

Spring 2023 After Action Report

Held on May 13, 2023 12-4PM

How on earth did we select the hottest day in May for the Spring CDE? The temperatures reached into the low 90s. Due to the heat, the planning committee conferenced and closed the exercise at 3PM. Each team operated from a staging area and conducted exercise operations from that point.

The exercise was started by a text from PBEM alerting participants to deploy, just as would happen in an actual incident.

Activities Conducted Based on Objectives



All teams made progress on the objectives outlined for the exercise:

- Each team set up a staging area and most had an incident team lead (ITL), a scribe, an amateur radio operator (ARO), and some had a dedicated FRS/GMRS Radio Lead. Other teams had their ITL or their ARO coordinating intra-team activities via FRS/GMRS radios.;
- Each team member was given a scenario sheet upon arrival at the staging area. They then transcribed this info on to a Form 1, as if this is what they saw on the way to the staging area. This gave team members practice with Form 1;
- Each team undertook a damage assessment activity;
- Individuals were asked if they had a current copy of their Ops Plan;
- Each team used FRS/GMRS radios for intra-team communication;
- Each team had an opportunity to practice triage, search and rescue, downed power lines, a gas leak and the decision on whether to respond or not to some scenarios.
- Teams had one scenario to discuss as a tabletop exercise. They were to decide how to work with a large residential facility in their neighborhood. Many decided that they should be proactive and contact such facilities prior to a disaster.
- Teams were asked to tie three knots
- Two teams had Boy Scouts as SUVs, one team has high school students studying emergency preparedness.

Teams

Thirteen teams participated in the Spring 2023 CDE. Most were comprised of members from their own team as well as other teams. Fifty-one neighborhoods were represented including West Salem CERT who participated from their staging area.

A Zoom option was offered. Only three people signed up this time around. Those three joined in-person teams. We will continue to offer a Zoom Team going forward. The feedback was that those who participated online could not be active in-person for the exercise. Some were out of town while others had transportation or mobility reasons. Having a Zoom Team allows for true inclusivity.

Each team had an exercise coordinator – a member of that neighborhood team that was not a direct participant in the exercise – who were aware of the scenario and all aspects of the scenario prior to the exercise. They assisted the planning committee in preparing materials for the team in advance of the exercise. They served as a resource for the team to provide the injects and any needed details to enable the team to move forward within the scenario. The exercise coordinators filled a vital role and this role will continue to be an essential part of future exercises.

The Numbers

Total number of registrants	191
Participants (registered)	191
Participants (day of registered)	191
Participants (day of, actually participated)	146
Number of teams	13
Exercise Coordinators	13
Subnets	5

Hours

735 hours logged

Feedback Scores

CDE Feedback Scores - Perfect Score is 5.00							
Date	The exercise was well structured and organized.	The overall exercise was plausible and realistic.	The individual scenarios were plausible and realistic.	The exercise will help me be a better NET member.	I felt that my participation was valued and necessary.	The Incident Commander built a strong plan.	Total Score
Spring 2023	4.45	4.28	4.49	4.64	4.45	4.35	4.44
Fall 2022	4.28	4.21	4.16	4.47	4.4	4.05	4.08
Spring 2022	3.14	3.14	3.26	3.05	2.86	2.52	3.00
Fall 2021	4.31	3.79	4.32	4.03	4.35	4.08	4.15
Spring 2021	3.86	3.86	3.83	4.08	3.82	3.43	3.81

What do participants want to focus on for the Fall 2023 CDE

Exercise participants identified several items that need continued focus in the next CDE:

- Working with forms, forms, forms...this continues to be an area we need to continue to practice
- ICS Structure
- FRS Radio Techniques
- Nighttime response
- More medical training
- Water, food and sanitation

Comments from participants

Many responded that they felt that injects were just the right amount and timed well. A few others felt that they could have had more injects.

The scenario and injects were realistic.

Some voiced that they would like to have had the most difficult mission come last. All info was given to ITLs at the start of the exercise. ITLs prioritized response. Doing the most difficult one first was the correct order as they was where there was the greatest need.

Several reported that they did not know what the disaster was. We need to make sure that Exercise Coordinators communicate this at the start of the exercise.

Many liked the fact that the response spots were within one to two blocks of the staging area. The Exercise Design Committee personalized the injects for each team based on their staging areas. The goal was to work on the scenario.....not spend time walking to an address.

Participants liked the fact that they were given a sheet of paper with the area they were to go to. Once there they opened an envelope to discover what they found. In some cases, the envelope told them that they found nothing and to wait five minutes before reporting back.

One great suggestion is that the ITL establish ground rules at the beginning of the exercise. Such items as a radio check; how communications should be sent; size-up expectations; etc.

Exercise Follow-up

The planning committee encouraged each team to conduct a brief “hot wash” immediately following the exercise to report on their experience, give initial reactions to the planning committee through their exercise coordinators, and begin to identify areas where individual teams need to work on improvement and also where the team currently excels so that their skills can be maintained. It appears that most teams were able to have an on scene (or nearby) hot wash.

