Calvert AUXCOMM After Action Report

Radiological Sheltering Exercise – 2015-07-07

Location: Huntingtown High School, Huntingtown, Calvert, Maryland
Members participating:

1. Chip Dahle, K3AWD
2. Karl Long, KG1L
3. Shawn Donley, N3AE
4. Bob Sheskin, N3PPH
5. Bill Hackett, N3XMZ
6. Eric Christensen, W4OTN
7. Les Silva, KH6CUJ

Mission

1. Establish communications between the shelter and the EOC.
2. Establish communications between the shelter and the health department.
3. Establish communications with Anne Arundel County (Calvert is using some of AA's resources).
4. Establish communications with the Hospital Net.

Activities

Members responded to their predesignated locations and were in place at 8:00 AM.

Chip, Karl, and Eric erected a push-up pole with VHF/UHF vertical antenna at the shelter. This antenna was connected to a cross-band repeater inside a vehicle and communications were established with Anne Arundel County on the Davidsonville, 147.105 MHz, repeater. We also tested communications to the local repeater, 146.985, which was being used as the primary communications circuit.

Bill responded to the EOC but found that it was not going to be used and diverted to the shelter.

Shawn, Bob, and Les responded to the health department and setup the VHF/UHF station there. Communications was confirmed between the health department and the shelter. Digital (e-mail) communications was tested from the health department to the Winlink network.

The FEMA representatives quizzed the team at the shelter and then left without further requests.

Lessons Learned

Several things have changed at the shelter from previous setups. We made contact with the Social Services communications team, which is responsible for communications at the site as well as entering data into WebEOC. This will likely be our primary point of contact at the shelter and will be

complimenting their communications resources.

We also learned the condition of the gear at the health department.

Needs improvement

- There were several things that could have gone better. Digital communications (packet for Winlink and peer-to-peer connections) should be a must. If we had to relay a list of sheltered people, a list of resources required, or health and welfare messages it could take an extended period of time to transmit the information. Extended transmissions take more power, occupy more bandwidth, and can incur errors. A packet station should be a standard deployment item along with voice equipment. A local Winlink node and/or packet digipeater should be installed within the county to facilitate better communications.
- We need a better way to alert members. The use of the SMS messaging system worked well BUT requires web access. We can send email to everyone but, as happened over that weekend, some members had an email outage. No announcement was made on the repeater which could have also alerted members but they have to be listening.
- An error was made in transmitting a couple of messages to the Winlink network. We need to make sure that we are connecting to the correct stations and that the messages are making it out.
- We need to make sure everyone knows how to operate the equipment that's pre-deployed. The health department is such a location. It is also a good idea to bring your own laptop with all the needed software installed so you are familiar with the setup and the software will be up to date.
- We didn't take full advantage of having people deployed at sites. Exercises like this should be exploited to our advantage with “extra” traffic being used to test people's abilities.
- None of the original responders to the shelter had proper county identification. This was a security issue and was noted by the Incident Commander.

Summary

Overall we did a good job. Of the stated missions we confirmed the communications between the shelter, the health department, and Anne Arundel County. We did not confirm communications between the shelter and the EOC nor did we establish communications with the hospital net (we canceled the hospital net prior to the exercise).

We need more exercises to test our ability to deploy with the necessary gear to establish communications between various locations.

We also need more training to make sure operators know how to use their equipment and have the ability to make changes or setup more complex systems when needed.

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INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	1. Incident Name Calvert Radiological Sheltering Exercise	2. Date/Time Prepared 042114L JUL 2015	3. Operational Period from: 060800L JUL 2015 __to: 061200L JUL 2015

4. Basic Radio Channel Utilization

LN #	Function	Channel	Assignment	Rx Freq	Rx Tone	Tx Freq	Tx Tone	Mode A/D/M
1	Intra-agency	1	Sunderland Victor	146.985	156.7	146.385	156.7	A
Remark:								
2	Shelter Ops	3	Tac 3	146.580		146.580		A
Remark:								
3	Shelter Crossband Local	8	Tac 8	446.125		446.125		A
Remark: Used as shelter side of crossband repeater if needed.								
4	Shelter Crossband DX	6	Tac 6	146.550		146.550		A
Remark: Used as distant side of crossband repeater if needed.								
5	Winlink & Packet			145.750		145.750		D
Remark: Data								
6	Backup area repeater	2	Sunderland Uniform	444.950	156.7	449.950	156.7	M
Remark: Used as a backup to Sunderland Victor or as needed. Mixed mode, analog voice and System Fusion digital voice.								
7	APRS		APRS	144.390		144.390		D
Remark: Data								
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5. Prepared by (Communications unit) Eric Christensen, W4OTN	6. Incident Location County: Calvert State: MD Lat: Lon: