Start: 1947 L – Stop: 2000 L

Event Specific Operations

1.1 OVERVIEW.

Thank-you Bob and good evening to the net. The latest update to the Pinellas County ACS Emergency Communications Plan is in final review and should be released to the membership before the end of the month. Most of the changes in this release are intended to incorporate the lessons learned during Hurricanes Ian and Idalia.

The section describing the events that will cause ACS to activate has been expanded and updated. There are now eight event categories in the document.

a. **Tropical Storms and Hurricanes**

b. **Non-Tropical Weather Events**

c. **Temperature Related Electrical Power Outages:** These events occur when extreme environmental temperatures significantly increase the amount of electrical power needed to run either air conditioning or heating units. In some cases, the electrical power grid supporting Pinellas County may become overtaxed resulting in brownouts, rolling black-outs, or a complete loss of power.

d. **Public Safety Communications Emergency:** This is defined as the 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 PBX outages, etc.)

e. **Localized Emergencies:** These events include but are not limited to industrial accidents, hazardous material spills, and major urban fires. The scope of this type of emergency is limited to neighborhoods, industrial zones, or city blocks.

f. **Regional or National Emergencies:** These events include but are not limited to widespread power outages, cyber-attacks, acts of terror, and acts of war.

g. **Search and Rescue**

h. **Non-Emergency Special Events:** These events include but are not limited to parades, bicycle races, runs, walk-a-thons, and VIP visits.

Tonight, I'll be providing the net with an overview of the severe weather events that could cause ACS to activate, the potential impacts to critical infrastructure we need to plan for, the communication networks that could be activated, and the ACS assets required during a deployment.

1.1.1 Tropical Storms and Hurricanes

Tropical storms and hurricanes are a frequent occurrence in the western Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico. The time between initial formation of a tropical depression and the potential landfall of a tropical storm or hurricane will normally provide ACS members with several days or even a week of advanced notice that a local activation will occur. For this scenario, ACS activation will progress orderly from Level 3 upwards through Level 2 and Level 1 as the storm track and landfall location solidifies.

Depending on the size, projected path, and timing of the storm, emergency managers may order evacuations and open all or a limited number of shelters.

Once activated in support of the storm, the **ACS Tactical-Resource net**, the **Winlink Data net, SARnet,** and the **Florida Statewide HF Emergency Net** will be activated. The **ACS Traffic Net**, the **ARES® VHF Traffic Net**, and the **SHARES** net will be activated on an as-needed basis.

ACS Communication Teams will be deployed to the EOC, all activated shelters, and additional critical infrastructure sites identified by PinCo Emergency Management.

The ACS Leadership Team will need to assess the potential scope of the emergency to determine the number and types of ACS communication teams to deploy. Deployment sites without emergency power will need teams to arrive with one or more sources of back-up power (e.g., batteries, generator, solar).

Ideally, two ACS members should be assigned to each communications team. Whenever possible, at least one of the ACS members on each team should be Winlink qualified and be equipped to support the Winlink data net. If the number of Winlink qualified members is limited, the ACS Leadership Team should assign Winlink assets to teams deployed to locations where a high volume of traffic is anticipated (e.g., EOCs, Hospitals, Special Needs shelters, etc.).

Prior to landfall, members can assume that all area VHF/UHF repeater networks and Winlink RMS gateways are fully operational and available to support the activation event. Power, phone, cell, and internet services will also be available at all shelter locations. Members will be able to freely move between home and deployment locations in support of shift change and staff leveling requirements.

However, as landfall approaches, the storm comes ashore, and in the aftermath of the storm, the status of critical infrastructure can change rapidly. The storm may cause local or wide area power, cell service, and internet outages that may last from a few hours to several days. Movement within the county is likely to be difficult or impossible until debris is cleared from the roadways. Therefore, the go-kits assembled by members should contain, as a minimum, the personal support (e.g., clothing, medicine, personal hygiene, etc.) and communications equipment needed to operate independently for 3 to 5 days.

During and after the storm, the operational availability of local VHF/UHF repeater networks and Winlink RMS gateways may be impacted. The contingency modes documented in section **Error! Reference source not found.** of the communications plan will need to be reviewed and activated as required.

If in the aftermath of the storm, emergency managers establish asset staging areas or incident command posts, the ACS Leadership Team may deploy a Command-Runner™ and/or SatRunner® asset to provide VHF, UHF, HF, and satellite communications links; a local Wi-Fi computer network; and FirstNet® phone service to the deployment site. Only those members trained to transport, emplace, configure, and operate Command-Runner™ and SatRunner® assets will be deployed to these locations.

1.1.2 Non-Tropical Weather Events

Non-tropical weather events include severe thunderstorms, flash floods, and tornados. These severe weather events have the potential to cause significant property damage, serious injuries, and death. ACS and SKYWARN® members should monitor National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio (NWR) and local news outlets for severe

weather warnings. The SKYWARN® net should be activated in accordance with the *Pinellas County ACS SKYWARN® Operations Plan* document.

In the aftermath of a storm, an immediate damage assessment or the potential for flash flooding may cause emergency managers to order an evacuation and/or open a limited number of evacuation shelters. Assistance from the ARC may be requested. The event may cause localized power, cell, and internet outages. Movement in and around the impacted area may be difficult or impossible.

If activated in support of an emergency, the **ACS Tactical-Resource net** and the **Winlink Data net** will be activated. The **ACS Traffic Net**, the **ARES® VHF Traffic Net**, **SARnet,** and the **Florida Statewide HF Emergency Net** will be activated on an as-needed basis.

ACS Communication Teams will be deployed to the EOC, all activated shelters, and additional critical infrastructure sites identified by PinCo Emergency Management.

NOTE: *The W4ACS repeater is the primary repeater system for SKYWARN® operations within Pinellas County. If the ACS Leadership Team directs the NCS to establish a Tactical-Resource net when a SKYWARN® net is already active on the W4ACS repeater, the NCS for the Tactical-Resource net will notify the SKYWARN® NCS that the SKYWARN® net will be combined with the Tactical-Resource net. Once the two nets are combined, all severe weather and after-action damage reports should be reported to the NCS for the Tactical-Resource net.*

All area VHF/UHF repeater networks and Winlink RMS gateways are assumed to be fully operational and available to support the activation event. Power, phone, cell, and internet services are also assumed to be available at all shelter locations. Members can freely move between home and deployment locations in support of shift change and staff leveling requirements. Ideally, two ACS members should be assigned to each communications team. Whenever possible, at least one of the ACS members on each team should be Winlink qualified and be equipped to support the Winlink data net. If the number of Winlink qualified members is limited, the ACS Leadership Team should assign Winlink assets to teams deployed to locations where a high volume of traffic is anticipated (e.g., EOCs, Hospitals, Special Needs shelters, etc.).

1.2 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

1.3 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 leave me a note on the Pinellas ACS groups.io web site.

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

1.4 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	KC4SXO	Will the Winlink addresses be updated in this release of the communications plan?	Yes.
		No Additional Questions or comments	