Okaloosa County ARES

Emergency Communication Plan

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Okaloosa County ARES

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information current as of 27 March 2007, except where noted.

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Purpose

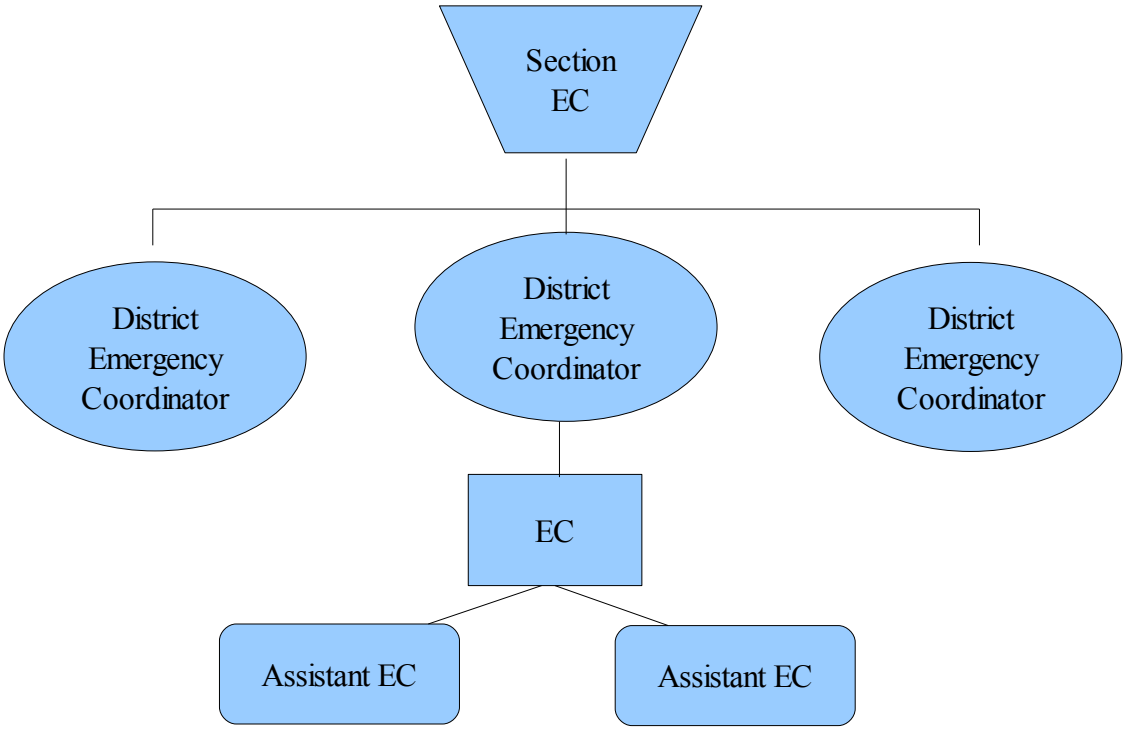
The purpose of this document is to establish a clear and effective operating methodology for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service in Okaloosa County. Since situations tend to develop and change rapidly, this plan should not be considered a concrete set of rules, but guidelines to be adapted to best fit the situations encountered. Should any of this document keep you from providing constant and reliable communications, disregard it.

The sections “Definitions”, “Policies”, “Emergency Coordinator”, “Alerting Procedures” and ”GATEway System” from the North Florida AREC Emergency Plan (NFARECEP), 7-1-2006, are hereby included in this section as if they were written in full. For a complete, up-to-date reference on these sections, refer to the latest version of the NFARECEP. When the NFARECEP is available from a consistent source (i.e., a website), this section shall include a reference.

Administration and Organization

Leadership and Organizational Structure

ARES is part of the American Radio Relay League, the ARRL, and as such, all ARES officials are field officials of the ARRL. The ARES chain of command goes something like this:



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Chain of Command: The County ARES Group

Emergency Coordinator

The Emergency Coordinator for a county ARES group is in charge of ARES operations in that county. ARES operators in his county report to him, and he reports in turn to the DEC. He is ultimately responsible for the planning, training and operations of his ARES group.

