Start: 1950 L – Stop: 2012 L

Pinellas ACS Activation

1.1 OVERVIEW.

Thank you, Bob. Good evening to the net and Happy New Year! With the start of a new year, I thought that tonight we would be a good time review ACS activation. This presentation will answer the following questions.

a. Who has the authority to Activate ACS/ARES® within Pinellas County?

b. What are the events that could cause ACS/ARES® to Activate?

c. What does Activation mean?

d. How will you be notified about an activation event?

e. What should you do when you're notified that ACS/ARES® has been activated?

1.2 ACTIVATION OF ACS/ARES® WITHIN PINELLAS COUNTY.

So, let's start by talking about who's authorized to activate ACS/ARES. The Radio Officer or in his absence, the deputy radio officer is responsible for the activation of ACS/ARES® within Pinellas County. This will likely occur when he/she is notified by a served agency that they have a need for ACS communicators.

1.3 EVENTS THAT COULD CAUSE ACTIVATION.

There are many reasons we could be activated.

a. A Loss of internal or external communications, (phone or radio), in any facility that contributes to the public safety or welfare, (e.g., phone cable cuts, hospital Private Branch Exchange (PBX) outages, etc.).

b. Augment communications due to the overloading of the communications in any facility that contributes to the public safety or welfare.

    c.   Provide communications for a served agency in order to augment their existing facilities or to provide interfaces to other agencies during emergencies or special events.

        (1)   Very Important Person (VIP) visits

        (2)   Search and Rescue operations

        (3)   Weather events (e.g., Severe thunderstorms, tornados, flash floods, tropical storms, and hurricanes)

        (4)   Industrial accidents, hazardous material spills, major fires (e.g., Urban or rural wildfires)

        (5)   Widespread power outages

        (6)   Cyber-attacks and acts of terror (e.g., Christmas day Bombing at the Nashville AT&T switch facility that crippled telephone and internet services across the region).

        (7)   Acts of War

    d.   Communications for non-emergency events that support public safety. (e.g., parades, bicycle races, runs, walk-a-thons, etc.).

    e.   And finally, relief or support for ARES®, ACS, or RACES organizations outside of Pinellas County.

1.4   ACTIVATION LEVELS.

What does activation mean? We normally think of activation as the activity associated with deploying to specific locations to support communications; however, like anything else we do, activation is really a multistep process that can be divided into several phases.

When time permits, ACS will walk through each phase one at a time. First, a decision is made that activation is possible, ACS leadership begins planning for a full activation, the membership begins preparing for deployment, and finally, if required, we grab our gear and head to our deployment locations.

To better organize these activities, four activation levels have been defined within our Emergency Communications Plan.

      a.   *Activation Level 4 (NORMAL):* Normal operations.

      b.   *Activation Level 3 (ALERT):* ACS leadership have been notified by one or more served agencies that ACS Communicators may be needed in the near future. However, no specific time frame for activation has been provided.

      c.   *Activation Level 2 (STANDBY):* For Level 2, there is a high probability that ACS/ARES® will be activated. This level of activation will be established when ACS/ARES® is notified that the need for assistance is **imminent**.

      d.   *Activation Level 1 (ACTIVATE):* This level of activation will occur when ACS/ARES® officials are notified by one or more served agencies that the need for assistance is **immediate**.

Let's walk through an example of a potential activation.

During hurricane season, the time between initial formation of a tropical depression and the potential landfall of a tropical storm or hurricane will normally provide us with several days or even a week of advanced notice that a local activation will occur. For this scenario, activation will progress orderly from Level 4 upwards through Level 3 (**ALERT**), Level 2 (**STANDBY**), and Level 1 (**FULL ACTIVATION**) as the storm track and landfall location solidifies. It's also possible that ACS could fall back from a Level 2 to a level 4 if the storm track changes.

In this scenario, we could see the problem coming and had time to prepare; however, this will not always be the case. Severe thunderstorms, tornados, flash floods, industrial accidents, widespread power outages, cyber-attacks, and acts of terror can occur with little, or no warning and ACS may need to transition from Normal operation, level 4, to Full Activation, level 1, immediately.

