

Start: 1948 L – Stop: 2003 L

Pinellas ACS Activation

1.1 OVERVIEW.

Thank you, Bob. Good evening to the net. Tonight, we'll be reviewing ACS activation. This presentation will answer the following questions.

- a. Who has the authority to Activate ACS within Pinellas County?
- b. What are the events that could cause ACS 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 has been activated?

1.2 ACTIVATION OF ACS WITHIN PINELLAS COUNTY.

So, let's start by talking about who's authorized to activate ACS. The ACS Radio Officer or in his absence, the deputy radio officer is responsible for the activation of ACS 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 to augment their existing facilities or to provide interfaces to other agencies during training activities, special events, or emergencies.

- (1) Drills and exercises (e.g., Pinellas County Government, Pinellas County Schools, Civil Air Patrol)
 - (2) Very Important Person (VIP) visits
 - (3) Search and Rescue operations
 - (4) Weather events (e.g., tornados, flash floods, tropical storms, and hurricanes)
 - (5) Industrial accidents, hazardous material spills, major fires (e.g., Urban or rural wildfires)
 - (6) Widespread power outages
 - (7) 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).
 - (8) Acts of War
- d. Communications for non-emergency events that support public safety.
- (1) Parades, bicycle races, runs, walk-a-thons, etc.
- f. PinCo ACS Drills and Exercises
- 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 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. For tropical cyclones, this will occur shortly after the EOC issues its first Situation Report corresponding to a tropical depression, storm, or hurricane.
- c. Activation Level 2 (STANDBY): For Level 2, there is a high probability that ACS will be activated. This level of activation will be established when ACS is notified that the need for assistance is **imminent**. For tropical cyclones, this usually corresponds to the EOC transitioning to activation level 2.
- d. Activation Level 1 (ACTIVATE): This level of activation will occur when ACS officials are notified by one or more served agencies that the need for assistance is **immediate**. For tropical cyclones, this usually corresponds to the EOC transitioning to activation level 1.

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 Hurricane Ian, the first situation report was issued six days prior to landfall.

For this scenario, activation should 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 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 ACS radio officer, or in his absence the Deputy Radio Officer, are the individuals who have 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. The primary method is ALERT PINELLAS. This system sends text and email notifications to all registered ACS members.
- b. As a backup, the leadership can send emails to the ACS membership using the information in the ARES Database.
- 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, you will only receive notifications from ALERT PINELLAS if your contact information has been properly entered into the system. If you did not receive last week's severe weather situation report notification from ALERT PINELLAS, please send me an email so that I can work with Clayton to update your information in the ALERT PINELLAS system.

As a back-up to PINELLAS ALERT, the leadership team will be able to send you emails and text messages if your contact information is up to date in the ARES DB. I strongly encourage everyone to check their information in the ARES 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 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 has been activated?

- a. When notified of a Level 3 Activation (Alert)
 - (1) **Review and update family emergency plan.**
 - (2) Use telephone, text, or email to notify the EC/RO about your ability to support activation.
 - (3) Inventory and check radio equipment and personal go-kit. Winlink users should verify that software and forms are up to date.
 - (4) Charge Hand-Held Transceiver (HT), computer, and emergency batteries.
 - (5) Test emergency generator and top-off fuel supply.
 - (6) Top-off fuel for car/truck.
 - (7) Monitor email for ACS activation notifications and ICS 205 updates.
 - (8) Monitor the ACS Tactical-Resource net for updates.
 - (9) Monitor local news reports.

- b. When notified of a Level 2 Activation (STANDBY), in addition to the actions identified for level 3 activation, perform the following.
 - (1) **Ensure that family and property are safe.**
 - (2) 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 Tactical-Resource net.
 - (3) Emergency Go-kit should be packed and ready for immediate deployment. If ACS transitions to level 1, members should be ready to deploy within approximately 15 minutes.
 - (4) **Do-Not Self-Deploy.**

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

- (5) Check-in to the ACS Tactical-Resource net.

- (6) Review *the Pinellas County ACS 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 activation.
 - (7) Download any event specific information from the PACS website. During the hurricane Ian activation, the event's Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205) was posted to the website.
- c. When notified of a Level 1 Activation, in addition to the actions identified for level 3 and level 2 activation, perform the following.
- (1) ***Ensure that family and property are safe.***
 - (2) **Do-Not Self-Deploy.**
 - (3) Wait for deployment instructions from the Radio Officer, his designee, or the NCS.

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.

ACTION - PAUSING FOR QUESTIONS

1.8 CONCLUSION.

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

1. I strongly encourage everyone to provide comments and suggestions for future training activities. I can be contacted at WA1RYQ@ARRL.net or you can send me an email via our groups.io website.

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
		No Additional Questions or comments	