

Incident Briefing (ICS-201)

1. Incident Name 2026 Simulated Emergency Test	2. Incident Number NA	3. Date Initiated 23 Sep 2026 Updated 28 Oct 2026
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4. Map/Sketch:



5. Situation Summary/Health & Safety Briefing:

THIS IS A DRILL

Utility, internet and telephone services across Pennsylvania are behaving unreliably. Power, internet and communications interruptions are occurring at random intervals creating a potential for disruption of communications and emergency services. Pennsylvania has alerted ARES and the Red Cross to be ready to provide emergency communications and report situational awareness. Emcomm teams have been advised

6. Prepared by: Carmine W. Prestia, Jr. K3CWP	Position/Title: Emergency Coordinator
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that even amateur radio repeaters may be affected. ARES units are activating and Red Cross is providing two winlink gateways to service emergency traffic.

Personal safety is the only health and safety issue for this drill as participants can check in from home, portable locations, or mobile. All participants are advised to exercise situational awareness wherever they are and not place themselves in danger for the drill.

7. Current and Planned Objectives:

Fall 2026 PA SET – EXERCISE INSTRUCTION (version 09/24/2026) Prepared by the Exercise Team.

This exercise is voluntary. As EC you know your unit's specific needs for training and experience. If you have other plans for the Fall SET then feel free to follow them. Any SET results that you report to the Exercise Lead will be included in the SET Report.

This SET serves both the Eastern PA (EPA) and Western PA (WPA) ARRL Sections. It also includes a Red Cross activity that serves Greater PA (GPA) and Southeastern PA (SEPA) American Red Cross Regions.

The Fall 2026 PA SET exercises general emergency communication skills, ARES unit activation, assessment of simplex capability and using the Pennsylvania Red Cross Winlink mail boxes.

EXERCISE SCENARIO

Utility, internet and telephone services across Pennsylvania are behaving unreliably. Power, internet and communications interruptions are occurring at random intervals creating a potential for disruption of communications and emergency services. Pennsylvania has alerted ARES and the Red Cross to be ready to provide emergency communications and report situational awareness. Emcomm teams have been advised

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that even amateur radio repeaters may be affected. ARES units are activating and Red Cross is providing two Winlink gateways to service emergency traffic.

EXERCISE ACTIVITIES

Alert ARES Team Alert ARES team per local procedures

Conduct ARES Net Run a resource net, check-in available team members

Assess Simplex Capabilities Assess team's ability to communicate with net control via simplex

Red Cross Winlink Check-in Send check-in message to Red Cross via Red Cross gateways

RATIONALE

This exercise is an opportunity practice communications with minimal infrastructure support.

Alert and Net are standard Emcomm activities. This is a good chance to practice.

Simplex operation is an opportunity for the ARES unit to assess usability of simplex for Emcomm when it may be required.

The Winlink activity leverages the improved Winlink Post Office function. The exercise gateways will be operating without internet connections. The grid square single line check-in is sufficient for participants to have an opportunity to learn how to address messages to, and connect with, a Winlink Post Office. We will try more complicated messaging and forms in the future.

WINLINK POST OFFICE

Post Office is a way of using Winlink where deposited messages remain at the Gateway in local storage to be retrieved later by the addressees when they connect to the same Gateway. The Gateway is not dependent on the internet for Post office messages. The

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message originator connects to the gateway in a Post Office session and addresses the message as a Post Office message (see example below). Recipients check in as a Post Office session to receive their messages.

EXERCISE ACTIVITY – ARES UNIT ACTIVATION

Activate your ARES team per standard procedures. This can be combined with the Unit Net and/or the Simplex Test.

EXERCISE ACTIVITY – ARES UNIT NET

Conduct a simulated emergency net. Log the attendees and their availability to provide situational awareness, to deploy and to provide emergency communications support from their QTH, deployed location or mobile.

Log the net. Record attendees and status. Use of ICS-214 or ICS-309 is suggested but any legible log is acceptable. See example below.

When complete, email log to the exercise lead at JayHKing@yahoo.com.

EXERCISE ACTIVITY – ARES SIMPLEX TEST

Conduct a simplex net and map out your team's ability to reach one another directly or via relay.

