

Amateur Radio Emergency Service®
Simulated Emergency Test
2025 Player Handbook
Connecticut ARES®



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Section Emergency Coordinator

SET 2025 Player Handbook

Purpose

This *SET 2025 Player Handbook* provides all exercise players with information required to participate effectively in the Connecticut Section Simulated Emergency Test (SET). Players should feel free to ask questions and seek clarification concerning their roles and responsibilities and the rules of exercise play.

Anyone with questions about the exercise not answered in this *SET 2025 Player Handbook* should contact the District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) for their respective Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Region using their *callsign@arrl.net* for email:

Region 1 – Peter K1PCN
Region 2 – Phil K1XFC
Region 3 – Bill AB1LZ
Region 4 – Phil K1XFC
Region 5 – Harlan W1QH

Scope

The Connecticut Section 2025 SET will be a statewide emergency communications exercise. It is intended to test our ability to provide communications for our Served Agencies that include the Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), the Connecticut Department of Public Health, and local municipalities (EOCs).

Exercise information will be communicated beginning on *Thursday, 2 October 2025*. Players should monitor the CT ARES Groups.io Announce and Alert groups as well as the CT ARES website.

The Exercise operational period will begin on *Friday, 24 October 2025 at about 1900 EDT* and end at about *2200 EDT Saturday, 25 October 2025* as determined by the Section Emergency Coordinator. ARES, SKYWARN, and NTS play will occur over this operational period.

Please note that we are seeking maximum participation from ALL radio amateurs, not just CT ARES members!

Exercise Objectives

In addition to the SET purposes outlined on the ARRL website, the CT Section 2025 SET has the following specific Exercise Objectives:

1. Evaluate the capabilities, with preplanning, to activate portable operations at the 17 Regional Technical High Schools.
2. Evaluate the ability to send Winlink messages from each of the 17 locations.
3. Evaluate the ability of participants to complete an ICS 214 and deliver that completed form to their DEC.
4. Evaluate VHF/UHF statewide communications on the KB1AEV linked repeater system.
5. Evaluate HF statewide communications using both 80 meters and 40 meters.
6. Evaluate the ability to communicate via simplex on assigned frequencies.
7. Evaluate the command-and-control capabilities of ARES Leadership (DEC, ASEC and EC) using the DMR network.

Concept of Play

At the start of the exercise the scenario will require notification of response personnel and activation of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for CT ARES. Communications will occur on frequencies as specified in the CT ARES Communications Plan (ICS 205). To facility the objectives of this Exercise within the operational period, players activating field locations will be selected prior to the start of play.

Exercise Assumptions

- Coordination of Regional responses by the DEC (or alternate) will be essential.
- Exercise players will respond in accordance with the existing plans, procedures, and policies. In the absence of applicable plans, procedures, or policies, players will be expected to apply individual and/or team initiative to satisfy response requirements.

Exercise Artificialities

It is recognized that certain artificialities and constraints detract from exercise realism. However, exercise players are to accept the following artificialities as a means of facilitating the accomplishment of the exercise objectives and performance criteria.

- We are purposely trying to conduct the test using a compressed timeline so that we can maximize participation by all radio amateurs in Connecticut.
- Alert, notification, and initial activation activities will be an important part of the overall exercise.

Exercise Simulation

Simulation during this exercise may be required to compensate for non-participating organizations, individuals, and field units that would actually be deployed in a real-world response. Although simulations may detract from exercise realism, the simulated incidents (including messages from and to simulated entities) provide the means to facilitate exercise play and provide for the testing of exercise objectives and specific performance criteria.

All persons, agencies, response units, citizens, and higher levels of government not actually participating in the exercise will be represented as needed by simulation or through exercise control.

When players determine the need to deploy, recall, or otherwise task any resources, they must follow existing procedures and coordinate with the appropriate ARES leadership officials as they would in an actual response.

As the exercise is being played in a real-time environment, players will be provided with any information that they need that would have come from other sources.

Scenario Narrative

The exercise scenario will be a plausible incident (or series of incidents) that creates an urgent need for establishing auxiliary communications statewide.

Players should be prepared to participate in an exercise that tests their ability to meet the Exercise Objectives stated previously.