Sean Flynn, KI4IIB is the Emergency Coordinator for Okaloosa County ARES, until 31 December 2007.

Assistant Emergency Coordinators

Assistant Emergency Coordinators are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of the county EC. They are assigned specific support roles within the organization. If you see a need you might be able to fill, contact your EC to see whether an AEC appointment might be right for you!

Gary Jordan, K8GJ, is the AEC in charge of Training for Okaloosa ARES. Other AECs as announced.

Chain of Command:

Okaloosa County Emergency Management Agency

When ARES members operate in support of government agencies or government-managed emergency operations, the federally mandated National Incident Management System (NIMS) requires that each member have only one supervisor. This concept is known as *Unity of Command* and is required for organizations to be NIMS-compliant.

Therefore, when operating in support of government operations, the EC shall report directly to the Incident Commander, typically the Okaloosa County Emergency Manager. Other Okaloosa ARES operators will continue report to the EC.

Should the EC be unavailable, an AEC or other operator will be designated as the interface between Okaloosa EMA and Okaloosa ARES operators.

The *Emergency Manager* for OCEMA is Randy McDaniel, and the *Emergency Coordinator* is Ken Wolfe.

Internal ARES organizational and administrative matters are addressed more completely in the North Florida Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Plan (NFARECEP), available online. [link needed]

Operations

Okaloosa ARES operates in support of any emergency operation that requires timely, accurate and failsafe communications. In Okaloosa County, this generally means hurricanes. The majority of the information presented in this document will therefore focus around preparation, response, and relief for pre- and post-hurricane operations.

Activation

Okaloosa ARES can be activated independently by a number of ARRL officials, or through an ARRL official by request of a served agency. Generally, ARES members will have advance notification of activations, but not always. Respond as soon as practically possible to activations, since ARES is activated for situations in which life and property depend on constant and reliable communications.

Served Agencies

ARES does not operate in a vacuum; ARES operators are not first responders, and so almost always provide communications in support of another group – the American Red Cross, FEMA, or local Emergency Management Agencies, to name a few. These groups are called *Served Agencies*.

The main served agency for Okaloosa ARES is the Okaloosa County Emergency Management Agency (OCEMA). While we are always open to opportunities to serve in as many capacities as we can, our main working relationship is currently with OCEMA.

Status Levels

These status levels are passed down from the Section Emergency Plan. Operators are encouraged to review the NFARECEP for further information.

- **Monitoring** – Condition Green. ARES operators are encouraged to monitor for potential emergency situations, report as needed, and continue training and exercise.
- **Hot Standby** – Condition Yellow. ARES operators are notified that their services may be needed in less than 48 hours. Team leaders should prepare

their teams; operators are requested to secure property and prepare for deployment.

- **Full Operation** – Condition Orange. ARES operators are in place and operating.

Activation Methods

The OCARES EC will generally utilize Okaloosa County's mass notification system, Code Red, to activate ARES. Code Red is essentially a highly efficient automated phone dialer / message delivery service. It is vital that ARES operators keep their contact information up to date!

In situations where Code Red is unavailable, ARES operators should monitor e-mail and local repeaters, mainly 146.79(-), 147.36(+)(100hz), and 146.52 simplex.

Upon activation, ARES operators should contact the EC as soon as possible, by any means possible to receive operating instructions, pre-incident briefings, and any further instructions. Absent further instructions, ARES operators should report to the Okaloosa County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), in the Shalimar courthouse annex.

Nets

ARES Nets are the backbone of communication during emergencies. The Net Control Station (NCS) supervises and routes radio traffic during emergencies, allowing the smooth and orderly flow of information. Sometimes these are formal nets, where check-ins are taken, and formal traffic is passed between stations. More often, ARES Nets are simply directed nets, using tactical callsigns to delineate who is where. In any case, an active ARES Net is an emergency net, and takes precedence over all other traffic.