Net Control Location

You can use any location for net control. The most useful would be a location that you would use in an actual activation.

Simplex Frequency

See the separate ICS-217 Communications Availability Worksheet for frequencies. You are not limited to VHF/UHF. Any simplex/point to point operation is acceptable including HF.

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Location Reporting

Grid square is the recommended tool for location reporting. Participants can operate from home or deploy. If deployed consider using a likely EmComm / public safety location like a hospital, high school (shelter), city and county office, etc.

Using Grid Square for location reporting would enable using other tools to map contacts. Here are two sites that can make maps.

WG7J Grid Mapper <https://wg7j.reinalda.net/gridmapper/gridmapper.php>

QSO Map <https://www.qsomap.com/>

Logging

Use ICS-214, ICS-309 or similar log format. Log call, time, frequency and location. If a relay, log the station providing the relay.

Results Reporting

Send logs and maps to JayHKing@yahoo.com for inclusion in the exercise report.

EXERCISE ACTIVITY – RED CROSS WINLINK GATEWAY CHECK-IN *(Any participant with Winlink capability may send a check in message as below. CWP)*

Greater PA and Southeastern PA Red Cross are providing two Winlink gateways for check-in via Post Office. This is representative of how ARES teams and Red Cross EmComm could communicate if the phone network and internet were not available or reliable. The Post Office check-in retains traffic at the Gateway were it is later retrieved by the addressee.

The exercise check-in message is limited to the sender's grid square (in the message subject). In future exercises we will have more advanced activities and more complex messages.

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Participants are invited to check-in at either or both exercise gateways. Check in only once per gateway. All check-ins should be point-to-point. The purpose of this exercise is for individual operators to reach and use the Red Cross Gateways. Relay through other Winlink Gateways or via other Winlink stations is not the intent.

Be sure the latest versions for Vara FM, Vara HF and Winlink are installed.

Checking In

Check-in format is single line check-in using the message subject. Address to only the address below. Do not send to other addresses or CC. Put your current station grid square in the message subject. Leave the message body blank.

For gateway KD3CST, address check-in message to WA3ARC, with your grid square in the message subject.

For gateway K3FZT-10, address check-in message to W3ERS, with your grid square in the message subject.

NOTE – See Winlink Post Office Addressing below for examples.

Gateway Details

Greater PA ARC Gateway SEPA ARC Gateway *(Also specified on the ICS-217. CWP)*

KD3CST Lewisburg
K3FZT-10 Philadelphia
3.550.5 (Vara 500)
7.106.5 (Vara 500)
14.027.5 (Vara 500) 3.586.5 (Vara 2750)
7.039.5 (Vara 500)
10.146.5 (Vara 2750)
145.670 (Vara FM and Packet)

Address to WA3ARC
Address to W3ERS

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At the conclusion of the exercise, grid square information in the check-in messages will be used to create a participant location map. The map will be included in the exercise report.

EXERCISE REPORT

Exercise results will be reported. The report(s) will be provided to ARES and Red Cross leadership for distribution. In addition a report link will be sent via Winlink.

The report will summarize participation, results and participant comments. It will include maps of the GPA and SEPA Gateway check-ins and any maps of the Simplex Test that are provided to the exercise lead. All logs, comments, maps, etc provided to the exercise lead will be included in the report.

8. Current and planned actions and strategies:

TIME	ACTION
10:00	Open nets at all locations
	Each NCS take check-ins and log same
12:00	On or before this time close the nets depending on activity
	K3CWP send results to Red Cross via WinLink

9. Current Organization (Chart):

Jay H. King, W2AFE, EPA SEC, ARES Exercise Lead

Brett Saylor, W3SWL, GPA ARC Lead

Carmine Prestia, K3CWP, ARRL EC, Centre County, PA, Net Control Station

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10. Resource Summary

Resource	Tactical Call Sign	Date/Time Ordered	Notes (Location/Assignment/Statue)
Mount Nittany Medical Center	Mount Nittany	1000 – 1200	Carmine Prestia, K3CWP, Net Control Station for Centre County

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