

# Escambia County Participates in Annual Hurricane Exercise 2016

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This is the ARES After Action Report for Escambia County Hurricane Exercise on May 18, 2016 in Escambia County, FL.

## Summary

On Wednesday, May 18, 2016, Escambia County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) participated in the annual Escambia County Hurricane Exercise and in the Florida Statewide Hurricane Exercise.

- 16 Amateur Radio Operators and stations.
  - 14 Escambia County ARES, 2 non-ARES.
- ARES room in the EOC was activated and staffed by 3 ARES members.
  - Additionally, 4 ARES members and 1 non-ARES amateur radio operator staffing other agencies desks at the EOC stopped by the ARES room.
  - One of these ARES member handled our check in into the Northern Florida ARES state net.
- Escambia County Emergency Net (local ARES net) was activated.
  - In addition to the ARES members already at the EOC, 8 additional stations checked in on the local net.
- Simulated deployments of ARES members to multiple locations to cover Fire Stations and Shelters.
- Multiple HF/VHF/UHF frequencies used, including digital modes.
- 12 digital messages sent and received.
  - Successful testing of using digital modes (Winlink) for sending/receiving messages:
    - Long-distance on HF to Chipley for relay of message to the state EOC
    - Locally on VHF from near the Special Needs shelter to the EOC.
- Estimated 17.5 person-hours for the exercise itself. 7.75 hours of planning including writing the Incident Action Plan (exercise plan) and writing after action report after the exercise. 25.25 person-hours total.

## Radio Modes used

- HF voice
  - Successfully checked into Northern Florida ARES net on 3.950.
  - We were unsuccessful on the special Florida Statewide Hurricane Exercise net on 3.950 or 7.242.
- Tactical net – VHF – Escambia County Emergency Net (Local ARES net) on 146.76 repeater successfully used.
- Digital modes
  - APRS.
  - E-mail using HF freq (Winlink) –
    - Sent a ICS213 message (Situation Report) to the state EOC per Florida Statewide exercise re-quest. Sent to Florida Department of Transportation amateur radio station in Chipley via digital modes (Winlink on HF), which then relayed it to the state EOC via HF voice on 7.242.
    - 1 ARES activation message sent to Northern Florida Section Emergency Coordinator (ARES).
  - Tested sending digital messages via VHF frequency (Winlink Peer to Peer) from near the special needs shelter to the EOC.
    - Successful at med power (10 watts) and low power (5 watts).
    - Establishing digital messaging capabilities using Amateur Radio between EOC and shelters is an unresolved follow-up action item from the Hurricane Ivan After Action Report.
  - Digital Messages sent via Winlink has been documented in WebEOC on ICS213 General Message forms.