The planning committee conducted a follow-up survey offered to all exercise participants to gather more in-depth feedback on various aspects of the exercise.

This after-action report will be used in planning future exercises.

Photo Link

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_it_36a7rsJddeH8AEqLmSFIRHkLm6hzaAOnMiL6yU/edit?usp=sharing



ARO Survey for Citywide Deployment Exercise (CDE) on May 13, 2023

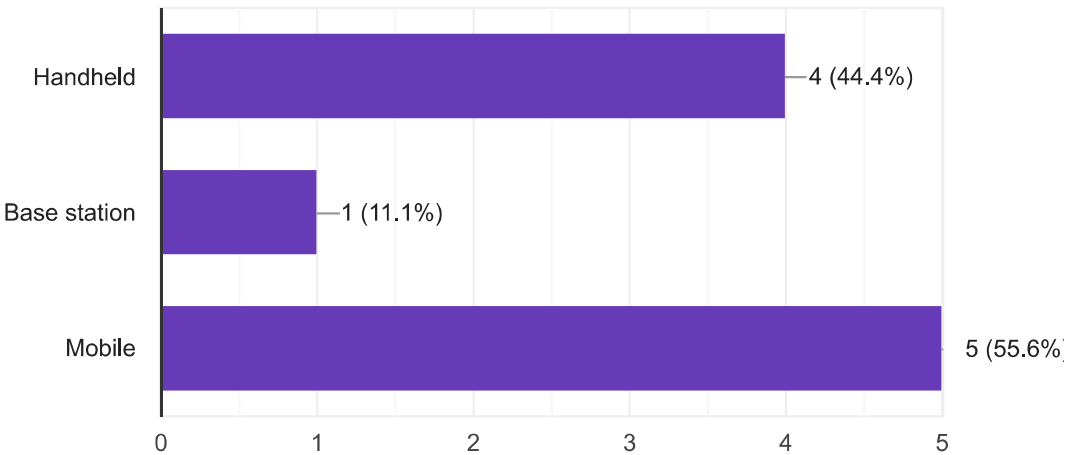
9 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

Type of the radio you used during the CDE on May 7th (check all that apply)

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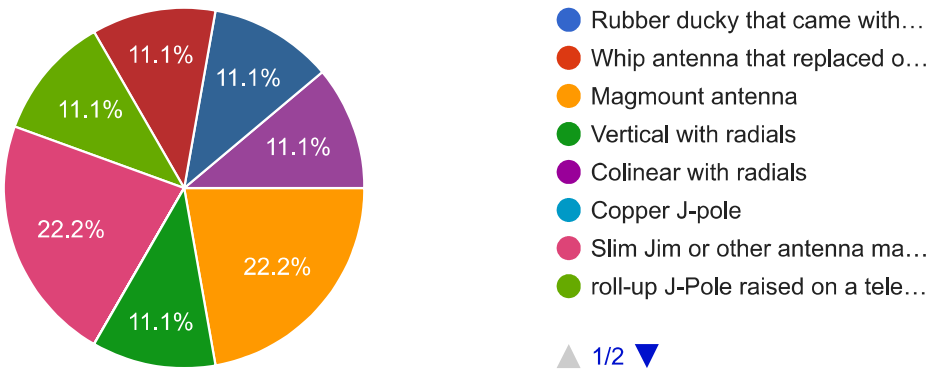
9 responses



Type of the antenna you primarily used

 [Copy](#)

9 responses



Rough estimate of height of the base of your antenna above ground level (not above sea level) in feet during contacts with subnet control.

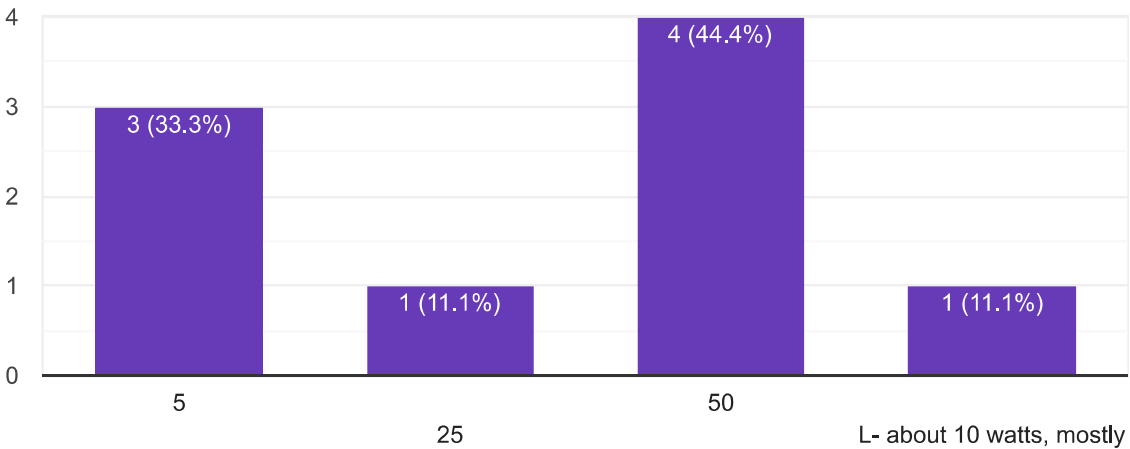
9 responses

12
6
7
21
22
2
18
14
10

Transmit power that you used in watts. (Most handhelds use 5 watts when set to high power.) If your radio has L, M or H power settings instead of watts and you're not sure what they correspond to, indicate L, M or H instead of watts.

