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Pinellas ACS Activation

1.1 OVERVIEW.

Thank you, Bob. Good evening to the net. Tonight, we'll be reviewing ACS activation. As a result feedback received from those team members who deployed during the hurricane Idalia activation, we've made a few changes to the activation process.

1.2 ACTIVATION OF ACS WITHIN PINELLAS COUNTY.

So, let's start by talking about who's authorized to activate ACS. No change here. The ACS Radio Officer or in his absence, the deputy radio officer is responsible for the activation of ACS within Pinellas County. This will occur when the RO is notified by Pinellas County Emergency Management that they have a need for ACS communicators.

1.3 EVENTS THAT COULD CAUSE ACTIVATION.

The reasons for activation also remain unchanged.

    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.

So, let's talk about activation levels. This is where the majority of changes are taking place. Prior to Hurricane Idalia, PinCo ACS had four activation levels. Based on the feedback received from the team, I've reduced the number of activation levels documented in the communications plan from four to three.

  a.   *Activation Level 3 (NORMAL):* Normal operations.

  b.   *Activation Level 2 (Mobilize)*

  c.   *Activation Level 1 (ACTIVATE)*

For each activation level, I'll present the operational objectives and tasking to be performed by the ACS Leadership Team and the general membership.

1.4.1 Activation Level 3 (NORMAL).

Let's walk through these levels one at a time starting with Level 3, normal operations. There are five operational objectives to be performed during level 3.

a. Participate in scheduled local ACS, statewide, and regional training nets.

b. Perform periodic preventive maintenance on PinCo ACS communications equipment.

c. Review and update ACS member contact information within the **Alert Pinellas** and ARES® database systems.

d. Assemble, inventory, and test personal radio go-kits.

e. Complete PinCo ACS training requirements.

1.4.1.1 ACS Leadership Team

To meet these objectives, the work is divided between the ACS leadership team and the general membership. The Leadership Team will:

a. Participate in statewide SARnet and regional SHARES training nets.

b. Create and update, as required, preventive maintenance procedures for PinCo ACS communications equipment stored at the EOC (e.g., Command Runners, SatRunners, Shelter go-kits, etc.)

c. Schedule periodic preventive maintenance on all PinCo ACS communications equipment.

    (1) Assign ACS members to perform preventive maintenance actions.

    (2) Review the results from each preventive maintenance action and perform corrective maintenance as required.

d. Test the operation of the **Alert Pinellas** notification system.

    (1) Periodically, send an **Alert Pinellas** notification to the ACS membership. The alert should request confirmation.

    (2) Contact each member who failed to confirm receipt of the notification and remove members from the database who no longer want to be members of PinCo ACS.

e.   When notified of discrepancies in the **Alert Pinellas** system, update the database with the corrected information.

1.4.1.2   General Membership

So what should the general membership be during level 3, normal operations?

a.   Participate in local ACS training nets, drills, and exercises.

b.   Perform preventive maintenance actions on PinCo ACS communications equipment and document results.

c.   Review for accuracy the personal contact information stored with the **Alert Pinellas** and ARES® database systems. When errors are found, notify the ACS Leadership Team and provide them with the information needed to correct the discrepancies.

d.   Assemble, inventory, and test a personal radio go-kit.

(1)   At a minimum, inventory go-kit contents on a quarterly basis.

(2)   Test radio go-kit monthly for proper operation.

(3)   If your go-kit includes a computer, check computer operating system and radio unique application software for updates on a monthly basis.

(a)   Winlink Express and associated forms.

(b)   Virtual TNC software (e.g., VARA, VARA FM, UZ7HO)

e.   Complete PinCo ACS training requirements.

(1)   IS 100, IS 200, IS 700, and IS 800

1.4.2   Activation Level 2 (MOBILIZE)

The first question we need to answer is what set of events will trigger activation level 2?

Pinellas County Emergency Management will issue an EOC Activation Notice prior to PinCo ACS activation. The notice will specify the date and time that the ACS EOC radio room team is required to be on site at the EOC and ready to work.

Pinellas ACS will transition to level 2, Mobilize, upon receipt of the EOC Activation Notice or at the direction of the PinCo ACS RO.

1.4.3 Level 2 operational objectives

There are five operational objectives to be performed during level 2 activation.

a. Notify the ACS membership that Pinellas County Emergency Management has directed ACS to activate.

b. Identify ACS members available for deployment and assign each member to an ACS communication team.

c. Begin development of the ACS Incident Action Plan.

d. Prepare personal Go-kits for immediate deployment.

e. Authorize deployment of ACS communication teams.

1.4.3.1 Radio Officer

The RO or his/her designee will:

a. Notify the Pinellas County ACS membership that activation level 2 has been established. The announcement should describe the reason for the planned activation, the scope of the activation, and provide an approximate time frame for the activation. The announcement should also request that each ACS member notify the ACS Leadership Team of their ability to support activation.

(1) If internet and phone services are available, the Radio Officer will

(a) Issue an *Alert Pinellas* notification to all ACS members.

(b) Send an email to all ACS members using the ARES® Database system.

(2) If internet and phone services are *not* available, use the W4ACS repeater system to contact a member of the ACS leadership team, assign a member of the team to the role of NCS, and direct the NCS to establish the ACS Tactical Resource net.

b. Authorize ACS communication teams to activate and deploy.

