

## SECTION 27: EXERCISES

Once you complete this section, you will be able to:

- Discuss emergency exercises and training
- List the types of exercises
- Describe the tasks involved in the design and implementation of an ARES exercise
- Explain what to do after an exercise
- Describe ways to use public service events as ARES exercises.

### EMERGENCY EXERCISES, DRILLS, AND COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICE SESSIONS

Part of staying prepared is periodic training and practice. We hope to take advantage of the following opportunities for exercising our preparedness and communications skills:

- Formal emergency exercises held by regional emergency and safety organizations.
- Less formal emergency exercises for radio amateurs, conducted by ARES groups.
- Facility-specific exercises (for example, Field Day operations at an Emergency Operations Centre).
- Regional not-for-profit events and operations requiring communications support.
- Informal drills between ARES members (for example, message handling during weekend sessions).
- Net operations (for example, a once-monthly ARES net hosted on one of the local repeaters).
- News bulletins, Q&A quizzes, allegories and other useful aids provided in a printed bulletin or over the web.

Exercises serve a number of functions:

- Ensuring that ARES practices, processes and personnel are able to meet the needs of served agencies
- Identifying opportunities to improve practices and processes
- Identifying the need to improve operator performance through further training or practice
- Demonstrating capability and best practices to served agencies and partner organizations

## TYPES OF EXERCISE

The following types of exercise may be used individually or combined to form more involved exercises:

- 1 Repeater coverage test
- 2 Simplex coverage test
- 3 Activation
- 4 Informal ‘tactical’ message handling
- 5 Formal message handling
- 6 NTS interzone exercise
- 7 Multinet exercise
- 8 Rapid community assessment
- 9 Road rally exercise
- 10 Packet communications
- 11 Combined ‘served agency’ exercise
- 12 Mobile repeater test
- 13 SAR exercise
- 14 Site test
- 15 Capabilities demonstration

## DURING AN EXERCISE

- 1 Announce the emergency situation. Activate the emergency net. Dispatch mobiles to served agencies.
- 2 Have designated stations originate messages on behalf of served agencies. Test messages may be sent simulating requests for supplies. Simulated emergency messages (just like real emergency messages) should be signed by an authorized official.
- 3 Emphasize tactical communications for served agencies.
- 4 As warranted by traffic loads, have liaison stations on hand to receive traffic on the local net and relay to your section net. You should also be sure that there is a representative on each session of the section net to receive traffic going to the local area.
- 5 Operate at least one session (or substantial segment of a session) of the local net on emergency-only basis. Or, if a repeater is on emergency power, allow only emergency-powered stations to operate through the repeater for a certain time period.

## AFTER THE EXERCISE

An important post-SET activity is a critique session to discuss the test results. All ARES members should be invited to the meeting to review good points and weaknesses apparent in the drill. Emphasize ways to improve procedures, techniques, and coordination with all groups involved. Report your group's effort using the appropriate forms (available at <http://www.rac.ca/fieldorg/setform.htm>) and include any photos, clippings and other items of interest.

## USING PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS AS EXERCISES

Using ARES participants and practices to provide communications support during public service events gives ARES participants an opportunity to test their equipment, deployment methods, and communications practices in real-life situations that may not be very similar to an emergency, but are more realistic than table-top or simple message handling exercises. Public service events might include marathons, parades, or community events like festivals that require traffic control or service coordination.