

HURRICANE JOHN PAUL A STATEWIDE COMMUNICATIONS DRILL



JULY 15 2009
AFTER ACTION REPORT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN



CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF FLORIDA
PROVIDING HELP – CREATING HOPE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hurricane John Paul Drill was designed and facilitated to assess the capability of a network of Satellite Communications (SatCom Hub) trailers to remain connected to the internet in the aftermath of a hurricane striking Florida.

During the exercise:

- Participants were able to communicate via e-mail with the four SatCom Hubs
- Digital Amateur Radio operators were able to utilize Winlink, D-Star and other digital assets to communicate via e-mail with the four SatCom Hubs.
- Simulated hurricane survivors were able to request assistance from FEMA using the internet via the SatCom Hubs.

This was a first of its kind drill for Florida's community and faith based organizations and governmental disaster response and recovery agencies and departments.

The purpose of this report is to analyze exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

Incorporated in *Section 3: Analysis of Capabilities* of this After Action Report is a comprehensive listing of each Target Capability with its associated Major Strengths, Primary Areas for Improvement and Improvement Recommendations

SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Details

Exercise Name: Hurricane John Paul – A Statewide Communications Drill

Type of Exercise: Drill

Exercise Start Date: July 15 2009

Duration: 3 Hours

Locations: Alachua County
Bradford County
Brevard County
Broward County
Charlotte County
Citrus County
Clay County
Collier County
Columbia County
DeSoto County
Dixie County
Duval County
Escambia County
Flagler County
Franklin County
Hardee County
Hernando County
Highlands County
Hillsborough County
Indian River County
Jackson County
Jefferson County
Lake County
Lee County
Leon County
Liberty County
Madison County
Manatee County
Marion County
Martin County
Miami-Dade County
Monroe County
Okaloosa County
Okeechobee County
Orange County
Osceola County
Palm Beach County
Pasco County
Pinellas County
Polk County

Putnam County
 Santa Rosa County
 Sarasota County
 St John’s County
 St Lucie County
 Sumter County
 Suwannee County
 Taylor County
 Volusia County
 Wakulla County

Sponsor: Catholic Charities of Florida

Program: The Hurricane John Paul Drill was designed and facilitated to assess the capability of a network of Satellite Communications (SatCom Hub) trailers to remain connected to the internet in the aftermath of a hurricane striking Florida.

By undertaking this exercise:

- Participants were able to communicate via e-mail with the four SatCom Hubs
- Digital Amateur Radio operators were able to utilize Winlink, D-Star and other digital assets to communicate via e-mail with the four SatCom Hubs.
- Simulated hurricane survivors were able to request assistance from FEMA using the internet via the SatCom Hubs.

This was a first of its kind drill for Florida’s community and faith based organizations and governmental disaster response and recovery agencies and departments.

Exercise Purpose: The purpose of the Hurricane John Paul Drill was to evaluate the ability to:

- Establish and maintain internet communications in the aftermath of a hurricane using a network of SatCom Hubs.
- Interface digital amateur radio capabilities with the SatCom Hubs.
- Provide a mobile platform for disaster survivors to register for assistance with FEMA via the SatCom Hubs.

Exercise Mission: The primary mission of the exercise was to assess the ability of the various governmental agencies and departments along with community and faith based organizations to remain connected to the internet via a network of four SatCom Hubs.

Capabilities Communications

Scenario Type Hurricane

Participant Information

Participant Organizations 2-1-1 Big Bend
 2-1-1 Charlotte County
 2-1-1 Charlotte County
 2-1-1 Tampa Bay
 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares

