

## **Tactical First In Team Exercise - April 9, 2009**

Sarasota County held its annual "Tactical First in Team" (TFIT) exercise on April 9, 2009. ACS members, as well as licensed CERT members, participated in the exercise.

The primary goal of the TFIT teams is to deploy after a storm passes, and facilitate the opening of major roadways to allow the movement of emergency relief efforts into and within Sarasota County and its municipalities, and address any emergency conditions that are encountered while performing this mission.

The teams assembled at pre-determined "staging areas" throughout the county, and at their specified deployment time, would make their way to the "drill site" located on property at the Sarasota County Landfill. Using repeaters, amateurs provided communications between the teams and the "Command Post" while enroute to the drill site. Once the teams were staged and ready to perform their tasks, they were switched over to a simplex "tactical" channel.

Some of the things the teams encountered, were persons trapped and injured in a vehicle with utility pole and live wires touching the vehicle, a HazMat situation, obstacles in the roadway that needed to be cleared, and a knife attack/hostage situation. (Fortunately, the real weapons were stowed away, and dummy weapons were issued!)

Several minor issues came up during the exercise ... some of the teams didn't have, or use, FRS radios to communicate between team members (law enforcement used 800 direct channels, but that left no way to talk to other team members). One of the Police Vehicles that does have ham gear, has an antenna mounted on a fiberglass/plastic shell. This does not work very well as a ground plane, so they had difficulties getting into the repeater. Fortunately, they were staged close to the drill site, that they could be worked on simplex. That radio also needs some reprogramming to get "current" with what we're using.

Portable "jump kits" and mag mount antennas were issued to those folks who needed them, and 2 "jump kits" and portable antennas/tripods were set up for the stations inside the "Command Bus". We were approached about getting a dual-band ham rig installed in the command bus for future use, and we'll be working with the Sheriff's Department to get that done.

All in all, a good exercise ... and our "first timers" did a great job!

Those participating in the exercise, were:

Alex, KJ4JCD (1st exercise)

Bob, KA4BOB

Bob, K9SRQ

Joe, WA1VNP

Gene, KJ4GST (1st exercise)

Rich, KJ4KHJ (1st exercise, CERT)  
Ed, K8DSS  
Dennis, KI4DLD  
Harry, KJ4HUP (CERT observer)  
Tim, KJ4ICT (1st exercise, CERT)  
Ron, WD4AHZ

Special thanks to Tom, K4TAP, for the use of his linked repeater system. It provided excellent coverage from both ends of the county and everywhere in between.

Thanks to those folks who helped.

Ron, WD4AHZ  
EC, Sarasota County