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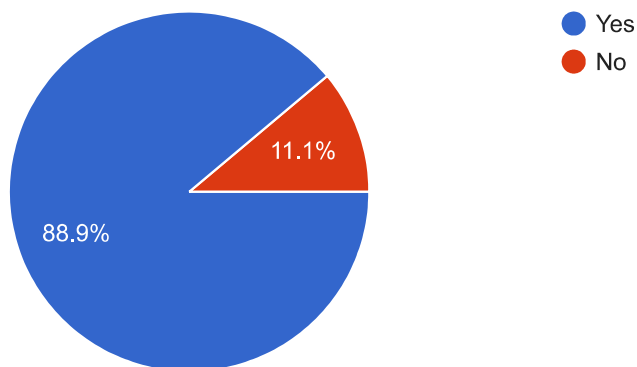
9 responses



Were you able to check into the Resource Net?

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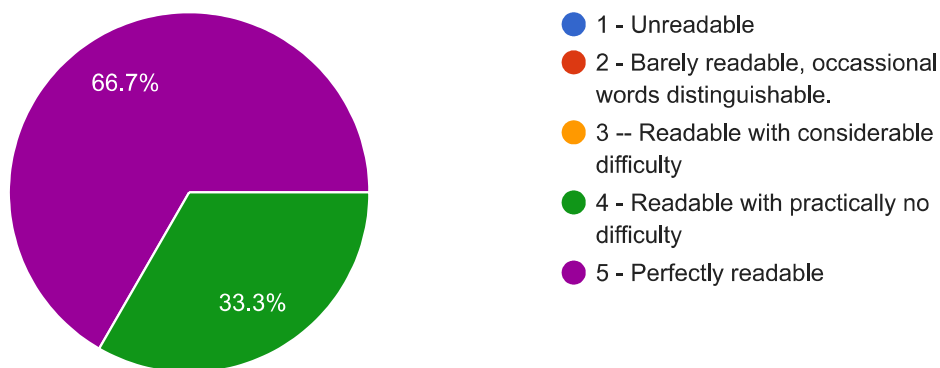
9 responses



How well could you hear the Resource Net?

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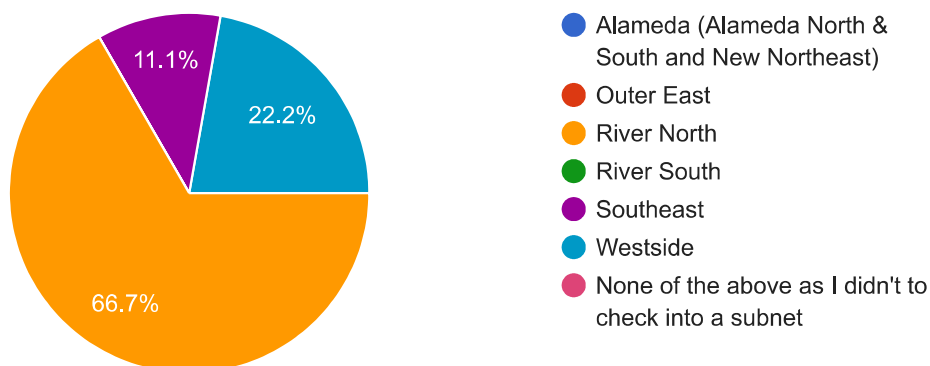
9 responses



What subnet region did you participate in?

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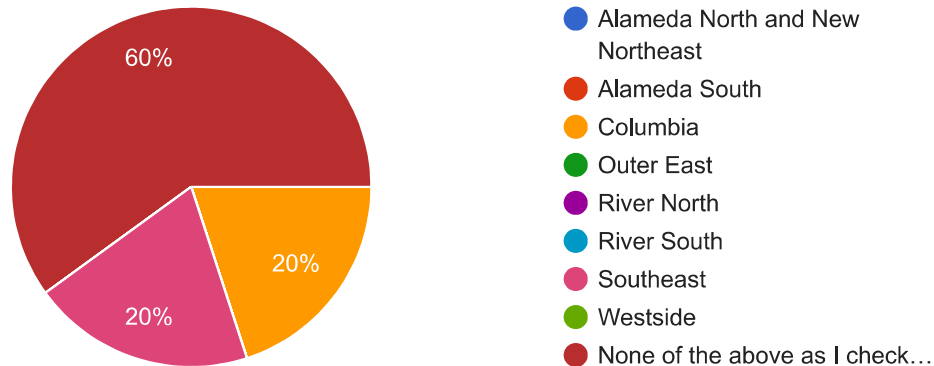
9 responses



If you tried another subnet before the one you selected above, what was that other subnet?