Adventist Community Services
Agency for Enterprise Information Technology
Air Ambulance Professionals
Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES)
Ambitrans Medical Transport
American Red Cross - Central Florida Chapter
American Red Cross - Manatee County Chapter
American Red Cross - Martin County Chapter
American Red Cross - Southwest Florida Chapter
Area Agency on Aging of North Florida
BRACE
Brevard Long Term Recovery Coalition
Calvary Chapel St Pete - Disaster Relief Team
Catholic Charities of Florida
Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida
Catholic Charities of St Augustine
Catholic Charities of St Petersburg
Center for Independent Living - Self Reliance
Central Florida Presbytery
Century Ambulance Service
CERT - Azalea Trace
CERT - Carriage Village
CERT - City of Palm Coast
CERT - Daytona Beach
CERT - Dearfield Beach
CERT - Deltona
CERT - Greater Tampa Bay
CERT - Hacienda Del Rio
CERT - Hallandale Beach
CERT - Isles on Palmer Ranch
CERT - Lealman Fire District
CERT - Merritt Island
CERT - Navarre
CERT - North Fort Myers
CERT - Palm Coast
CERT - Polk County Fire Rescue
CERT - Saddlebag Lake
CERT - Santa Rosa County 4-H Teen
CERT - Sorrento East Nokomis
CERT - Southbay
CERT - Strawberry Ridge
CERT - Sumter County
CERT - Sunrise
CERT - Suwannee Valley
CERT - Tampa
CERT - Verona Walk
Charley's Angels Team Florida
Christ Church of Longboat Key
Christ Presbyterian Church
Christian Contractors Assoc
City of DeBary
City of Gainesville

City of Miami
Civil Air Patrol - Suwannee Valley Composite Squadron
COAD - Big Bend
COAD - Sarasota
Community Services and Disaster Response
Coordinated Assistance Network
Covenant Life Presbyterian Church
Department of Agriculture - Division of Plant Industry
DERA - Southeastern Operations Director
Disaster Amateur Radio Network
Eagles Wings Foundation
Emergency Management - Bradford County
Emergency Management - Broward Emergency
Emergency Management - City of North Port
Emergency Management - City of Tallahassee
Emergency Management - Dixie County
Emergency Management - Escambia County
Emergency Management - Franklin County
Emergency Management - Hernando County
Emergency Management - Hillsborough County
Emergency Management - Madison County
Emergency Management - Manatee County
Emergency Management - Okaloosa County
Emergency Management - Orange County
Emergency Management - Pasco County
Emergency Management - Pinellas County
Emergency Management - Taylor County
Emergency Support Function # 15
EMS - Leon County
EMS - Madison County
Faith Presbyterian Church
Family Medical & Dental Centers
Family Medical and Dental Centers
Fellowship of Believers Church
First Congregational United Church of Christ
First Presbyterian Church
First Presbyterian Church in N Palm Beach
First Presbyterian Church New Smyrna Beach
First Presbyterian Church of Ft Lauderdale
First Presbyterian Missions
Florida Assoc of Community Health Centers
Florida Baptist Convention Disaster Relief and Recovery
Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church
Florida Conference United Church of Christ
Florida Department of Children & Families
Florida Department of Education
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Florida Department of Health
Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Florida Department of Transportation
Florida Division of Emergency Management
Florida Emergency Preparedness Association

Florida Interfaith Networking in Disaster
Florida Lottery
Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network
Florida Senate
Florida SKP CO-OP
Florida State University
Gold Coast Amateur Radio Assoc
Good Samaritan United Methodist Church
Grupo Comunitario de Respuesta a Desastres
Gulf Gate Community Assoc
Health Department - Escambia County
Health Department - Jefferson County
Health Department - Leon County
Health Department - Liberty County
Health Department - Polk County
Heart of Florida Regional Medical Center
Heart of Florida United Way
Hope United Presbyterian Church
I HOPE Inc
L D S Disaster Response
Lake Jackson United Methodist Church
Lake of the Woods of Jacaranda
LASER
Lee Memorial Health System
Leon County School District
Lutheran Services Florida
Medical Reserve Corps
MERT
Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS)
Moorings Presbyterian Church
N Fort Myers Fire Control District
National Disaster Relief
Network of Hope
New Vision / Evidence Video
North Central Florida Regional Planning Council
North Florida Digital Group
Northminster Presbyterian Church
Ocean Reef Public Safety
Palm City Presbyterian Church
Palma Sola Presbyterian Church
PBC Disaster Recovery Coalition
Peace River Presbytery
Pinellas County Volunteer Services
Police Department - City of Davenport
Presbyterian Church USA
Presbyterian Social Ministries
Presbytery of Tampa Bay
Presbytery of Tropical Florida
RACES - Broward County
Relief Ministries Calvary Chapel Sarasota
San Pedro Disaster Recovery Team
Sarasota County Auxiliary Communications Service

