

# The Cape & Islands ARES District Exercise #83 Spring Mini-Exercise Scenario and Guidelines



## Cape and Islands ARES

Exercise **“Spring Test”**

Frank O'Laughlin – WQ1O  
Cape&Islands ARES DEC

*Version 1.3*  
05-09-25

# Table of Contents

Purpose .....	1
Exercise Scenario .....	2
Cape District Exercise Objectives .....	2
Operational Ground Rules .....	3
Communications Options to be utilized .....	3
Field teams must be completely self sufficient.....	3
Setup and Timeline.....	3
Operational Disclaimers .....	3
Operational Players and Field Units .....	4
Mid-Cape field site-2M Net Control site (NCS) Dennis .....	4
Upper Cape Field Site .....	4
Communications with the islands.....	4
Home Operator Stations .....	5
Exercise Messaging Activities.....	5
NTS formal messages to be sent into the NTS system (Optional).....	5
NTS passing of formatted messages between the field sites .....	5
Winlink Messages to the Cape Cod and Islands ARES DEC (Optional) .....	6
Winlink Messages for the Eastern MA Section ARES Mini-Exercise (Optional) .....	6
VHF 2m NET Operations.....	7
Primary Tactical NET.....	7
Operating Procedure for the Tactical NET .....	7
Signal strength reporting .....	7
HF/VHF Winlink operations .....	8
HF Operations .....	8
HF voice operations on 75m.....	8
Problem Solving Situations and Improvisation .....	9
Unexpected situations.....	9
Incident Command Structure (ICS).....	9
Critique and Evaluation of the Exercise .....	9
This is an <i>Medium</i> Level Exercise.....	9
Cape-Exercise Frequency Usage .....	10
Eastern MA Section ARES Mini-exercise participation .....	11
Eastern MA Section Mini-Document .....	12
Appendix 1: Emcomm Training Organization Exercise.....	13

***Revised pages with this version:***

# Cape Field Site Map



# Cape Cod ARES Zone Map



## Date of Exercise

Saturday May 10th, 2025

Setup time: 8:30am

Start Time: 10:00am

End Time: noon

Operational Duration: 2 hours

## Purpose

The Cape Cod and Islands District Amateur Radio Emergency Service will conduct a spring test exercise to test its capability in establishing communications with stations within its district and outside it under emergency conditions. The operational exercise called “**Spring Test**” will test the ability of one or two field stations to communicate. This will also be a drill to test for some of our primary stations and other ARES member home stations. The exercise will attempt to build upon the lessons learned from our past operational exercises. This exercise may also involve participating in the activities from the Eastern MA Section exercise document (Only if you have Winlink).

# Exercise Scenario

*This will be a test exercise without a specific scenario.*

## Cape District Exercise Objectives

The objectives of this exercise are as follows:

- Deploy field operations sites to the Mid-Cape (Dennis), and possibly Upper Cape (Falmouth) zones
- Establish contact with other ARES districts and their EOCs where possible
- Test zone relay operations with Home Stations
- Communicate with the Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard ARES/RACES stations
- Use HF 75m and possibly 40m voice to attempt district wide contacts and beyond.
- Allow our new people to get some operating experience and field orientation
- Pass NTS formatted messages on VHF FM and HF 75m voice
- Allow home stations to test their VHF and HF capabilities
- Pass ICS-213 messages by Winlink
- Participate in the Eastern MA ARES Section Winlink test (if you have Winlink)

# Operational Ground Rules

## Communications Options to be utilized

Communications options for this exercise will be 2m FM, 440 FM UHF (on field sites), HF 75M (Primary) and 40M (Secondary Fallback) voice. There will be a tactical net on 146.580 MHz FM simplex. VHF and HF Winlink will be used (Optional).

## Field teams must be completely self sufficient

The ARES field teams must bring all of their own equipment and supplies. Served agency communications equipment may **NOT** be used in any way. *We only use what we have brought with us.* Teams operating inside RACES EOC's or other served agency sites are exempt, of course.

## Setup and Timeline

Setup time will be 8:30am. The exercise will begin promptly at 10am (HF). The **VHF simplex net** will begin at **10:30am**. The exercise will last approximately 2 hours and will end at noon. Timelines may be adjusted accordingly in response to turnout and early completion of primary objectives.