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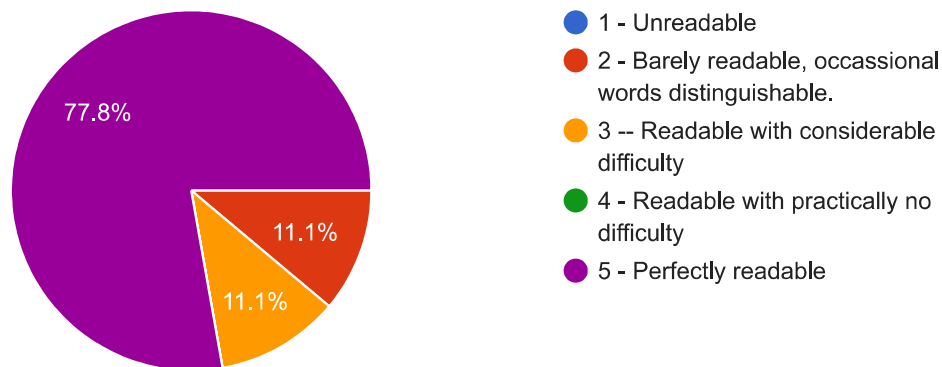
5 responses



How well could you hear your Subnet Controller?

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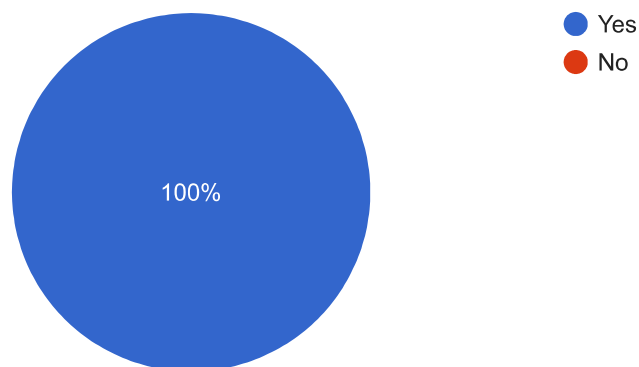
9 responses



Did your Subnet Controller read a Form 8 or an announcement to you during the exercise?

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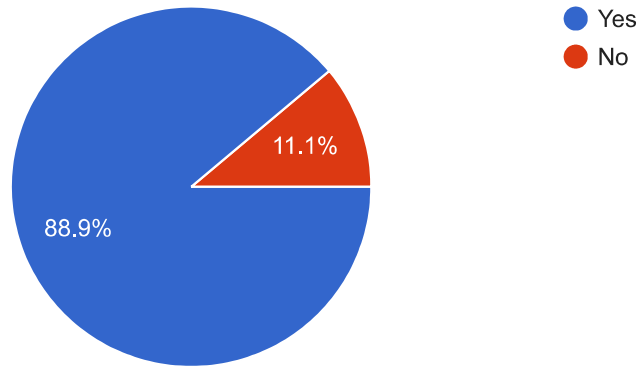
9 responses



Did you read one or more NET Form 8s to your subnet controller?

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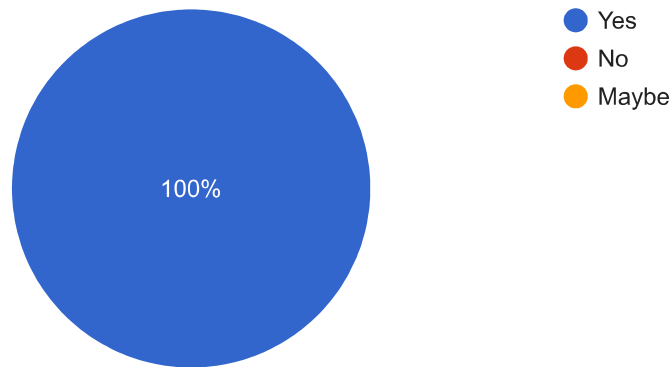
9 responses



Do you expect to participate again as an ARO in the future?

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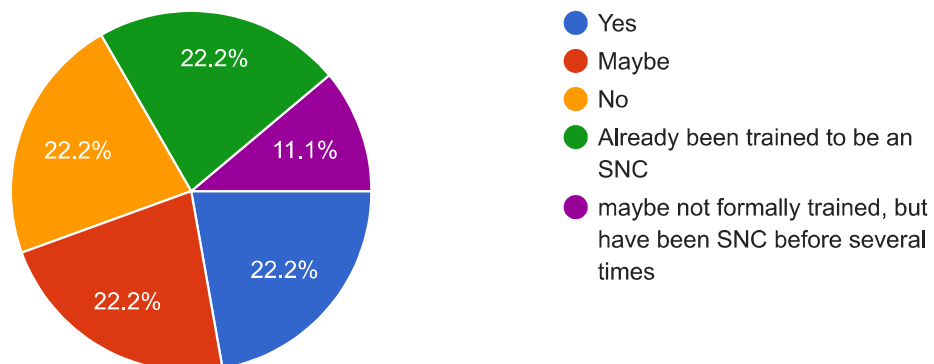
9 responses



Are you interested in learning to be a Subnet Controller?