Seabreeze United Church of Christ
 SEDAN
 Select Specialty Hospital
 Shands Teaching Hospital at University of Florida
 Siesta Key Chapel
 SKP Resort
 St Joseph's Hospital - Emergency Preparedness
 Synod of South Atlantic - Disaster Response
 Tallahassee Regional Airport
 Tampa Bay Presbytery
 The Four Winds Foundation
 The Salvation Army
 Titusville Fire and Emergency Services
 Trinity Presbyterian Church
 Trinity United Methodist Church
 U S Attorney's Office
 U S Department of Homeland Security
 U S Department of Housing and Urban Development
 United Way Escambia - First Call For Help
 United Way of Charlotte County
 United Way of Florida
 United Way of Hernando County
 United Way of Indian River County
 United Way of Manatee County
 United Way of Marion County
 United Way of Palm Beach County
 United Way of Pasco County
 United Way of Volusia-Flagler Counties
 University of South Florida - Polytechnic
 Volunteer Florida
 Volunteer USA Foundation
 Westminster Presbyterian Church

Number of Participants 358

SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

Exercise Purpose and Design

The Hurricane John Paul Drill was designed and facilitated to assess the capability of a network of Satellite Communications (SatCom Hub) trailers to remain connected to the internet in the aftermath of a hurricane striking Florida.

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Exercise Objectives, Capabilities and Activities

Capabilities-based planning allows for the exercise planning team to develop exercise objectives and observe exercise outcomes through a framework of specific action items that were derived from the Target Capabilities List (TCL). The capabilities listed below form the foundation for the organization of all objectives and observations in this exercise. Additionally, each capability is linked to several corresponding activities and tasks to provide additional detail.

Based upon the identified exercise objectives below, the exercise planning team has decided to demonstrate the following capabilities during this exercise:

Capability: Communications

- Activity # 1: Provide Emergency Internet Connectivity Support
- Activity # 2: Return to Normal Operations

Scenario Summary

It is mid July and Florida's residents have been following the development of the season's first Tropical Storm. Within 48 hours the storm becomes Hurricane John Paul and is making landfall in southeast Florida as a category 4 hurricane.

Over the next 36 hours the hurricane moves up the center of the state entering into the Gulf of Mexico just above Tampa still a category 1 storm.

While in the Gulf of Mexico the hurricane strengthens once again into a category 2 storm making landfall for the second time along the coastline of Santa Rosa County.

In the aftermath of such a hurricane the need for faith and community based organizations and their government partners to communicate via the internet is vitally important.

SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

This section of the report reviews the performance of the exercised capabilities, activities, and tasks. In this section, observations are organized by functionality. Each function is ranked by an overall and specific evaluator level of performance. Following the functional performance level are the narrative observations of specific evaluators.

Communications

Performance	Target Capability
Adequate	Activity # 1: Provide Emergency Internet Connectivity Support

Associated Critical Tasks	
1.1 Implement satellite internet connectivity plans and protocols	
Adequate	Evaluator # 1 – Escambia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System operators were somewhat familiar with the operation of the system. Evaluator perceived that the operator was dependent upon Information Technology (IT) staff of the Catholic Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee to aim the satellite.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend cross training of personnel to ensure a minimum depth of three staff capable of operating the system.
Weak	Evaluator # 2 – Leon County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to a equipment malfunction (bad cable) the Leon County SatCom Hub was almost 90 minutes late establishing contact with the internet. Connectivity not consistent.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to future exercises equipment should be tested.
Strong	Evaluator # 3 – Volusia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SatCom Hub set up and operational in less than 10 minutes. Three minutes for receiver to lock on to satellite and within five minutes both cell phone and internet up and running.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few additional resources are needed such as longer cables and electrical cords along with changing the physical location of router unit. Steps for better access to the trailer are suggested.

Associated Critical Tasks	
1.2 Communicate incident response information per agency protocols	
Adequate	Evaluator # 1 – Escambia County

Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency protocols appeared to be minimally defined, however, the system performed well and staff were capable of communicating with other exercise participants.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Standard Operating Guidelines that would be the same for all units, with the exception of differentiating between pointing of the satellite dish and the redundancy of staff capable of operating the system.
Adequate	Evaluator # 2 – Leon County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Strong	Evaluator # 3 – Volusia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essentials of this activity were performed and information was relayed via satellite internet connectivity.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For purposes of organization, written plans and documented guidelines should be prepared and stored in the SatCom Hub. While onsite personnel were clearly professional and competent, written plans would be necessary and helpful for redundancy if secondary or tertiary personnel were pressed in to service.