1.4.3.2 ACS Leadership Team

When the RO notifies the leadership team that ACS is mobilizing, the Leadership Team will:

a.   Determine the type and number of ACS communication teams required to support the activation.

b.   Assign ACS members to each identified communication team.

c.   Notify each communication team member of their assignment. The notification should include the following information.

    (1)   Team assignment and deployment location.

    (2)   Date and time each team member is required to arrive at the staging area or deployment location.

    (3)   Expected duration of deployment.

    (4)   Name and contact information for all deployed ACS team members. This information will be distributed using an encrypted ICS 205A.

d.   Begin development of the ACS Incident Action Plan for operational period one.

1.4.3.3   General Membership

When the membership is notified that ACS is mobilizing, each member should:

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

b.   ***Do-Not Self-Deploy.***

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

c.   Use telephone, text, or email to notify/update the RO about their ability to support activation. If cell and internet service are unavailable, provide activation status via the ACS Tactical-Resource net.

d.   Inventory and check radio equipment go-kit. Winlink users should verify that software and forms are up to date.

e.   Charge Hand-Held Transceiver (HT), computer, and emergency batteries.

f.   Test emergency generator and top-off fuel supply.

g   Top-off fuel for car/truck.

h.   Monitor email for ACS activation notifications and Incident Action Plan updates.

i.   Monitor the ACS Tactical-Resource net for updates.

j.   Monitor local news reports.

k.   Prepare personal Go-kit for immediate deployment. When ACS transitions to level 1, members should be ready to deploy within approximately 15 minutes.

l.   Review this plan.

m.   If the ACS Tactical-Resource Net is active, check-in to the net.

1.4.4   Activation Level 1 (ACTIVATE)

Pinellas County Emergency Management will issue an EOC Activation Notice prior to ACS activation. The notice will specify the date and time that the ACS EOC radio room team is required to be on site at the EOC and ready to work.

Pinellas ACS will transition to level 1, activation, when the Pinellas County EOC begins its first operational period that requires the ACS EOC radio room team to be on site at the EOC.

1.4.4.1   Operational Objectives

There are four operational objectives that need to be performed during level 1 activation.

a.   Complete work on any outstanding Level 2 task.

b.   Distribute equipment to ACS communications teams.

c.   Complete and distribute the ACS Incident Action Plan.

d.   Establish and maintain communications between all deployed ACS communication teams and the Pinellas County EOC radio room.

1.4.4.2   ACS Leadership Team

The Leadership Team will:

a.   Complete work on any outstanding Level 2 task.

b.   Complete the ACS Incident Action Plan and distribute the plan to all deployed ACS communication teams. Distribution can be via email or Winlink.

c.   Perform any additional task required to support the RO and the EOC shift supervisor.

1.4.4.3   Net Control Stations

At the beginning of the first operational period, the PinCo ACS EOC radio room team will assume the role of NCS for the ACS Tactical-Resource net and perform the following actions.

a.   If not previously activated, establish the ACS Tactical-Resource net on the W4ACS repeater. Net Control scripts and procedures for activation level 1 are documented in section E.2.

b.   Announce that activation level 1 has been established.

c.   Provide assignment instructions to the membership as appropriate.

(1)   Maintain an up-to-date list of each deployed ACS Communications team. The list should include the deployment location, time and date each team was deployed, the time each team member departed home for deployment, the time each team member arrived at the deployment location, and the operational status of each deployment site.

If the ACS EOC radio room team determines that the volume of traffic on the ACS Tactical-Resource Net cannot be effectively managed using a single repeater, the radio room team will establish the ACS Traffic Net on the WD4SCD repeater. The EOC Radio Room Team will assume the role of NCS for the ACS Traffic net.

1.4.4.4   General Membership

In addition to the steps performed for level 2 activation, members should:

d.   Verify that their Emergency Go-kit packed and ready for immediate deployment.

e.   Check into the ACS Tactical-Resource Net **_only_** if you are available for deployment. If you are **_not_** available for deployment, continue to monitor the net for status updates.

f.   If notified of an assignment by the RO, the ACS Leadership Team, or the NCS, perform the following actions.

(1)   Notify the NCS when you leave your current location and are enroute to your assignment.

NOTE: _Each ACS member who is deployed in response to an approved activation event will be covered by worker's compensation for volunteers. The coverage starts when the ACS member responds to a deployment request (sent to him/her via text, phone call, or NCS message) indicating that the member is leaving his/her home and is now enroute to a deployment location. The time of this response message is recorded by the NCS and used to start the clock for worker's comp._

       (2)   If you require additional equipment to support the assignment, proceed to the EOC to obtain the equipment. Once you have the equipment in hand, proceed to the specified location or staging area. Notify the NCS upon your arrival at the destination.

       (3)   If you do not require additional equipment, proceed directly to the specified location or staging area. Notify the NCS upon arrival.

NOTE: _When someone calls in to report travel, the Tactical Net Control in the radio room of the EOC will make a note stating that the person is enroute to a specific location. When the traveler reports that they have arrived, the EOC will close out the associated travel monitor. If the EOC does not hear back from the traveler, the EOC will call them in approximately 30 minutes to find out where they are located or, if necessary, send someone to look for them._

1.5 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 align="center">**ACTION - PAUSING FOR QUESTIONS**</p>

1.6   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.

1.7   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
		No Additional Questions or comments	