

# 2021 Virginia Section Simulated Emergency Test Exercise Plan and Reporting

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## Purpose:

Saturday October 23 is designated for holding the Virginia Section ARRL® Simulated Emergency Test (SET). This SET will run from 1300 local (Eastern Daylight Savings Time [DST]) until 2100 DST. The SET is Virginia Section of the ARRL's® primary emergency exercise and is designed to assess the skills and preparedness of Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) volunteers, as well as those affiliated with other organizations involved in emergency and disaster response.

The SET encourages maximum participation by all radio amateurs, partner organizations, and national, state, and local officials who typically engage in emergency or disaster response. In addition to ARES® volunteers, those active in the National Traffic System® (NTS®), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), National Weather Service (NWS) SKYWARN® (a weather observation and reporting program of the National Weather Service®), Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and a variety of other allied groups and public service-oriented radio amateurs are needed to fulfill important roles in this nationwide exercise.

The SET offers volunteers an opportunity to test equipment, modes, and skills under simulated emergency conditions and scenarios. Individuals can use the time to update a “go-kit” for use during deployments and to ensure their home station’s operational capability in an emergency or disaster. To get involved, contact your local ARRL® Emergency Coordinator or Net Manager.

## Scope:

Type of Emergency: This exercise will use the scenario of a section wide winter storm, with some widespread power outages, many smaller localized outages, and reduced transportation due to snow, ice, downed trees, etc.

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Location: Section wide

1. Functions: Due to the limited time for preparation and training, the functions of this exercise will be limited to:
  - a. Providing simulated emergency communications from the served agencies remote facilities (shelters, warming stations, food distribution facilities, etc.) to the County/Independent City (C/IC) Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or Incident Command Post (ICP), as determined at the local level.
  - b. Providing simulated emergency communications from the EOC or ICP to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) Regional EOC or ICP.
  - c. Providing simulated emergency communications from the Regional EOC or ICP to the Virginia State Operations Center.
2. Participants: All licensed amateur radio operators in the Virginia Section are welcome to participate. Your local ARES® Emergency Coordinator will be able to provide you with the communications plan for his or her responsible area, and should be able to provide you with an assignment. Due to the continuing COVID-19 measures, this assignment can be at a simulated location, but should be in the spirit of one that would actually be staffed in an emergency. It is also recommended that the served agency/agencies be made aware of this exercise, and request their participation. (This will be covered later in this exercise plan).

## Objectives:

1. To develop and/or refine local communications plans that will be of service to our communities in the event that our services are called up.
2. To practice the principles of Unity of Command, and ensure that all participants understand the importance of following this system.
3. To identify any training needs, particularly as it pertains to communications skills.
4. To demonstrate to our served agency/agencies that amateur radio, and in particular the ARES® organization is a valuable resource to them.
5. To obtain or update a list of ARES® members, served agency contact information, and primary locations where amateur radio services may be needed.

## Administrative Notes:

It is imperative that all communications related to this exercise contain the verbiage “EXERCISE, EXERCISE, EXERCISE”. This is whether it is voice communications (radio or telephone), written, or sent in digital or Continuous Wave (CW) modes.

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## Scenario:

1. It is permissible for the EC to provide “EXERCISE EXERCISE EXERCISE Severe Storm Watch” information ahead of the actual exercise, as in a real-world event there would be at least some level of advance warning from the National Weather Service. This may be via any means available to the EC (text, cellphone, e-mail, etc), as at this time it is assumed that all normal communications systems are operable.
2. At 1300 local, each EC will begin activation of their respective networks. This should be via Radio Frequency (RF) only transport modes. The use of linked repeaters not using stand-alone linking systems (i.e. hardwire, microwave, UHF etc.) is discouraged, but for the purpose of this singular exercise not prohibited. (i.e. Echolink, dStar, ip linked repeaters such as DMR networks, etc. are examples of those relying on outside systems).
3. The EC will request all participating stations to check in for their assignments, if not already pre-assigned. Check-ins will be logged in on an Incident Command System (ICS) Form 214 (ICS-214). There will be information gathered at this time specific to this exercise.
4. Once every two hours, beginning with the initial activation (i.e. at 1300, 1500, etc.) the ECs will send a single message to the DEC (or Section EC if there is no DEC assigned), with information to be described later in the document.
5. During the exercise, the ECs and DEC are encouraged to inject traffic based on the prior experiences of the jurisdiction. Realism is highly encouraged, and checking with your served agencies will go a long way toward ensuring this.

## Master Scenario Event List (MSEL)

Each D/EC is encouraged to develop a realistic scenario event list based on previous real-world experiences, particularly as have occurred in or near their jurisdiction. As an example of what NOT to do, no storm surge scenarios in Luray, VA! No blizzard scenario in Brownsville, TX!

## Exercise Metrics

The most challenging part of providing meaningful metrics of an exercise that covers so many variations in population density is how to make it “fair” to all. While this is not by any means a perfect system, I trust you will find that it does not punish those smaller communities over the larger ones with much larger populations to draw from. There is

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an Excel spreadsheet attached to assist with computing your score and tracking relevant data.