Associated Critical Tasks	
1.3 Initiate documentation process using required forms and follow-up notations.	
Unsure	Evaluator # 1 – Escambia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluator did not observe the utilization of a log or similar tracking system. No forms, logs or reports were observed at the satellite operation other than those provided by the exercise design staff.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a system wide logging system and reporting forms that would be consistent throughout the Catholic Charities system.
Non-Existent	Evaluator # 2 – Leon County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise forms were not used.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Weak	Evaluator # 3 – Volusia County

Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing upon the lack of written plans as cited above in Task # 1.2, forms were noted to be lacking. However staff were aware of what was needed and indicated that they were in the process of being developed at this time. All local requirements were met as evidenced by a site visit from the Volusia County Emergency Management Department..
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolling out written plans and completion of forms should become a priority.

Associated Critical Tasks

1.4 Ensure that all satellite internet connectivity networks are functioning.

Unsure	Evaluator # 1 – Escambia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on overheard discussion there is little if any routine maintenance of the system. Satellite dish failed to return to its stowed position at the conclusion of the exercise. Tools required to return the dish to a stowed position had to be purchased.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend weekly exercise of the generator and at least monthly simulated operation of the system.
Adequate	Evaluator # 2 – Leon County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once internet connectivity was established through the SatCom Hub the e-mails were received and processed.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Strong	Evaluator # 3 – Volusia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constant monitoring of satellite network noted. Repair, adjustments, modification and improvising as needed were carried out.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Associated Critical Tasks

1.5 Establish and maintain satellite internet connectivity systems on-site.

Adequate	Evaluator # 1 – Escambia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System was made available to outside agencies and organizations. Technical personnel were not available during most of the exercise.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend cross training of personnel to maintain minimal competency to address technical system issues.

Adequate	Evaluator # 2 – Leon County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once internet connectivity was established through the SatCom Hub the e-mails were received and processed.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Strong	Evaluator # 3 – Volusia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of connectivity and networking as in Task # 1.4 above were successful and properly performed. Excellent partnership with multiple agencies and organizations noted. The personnel from the Diocese of St. Petersburg contributed greatly to information technology (IT) and are to be commended. Morale of all participants was excellent.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Associated Critical Tasks	
1.6 Implement procedures to protect information and satellite internet connectivity network systems	
Weak	Evaluator # 1 – Escambia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System is stored on an unsecure parking lot and not protected from weather. Operating equipment is secured within a lockable trailer.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible, storing the system within a garage, warehouse or similar structure would better protect the equipment and may reduce operating problems that have been encountered with the Pensacola unit both times it has been operated.
Adequate	Evaluator # 2 – Leon County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard precautions were established and maintained.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Non Existent	Evaluator # 3 – Volusia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Law Enforcement personnel or identifiable security officials were on-site. Communication vehicles are always at risk during extreme events given the fact that panicked individuals can attempt to commander equipment and put personnel in danger in desperate efforts to reach loved ones.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for ESF 16 (Law Enforcement) must be factored into all future planning.

Associated Critical Tasks	
1.7 Coordinate and provide internet connectivity support to various governmental agencies and departments, community and faith based organizations and disaster survivors.	
Strong	Evaluator # 1 – Escambia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system provided inter-organizational communication that would offer significant value during communications outages. • The system offered excellent redundancy to regular communications of community organizations during the period of the exercise. • The system also worked well to support the simulated registration of disaster survivors for FEMA assistance.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend exploring technical solutions that would allow the system to support a hardened structure by stringing of hard lines into a building, rather than operated from the confined space of the trailer.
Adequate	Evaluator # 2 – Leon County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once internet connectivity was established through the SatCom Hub the e-mails were received and processed.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Strong	Evaluator # 3 – Volusia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 358 registered participants of which over 200 were handled online was my understanding evidencing great success. • Numerous agencies and organizations involved in this exercise seamlessly coordinated at our site. • Morale was very high which is always a consideration in working with volunteers. • Marcus Hepburn did an excellent job in holding a mid exercise briefing for all personnel on site to ensure compliance with all safety and well being issues and acknowledge the efforts of participants. • Conference call with FL VOAD and many others at various sites were noted to be helpful and informative.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Performance	Target Capability
Weak	Activity # 2: Return to Normal Operations

Associated Critical Tasks	
2.1 Initiate satellite internet connectivity demobilizations procedures.	
Unsure	Evaluator # 1 – Escambia County

Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satellite demobilization plans were available and followed, however, the satellite would not fully retract into the stowed position during the period the evaluator was on site
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend performance of preventive maintenance and exercising of system to reduce mechanical problems.
Unsure	Evaluator # 2 – Leon County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Weak	Evaluator # 3 – Volusia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demobilization plan did not exist. Written plans must be in place. While there was no written plan or checklist to follow the connectivity equipment was properly organized to stand down and to be transported.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As stated elsewhere staff did indicate that they are in the process of developing written plans.