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9 responses



How could the ARO instructions provided for this exercise be improved?

8 responses

Edit for brevity, readability, simple (1-page?) summary of essential (bullet?) points. Consider whether the many hyperlinks could be replaced with (and/or moved to) end notes

correct time would have helped the SNC as he wasn't quite ready at 11:45 but scrambled and was able to check in (Dave, RN SNC was at SW Hills staging area with us so he got the info from me, not your late email). I was a little confused too but deferred to the email info and was ready :)

Only issue was the early end of the exercise cast doubt as to needing to check out with Resource Net, which I listened to and heard no response to others tries

very clear today

Some proofreading ahead of time would help cut down on confusion.

I think you have them refined quite well, albeit an occasional editing error.

I thought they were very clear.

I am not familiar with all the nets that existed during the exercise and I would appreciate a review of those (ie resource net, sub controller, neighbourhood aro, tactical net, others?) and who should check in to which one(s).



How could these exercises be made more valuable in preparing you to help in an actual emergency?

7 responses

In general, I'd say that they are very good! Great value in simply practicing assembly, setup, arranging protocol(s) with team members and radio nets, passing traffic. Consistently good learning experiences, with what seems like the right level of built-in frustration. Accepting the frustrations and learning to cope anyway is an important theme for organization, training, learning.

The more message passing we are able to do, the more useful.

The Resource Net never finishes in 15 minutes, so maybe that needs an earlier start as the staging area was well on it way when I arrived

continued practice

The radio stuff always feels tacked on to whatever exercise is going on. I've never felt integrated into whatever the scenario was.

Increase frequency of CDEs, maybe three times a year.

How about starting the resource net check in an hour before the start of the exercise so we would truly check in at home, and not cheat (like I did) and set up beforehand at the staging area. Would test our ability to set up quickly once the bell rang.

Simulating the need to switch frequencies like we did a month or two ago I thought made it feel more real world.



Please provide any other comments you may have.

6 responses

Thanks for all the committed work that goes into creating and managing these events.

There was much more message passing than recent exercises which meant more Form 6 logging, and with that the form and the info that goes into it finally made sense to me!

Responses above re checking in to resource net apply to me using my handheld. Resource Net could not hear me from handheld, but I was able to check-in using Dave's mobile with his much larger antenna by walking across the playground, so it worked out.

checked into Resource from home at 9w with base radio, could not reach subnet from home at 5w and rubber duck on handheld, needed the J-Pole at Kerns staging area also

spare fuses when increasing power

- re: Transmit power that you used in watts- I tried operating at high power, about 25 watts, for a couple of transmissions, but neither my radio nor my power supply seemed to like the heat very much. Signal reports didn't seem to notice any difference, though.
- re: How well could you hear your Subnet Controller?- He was either a) perfectly audible, b) buried in hash, or c) not audible at all. Neither of us could figure out where the hash was going from; the same gear is used for the monthly simplex exercises with no issues.
- I need some headphones for my radio.
- Our IC shelter needs to add A Box of Rocks to our filing system.
- I need to not scrimp on antenna guying. Mine blew over twice.
- Logging goes out the window when things start happening.
- We need a class for everyone, not just radio people, on How To Fill Out a Form 8.
- We need a class for everyone on all of the NET forms and how they fit together, workflow

The ARO Instructions sent to us before the exercise were thorough and very useful.



SNC Survey for Citywide Deployment Exercise (CDE) on May 13, 2023

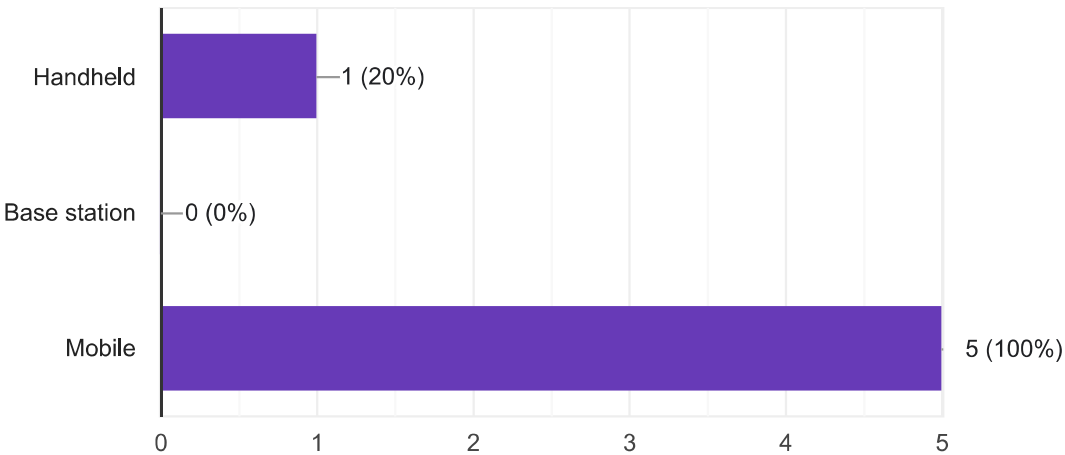
5 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

