. For instance, avoid using "duct" tape to fasten cables to walls, since its removal will usually damage the surface. If any damage is caused, make note of it in your log and report it to the appropriate person as soon as possible.

**Initial Set Up and Information Gathering**

In most cases, your priority will be to set up a basic station to establish contact with the net. Pack that equipment in your vehicle last so that you can get to it first. This may include just the go kit to get a temporary set up activated while preparing for something more permanent for location and resources as power and facilities. If you arrive as a team of two or more, station setup can begin while others carry in the remaining equipment. Set up and test the antenna for proper SWR, and then check into the net. Test to find the lowest power setting that produces reliable communication, especially if you are operating with battery or generator power, to conserve power for extended operations. High power should also be avoided whenever possible to prevent interference with other radio systems, telephones, and electronic equipment.

That concludes tonight's training.

Thanks, this is KI5UAJ back to net control.