Associated Critical Tasks	
2.2 Report and document the incident by completing and submitting required forms, reports, documentation and follow-up notations.	
Unsure	Evaluator # 1 – Escambia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluator is unaware of required forms, reports and documentation for follow-up.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend development of Standard Operating Guidelines for SatCom Hub operators which would address forms, reports and documentation.
Adequate	Evaluator # 2 – Leon County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using yahoo e-mail accounts proved troublesome.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the future establish e-mail accounts that can be easily opened in Microsoft Outlook.
Adequate	Evaluator # 3 – Volusia County
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is my understanding that the usage log will be forthcoming in the complete After Action Report (AAR).
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

Exercises such as this one allow personnel to validate training and practice strategic and tactical prevention, protection, response and recovery capabilities in a risk-reduced environment. Exercises are the primary tool for assessing preparedness and identifying areas for improvement, while demonstrating community resolve to prepare for major incidents.

Exercises aim to help entities within the community gain objective assessments of their capabilities so that gaps, deficiencies, and vulnerabilities are addressed prior to a real incident.

Exercises are the most effective (and safer) means to:

- Assess and validate policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment, assumptions, and interagency agreements;
- Clarify roles and responsibilities;
- Improve interagency coordination and communications;
- Identify gaps in resources;
- Measure performance; and
- Identify opportunities for improvement.

This exercise succeeded in addressing all of the above as it provided examples of good to excellent participant knowledge, teamwork, communication and use of plans and procedures while pointing out areas in need of improvement and clarification.

Listed below is a summary of the level of performance the Target Capabilities and Tasks evaluated during the exercise. This summary outlines the areas in which Catholic Charities of Florida is strong as well as identifying areas that the organization should invest future planning, training and exercise funds on.

Communications		
Activity	Target Capability	Performance
# 1	Provide Emergency Internet Connectivity Support	Adequate
# 2	Return to Normal Operations	Weak

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This Improvement Plan has been developed specifically for Catholic Charities of Florida as a result of Hurricane John Paul – A Statewide Communications Drill conducted on July 15 2009. These recommendations draw on both the After Action Report and the After Action Conference.

Capability	Observation	Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Completion Date
Communications	Not enough trained staff to ensure that each of the SatCom Hubs could remain operational for an extended period of time.	Recruit and train additional Catholic Charities staff along with staff from partner organizations to ensure that each SatCom Hub can remain operational in the field for a minimum of three weeks.	Catholic Charities of Florida	4/1/2010
	It appeared that there was now standardized training on use of the equipment from one location to the next.	Develop a standardized curriculum for future training purposes	Catholic Charities of Florida	3/1/2010
	While some basic procedures were available to the staff managing each SatCom Hub, there was now comprehensive set of Standard Operating Procedures.	Develop a set of Standard Operating Procedures for each of the SatCom Hubs to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment • Technical Operations • System Access • Security • Demobilization 	Catholic Charities of Florida	2/1/2010
	There appeared to be an on-going challenge with proper maintenance of the SatCom Hub units.	Develop a Standard Operating Procedure for ongoing equipment maintenance and testing.	Catholic Charities of Florida	2/1/2010

Communications	Funding appeared to be a challenge for proper maintenance of the Sat Com Hub units.	Develop an operational budget for the SatCom Hub units to ensure that the financial investment made in the equipment can be sustained into the distant future.	Catholic Charities of Florida	10/1/2009
	Funding appeared to be a challenge for proper maintenance of the Sat Com Hub units.	Provide sufficient funding to properly maintain and store each of the SatCom Hubs.	Catholic Charities of Florida	1/1/2010
	The Hurricane John Paul Drill was a great start.	Design and facilitate a similar exercise prior to the 2010 hurricane season	Catholic Charities of Florida	2/1/2010
	While various community partners participated in the drill there lacked a total understanding of the resources available from Catholic Charities.	Design and initiate an educational / partnership outreach effort to inform new partners of the capability of the SatCom Hubs.	Catholic Charities of Florida	1/1/2010