Type of the radio you used during the CDE on May 13th (check all that apply)

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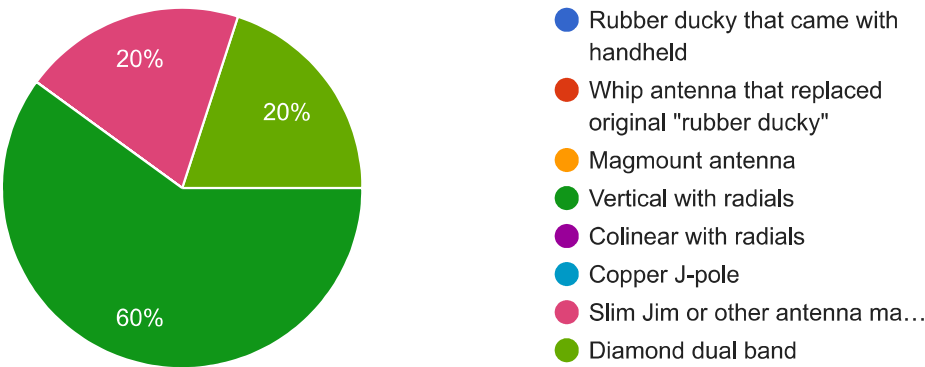
5 responses




Type of the antenna you primarily used

 [Copy](#)

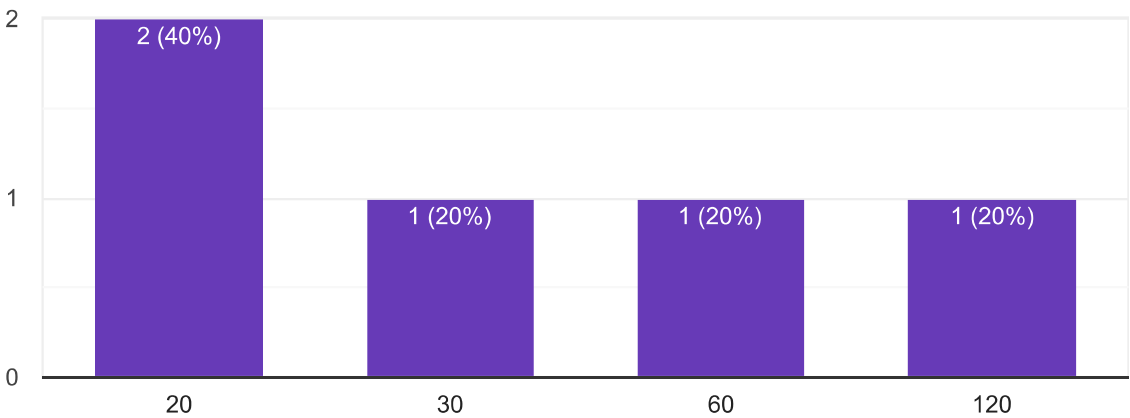
5 responses




Rough estimate of height of the base of your antenna above ground level
(not above sea level) in feet

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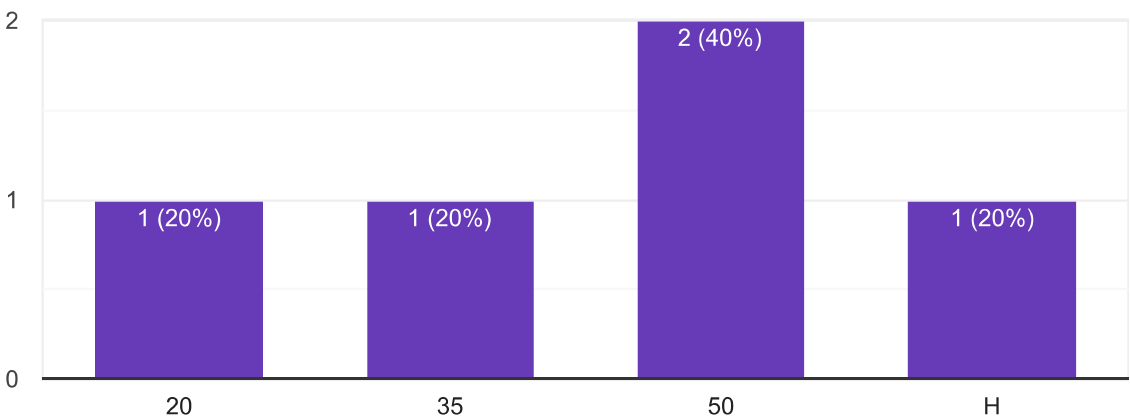
5 responses



Transmit power that you used in watts. If your radio has L, M or H power
settings instead of watts and you're not sure what they correspond to,
indicate L, M or H instead of watts.

