

Suggestions from the ARES Meeting of March 21, 2023

1. Current Net control scripts should be disseminated the first month of hurricane season to all Members. (To hear a Net Control tell an operator to download the script -- when no one has power -- is very frustrating).
2. A suggestion to include the Members that are not supporting a shelter but have stayed behind riding out the storm. Include them in the net have them provide SITREPS and take those reports at the end of the Area Nets.
3. Include in the Hurricane prep handouts a "what to bring" to a shelter.
4. Deploy the shelter lead operator and back up at the same time.
5. Provide the alternative frequency(s) that will provide the most up to date information about the storm when the net stands down. The net provided a "Comforting voice in the darkness." When it was gone it was very unnerving.
6. The need to supply the ARES volunteers with specific contact names for both the school staff and EM staff at each shelter. It would also be helpful to have a little depth to such a list – i.e. have the names of assistants or of second shift managers, etc. Having their cell phone numbers would also be useful during the early hours when things are still getting organized. Hopefully, by the time the cell phones quit working, on site personal connections will have developed.
7. The distribution of backup electric power (from generators) left a lot to be desired. First, impacting ARES operations the most, is the fact that at some facilities, there was no generator power anywhere near the external antenna connection for the building. When the power went out, the ARES operator either had to switch to an HT or, hopefully, had a fully charged battery handy. Depending on how the facility was protected from wind damage, an HT may or may not be able to get out.
8. Related to the ARES generator shortcoming was the fact that, in many cases, apparently the generator was not hooked up to the water pumps and/or lift stations. Thus, those facilities really turned into hell holes in short order. Throw in a couple hundred dogs and ... you get the picture.

The whole operation of the backup power needs looking into. Note that some operators also noted that the generators were not hooked up to the air handlers. That may be too much to expect, though a connection to simple but protected exhaust fans may be workable.

9. If something happens which makes a regular transceiver unavailable and the operator turns to an HT, it would be nice to be able to connect the HT to the external antenna. In most cases that will require a simple SMA to UHF adapter. Unfortunately, the HT vendors have not agreed to a standard, so some use an SMA male antenna and some use an SMA female. Perhaps we could equip each orange box with a pair of adapters so we are better prepared when "Murphy" comes calling. If the "adapter" took the form of a foot long pigtail with very light-weight coax with an SMA connector at one end and a female UHF at th

10. We could use more practical training and some hands-on drills. Also, perhaps, table top exercises at a meeting.