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK (3 THUMBS UP – 3 THUMBS DOWN)

Thumbs Up
Great idea to test communications prior to needing to use it.
Main strength to me was interacting with the other groups and learning who was who. I didn't have my laptop so couldn't do the satellite communication portion of the exercise. But sharing information with the other individuals, agencies and groups was extremely helpful to me.
I sent Winlink messages to the four SatCom hubs. I received prompt replies from three via Winlink. I received one response from the Pensacola SatCom Hub via my regular email address.
The planning and exercise setup was excellent.
A very good response from a lot of agencies
The idea is good, but the follow through was not good. Need to work more with the people in the field to really simulate what info is really needed during a potential hurricane and when the actual thing occurs.
Had a great area of coverage and did not experience any 'hic-ups'.
Operation was solid after the first few issues were resolved
Well organized, I liked the frequent updates leading up to the drill and multiple points of contact as back ups
Still not sure what the purpose was of sending four emails and nothing more.
Worked as we would hope.
Use of Winlink.
Seems that the event was publicized quite adequately.
The exercise appears to have demonstrated that there are quite a few ready to assist when called upon.
Well Done.
Regular updates.
As part of the North Florida Digital Team, we sent four messages to the SatCom Hubs and received four messages back. We used 1.2 Giga-byte D-Star radios to send and received the messages. The messages originated in Outlook on a PC and then sent from one D-STAR radio to the other 1.2 Giga-byte radio which placed the message onto the internet. The received messages went backward through the same method. This was extremely easy to set up and can be used in the field as a means to get messages from a disaster area to an outside unaffected area. This was first time we had used this method.
Amateur radio backup provides non-terrestrial link.
Simple message scenario was all that was needed for communication test.

Very good origination and planning.
Well organized.
Well planned, good long-ranging communications
Thank you for planning and conducting such an exercise.
Good updates throughout the exercise
Started strong with the updates until the day of the drill.
It was straight forward and well planned electronically.
Very well organized and carried out.
I wished to thank you for allowing me to participate in your exercise. The dedication and time required to produce an exercise of this size and caliber speaks volumes to the desire you have to support the community in their time of need. Please include me in future exercises as I find they support my mission as well and always look for community partners to exercise with.
Drill appeared well-organized. No problems on my end. As a North Carolina based amateur radio operator I can readily send / receive emails via Winlink to / from any operational site inside a potential disaster site in Southeast United States.
Well planned.
No delays between acknowledgements of messages sent.
Communications (SatCom Hub) gear up in running in less than 20 minutes.
Collaborative effort was terrific.
The SatCom Hub proved that it will be a great asset in the midst of a disaster.
After sending my reported messages, I received three responses in a timely manner.
Quick response.
Appreciate the opportunity to participate.
Became aware of additional communication capabilities from the SatCom Hubs of the Florida's Catholic Charities.
Quickness of response from reporting stations.
Disaster Amateur Radio Network (DARN) established that its network can provide UHF / VHF coastal communications to Catholic Charities from Venice to Naples.
Disaster Amateur Radio Network (DARN) can work collaboratively with other emergency communication responders..
Messages can be passed in a timely fashion between Disaster Amateur Radio Network (DARN) and the SatCom Hubs.
Quick communication in the event of an emergency.
Great Exercise.
I found the instructions for what we were to do were clear and could be easily accomplished.

Portal information and maps were clear.
Instructions and procedure was simple and straightforward.
Smooth flow of information.
Received replies to my Winlink messages (both MARS and Amateur) from the Escambia and Volusia County sites.
Appreciate you hosting the exercise and would like to see more in the future.
Well, to be part of so many organizations showed the ability to coordinate efforts. Check-ins were nearly perfect. Operators seemed well versed in radio operation. I was proud and pleased to be a part of the exercise.
Web site was very informative and looks to be well designed.
A good demonstration on our communications capability if e-mail is available.
Timely notice of storm tracking.
Messages sent to the four SatCom Hubs at 10:14AM and received acknowledgements from all four hubs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tallahassee at 10:19AM • Pensacola at 10:23AM • Ft Lauderdale at 10:25AM • Pierson at 11:10AM
Good way to link up with the appropriate resources during a disaster.
Good Drill – Easy Access – Simple Instructions
Very easy to register and participate.
I thought the exercise went off pretty well being it was the first attempt with the e-mail scenarios.
The strengths is the great connections with the different agencies and the speed of the information.
We sent four Winlink messages to each of the SatCom Hubs. We received messages back from three of the SatCom Hubs.
Positive attitude of everyone involved.
The number of people involved from many different venues.
The location in Pierson and local community involvement.
The IT guys from Pensacola
Great to test and do a drill.
Good communication beforehand.
Received three confirmations.
I encouraged as many people as possible to participate in and support to you and your partner's efforts. I have firsthand knowledge of the excellent work your groups provide during disasters.

