

After Action Report for Virginia AUXCOMM for Operation Tsunami 27 January 2018

Submitted: 29 January 2018

Call Sign: NoWGG

Operating Location: Glen Allen, Virginia

Messages Sent: 14

Messages Received: 11

Our Expectations:

REACT Warning Team 6247 is the Virginia based coordinator for national REACT deployable communication teams. We planned to offer our teams to assist in a major disaster and expected to be asked to respond to provide resources. That would allow us to determine needs in conjunction with the requestor, assign resources, simulate deployment, and provide estimated times of arrival to supported Virginia communicators – in other words to work through the request, dispatch, and deployment cycle the way we would in an actual event. For teams not selected to deploy we expected to be able to provide information that would broaden their understanding of the impact of such a disaster.

What Actually Took Place:

We alerted our Type IV teams (2 operators with Amateur VHF/UHF, GMRS, FRS, and CB capability) in Massachusetts, Maryland, Kentucky, Texas, California, and Trinidad and Tobago. We sent the five scripted messages offering assistance we were provided to a variety of local agencies/organizations. The results: 1 was not answered, 3 were answered with no need, 1 asked us to deploy to provide donuts, coffee, and lunch to a CERT (declined - we are not a food service organization). We did receive 2 requests to deploy our medical and search and rescue teams, both obviously from another station's selection of scripted messages. We replied that we had no such capability. We received one message identifying a staging location in Staunton, but no direction to stage.

What Went Well and Why:

We appreciated the opportunity to participate, and found the exercise to be a valuable one. (1) Our teams got to practice the long wait for tasking that inevitably happens in actual events. (2) Our teams were able to practice our team availability reporting process using preformatted ICS 213 messages, and all reported within our time criteria. (3) Our pre-event training increased awareness of the tsunami threat to the eastern coast of the United States and the Caribbean. (4) We were able to generate our own internal play to take advantage of the wait time to maximize training including our internal message handling procedures, transfer of relevant messages (on staging location and weather) from one system to another, regular briefings on our voice net, and training for our net

control stations in handover procedures. (5) We validated the current edition of our Field Operations Guide and our preformatted ICS 213 mission assignment format.

What Can Be Improved and How?

(1) At no time were we sure of the current situation in the event, making it difficult to understand the context. Suggest that either a more detailed scenario with a time line related to real time be provided or that book messages be used to provide a very general situation report to all participants. (2) No substantive reports of resources, conditions in our area, even a simple red, yellow, green status color code, were asked of us. Suggest that a very basic situation report with a standard format be a regular requirement. (3) There was no accountability reporting – we were never asked if we were still there. Suggest that this is a basic safety function that might need to be exercised. (4) It would have been nice to have at least one request for us to go do what we would do in this scenario, supplement existing communications capabilities. This is not to keep us busy (although it would have met our objectives), but is valuable training for any communications organization. Having to coordinate with resources coming in to help is made a lot easier if you have some experience doing it.

Walter G. Green III, NoWGG
Chair, Training Committee
REACT International