## 1. EC Level Metrics:

- a. Number of licensed amateurs in your C/IC. This number does not count “against” or “for” you, but is necessary for further computations. This data can be obtained from QRZ.com and running a “County” search. As Virginia has Independent Cities, which for legal purposes are considered “counties”, these must be searched separately. As examples, for Charlottesville the search is for “Charlottesville City”, and for the Independent City of Fairfax, it is for “Fairfax City”.
- b. Number of ARES® members for each jurisdiction<sup>1</sup>. This will be further divided into:
  - i. ARES level 1
  - ii. ARES level 2
  - iii. ARES level 3
- c. Number amateur radio operator exercise participants:
  - i. ARES members
  - ii. Licensed amateur radio operators
  - iii. Bonus points for percentage of participating amateur radio operators who have completed the AUXCOMM training course.
  - iv. (FOR FUTURE USE) Bonus points for percentage of participating amateur radio operators who have completed the AUXCOMM Position Task Book.
- d. Number of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) contacted (two-way communications of any type) during the exercise period<sup>2</sup>.

NOTE: The statewide list may of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can be found listed in the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (<https://www.vaemergency.gov/attachments/cova-emergency-operations-plan/>) under Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6 (ESF-6). Your C/IC may have an additional list in their plan, and it is encouraged to use that at the EC level. The DEC's should use the state-wide listing.

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<sup>1</sup> Number of ARES® participants and training level can be computed at the end of the exercise and final report provided on 25 October. This is to encourage new participants and to reflect that Training Task Books may be completed and signed off on during or immediately after the exercise.

<sup>2</sup> In the event that two or more C/IC jurisdictions share resources, these may be combined into a single report.

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- e. Two-way communications with the C/IC Emergency Management Coordinator(s) (EMCs) for the jurisdiction<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>.
  - f. Two-way communications with the senior elected official for the C/IC<sup>5</sup>.
  - g. Two-way communications via RF with the DEC (any mode permissible).
  - h. Bonus points will be awarded for published/aired press release or coverage.
  - i. Bonus points will be awarded for messages sent and delivery confirmed via the National Traffic System (NTS).
  - j. Report to be sent to District Emergency Coordinator no later than 25 2359 DST OCT 2021.
2. District EC Level metrics:
- a. Number of licensed amateurs in your District. This number does not count “against” or “for” you, but is necessary for further computations. This data can be obtained from QRZ.com and running a “County” search. As Virginia has Independent Cities, which for legal purposes are considered “counties”, these must be searched separately. As examples, for Charlottesville the search is for “Charlottesville City”, and for the Independent City of Fairfax, it is for “Fairfax City”. The list of those jurisdictions in your district can be found at:
    - i. [Region One \(East\) | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#).
    - ii. [Region Two \(West\) | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#).
    - iii. [Region Three \(West\) | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#).
    - iv. [Region Four \(West\) | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#).
    - v. [Region Five \(East\) | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#).
    - vi. [Region Six \(West\) | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#).
    - vii. [Region Seven \(East\) | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#).
  - b. Number of participating C/ICs (uncombined).

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<sup>3</sup> In the event that two or more C/IC jurisdictions share resources, there will still be a separate EMC for each C/IC. As an example, Charlottesville/Albemarle share an EOC, but have two EMCs. In this case, full credit will only be given for successful two-way communications with each of the EMCs (or their designated representative). Fractional credit will be given accordingly.

<sup>4</sup> In the event that C/IC does not have an EMC and only the Senior Elected Official, point(s) will be awarded for both duty positions.

<sup>5</sup> In the event that two or more C/IC jurisdictions share resources, there will still be a separate senior elected official for each. As an example, Charlottesville/Albemarle share an EOC, but Charlottesville Independent City has a Mayor, and Albemarle County has a Chair of the Board of Supervisors. In this case, full credit will only be given for successful two-way communications with each of the senior elected officials (or their designated representative). Fractional credit will be given accordingly.

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- c. Number of ARES® members for each District<sup>6</sup>. This will be further divided into:
  - i. ARES level 1
  - ii. ARES level 2
  - iii. ARES level 3
- d. Number amateur radio operator exercise participants:
  - i. ARES members
  - ii. Licensed amateur radio operators
  - iii. Bonus points for percentage of participating amateur radio operators who have completed the AUXCOMM training course.
- e. Number of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) contacted by the DEC or designee (two-way communications of any type) during the exercise period<sup>7</sup>.  
NOTE: The statewide list may be found listed in the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (<https://www.vaemergency.gov/attachments/cova-emergency-operations-plan/>) under Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6 (ESF-6). The DEC's should use the state-wide listing.
- f. Two-way communications with the VDEM Regional office of any type.
- g. Bonus points will be awarded for published/aired press release or coverage.

Report to be sent to Section Emergency Coordinator no later than 27 2359 DST OCT 2021.

Future events will include such items as backup/emergency power, Winlink messages, Narrow Band Emergency Messaging (NBEMS) (ie. FLDigi, FLAMP, etc.) and other items as are determined to be relevant to those exercises.

Questions or comments? Please contact Jack KE4LWT at KE4LWT at ARRL dot NET or at GMAIL dot COM.

73,

Jack KE4LWT

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<sup>6</sup> Number of ARES participants and training level can be computed at the end of the exercise and final report provided on 25 October. This is to encourage new participants and to reflect that Training Task Books may be completed and signed off on during or immediately after the exercise.

<sup>7</sup> It is likely that a VDEM district may be served by multiple districts of a VOAD as their geographic divisions may not align with the VDEM's. For the purpose of the 2021 SET only, any of those will count.