Local Nets (VHF/UHF)

Okaloosa ARES nets will operate primarily utilizing UHF/VHF frequencies. UHF frequencies are encouraged whenever possible, since space and power requirements are more suitable to emergency operations. Be aware that ARES operators often have limited UHF capability; **at the time of this writing, the Okaloosa County EOC has no UHF capability.**

When the EOC is staffed, the operators at the EOC shall function as Net Control.

HF Nets

HF nets are managed at the District and Section levels, and therefore should require little to no action from Okaloosa County operators.

HOWEVER: All HF-capable stations are strongly encouraged to monitor calling frequencies and traffic nets, and to stand ready to offer assistance should traffic relay requests go unanswered. In the absence of a functioning net, HF operators are encouraged to relay priority and emergency traffic to the best of their ability.

Priority Traffic

In an emergency situation, many nets – including Okaloosa ARES nets - will not carry health and welfare traffic until the incident has terminated. Such traffic should be recorded as opportunity allows and relayed after the incident has terminated, at the first possible opportunity.

Net Protocol

How to Check In:

Give your callsign, and location. If your location has been assigned a tactical callsign, use it.

When checking into an ARES net, be as exact with your location as possible, so there is no confusion.

*Bad: "*KI4IIB, checking in."

Better: "KI4IIB, Fort Walton Beach."

Best: “This is KI4IIB, checking in. I am 50 yards east of the intersection of Beal and Racetrack, in Fort Walton Beach.”

Indicating Traffic:

If you have traffic to pass, indicate the number of messages you have when you check in (i.e., “KI4IIB, Fort Walton Beach, one piece of traffic.”)

Checking Out:

When you wish to secure your station, report to the net controller and they will grant permission unless your assistance is immediately vital. If you are going to step away from the radio please report that you are doing so, and check back in when you return to your operating position.

Tactical Callsigns:

Operation positions generally change hands during an emergency situation of any length. To simply things, ARES operators should use tactical callsigns as they are assigned by Net Control. Consistency and speed of communication are the goals (at 3:30 in the morning, nobody will remember who's staffing Davidson Shelter). Operators still have to comply with FCC regulations regarding transmission of their own callsigns (once every 10 minutes, and at the end of a transmission)

Frequency Usage

UHF: *ARES nets may use UHF frequencies whenever practical, given the more practical size, power and transmission qualities of UHF frequencies. Be aware that many stations –* ***including the EOC*** *- have limited UHF capability, and so this statement is intended to be forward-looking to a time in which most ARES operators have UHF capability, and a capable infrastructure is deployed. Repeater frequencies may be found in Appendix D.*

- **South Okaloosa County (south of the Shoal River)** shall utilize the 146.79(-)(n/t) repeater, when available. In lieu of the 146.79 machine, the Eglin AFB repeater on 147.12(+)(100hz) shall be used.
- **North Okaloosa County (north of Duke Field)** shall utilize the 147.36(+) repeater. In the event of failure, the 147.225(+) repeater shall be used.
- **Northwest Panhandle ARES District** nets operate on 146.700(-)(100hz).

Operational Note: Many repeaters require subaudible tones, which tend to muck with digital operations. Ensure that the repeater you use has the tone turned off when using digital modes through a repeater.

Please see Appendix D, Local Repeaters for a more complete list of local repeaters.

ARES Operators

ARES operators serve their community in times of great need. They work long hours in conditions that are often stressful and unpleasant, with little sleep. Usually, their only reward is the knowledge of the good they have done for their community, and a few kind words. ARES operators are amateur radio operators of the highest caliber, professionalism, and dedication to their community.