## Operational Disclaimers

Due to the proliferation of radio scanners and the possibility of misconstrued information by the public, all tactical voice messages *that can be misconstrued* will be preceded by the words **"This is a Drill"**. Any NTS formal messages will have the words **"This is a drill X"** as the first five words in the body text. In this time of national public concern, we must make all efforts to ensure that the general populace is not misled and that amateur radio is not portrayed in a negative manner. *If the message is one that is likely to not be misconstrued, then the words do not have to be inserted.*

# Operational Players and Field Units

## Mid-Cape field site-2M Net Control site (NCS) Dennis

The Cape Cod ARES Mid-Cape field site will operate:

- 2m FM 175W station
- 440 UHF simplex
- 75M and 40M voice SSB
- VHF/HF Winlink (Possibly)

The site in Dennis will be established at a private residence in a location on high ground that is not far from the Dennis repeater site. It will serve as the VHF Net Control site and field site for medium to long range coverage. It will operate self-sufficiently.

## Upper Cape Field Site

The Upper Cape field site will be in a parking lot at Falmouth Hospital with field expedient antennas and power. It will operate 2m FM simplex. It may also have Winlink. It will operate self-sufficiently. Its back up plan is to operate inside the hospital if necessary.

## Communications with the islands

Communications with the Islands will be attempted from the Net control station along with ARES home stations, field teams and any EOC stations. Home relay stations can also be employed where necessary to establish contacts by simplex. Nantucket will likely have one or two stations active. Islands communications are critical, as always. We will also accept any contact with any mobile stations on the islands.



## **Home Operator Stations**

Home operator stations will be of value in this exercise as stations that will communicate with the NCS site and field units within their range. We will continue our test of home stations and their ability to serve as backup stations to ARES/RACES EOCs. Home stations can be the primary anchor points for our zones of operation within the district. This exercise will give our member's home stations a chance for testing of any new or experimental equipment, as well as, their emergency power backup systems. This will be an ideal time for the home operators to fully evaluate their stations performance.

## **Exercise Messaging Activities**

There will be three operational messaging activities in the exercise. The first will involve the sending of an NTS message between field sites only. The second will be any NTS messages that general participants wish to send into the NTS system. The third will be for Winlink users to send an ICS-213 to the district DEC.

### **NTS formal messages to be sent into the NTS system (Optional)**

Exercise participants are encouraged to create and pass NTS messages addressed to friends or family on the HF 75m Net. These messages will NOT be scenario specific as we are not using a scenario for this exercise. The messages should just state that they are a "TEST message using amateur radio" in the message body along with any other details you wish to add (Brief is best).

### **NTS passing of formatted messages between the field sites**

Near the end of the exercise, all of our field station (s) will compose an NTS formatted message. The message will contain information as to the number of operators at the site and whether the site is operating on battery, generator, or both. Field site operators will pass their messages to the NCS. All interested persons are encouraged to copy the messages for practice and/or act as relays if needed.

## **Winlink Messages to the Cape Cod and Islands ARES DEC (Optional)**

Participants in the exercise that have Winlink may send an ICS-213 message to the Cape Cod and Islands ARES DEC (WQ1O). The message will include which bands and modes that you operated. It will also state the antenna type and power output along with whether you were using emergency power.

## **Winlink Messages for the Eastern MA Section ARES Mini-Exercise (Optional)**

Our district ARES exercise will be ongoing at the same time as the Eastern MA ARES Winlink Exercise. This will be referenced later in the document with a link. *We encourage all members with Winlink to try to participate in the Eastern MA Mini drill.*

# VHF 2m NET Operations

## Primary Tactical NET

The primary tactical NET will operate on the Primary *simplex* operating frequency of 146.580 using FM. The net will begin *30 minutes after the 10am start of the exercise* beginning at 10:30am. HF operations will begin first at 10am sharp. This will be covered in the HF section of the document. The VHF NET may remain at 146.580 or move, if necessary, to alternate frequencies as required for the exercise.

## Operating Procedure for the Tactical NET

The operating procedure for this exercise will consist of a roll call format. The NCS station will do a staggered priority and geographical call up. 1st call will be for ARES/RACES field sites. The second call up will be for any EOC stations in our district (including the Islands). The third call up will be for home and other stations by order of zones in sequence (Outer Cape, Lower Cape, Mid Cape, Upper Cape, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard). Last call up will be for stations outside the Cape/Islands district. After the initial call up, NCS will designate one station in each zone (if available) that will call out for any stations that the NCS could not hear. NCS will then poll all field sites and individual check in stations which will read aloud those stations they could hear on the net. We will evaluate successful communications paths based on that data. All stations will keep a log of whom they can hear and send it to the ARES DEC by email after the exercise. Mobile units (if any) may call NCS outside of the roll call when any mobile operators feel the necessity of doing so. **In a change from previous exercises, we will not be asking each station to call out and attempt contact with all the stations on their list. This change is in order to leave more time for other operations.**