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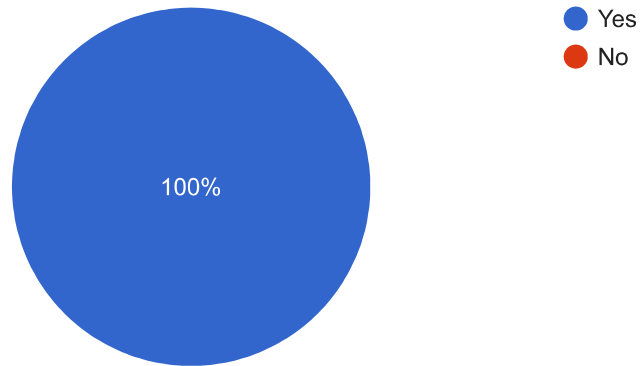
5 responses



Were you able to check into the Resource Net?

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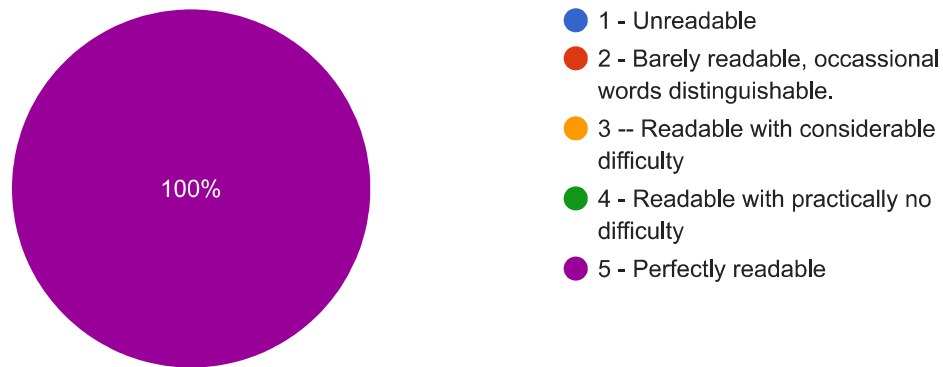
5 responses



How well could you hear the Resource Net?

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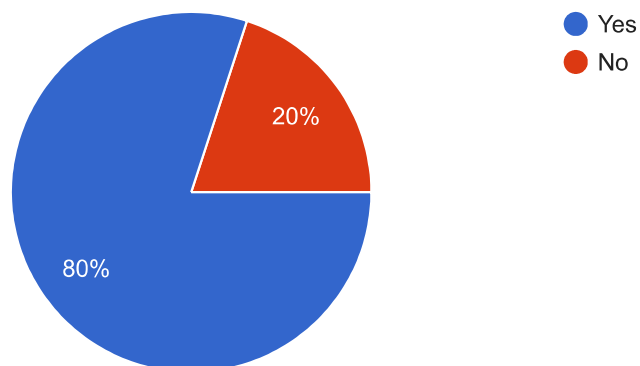
5 responses




Did read a tactical message or announcement from ECC to the AROs on your subnet during the exercise?

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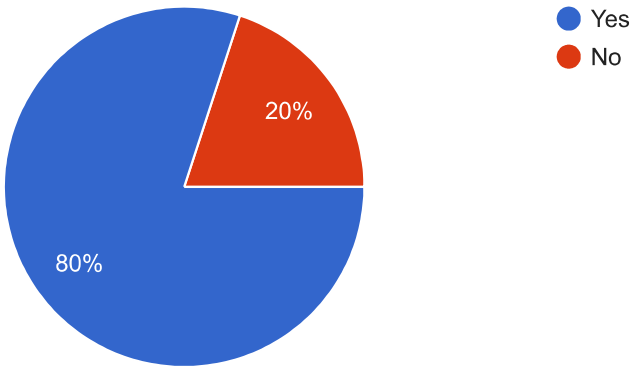
5 responses




Did read a Form 8 or an announcement from ECC to the AROs on your subnet during the exercise?

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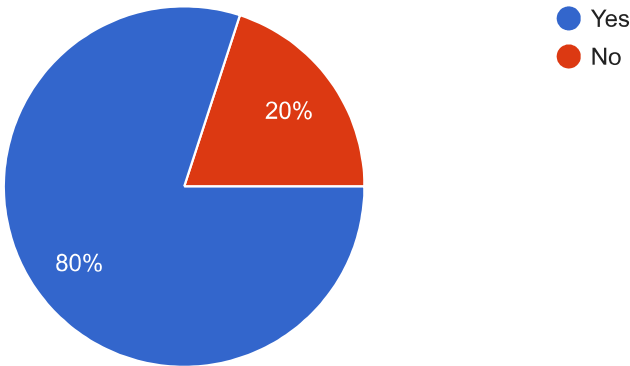
5 responses




Did you receive one or more Form 8s or Form 8 replies from participating teams during the exercise?