E-mail fast and efficient thru Winlink.
Seemed to be set up well.
The information leading up to the drill was excellent and sending out the replies on the drill went well.
The organization and information given to the participants was a strong point. The opportunity that this kind of exercise presents for communicators to exercise digital communication skills is excellent. The feedback echo messages were a strong point, which in my situation came via the MARS and Winlink e-mail over digital amateur radio frequencies.
Winlink worked very well. Four messages sent four messages received.
This ran without a hitch and was easy for participants to enter and complete.
The simplicity and the organizational effort shown is excellent.
Number and variety of participants.
The team seemed well versed in the set up of the equipment and how to get the volunteers organized quickly and efficiently
Relatively short response time for two of the four replies.
VERY USER FRIENDLY.
E-mail allows quick and easy participation and a list of participants.
SIMPLE – Great technology
Great partnership support.
Excellent follow-up and map descriptions of hurricane progress.
Great online registrations process.
The most important strength I saw was the human network that was brought together to participate in this exercise. Satellites and computers are the tools that people use to solve the problems. Still the most important problems solvers are the people and the direct resources they provide. I applaud your efforts in bringing so many people in to participate!
I didn't receive any feedback or follow up info so it is hard to say. I did however receive a response to three of my four e-mails so the communications seemed to be effective.
The Situation Reports were a nice touch.
Great if everybody does their part.
Opportunity to try out equipment and software, get to know folks before the event.
Great partnerships - everyone worked well together.
Communications established quickly.
Mock FEMA registrations were a plus.
Overall, a great exercise!

Thumbs Down

Too many messages and too complicated in format. I was often unsure what or when I needed to respond to for the best results

I learned that the Pensacola SatCom Hub was backed up with over 100 messages and had to recruit folks to answer the Winlink messages via regular email. The information about the participation of digital amateur radio was sparse and appeared to me limited to the D-Star group. I learned that that was not the intent.

I only received one response to my four emails,. It was probably due to the qualifier necessary in MARS and Winlink connections.

The message we were to send was very general and did not apply to any of us equally. The overall objectives connected with this exercise were not at all clear. Need to communicate more with the various communities involved. Instructions were weak. Daily communications were repetitive and did not really simulate what would have happened in a real hurricane.

The SatCom Hub doesn't appear to have the ability to operate outside in a downpour, as some equipment may need to be placed outside the vehicle for operation. Also the SatCom Hub was difficult for operator to set up, as he had a few un-expected issues (nothing new there...I have that problem too). It would be advantageous to make sure many folks know the SatCom Hub system very well in each area, for redundancy.

Are other communication avenues being evaluated as well?

We were asked to send four emails and request a response. We only heard back from two of the four SatCom Hubs. There was also a conference call which only a few of those participating were on and not even all the sites were on the call. There was no report giving to participating organizations after the exercise.

Sent messages to all four SatCom Hubs received replies from two. Others that participated from SV-CERT only received one reply

Would we have internet access as the hurricane hit our location?

Sent four messages receive two.

Per your instructions, it was stated that I was to e-mail each of the four SatCom Hubs. If this was your intention, I don't think that this was emphasized properly. Please let me know if possible, what your intentions on this matter was.

Links were not working. My son had to work out how to cut and paste links to take part. No follow-up to let us know how it went till this.

This station had received just tow replies having sent messages to all for SatCom Hubs.

Sent four messages and only one response was received.

Only received replies from Broward and Volusia County SatCom Hubs.

More notice of the drill.

Might have done a better job explaining the nuts and bolts of how it was going to work.

