

Start: 1954 L – Stop: 2003 L

Low Power Simplex Net Operation

1.1 OVERVIEW.

Thank-you, Bob. Good evening to the net. First, I'd like to thank all those who participated in last Thursday's Low Power Simplex training drill. We had a reasonably good turn-out with 16 members participating. We started at 1930 hours local on the W4ACS repeater and completed the drill 1 hour and 4 minutes later at approximately 2034 hours. We were able to complete all our planned activities and successfully demonstrate the drill objectives.

For those who did not participate, I'll quickly review what took place.

1.2 DESCRIPTION

The ACS/ARES® Tactical-Resource Net was established at ACTIVATION LEVEL 1 using the primary ACS repeater system, W4ACS. The Net Control Station (NCS) was located at the Pinellas County EOC. Once the net was established, the NCS notified the net participants that the net was transitioning to a county wide simplex net on a frequency of 146.430 Mhz. This is the Pinellas ACS Simplex Plan A. Once on the simplex frequency, the NCS re-established the net by call for net check-ins. Relays were used when appropriate.

When simplex net check-in was complete, the NCS notified all net participants to transition to Low power (5-watts or less) and begin using emergency power if it was available. Again, relays were used to ensure all net participants were notified of the network power change.

Following the network power change, the NCS again call for net check-ins and re-established the net. Once the net was reestablished, the NCS notified all net participants to transition back to the W4ACS repeater for question, comments and net shut down.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

This Drill has three objectives.

- a. Establish a county wide simplex net using normal RF power levels in accordance with the procedures documented in the *Pinellas ACS/ARES® Emergency Communications and Standard Operating Procedures* document.
- b. Transition the simplex net to a low RF power setting and back-up DC power sources (If available).
- c. Exchange message traffic and network operations data within a simplex net.

1.4 AFTER ACTION REPORT

Following the Drill several members provided feedback and recommendations on the exercise. I'm going to walk through those comments now. But first I want to remind everyone that the purpose of a drill is to identify shortfalls and areas where we can improve. So, even though I believe we met the drill's objectives we found a few areas that will need attention.

No.	Call Sign	Comments	Response
1	KA4EBX	Several times during simplex net operation the audio level of the NCS became extremely low and it was difficult for net participants to hear. This problem was reported by several net participants.	The microphone associated with the radio at the EOC is a hand mic. The NCS operator, WA1RYQ, is most likely at fault; however, recommend that additional testing be performed to confirm that it was an operator error.
2	WA1RYQ	The procedure used to change the net power level from high power to low power was confusing. It did not clearly state when the power level change should take place. Net participants did not know if the power change was to take place immediately or at a specific time.	Modify procedure to specify a specific time at which the entire net will transition to low power.

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No.	Call Sign	Comments	Response
3	WA1RYQ	Recreating the timeline of net activities is an important task during an activation event. The NCS found that it was difficult for the NCS to both manage the net and keep an accurate log of activities.	If possible, the NCS should record the net so that the exact timeline can be verified against the notes taken during the net. If the NCS cannot record the net, the NCS should request that the alternate NCS or another net participant record the net activities. I would like to thank Will, W7WMS, for his assistance in recording the net.
4	WA1RYQ	The logging procedure used by the NCS did not enable the NCS to easily identify missing stations during simplex net operation. This caused the NCS to miss a total of three stations during the simplex net. Additionally, the bookkeeping at the NCS should also identify those stations operating on emergency power and each station's RF power settings.	Develop a better approach for logging and tracking net participants. The new approach cannot rely on the internet, phone line, or cellular service.
5	WA1RYQ	Although greatly improved, the net check-in procedures did not always provide net control with the requested information.	
6	WA1RYQ	Recommend that a training class for net control operators be developed and offered to the membership.	

1.5 QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

I'd like to pause here for a minute and ask if anyone has a comment or question about the drill. 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.

ACTION - PAUSING FOR QUESTIONS

1.6 CONCLUSION.

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

1. The next Winlink Training net is scheduled for this Wednesday, March 2nd, at 1930 hours local. This will be an on-line zoom presentation and is part 2 of our introduction to Winlink series.

No Winlink experience is required. I would encourage everyone who is interested in Winlink to attend. Invitations will be sent to all registered Winlink training net participants earlier tomorrow.

If you would like to attend and are not currently a registered Winlink net participant, please send me an email at WA1RYQ@arrl.net and I will send you an invitation.

2. Finally, 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.

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1.7 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	W8QFV	Please send me whatever information you have associated with the Drill.	Will do.
		No additional comments or questions.	