The 2025 scenario involves an escalating statewide drought that culminates in the need for emergency drinking water distribution. Seventeen locations (the Regional Technical High Schools) will be used as distribution points for bottled water going to municipalities for further distribution. The State will ask CT

ARES to provide auxiliary communications at those seventeen locations. Teams of radio operators will be preassigned to each location. Simplex relay stations will be assigned as needed. Volunteers for these two assignments should contact their DEC. Individual players not assigned to a field location will be tasked with participating in nets and receiving simplex messages at their home stations.

Details of the scenario will be disclosed as the exercise progresses.

Player Procedures and Responsibilities

Primary players in this exercise will be licensed amateur radio operators providing auxiliary communications support in accordance with the protocols, procedures, frequency plans, and other guidance as detailed in the CT ARES Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and the CT ARES Communications Plan (ICS 205)

Coordination and execution of the exercise plan within each of the five CT ARES Regions will be the responsibility of the District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) or designee, as well as Assistant DECs (ADECs), and local Emergency Coordinators (ECs).

All players will be asked to participate in the following:

1. Friday, 24 October between 1900 and 2100 hours – SKYWARN Nets by county to provide weather forecast information. Specific times to be announced by the SKYWARN ECs.
2. Saturday, 25 October at 0900 hours – SET opening net on the KB1AEV linked repeater system.
3. Saturday, 25 October beginning at 1000 hours – Simplex communications from the Regional Technical High Schools to assigned towns. Players in those towns should acknowledge when called. Specific frequencies to be announced.
4. Saturday, 25 October at 1100 hours – SET HF net on 3965 kHz followed by a net on 7280 kHz.
5. Saturday, 25 October at 1145 hours – SET closing net on the KB1AEV linked repeater system.
6. Saturday, 25 October between 1800 and 2130 hours – Regularly scheduled NTS Traffic nets to handle “Test Priority” messages going to the SEC.

Safety and Security

All voice exchanges should begin and end with the phrase “This is a Drill.” NTS messages should contain the word “Test” as part of the precedence in the message preamble. NTS and Winlink messages should include the phrase “This is a Drill” as the first words in the text (or body) of the message.

Should an ACTUAL emergency occur at any time during the exercise that dictates that play should stop, the phrase “REAL WORLD” (preferably repeated three times) shall be used to indicate that exercise play is suspended until further notice or until the emergency is resolved. ARES officials with knowledge of the actual emergency situation should inform the Regional DEC and the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) of any pertinent details of the situation as soon as practicable.

Players activating field locations should follow proper procedures for the safe installation of antennas. They should also safely set up and operate all equipment including batteries. Dress should be commensurate with the weather (information provided on the Friday evening SKWARN nets). Hydration should be part of everyone’s personal safety planning.

Communications

Communications during the SET will be in accordance with the CT ARES Emergency Operations Plan using frequencies specified in the CT ARES Communications Plan.

Statewide coordination and message handling will be accomplished through multiple redundant channels to include:

- CT-ARES DMR Network (used by ARES Leadership for Command & Control)
- KB1AEV linked VHF/UHF repeater system
- HF SSB on 3.965 MHz and 7.280 MHz
- Assigned simplex frequencies
- Regular SKYWARN and NTS net frequencies

The CT ARES Announce and Alert Groups as well as the CT ARES web site will be used by the SEC for Exercise messages in the weeks leading up to the start of the operational period.

Reporting

Immediately after the conclusion of the exercise, responsible officials (Emergency Coordinators at all levels and Net Managers) should submit reports and logs to SEC as discussed in related communications. Each player should submit an ICS 214, Activity Log, documenting the participant's play during the operational period. These should be completed while the information is fresh, and they are still engaged in the exercise process!!

Any logs or other records produced as part of this exercise should be retained by the responsible person or organization.

To the maximum extent possible, DEC's are encouraged to conduct after-action critiques to solicit comments and lessons learned. Collection and submission of input to the respective DEC from exercise players and observers is highly desirable.

Administrative Details

Anyone with questions or comments about the 2025 SET should contact their District Emergency (DEC) using their *callsign@arrl.net* for email:

Peter K1PCN, DEC Region 1
Bill AB1LZ, DEC Region 3
Harlan W1QH, DEC Region 5
Phil, K1XFC SEC Regions 2 and 4