Conduct

While courtesy is encouraged at all times for all amateur radio operators, it is absolutely vital during emergency operations. While the general public is not our intended audience, many non-hams listen through other means (scanners, etc). Our audience extends **far** beyond the confines of our radios. In that light:

- Professional conduct shall be maintained at all times.
- Confidential information, unless vital to operations, should not be passed over the air. If there is any doubt about the confidentiality of information, contact net control and inquire further.
- During emergency nets, stress builds quickly. If any personal conflicts arise which interfere with ARES operations, conflicting individuals will be removed with prejudice from their positions until such time as the conflicts are resolved. The OCARES EC will have complete jurisdiction in these situations.
- ***At NO time during operations will any stations be under the influence of alcohol (or any other mind-altering substances).***

Certification

NIMS stands for the National Incident Management System. It's a federally-mandated training system that enables disparate agencies with little or no common background to operate on the same emergency scene in close conjunction with little notice or mutual training. It is designed to maintain interoperability before, during and after large events - like hurricanes.

ARES operators who wish to operate at the EOC, any shelters, or deploy as an extension of local, state, or federal government Emergency Management, shall be certified as required by the relevant agencies. These requirements are passed down from the Department of Community Affairs (the parent department of the Florida Emergency Management Agency), who (in turn) got them from FEMA.

Required certifications:

- Completion of FEMA's free, online independent study NIMS courses:
  - IS-700
  - IS-100
  - IS-200
- ARRL Emergency Communications Classes
  - Level 1
  - Level 2
- Any state, local, or federally issued NIMS-compliant training certificate issued less than 5 years ago (2001 at this time of writing) qualifies; any ARRL EMCOMM class successfully passed qualifies.

Regular training sessions are held to assist operators in attaining these goals. Lack of certifications should not discourage any volunteer from offering to help at any time. However, all operators are encouraged to pursue certification **well** before hurricane season approaches, as the turn-around time for certificate receipt may be in excess of 48 hours for electronic notice, and up to 2 weeks for receipt of paper notice.

Two copies of each certificate of completion should be given to the OCARES EC, who will retain one copy, and give one copy to the OCEMA.

Access Authority Badges

Access Authority Badges serve two purposes: First, they serve to identify ARES operators as emergency volunteers. Secondly, they are keys to the door to the Okaloosa EOC.

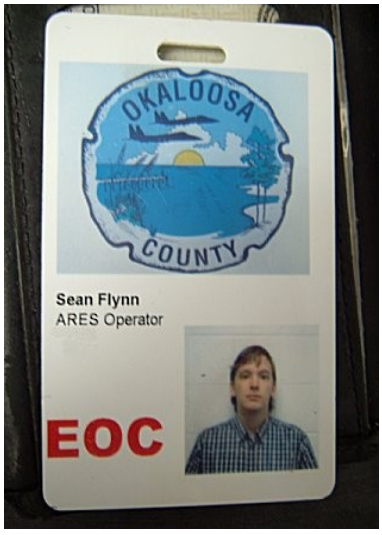
Okaloosa County EOC badges will be issued shortly before an incident to operators as-needed. Shelter operators, EOC operators, and damage assessment teams can expect to be issued badges at the outset of an event. Operators are required to keep their issued badges secure when issued. Should a badge be lost or stolen, report the loss or theft immediately to the OCARES EC, since a stolen badge may allow access to secured areas by unauthorized persons.

In the event that access badges are unavailable, and/or ARES personnel are denied access to areas in which they are deployed, said ARES personnel shall request enforcing personnel to make contact with their team leader / supervisor at the EOC to grant access authority.

Example: An ARES member is requested to move to Navarre from Okaloosa County, to assist in relief operations in Santa Rosa County, but encounters a roadblock.

Good: ARES member acknowledges the situation, produces identification if requested, and politely requests that the enforcing officer or Guardsman make contact with his supervisor to confirm entry with the Okaloosa and Santa Rosa EOCs. ARES member is -patient-, as these things take a few moments.