## Signal strength reporting

When participants are recording/reporting the received signals of incoming stations, we will use terminology similar to that used in the Upper Cape Falmouth ARES simplex net. Signals will be reported by:

1. **No signal**
2. **Weak readable**
3. **Good readable**
4. **Strong readable (if signal is exceptionally strong)**

# HF/VHF Winlink operations

Participants can use the W1SGL-10 RMS winlink station in Falmouth on 145.090mhz or the WA3SWJ-10 RMS station in Brewster on 145.030mhz. If you are attempting to connect to the Falmouth RMS from long distance, you can use the N1YHS-7 digi in Barnstable to reach it). If sending within the Winlink system to another Winlink address, the @winlink.org is not required.

If you wish to try HF Winlink, There is an Autoconnect option. It automatically goes through the stations in your "select channel" list, selecting what it thinks is best first, and trying one by one until it connects or gives up. It's not perfect, but it's useful in a scenario where you're away from your regular contacts. It helps to "Update via Internet" on the Channel Selection screen while you have internet access (i.e., probably from home before the exercise) so current band conditions are reflected (per Lem WILEM)

You can look up HF RMS stations on [www.winlink.org](http://www.winlink.org) to see stations around the world in general.

## HF Operations

### HF voice operations on 75m

HF stations in the Cape Cod and Islands district will attempt contact with our District HF Net Control station (NCS) in Eastham. The Net will begin at **10am sharp**. The Cape VHF simplex Net will begin 30 minutes later at 10:30am. The reason for this is that some members would like to participate in both HF and the VHF net. Staggering the time slot will make it easier for those operators to utilize both, especially if they are operating alone at home. The net will be on 75m at 3930 kHz. Cape field sites and home stations are encouraged to check in to the net. Stations checking into the net should log the signal strengths of all stations heard. Check ins can also pass any NTS voice messages on this net.

NOTE: If 75m proves to be ineffective, the net will transition to 40m on 7243khz.

# Problem Solving Situations and Improvisation

## Unexpected situations

There will be one or two unannounced problem situations in the exercise. This will require the operators to improvise and think “out of the box”. These situations will enhance our ability to adapt to rapidly changing conditions. They will occur without notice, so be prepared to act quickly.

## Incident Command Structure (ICS)

ICS functions will be assigned before operations begin at the site. An Incident action plan will be created, if time permits, and distributed for all operators participating. We shall continue to use the ICS in future exercises in order for us to become knowledgeable in operating under this system for served agencies.

## Critique and Evaluation of the Exercise

We will have a meeting to critique and analyze the exercise no later than 15 *days* after the exercise. All participants should bring their notes and observations for evaluation by the group. All exercises will produce information that could be useful to future operations. Even seemingly small details can prove valuable to our training and development.

## This is an *Medium* Level Exercise

Although CCARES has had some multi-site large exercises in the past, this will be an advanced level operations drill rivaling some of the earlier ones. It could be technically demanding on the field sites.

# Cape-Exercise Frequency Usage

**Primary Tactical NET: 146.580 Primary FM **Simplex****

**Secondary Simplex 2m: 147.465 FM Simplex**

**440 MHz simplex: 446.000**

**Primary 75m HF Voice Operations: 3930 kHz (LSB)**

**Secondary fall back 40m HF Voice Operations: 7243 kHz (LSB)**

**VHF Winlink: W1SGL-10 RMS station on 145.090 MHz Falmouth (W1SGL-10 RMS is also accessible via the N1YHS-7 Digi in Barnstable for those east of the Mid-Cape Zone)  
WA3SWJ-10 RMS station on 145.030 MHz Brewster**

If you wish to try HF Winlink, There is an Autoconnect option. It automatically goes through the stations in your "select channel" list, selecting what it thinks is best first, and trying one by one until it connects or gives up. It's not perfect, but it's useful in a scenario where you're away from your regular contacts. It helps to "Update via Internet" on the Channel Selection screen while you have internet access (i.e., probably from home before the exercise) so current band conditions are reflected (per Lem WILEM)

