

Hurricane "Tolbert" Exercise - May 9, 2007

Sarasota County Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS), participated in Sarasota County's portion of the statewide Hurricane Tolbert drill.

As part of this drill, Sarasota County Emergency Management tested their "COOP" (Continuity of Operation) plan. This plan involves evacuating the EOC, taking along vital equipment (laptops, printers, communications equipment) and needed materials (manuals, operating procedures, paperwork), to set up an EOC at an alternate location.

Working as support for ESF2 (Communications), ACS members loaded up all the portable communications equipment at the EOC, transported and set it up at the alternate location. A portable 800 MHz base station was set up, which included setting up a tripod and mounting an 800 MHz yagi. Using GPS, the yagi was pointed at the nearest 800 MHz tower. 800 MHz hand helds were issued to those who needed them.

An amateur radio "jump kit" (dual band radio, power supply, battery and charger) was set up, with another tripod and dual band vertical, and a television antenna was set up to support PIO operations.

We got the 800 MHz equipment set up in 30 minutes, and had everything else up and running in about 1 1/2 hours (with much time spent unpacking new equipment and tracking down parts that were stored elsewhere). This was the first time setting up all this equipment, so we expect to be able to cut that time down at our next deployment.

A fully functional EOC was set up and operational, including wireless and satellite Intranet/Internet access.

During the after drill "briefing", the Sheriff's Deputy who coordinates the county "Search & Rescue" teams, asked if ACS would be providing communications for the teams. He was reassured by our EM Director, that we would be there ... and then gave a brief update on EM's ham radio support, our current activities, and recruitment efforts.

After the drill concluded, everything was packed up and transported back to the EOC.

Those ACS members participating in this exercise included:

Bob, KA4BOB
Eddie, K4JP
Ron, WD4AHZ

A total of 25 1/2 man-hours was contributed to this event.

Ron, WD4AHZ
EC, Sarasota County