BE AWARE: The old County Access badges are NO LONGER VALID! If your badge does not look like the following picture, you need a new one.



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Appendix A: Glossary

AEC – Assistant Emergency Coordinator

ARES – Amateur Radio Emergency Service

ARC 4496 – Risk assessment guidelines used by county officials in evaluating shelters

ARRL – American Radio Relay League

DEC – District Emergency Coordinator

OCARES – Okaloosa County ARES

OCEMA – Okaloosa County Emergency Management Agency

EC – Emergency Coordinator, usually in reference to the ARES field official.

EOC – Emergency Operations Center.

FCC – Federal Communications Commission

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

NCS – Net Control Station

NFAREC – North Florida Amateur Radio Emergency Communications

NFARECEP – North Florida Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Plan

NIMS – National Incident Management System

SEC – Section Emergency Coordinator

Appendix B: Deployment Teams

[note:the following is taken from the North Florida Amateur Radio Emergency Communications plan, is provided as a courtesy, and is current as of 26 March 2006. For the latest information. please reference that document. As of this writing, the position of District Jump Team Coordinator is vacant.]

Self-supporting mobile teams have been a staple of AREC operations for many years. Deployment teams can go quickly to distant locations to help in AREC operations. They can be first responders where no local Amateurs are available. They can provide relief operators to let exhausted local operators to get some rest. Each Northern Florida DEC should maintain at least one such team ready to respond to a call within two hours or less of notification. The ideal would be two or three jump teams in each District. All deployment teams should obtain a Florida State tracking number before responding to an emergency communications request.

Suggested organization

Each DEC appoints an assistant to recruit a pool of operators from the District, train and organize them, and keep them functional. Volunteers are chosen in part for their ability to drop whatever they may be doing and hit the road with their
"ready kits" already loaded.

Preparedness

The jump team should be self-supporting in transportation, fuel, food, water, emergency power, and sleeping accommodations in addition to their communications equipment.

The ready kit

Each member should prepare his own “ready kit” and keep it in his vehicle or at a specific place where it can be picked up without delay. Typically, the ready kit would include provisions for at least three days of fully self sufficient

existence with the understanding that deployment may extend beyond three days.

Deployment

Normally, no relief teams are sent to another District unless specifically requested by the DEC or Emergency Manager in the impacted area. Relief teams must obtain a state tracking number before deploying to an impacted area. Operators should not just “show up” and expect to go to work.

When a deployment team is activated, the coordinator designates a team leader from among the members on a particular assignment . After the leader is fully briefed, he and his team depart for the assigned site or staging area as quickly as possible.

Upon arrival, the team should be able to set up a station on emergency power, operate on VHF/UHF and/or HF on designated frequencies, and maintain radio contact with other AREC stations as required. The coordinator provides a reliable base station link with home for the team members as necessary.

Scheduling operator relief

As soon as local AREC operators in the target area begin to report for duty posts, the DEC in the impacted area would notify the SEC that relief crews will be needed to staff various positions in about 24 hours, relieving worn-out local operators. The notice would specify the number of operators and any special equipment needed, e.g.; emergency power, portable repeaters, special antennas, ATV, AMTOR or APRS, or high-speed CW operators, for example. The SEC then attempts to locate suitable teams. He sends them to a staging point near the impacted area to await further instructions.

The SEC arranges for a second-wave replacement team if necessary, and attempts to keep fresh operators moving into the impact area about every 24

hours until they are no longer needed. The first deployment teams typically should be scheduled to arrive in the target area or staging area about 24 hours after local AREC units go on Activated Alert status.

In severe impact incident situations where personal trauma of the local AREC asset is considered at risk the SEC may assemble a Forward Command Assistance Team (FCAT) to accompany the initial the first wave of deployment teams. The purpose of this team is not to take over the role of the DEC or EC in the incident area but to relieve the impacted personnel so that they can take care of personal matters and get sufficient rest during times of extreme stress.