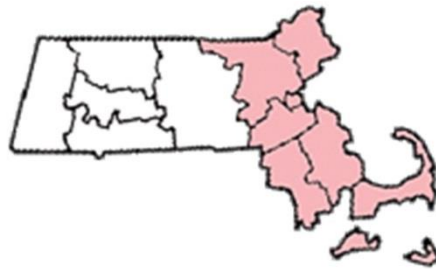
## **HF Winlink:**

If you wish to try HF Winlink, There is an Autoconnect option. It automatically goes through the stations in your "select channel" list, selecting what it thinks is best first, and trying one by one until it connects or gives up. It's not perfect, but it's useful in a scenario where you're away from your regular contacts. It helps to "Update via Internet" on the Channel Selection screen while you have internet access (i.e., probably from home before the exercise) so current band conditions are reflected (per Lem WILEM)

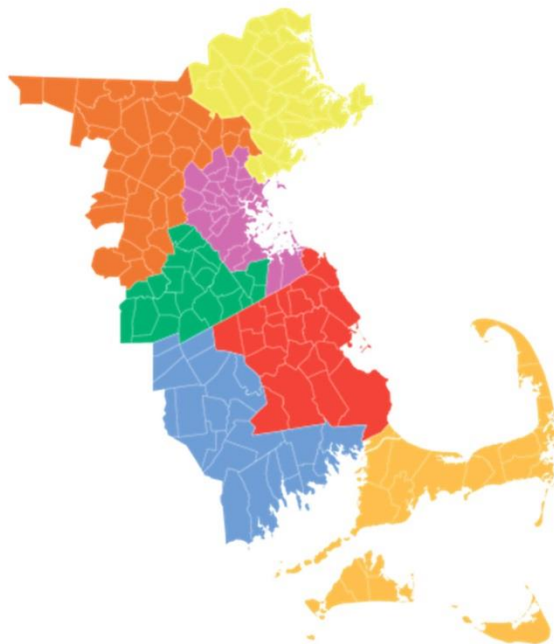
**Also See [www.winlink.org](http://www.winlink.org) website**

# Eastern MA Section ARES Mini-exercise participation

*The Eastern MA ARES Section mini-document will appear on the next page*



Eastern MA ARES Map



# Eastern MA Section Mini-Document

The Eastern Massachusetts ARES Section is conducting a “test” exercise focused on Winlink operations on Saturday 5/10/25. This “test” exercise is coincident with the following events:

- Cape Cod ARES District Exercise on Saturday 5/10/25 from 1000 AM-1200 PM
- Winlink ETO (Emergency Training Organization) exercise

Winlink is a form of email that can be sent over radio or Internet. Some details on what it takes to utilize Winlink via a program known as RMS Express and other background training material on Winlink can be seen at the following link:

[https://winlink.org/content/winlink\\_book\\_knowledge](https://winlink.org/content/winlink_book_knowledge)

For this “test exercise” at the section level, we are focusing exclusively on the Winlink Digital mode. General Amateur Radio Operators and ARES members that have Winlink capability or those interested in working on getting it running are asked to do the following using any Winlink mode (Packet/VARA Amateur Radio or Winlink Telnet):

- 1.) Send a Winlink Field Situation Report to [kd1cy@winlink.org](mailto:kd1cy@winlink.org) filling in the template with the info it requests anytime on Saturday 5/10/25 from 500-AM-1159 PM – if you are not familiar/comfortable with Winlink forms, a simple email message for the exercise is also acceptable.
- 2.) Send either a Winlink Severe Weather Report Form or Local Weather Report form filling in the template with the info it requests anytime on Saturday 5/10/25 from 500-AM-1159 PM — if you are not familiar/comfortable with Winlink forms, a simple email message for the exercise is also acceptable. Send these forms to [wx1box@winlink.org](mailto:wx1box@winlink.org)
- 3.) For “extra credit”, participate and following the instructions of the Winlink ETO exercise that are in this link: [https://www.emcomm-training.org/drills2.html#Assignment\\_5-10-25](https://www.emcomm-training.org/drills2.html#Assignment_5-10-25)
- 4.) Also for “extra credit”, participate in the Cape Cod ARES District Exercise via the various modes/bands they will be operating on Saturday AM 5/10/25

All messages sent to the KD1CY and WX1BOX Winlink email addresses will be responded to any time on Saturday through 200 PM Sunday Afternoon 5/11/25 and we will send a brief report out on the participation from the section. We appreciate your support of Eastern Massachusetts ARES!



# Appendix 1: Emcomm Training Organization Exercise

The Emcomm Training organization will be holding their nationwide semi-annual drill on the same weekend. ARES members with Winlink are encouraged to participate in this drill if they wish.

[https://www.emcomm-training.org/drills2.html#Assignment\\_5-10-25](https://www.emcomm-training.org/drills2.html#Assignment_5-10-25)