MECC SET 2019

After Action Report / Improvement Plan – Regional Final 101519

October 12, 2019

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine to include the National Preparedness Goal and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.

Kansas City Metro Simulated Emergency Test

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	MECC SET 2019
Exercise Date	October 5, 2019
Scope	This exercise is a Full Scale Exercise, planned for 6 hours throughout the Kansas City Metro Region. Exercise play is intended for jurisdictions and agencies identified in this plan, however, other jurisdictions may be conducting their own exercises and may participate with this exercise in a support role.
Mission Area(s)	Response
Core Capabilities	Operational Communication, Operational Coordination, Situational Assessment, and Public and Private Services and Resources.
Objectives	1. Notify group members to follow activation procedures. 2. Create UHF/VHF/HF/Digital nets to support EOC/family reunification operations. 3. Develop situational reports and relay to Kansas and Missouri state partners. 4. Activate KCHEART and establish communications with hospitals and family reunification centers. 5. Report on local/regional infrastructure interruptions and damage if known.
Threat or Hazard	Coordinated Complex Terrorist Attacks (CCTA) – Acts of terrorism that involve synchronized and independent teams at multiple locations, sequentially or in close succession, initiated with little or no warning, and employing one or more weapons systems: firearms, explosives, fire as a weapon, and other non-traditional attack methodologies that are intended to result in large numbers of casualties.
Scenario	This scenario is based on the coordinated complex terrorist attacks that have occurred around the world in Spain, London, France, Brussels and Africa in recent years. Each jurisdiction will chose the type of terrorist attack they will be using according to their hazards and vulnerabilities.

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Sponsor	Kansas City Metropolitan Emergency Communications Council (MECC) and the Metropolitan Emergency Manager's Committee (MEMC)

Participating Organizations	This exercise will include amateur radio groups and hospitals from the following jurisdictions:
	    Platte County, MO
	    Clay County, MO
	    Independence MO
	    Jackson County, MO
	    Johnson County, KS
	    Wyandotte County, KS
	    Leavenworth County, KS
	
	This will also include the following state or regional organizations:
	    Kansas City Hospital Emergency Amateur Radio Teams (KCHEART)
	    Kansas RACES
	    Salvation Army (SATERN)

Points of Contact	Carolyn Wells, Senior Controller Trauma/Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Liberty Hospital 2525 Glenn Hendren Drive Liberty, MO 64068 816-792-7248 (office) 816-377-7223(cell) Carolyn.Wells@libertyhospital.org Matt May, Exercise Director Director, Emergency Management Department Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City Kansas 701 North 7th St, Room B 20 Kansas City, Kansas 66101 913-573-6337 direct 913-645-6582 cell mmay@wycokck.org Alan Garrison, FEMA Region VII Exercise Coordinator 816-283-7021 alan.garrison@dhs.gov

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	Karen McMackin	Northland ARES
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	Susan Simms	Kansas RACES
	JD Spradling	Kansas RACES
	Tucker Livingston	Independence, MO RACES
	Diana Fiddick	SATERN
	Steve Rainey	Johnson County ECS
	Dick Quinlan	Leavenworth County RACES

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ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and core capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned core capabilities, and performance ratings for each core capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Core Capability	Performance
Notify group members to follow activation procedures.	Public and Private Services and Resources	P
	Operational Communications	P
Create UHF/VHF/HF/Digital nets to support EOC/family reunification operations.	Operational Communications	S
Develop situational reports and relay to Kansas and Missouri state partners.	Situational Assessment	P
Activate KCHEART and establish communications with hospitals and family reunification centers.	Operational Coordination	S
Report on local/regional infrastructure interruptions and damage if known.	Situational Assessment	S

Ratings Definitions:
- **Performed without Challenges (P):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.
- **Performed with Some Challenges (S):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.
- **Performed with Major Challenges (M):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.
- **Unable to be Performed (U):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Objective 1: Notify group members to follow activation procedures

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability: Public and Private Services and Resources

Strengths

The Performed without Challenges capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Local jurisdictions notified their operators via notification systems about the exercise involving various CCTA incidents, in some cases, several hours ahead of the exercise.

Strength 2: Local operators adjusted to the changes in the MSEL due to weather issues, were professional, and completed assigned tasks. All jurisdictions reported teams working together to problem solve and overcome obstacles.

Strength 3: Utilized locally developed software to deploy and manage operators

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Multiple groups experienced a lack of trained and experienced operators to perform the tasks needed for the exercise.

Reference: None

Analysis: The local radio groups do not have enough operators to complete the tasks of the exercise or during a real emergency.