The local DEC and EC will continue to be full participants to the extent that they are able and that they decide given the circumstances, utilizing the FCAT as needed. One function of the FCAT will be to program stress reduction activities for all AREC volunteers in the impacted area and keep the SEC apprised of all matters affecting the welfare of team members.

The reporting point

At the reporting point the leader reports the teams arrival to the host EC. The host EC will advise the team how to reach specific duty sites, and on what frequency to check in. On that frequency, the impact-area EC will direct the team to its specific duty assignments.

Appendix C: Shelters

The following list is taken from http://www.eoconline.org/EM_Live/shelter.nsf, as linked from the Florida Division of Emergency Management website, and is for reference only. Data matches the website as of 25 August 2006. Please note that these are only for reference. Many of these listings may be suitable for post-disaster operations, but most are not certified as hurricane shelters, and as such may not open in times of disaster. Please plan accordingly. Shelters listed as ARC 4496 compliant (i.e., they were designed as shelters) are in bold, and are most likely to be open in a disaster.

Shelter Name	Address	Capacity	Special Needs	Showers?
Antioch Elementary School	**4700 Whitehurst Lane, Crestview, FL**	**1,737**	**0**	**Yes**
Baker High School		**2,500**	**0**	**Yes**
Bruner Middle School		0	0	?
Choctawhatchee HS (Emergency personnel shelter)	110 Racetrack Rd., NW, Fort Walton Beach, FL	200	0	Maybe
Clear Springs Baptist Church	1284 Highway 85, Laurel Hill, FL	25	0	?
Davidson Middle School	**6261 Old Bethel Rd., Crestview, FL**	**2,701**	**65**	**No**
Dorcas Baptist Church	5880 McCallum Rd., Crestview, FL	45	0	?
First Baptist Church	102 Cedar Ave., Crestview, FL	100	0	?
First Central Baptist Church	951 S. Ferdon Blvd., Crestview, FL	120	0	?
First Christian Church	201 St. Mary Ave., Fort Walton Beach, FL	83	0	?
Harvest of the Vineyard Mission	544 N. Main St., Crestview, FL	50	0	?
Kenwood Elementary	**15 Eagle St. NW., Fort**	**466**	**0**	**No**

School	**Walton Beacn, FL**			
Mt Zion AME Church	502 Mcdonals St.	50	0	?
New Beginnings Church	412 W. James Lee St., Crestview, FL	100	0	?
Oakdale Baptist Church	1018 Valley Rd., Crestview, FL	50	0	?
Okaloosa-Walton College (Shelter of Last Resort)	**100 E. College Blvd., Niceville, FL**	**250+**	**0**	**?**

Appendix D – Repeaters

This section is intended to provide a quick-reference section for local repeaters. Data may not be current, and should be verified at the earliest possible opportunity. Keep in mind that in a disaster, many repeaters may be unavailable.

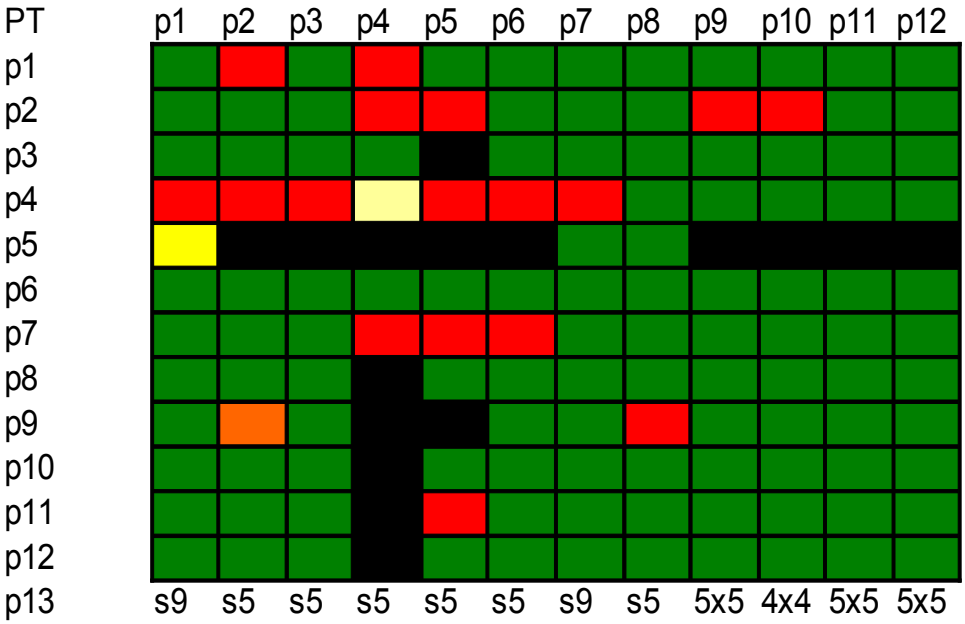
[see next page]