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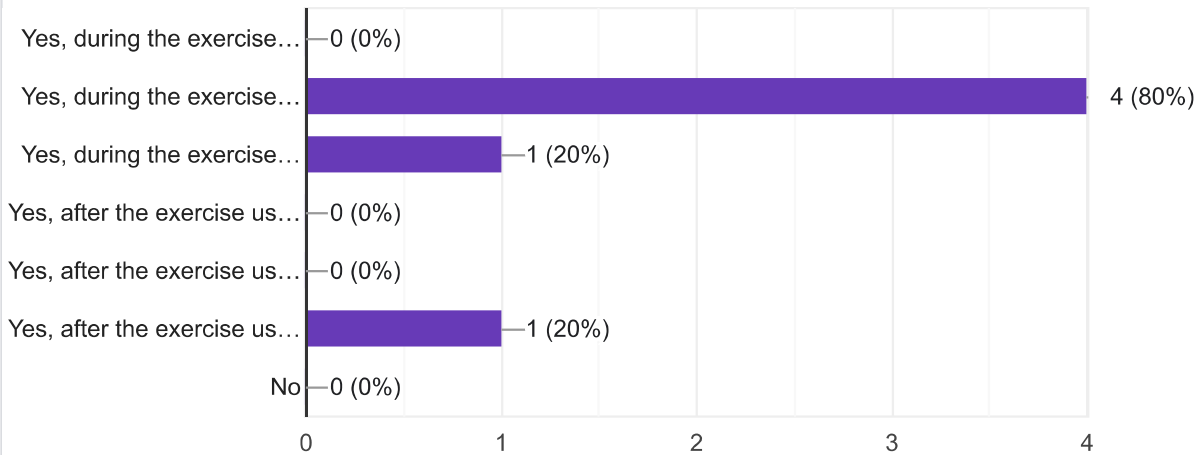
5 responses



Did you send message(s) to the ECC using Winlink? (Check all that apply.)

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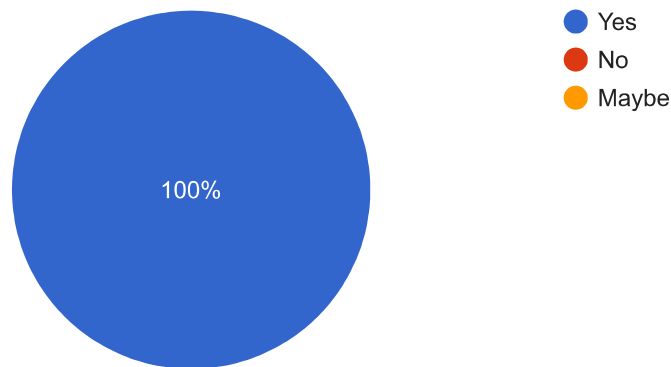
5 responses



Would you like to participate again as an SNC in the future?



5 responses



How could the SNC instructions provided for this exercise be improved?

5 responses

The first few messages from the field to the ECC weren't addressed to your specific tactical callsigns, so I ended up sending the first batch to W7ECC.

Tell you later. I'll mention tonight how I tried to distill a list of key information

I studied them several times. I'm not sure I could do a better job writing them.

Excellent - except i was one of those that misread the start time

A one-page printable ICS-205 would be nice. A very summary list of expectations followed by more details. E.g. (1) Check into Resource Net; (2) When released from RES, start subnet; (3) Check-in teams; (4) Get list of NET teams associated with each tactical call sign; (5) Give check-in list to TAC; (6) Periodically check with teams for traffic and handle traffic as it comes; (7) Check out teams; (8) Close subnet; (9) Check out of TAC; (10) compile and submit logs



How could these exercises be made more valuable in preparing you to help in an actual emergency?

4 responses

I think these messages were well done. Radio procedures are excellent but a lot to absorb. I'm trying out 2 ideas for me to manage the info better. Results inconclusive

Break them down into small, discrete pieces. Meet with ITLs on Zoom in 1 hr. break-out rooms with no more than 4 participants and drill, drill, drill.

I took this as an opportunity to go fully mobile - on battery etc; including my computer

Continue to include curveballs into the mix - Emergency message from ECC; Routing instructions for addressing messages ECC; Specific request from PBEM for information needed about infrastructure or other situation that needs to go to a specific NET team due to their location.

Please provide any other comments you may have.

4 responses

I'll think about it.

I had no team AROs in River South.

I great drill - I need to work on how to better keep track of my log

Team leaders / ITLs need more training on how to compose messages for PBEM. They need to know how to succinctly state a situation and request appropriate response. For example: need PFB help to extricate trapped person from crashed vehicle; Need Immediate medical help for person with crush injury to lower legs, etc. Then need appropriate replies from ECC. Could be, No help is available for the next 24 hours. All City resources are already deployed.

Practice that includes deploying BEECN as part of the exercise would be useful. We need to get a feel for how BEECN and NET will either work together or compete for resources - especially communication resources. Look at how information from PBEM would be routed. E.g., National Guard will be making a helicopter delivery of a pallet of water to area of XXX NET. Please provide coordinates for a clear area near your NET team with a suitable helicopter landing site.