I sent four e-mails, received no replies and was disappointed to return to the website the next day or two and find no report of how the drill went.
The use of Yahoo Email as a means of communication. Yahoo while a great service and I am a user of the system there was some discussion as to the legitimacy of the exercise based upon the yahoo domain use. I submitted messages to all for SatCom Hubs and received replies back from two. I do not know if the other two were missed due to volume, failed to reach the hub, or were blocked by my network when replied to. I own some domains that are generic and would be happy to allow you to use them as aliases in your next exercise.
Communications (SatCom Hub) gear needs tweaking.
FEMA assistance website navigation is less than friendly.
Confusion about sites caused me to send messages to each site, not realizing they were all forwarded to a main location. Better explanation would have prevented four messages instead of one. If everyone did the same thing the traffic could have unnecessarily overloaded the process.
I had trouble connecting to my main office which our IT Department is looking into.
I was able to hook to FEMA to do registration, however our signal was lost a couple of times
Once the bugs were worked out it ran smoothly
I learned to be patient and to remember to show that to a survivor in the midst of chaos.
At 9:55AM I sent my reported message to Broward County SatCom Hub but never received a reply.
Not sure if my response was received.
The command center never sent an opening for business notice, nor a permission to close network notice.
When using on-line e-mail an established format should be followed and a common numbering system employed to ensure messages have been transmitted / received.
Feedback was erratic (slow response) and incomplete.
Did not receive replies to my Winlink messages (both MARS and Amateur) from Broward and Leon County SatCom Hubs. I know the messages went through as I received my copies of both messages (Mars and Amateur) to my personal e-mail address.
When logging on to the web sites there was a warning about logging on. Original instructions led you to believe that you needed to wait until the day of the communications exercise to register. Also, the website software assumed that everyone uses Microsoft Outlook. This made it difficult to respond.
Not sure of the type of action we in the Gulf Gate community of Sarasota County were being asked to take.

<p>We had requested the e-mail notices be sent to Jack Leonard, Facilities Supervisor, yet it appeared that the notices were just sent to reply sender. Lauren Wickstrom forwarded each notice to Jack as they were received. Please make his e-mail address the primary address.</p>
<p>I would like to have seen genuine information sent to responders, perhaps a realistic interaction, a dry run "as it were."</p>
<p>I don't believe that some that took part in the exercise realized they were to download the scenarios in their area in order to report the damage or the shelter availability.</p>
<p>We are going to have computer problem if we have bad weather (thunderstorm).</p>
<p>There will be weaknesses when you have some people who come in and just take over. You must work as a team not one person. With team work you get more accomplished.</p>
<p>Not all SatCom Hubs were operational. I haven't been notified of any outcomes and am very interested in how it went from your end.</p>
<p>Did not receive confirmation back from Ft. Lauderdale SatCom Hub.</p>
<p>Immediate feedback as to if the message sent were actually received.</p>
<p>I only received confirmation from three SatCom Hubs. The fourth message was sent two times.</p>
<p>Two of the groups I sent my e-mail to did not respond. It was late in the drill, but well before the drill was over with.</p>
<p>I never received any reply from any of the e-mails sent to the locations.</p>
<p>Registration for the exercise may have deterred some MARS members from participating.</p>
<p>Depending on email may not be practical during an actual hurricane event.</p>
<p>It was brought up that the connection would be an open / public connection. This may hamper / overload the system if outside computers with wireless access start connecting to a SatCom Hub. Possible solutions brought up were passwords that would be updated every couple of hours. During emergency / crisis situations people do desperate things and just telling them they are not allowed to log in – is just not realistic.</p>
<p>I would like to have known how the exercise turned out. I find it hard to evaluate if I don't know how it was supposed to work, what you were using to evaluate that and how it turned out.</p>
<p>Do exercise before the hurricane season begins.</p>
<p>Electronic exercise version lacks hands on" experience".</p>
<p>Wireless internet lost connection several times in Pierson. Disrupted FEMA registrations.</p>

APPENDIX C: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
COMM	Communications
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEIL	Florida Emergency Information Line
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Command
ICS	Incident Command System
IMT	Incident Management Team
JIC	Joint Information Center
LOFR	Liaison Officer
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIMS	National Incident Management System
OPS	Operations
PIO	Public Information Officer
SatCom Hub	Satellite Communications Trailer
SERT	State Emergency Response Team
SitRep	Situation Report
SOG	Standard Operating Guideline
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UC	Unified Command