Repeater	Frequency / Offset	Tone	Emergency Power	Served Area
W4ZBB	146.790 (-)	-	No	FWB, Navarre, Destin, Eglin Range
W4AAZ	147.360(+)	100hz (can be disabled by N4NID)	Yes (battery; manual switchover)	Crestview, FWB, Baker Eglin Range, Niceville
KD4NHT	146.910(-)	100.0 Hz	No	
KF4PDX	147.285(+)	-	?	Defuniak Springs, Freeport, N. Walton County
K4BRT	146.700(-)	?	?	Santa Rosa County (District)
N4NID	444.850(+)	-	?	Crestview
N4NID	444.950(+)	110.9	?	Crestview
W4ZBB	147.225(+)		Yes	South / Central County
W4MTD	444.975	-	?	Fort Walton Beach
K4PRA	146.760	100.0 Hz	?	Pensacola
W4NN	147.120	100.0 Hz	Yes	FWB, Navarre, Destin, Eglin Range
W4NN	444.880	100.0 Hz	Yes	FWB, Navarre, Destin, Eglin Range
W4RH	147.000	100.0 Hz	No	FWB, Navarre, Destin, Eglin Range, Crestview, Freeport

Appendix E – Relay Points

The objective of this section is to compile a list of known relay points in Okaloosa County using mobile or handheld antennas and power levels of no more than 60 watts.

When the exercise was conducted, each point on the left-hand side of the chart transmitted for a set amount of time. All stations listened, then called back to Net Control, and reported whether they could hear the transmitting station.



NCS was at the Okaloosa County EOC, in the Courthouse.

P1 Mid-bay bridge

P2 Cinco bayou bridge (5W handie-talkie)

P3 Okaloosa island

P4 Navarre bridge

P5 Intersection of 85 and 123 [30°29.83'N, 86°33.49'W(NAD27)].

P6 Okaloosa-Walton airport [side of road]

P7 Okaloosa-Walton College

P8 Highway 85, slightly south of Crestview, as close to the south side of Lookout Tower as possible (30° 38.80'N, 86° 33.20'W)
P9 Navarre CERT Center
P10 Copeland Tower on Eglin Reservation
P11 PARC Clubhouse (50W fixed)
P12 W4RH residence (100W? fixed)
P13 WA4SXR residence by Florosa Fire Department (fixed)

To determine whether (for instance) P6 and P9 can communicate two-way, do the following:

(1) Locate the first station on the left side of the chart. In that station's row, look for the second station's column. If that square is green, then Station 2 can hear it.
(2) Locate the second station on the top side of the chart. In Station 2's column, find Station 1's row. If that square is green, then Station 1 can hear Station 2.
(3) **If both squares are green**, then two-way simplex communication is possible at 25-60 watt power ranges, using standard mobile whips and better. Exceptions are noted in point lists. If a square is black, stations were unavailable or unresponsive when called, and accurate data has not been collected.