

ERC Spring Exercise Prep

03 June 2015

If you've been on the ERC website in that last couple of weeks, you've probably noticed an announcement about the upcoming exercise on June 20. The exercise will begin at 9:00 am and run for about three hours, until noon. There will be lesson learned sessions in each region immediately following the exercise. There is not a great deal of information being released at this time, but there is some information that will be helpful on that day.

In the announcement on the website, there are a number of suggestions and questions to consider. Let's elaborate on some of those.

This will NOT be an exercise that you will be participating in from home.

If this were an actual emergency and you were invited to provide communication for your ward or stake, it is highly unlikely that you would be operating from your home. You would not have access to your base station rig, your high-gain antenna mounted high on a tower, or that unending supply of AC power used to energize it all. *This is an exercise to test our ability and readiness to be ready to go. Make sure that your equipment go-kits are ready to go.*

Can you operate on any simplex frequency you are asked?

Do you know how to change frequencies on your radio? Do you know how to operate your equipment? We refer to this skill as "frequency agile". You may be able to tune to a frequency and operate on that frequency for the duration of the event. However, the opposite may also be true. You may be asked to monitor other frequencies or relay traffic from one net on frequency A to another net on frequency B. It really all comes down to knowing your equipment. The best way to know your equipment is to use it.

Which bands, frequencies, or modes you will be called on to operate will not be known until the exercise - be prepared for anything.

We have done a few trainings on this net that have had you changing frequencies—both back and forth between your region simplex frequency and this training net, and to other frequencies that may be less common to you.

Know your radio. Know how to change frequencies; know how to set tones on frequencies—even simplex frequencies. Don't think that just because you have the repeater frequencies and tones programmed into your radio that you are good to go. It is sometimes necessary to apply tones to simplex frequencies when operating in close proximity. The decision to do so may be made on the spur of the moment based on the current situation. Be ready to apply tones when needed.

Are you prepared to operate on emergency power for extended periods of time?

This exercise is schedule to last about three hours. However, in an actual emergency, your assignment may not have ready access to electricity or the power may be out altogether for days. Be prepared to operate for extended periods of time independently of grid power. It is difficult to estimate how much emergency power is enough emergency power. I would aim toward three to four days—a period of time that aligns with 72 or 96 hour kits. Batteries are a good source of emergency power. Consider ways to charge your batteries, too. At the very least, consider purchasing a clamshell case for your HT so that you can use common, readily available AA batteries.

Do you have food and water?

As ERC operators, we strive to perform our responsibilities without becoming a burden on those providing relief to the ones in need. Have a personal go kit ready, packed with food, water, clothing, medication and other essentials to survive independent of outside resources for three or four days.

Do you have transportation?

Keep your vehicles in good repair. Keep the fuel level above half a tank and air in the spare tire.

Be prepared...Be ready2go!

A meeting was held this last Sunday where your Stake ECS was given about as much information as possible about this exercise. He or she will be organizing a training meeting prior to the exercise for the operators within your stake. Watch for an announcement. Ask them about it.

Also, there will be a meeting for all Net Control operators, all regions, on June 14, at 6:00 pm at the Rigby South Stake Center. This is the stake center located 1 mile north of County Line Rd.

I hesitate asking because we have so little information, are there any comments or questions regarding the training?