Core Capability: Operational Communications

Strengths

The Performed without Challenges capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Members reported in to their local jurisdictions using their local repeaters.

Strength 2: Some groups had formal check in and check out procedures for accountability of their operators.

Objective 2: Create UHF/VHF/HF/Digital nets to support EOC/family reunification operations.

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability: Operational Communications

Strengths

The Performed with Some Challenges capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Regional Net Control was able to collect data from all jurisdictions and share that information with both State Communications Officers

Strength 2: Digital communications were used by some jurisdictions very effectively.

Strength 3: Use of the 147.030 repeater in Lawrence worked well to contact Topeka and KS RACES on voice.

Strength 4: The High Frequency (HF) nets experienced few challenges being established and information was effectively relayed.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Not all operators were proficient with the non-voice modes of operation thereby limiting the number of digital stations available to pass traffic.

Reference: None

Analysis: There seems to be a need for more training on the handling of digital traffic including equipment operation and the use of various modes of operation.

Area for Improvement 2: Due to a lack of proficiency with FLDigi some operators struggled with getting traffic passed.

Reference: None

Analysis: More training for new operators on digital traffic handling, specifically when using FLDigi software and familiarization with specific operating stations.

Area for Improvement 3: Lack of familiarity with forms and formal message handling procedures when passing traffic in both voice and digital modes.

Reference: None

Analysis: Operators had not received training on messaging handling procedures and forms.

Area for Improvement 4: Digital nets had significant challenges being established due to a lack of pre planning regarding the mode, frequency and format on how the data would be passed.

Reference: None

Analysis: Lack of formal digital coordination contributes to a lack of standards for digital operation.

Objective 3: Develop situational reports and relay to Kansas and Missouri state partners

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability: Situational Assessment

Strengths

The Performed without Challenges capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Situational awareness communications were able to be passed between State and local governmental partners.

Strength 2: Status updates were able to be shared with both Kansas and Missouri State Communications Officers providing State EOCs with situational awareness.

Strength 3: The predetermined backup of a VHF repeater between KC and Topeka was utilized to pass traffic between the KC Metro area and the HF net.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

None

Objective 4: Activate KCHEART and establish communications between hospitals

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability: Operational Coordination

Strengths

The Performed with Some Challenges capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: The Mass Casualty Incident bed poll request was completed by most hospitals

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Due to a lack of participation by hospital staff the Amateur Radio some operators were unable to collect the required information and did not have access to the radios.

Reference: None

Analysis: Information provided to the EP staff was not passed to on duty hospital staff or amateur radio operators.

Area for Improvement 2: Due to a lack of digital capabilities, both equipment and trained personnel, information about hospital staffing was not able to be passed in this mode.

Reference: None

Analysis: Amateur radio operators need to work with hospital EP staff to obtain, retain and maintain digital equipment required for radio operations.

Area for Improvement 3: During net operations, the VA repeater (443.500 MHz) stopped working after about 40 minutes of operation.

Reference: None

Analysis: This have happened before and is linked to the time the repeater is in continuous use.

Objective 5: Report on local/regional infrastructure interruptions and damage if known

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Core Capability: Situational Assessment

Strengths

The Performed with Some Challenges this capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Operators were able to report back to their respective Net Control stations regarding any interruptions of infrastructure.

Strength 2: Status updates were able to be shared with both Kansas and Missouri State Communications Officers providing State EOCs with situational awareness as well.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Amateur radio groups need to be better integrated into local information sharing processes such as WebEOC.

Reference: Regional Coordination Guide: ESF 2

Analysis: The regional changes in WebEOC have been integrated so there can be communication among the different copies and the 2 states. For some instances of WebEOC the "fusion" server was offline at the time of the exercise.

Core Capability: Operational Coordination

Strengths

The Performed without Challenges capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: There was a great deal of willingness to work in austere conditions to set up and provide communications.

Strength 2: Positive attitudes and good cooperation between participants and jurisdictions.

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1: Although several jurisdictions had Emergency Management staff participating in the exercise many others did not.

Reference: Regional Coordination Guide: ESF 2

Analysis: The local Emergency Managers still need to become more engaged with their amateur radio groups to be better prepared to utilize them during an event.

[LOCAL Objective 1]

The strengths and areas for improvement for the local jurisdiction for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

[LOCAL Core Capability 1]

Strengths

The [full or partial] capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: [Observation statement]

Strength 2: [Observation statement]

Strength 3: [Observation statement]

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: [Observation statement. This should clearly state the problem or gap; it should not include a recommendation or corrective action, as those will be documented in the Improvement Plan.]

