
ARES

Ex17-2 Participant Guide

2017 ARRL Simulated Emergency Test



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Abstract

Each year the American Radio Relay League hosts a contest known as the "Simulated Emergency Test". Traditionally, this was held on the first weekend in October, but recently Sections may participate at any time during the year. For a number of years, Michigan has used the SET as an excuse for an exercise.

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1. Introduction

Over the past few years, FEMA has been emphasizing preparation for long term communications outages. The Section has participated in many drills and exercises around this scenario.

With the introduction of MI-CIMS, Michigan has become much more disciplined in responding to incidents. Part of that discipline has been to record everything in MI-CIMS. MI-CIMS is the official record of the incident response.

A result of this is that everything is recorded on forms. Many of the forms are ICS forms, but many others are unique to MI-CIMS. The Section has been practicing with MI-CIMS and with transmitting forms over several exercises.

In more likely incidents, however, it would be expected that legacy communications would be restored within a few days. The mission for ARES® then would be to transmit *critical* messages during those first, critical days.

In preparing for the 2017 Statewide Exercise (SE17), it was determined that the most critical form to be sent from the counties into the SEOC would be the MI-CIMS Resource request, and during SE17, that form was exercised. In a total loss of legacy comms, it is quite likely that an ICS-205A would also need to be transmitted when some forms of legacy comms are restored. It is also possible that the IAP may be desired, in either direction, but the IAP is often a rather large, unwieldy document. However, the IAP consists of a series of ICS forms, and only the first two, the 201 and 202, are likely to be interesting outside the jurisdiction that created the IAP.

During SE17, some success was had transmitting resource requests over voice circuits, as well as digital. Since digital circuits might not always be available, SET 2017 will concentrate on transmitting critical forms over voice circuits.

2. Preparation

While some success was had during SE17, there were some weaknesses. Most had to do with the lack of traffic handling practice among ARES® members. Prior to SET 2017, members are asked to review <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14wY3zcMn2o>, perhaps several times. Members might practice in a meeting or over the air.

Since HF conditions have been variable over the past few months, counties distant from the SEOC might consider developing VHF relay circuits to the SEOC. These could be useful to all counties along the route.

Since the purpose of this drill is merely to practice voice messaging skills, digital circuits are also available. The SEOC will be operating D-STAR REF024A and Mi5 STATEWIDE1. Counties are encouraged to use these circuits, or analog VHF where possible, to avoid congestion on the HF frequency. For those counties close to Dimondale, the SEOC will also be operating on the Potterville analog repeater, 145.39/100.

ECs should consider reaching out to experienced traffic handlers for assistance during SET. Skilled traffic handlers can not only pass messages more accurately, but also more efficiently. Some years back during an SET we discovered that experienced traffic operators could pass messages as much as 15 times more quickly than inexperienced operators. All jurisdictions will be competing for circuits to the SEOC, so efficiency will be helpful.

3. Execution

This year's exercise will be a simple, functional drill. Ahead of the SET, DECs will be given a number of messages to distribute to those counties planning to participate. Counties will be expected to pass those messages to the SEOC over voice circuits. The SEOC will transmit a few messages to the counties. ECs are encouraged to augment the state plan by practicing those skills important to their county.

The SEOC will be active on a number of circuits. While the State HF Emergency Frequency has tended to be primary for most exercises, that circuit is likely to be congested. Counties are therefore encouraged to exploit any VHF/UHF circuits available to them.

Depending on conditions and the number of operators available, it is possible the SEOC may be able to use both the 75 meter SEF as well as the 40 meter backup frequency simultaneously.

MI-CIMS

Counties are encouraged to maintain their station status in the MI-CIMS **AuxComm Station Status** board. It is helpful for everyone to know what other stations are on the air and what frequencies they are using.

Counties should also note their activities in the **Activity Log**, and tick **Post to AuxComm Shared Activities**.



September 30

This year SET will be held on Saturday, September 30, 2017.

SEOC Operation

The SEOC will operate on as many circuits as possible, limited by the number of transmitters and operators available. The SEOC plan is shown at [Figure 1, "SEOC Communications Plan"](#).

INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (ICS 205)

1. Incident Name: TRN-2017-09-30- ARRL_Simulated_Emergency_Test			2. Date/Time Prepared: Date: 09/10/2017 Time: 11:02:39			3. Operational Period: Date From: 09/30/2017 Date To: 09/30/2017 Time From: 08:00:00 Time To: 13:00:00				
4. Basic Radio Channel Use:										
Zone Grp.	Ch #	Function	Channel Name/Trunked Radio System Talkgroup	Assignment	RX Freq N or W	RX Tone/NAC	TX Freq N or W	TX Tone/NAC	Mode (A, D, or M)	Remarks
	1	Tactical	SEF	Traffic	3.9320		3.9320		A	State Emergency Frequency
	2	Tactical	40	Traffic	7.2320		7.2320		A	Backup Fof2>7
	3	Tactical	Potterville	Traffic	145.3900		144.7900	100	A	Close in counties
	4	Tactical	24A	Traffic		REF024A		REF024A	D	D-STAR Reflector 24A
	5	Tactical	DMR	Traffic		STATEW1		STATEW1	D	Mi5 STATEWIDE1
5. Special Instructions										
6. Prepared by (Communications Unit Leader):									Date/Time: 09/10/2017 11:02:39	
Name: John J. McDonough, WB8RCR										

Figure 1. SEOC Communications Plan