

Grid Down SET, might as well have fun with it !

On October 18th, this ARES group along with our neighboring counties ARES groups, will be participating in a similar “Grid down” exercise. This exercise does have a few mobile assets involved but its basis is of ‘grid down’ scenario and our ability to communicate with each other. During this exercise, we are mostly “deploying from within our homes”. Its an opportunity to practice skills and test our own equipment. During any training exercises, we always stress group safety. Here’s a few thoughts on being safe and prepared but near the end of it I have some ideas to make this interesting for you. You get out only what you put into these trainings.

ARES ([Amateur Radio Emergency Service](#)) deployment safety focuses on ensuring volunteers are prepared for emergencies, National Incident Management System (NIMS), maintaining personal fitness and supplies, and integrating with local authorities to operate effectively. Key aspects include carrying out drills to practice in emergency conditions, ensuring equipment is reliable and appropriate for the scenario, and following guidelines provided by the ARRL and local emergency management.

Personal Safety & Preparedness

- **Apparel:**

Wear a high-visibility (safety) vest with "AMATEUR RADIO COMMUNICATIONS" in large black letters on the back.

- **Personal Go Kits:**

Pack essential supplies, including water, food, a first-aid kit, and a means to cook, as you may be deployed for extended periods.

- **Training:**
Complete required NIMS courses, such as ICS-100, ICS-200, and ICS-700, to understand the [Incident Command System](#) (ICS) used in disaster management.

Equipment & Operations

- **Equipment Reliability:**
Maintain and test your radio equipment and power sources (batteries, generators) regularly to ensure they are functional.
- **Antennas:**
Bring appropriate antennas and extra coax cables, as your primary equipment may break.
- **Power Sources:**
Have multiple reliable power sources for your radios, including charged batteries, and consider solar charging devices.
- **Communication:**
Stay in constant communication with the served agency, using the appropriate traffic-handling methods for passing messages efficiently.

Environmental & Operational Factors

- **Environmental Awareness:**
Be prepared for the specific conditions of the deployment, such as time of day, weather, and the availability of utilities.

- **Risk Assessment:**

Understand the potential risks and plan for different scenarios, considering the duration and geographic area of the emergency.

- **Integration with Authorities:**

Work with and be integrated into the local emergency response structure by establishing ties with local authorities and registering with disaster services.

Deployment Logistics

- **Planning:**

Prepare for deployments by having a specific plan for the scenario, with the necessary equipment, based on the expected severity and nature of the event.

- **Drills and Exercises:**

Participate in ARES drills and exercises to practice in simulated emergency conditions and identify potential communication problems.

- **Deployment Kits:**

Be ready to assemble a base station for a shelter environment or a mobile unit for field deployment.

Even though we have planning meetings in advance to understand what it is we want to do during these simulated exercises and how we gauge our groups responses to the tasks given to us, sometimes unpredictable things are broadcasted during these training exercises...it keeps you from knowing everything that's going to happen...and unprepared.... but why not take advantage of this opportunity to really test your gear out? Sure we know when its going to start and about what time it ends.

Maybe add a coolness factor to it all by leading up to the exercise by pretending you were watching the news and something really bad was happening near by or there was an emergency radio broadcast on the drive home. Something that has you really concerned and the phones are out. Something that leads you up into the time of joining the rest of the group on the radio for the exercise. Maybe simulate you woke up to power out in your area and youre actually setting up that cool camp stove you bought for “what if”...make yourself a breakfast or brew up some coffee on it. Start up that generator because your gut says something might be going on here real soon... is the fuel bad and the battery run down? Uhhhhhhhhhh!!!!

Go over to your gear storage and do a quick assessment of fuel, food, water and medical supplies. Get into the mindset before the exercise..Get to thinking about what might be happening once you are able to make contact with the rest of the group on the radio...Whats going on? What are the latest reports? Are there casualties? Am I really ready for this? How bad is it in the next county? Do I have spare fuses for this radio?

Allowing yourself to be temporarily vulnerable or caught off guard during a simulation like this can give you some good insight on what you might need to improve on in skills or supplies. Even after the simulation is over, maybe grab some of your rations cans from the cupboard and cook out of that military canteen cup and that micro backpack stove you hid in the glove box. Get out that notepad and make a list of what you need to work on. Maybe practice with that water filtration system and make yourself some “fresh” water..use

your imagination. Just because the simulation is over doesn't mean you cant continue on with it at your home for the weekend...I can see the eye rolls from my wife already..lol...Its only going to make us all better.

That's tonights training....this is KI5UAJ back to net control.