1.5 NOTIFICATION

So, how will the membership be notified? As I stated previously, the radio officer, or in his absence the Deputy Radio Officer, are the individuals who has the authority to activate Pinellas

ACS. They are also responsible for notifying the ACS membership that activation has taken place. Four methods have been established to support notification.

a.   ALERT PINELLAS notification to all ACS members.

b.   Email to all ACS members.

c.   Text and/or call critical ACS members. Critical members will notify the entire team using a calling tree structure.

d.   Announcements on the W4ACS Repeater.

As an important reminder to everyone, the first three methods will only work properly if your contact information in the ARES DB is up to date and accurate. I strongly encourage everyone to check their information in the DB and verify that it is correct.

Now, as a final note about notification. it's always possible that depending on the event, cell service, phone, and internet access may not be available to notify members about activation. Therefore, it is imperative that all members begin monitoring the ACS/ARES® repeater, W4ACS, for activation announcements as soon as they become aware of a potential activation event.

1.6   MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES DURING ACTIVATION.

What should you do when you're notified that ACS/ARES® has been activated?

a.   ***Ensure that family and property are safe.***

b.   Use telephone, text, or email to notify/update the Radio Officer about your ability to support activation. If cell, phone, and internet service are unavailable, provide activation status via the ACS/ARES® Tactical-Resource net.

c.   ***Do-Not Self-Deploy.***

NOTE: *Individuals who deploy without an assignment from the EC/RO, his/her designee, or the NCS will not be covered by worker's compensation.*

d.   Check-in to the ACS/ARES® Tactical-Resource net.

e.   Review *the Pinellas County ACS/ARES® Emergency Communications Plan and Standard Operating Procedures* Document. This document is located on the

Pinellas ACS Web Site and provides detailed information about the activities that should be performed during ACS/ARES® activation.

1.7   QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

I'd like to pause here for a minute and ask if anyone has a comment or question about tonight's presentation. If you have a comment or question, please provide me with your call sign, slowly, clearly, and phonetically so I don't make a mistake when I respond. And then ask your question or provide me with your comment.

This is WA1RYQ.

<p style="text-align:center;color:red;">**ACTION - PAUSING FOR QUESTIONS**</p>

1.8   CONCLUSION.

That's all I have for this week's training session. Let me conclude with a couple of reminders.

1.   The next Winlink Training net is scheduled for this Wednesday, January 5th, 2022, at 1930 hours local. This will be a mixed voice and data net with the voice segment taking place on the W4ACS repeater.

A Winlink bulletin describing the planned net activities was sent to all registered Winlink net participants on Monday January 3rd, 2022. A copy of the bulletin and detailed instructions for creating the planned messages exchanged during the net will also be posted on the Pinellas ACS Website.

2.   I strongly encourage everyone to provide me with comments and suggestions for future training activities. I can be contacted at WA1RYQ@ARRL.net.

Now with that I'll turn it back to Net Control.

1.9 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS.

The following table contains a summary of the comments and questions provided by the membership during the presentation.

No.	Call Sign	Comments	Response
1	KJ4RUS	SKYWARN events like severe thunderstorms do not require the ACS RO to activate. Any person can activate a SKYWARN Net. Need to differentiate between SKYWARN net activation and ACS Activation.	I will update the ACS/ARES® comm plan to differentiate between SKYWARN net and ACS Activation.
2	KG4HSN	Encountered a problem with the www.aresdb.com website. Browser stated that the site was not safe because the site does not have a valid certificate. Is it possible to update the site so that it has a valid certificate?	KJ4RUS: Users have several options to address this problem. (1) the user can go ahead and trust the site. (2) users can manually add this to the list of trusted sites. (3) MS Edge/ Explorer users have reported problems. Recommend that the membership use Chrome or Firefox.
3	W8QFV	Spur of the moment activations should be addressed. It would also be helpful if notification for activation enabled the membership to immediately respond so that ACS leadership knew who was available to support.	Agree. Industrial accidents and wildfires are examples of events that would cause ACS to immediately transition from level 4 to level 1 activation. **Note**: A Pinellas Alert is issued with a request for response. Recipients are able to respond (Y) or (N) to the activation response received via text.
		No Additional Questions or comments	