Reference: [List any relevant plans, policies, procedures, regulations, or laws.]

Analysis: [Provide a root cause analysis or summary of why the full capability level was not achieved.]

Area for Improvement 2: [Observation statement]

Reference: [List any relevant plans, policies, procedures, regulations, or laws.]

Analysis: [Provide a root cause analysis or summary of why the full capability level was not achieved.]

Area for Improvement 3: [Observation statement]

Reference: [List any relevant plans, policies, procedures, regulations, or laws.]

Analysis: [Provide a root cause analysis or summary of why the full capability level was not achieved.]

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed for the Kansas City Metro Region as a result of the MECC SET conducted on October 5, 2019.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element[1]	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Core Capability 1: **Operational Communications**	1.1 Due to a lack of proficiency with FL Digi some operators struggled with passing traffic	Specific training on FL Digi software	Equipment and Training	Local Radio Group	Local Radio Group Leadership	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020
	1.2 Not all operators were proficient with the non-voice modes of operation thereby limiting the number of digital stations available to pass traffic.	Provide training on the digital traffic handling including equipment operation and the used of various modes.	Equipment and Training	Local Radio Group	Local Radio Group Leadership	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020
		Continue to develop regional digital protocol document.	Planning	MECC	TBD	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020
	1.3. Lack of familiarity with forms and formal message handling procedures in passing traffic in voice and digital modes	Operators need training on message handling procedures and forms	Training	Local Radio Group	Local Radio Group Leadership	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020

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[1] Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

Core Capability 1: **Operational Communications**	1.5. Digital nets had significant challenges being established due to a lack of pre planning regarding the mode, frequency and format on how the data would be passed.	Develop protocols and procedures for the use of digital modes and frequencies in the KC Metro area. Develop an ICS 205 for the exercise.	Planning	MECC	Matt May	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020
Core Capability 2: **Public and Private Services and Resources**	2.1 Multiple groups experienced a lack of trained and experienced operators to perform the tasks needed for the exercise.	Recruit and train new operators	Planning / Training	<mark>Local Radio Group</mark>	<mark>Local Radio Group Leadership</mark>	<mark>November 1, 2019</mark>	<mark>September 30, 2020</mark>
Core Capability 3: **Operational Coordination**	3.1. Due to a lack of participation by hospital staff the Amateur Radio Operators were unable to collect the required information	Hospital EP contacts need to better coordinate with amateur radio operators and hospital staff at their facilities.	Planning	Regional Hospital Committee	Steve Hoeger	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020
	3.2 Due to the lack of digital capabilities and trained personnel and equipment information about hospital staffing was not able to be passed in this mode.	Work with facilities to upgrade computers to support the requirements for radio operations.	Equipment	Regional Hospital Committee	Steve Hoeger	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020

	3.3 The local Emergency Managers still need to become more engaged with their amateur radio groups to be better prepared to utilize them during an event.	Continue to engage the EM community to participate in amateur radio based exercises.	Planning	MECC	Matt May	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020
	3.4 During net operations, the VA repeater (443.500 MHz) stopped working after about 40 minutes of operation.	The radio and controller need to be evaluated and fixed if needed.	Equipment	KCHEART	Matt May	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020
Core Capability 4: **Situational Assessment**	4.1 Amateur radio groups need to be better integrated into local information sharing processes such as WebEOC.	Amateur radio groups should request training on the local WebEOC system	Training	Local Jurisdictions	Local	November 1, 2019	September 30, 2020

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APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations
State
State of Kansas Div. of Emergency Management (KDEM)
State of Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA)
State of Kansas Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES)
Regional
Metropolitan Emergency Communications Council (MECC)
Kansas City Hospital Emergency Amateur Radio Teams (KCHEART)
Salvation Army (SATERN)
Local – Amateur Radio Groups
Clay County MO ARES
Independence MO ECS
Jackson County MO ARES
Johnson County KS RACES (ECS)
Leavenworth County KS ARES
Platte County MO ARES
Wyandotte County KS RACES
Local – Hospitals
Advent Health Shawnee Mission
Children's Mercy Hospital
Children's Mercy Hospital Kansas
Liberty Hospital
Mission Chateau LTC
Olathe Medical Center
Providence Medical Center
St. Joseph Medical Center
St. Luke's East
St. Mary's Medical Center
Local – Emergency Management
Clay County MO Emergency Management
Independence, MO Emergency Preparedness
Jackson County MO Emergency Management
Johnson County KS Emergency Management
Leavenworth County KS Emergency Management
Platte County MO Emergency Management
Wyandotte County KS Emergency Management