

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT: EARTHQUAKE DISASTER SIMULATION 13 JUL 08**

**Original script text is in black font. After action comments are in blue font.**

### **Script Elements**

Actors will provide a sense of realism and urgency during their transmissions. React the way you would during a real emergency, some appropriate adlibbing is approved. The timing marks are just for reference, the key is the order of transmission. There should be some pauses. If a station such as Net Control asks anything that is outside the scope of this script, then use your best imagination and run with it. But please keep it brief. I would like to keep this net under about 45 minutes in length. With normal check-ins taking 30 minutes, we will have to work fast. Remember to add some sort of notice that this is a drill!

**Net starts at 2000 hrs on Sunday, 13 July**

**The objective of this exercise was to familiarize state amateurs with the types of communications that would take place during an emergency and to encourage a dialogue between ARES net members and their emergency management counterparts. Extensive critic of performance and procedures is intentionally not a part of this objective.**

### **Scrip Begins**

2010

KB7QVG: "Hold on, something is happening here" "This is KB7QVG, This is a drill, we have experienced an earthquake of a strong magnitude. My house is damaged, we have lost power, and I am on emergency battery power. This appears regional, can any Columbia Station assume net control?" Stand by for station to accept NC.

" Thanks, This is KB7QVG transferring net control to XXX . Please continue to check in stations and all stations are requested to stand by when checked in to relay for those with priority traffic."

**Amateur Radio can be a great resource during an emergency. A net control should have the best station possible. The net control requested an alternate because his station was damaged and battery power was limited. AJ4DW Carl graciously accepted net control responsibilities. A formal transfer was announced by both stations. This is important in an emergency since not all stations may be able to hear the new net control. Having a net control who is part of the emergency can be full of such drawbacks as loss of power and task oversaturation. A net control needs only be familiar with the area and the net.**

2012

KM4RK : "Break, Break, Break. This is a drill. Can anyone hear me? This is KM4RK and we have had an earthquake." Net Control Acknowledges.

**This simulated a weak station checking in. Nets need to pause occasionally to allow breaking traffic. 3 'Breaks' are a common way of announcing an emergency. A short comment from net control should inform the station of the situation and that a net is in progress. The station should then either request specific help or stand by.**

2013

KB7QVG: “Break, Break, Break” Net Control Acknowledges (NCA) “This is a drill. Net Control, This is KB7QVG acting as assistant EC for Berkeley County. Is there anyone on frequency close to the EOC that can activate the Comm Center?”

KC6YLH : “ I’ll go. I am about 5 minutes away.” Don’t give callsign until asked!

**Know your emergency management structure. Disasters don’t always happen when the EC is in town. Some situations call for self activation. In this case, the station knew he could not respond, but someone would be needed at the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) quickly. The closest station should have volunteered. In this drill, the actor failed to check in. The net control should have made repeated announcements and queries of new check-ins in order to assign someone to the task.**

2014

KB9UJF: “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday” NCA “This is a drill. Name is David. I am trapped in my truck and using a handheld. The quake shook me off the bridge into a ditch. The water is rising and I need help. I am located \_\_\_\_\_?”

Net Control Response (should relay need for help)

**In the Charleston area, water is a big part of life here. In a real quake, the area would become at least 18 separate geographic entities. In this case, the actor ‘had’ an accident and was in need of help. Since phone lines were down, he used his radio to call for help.**

W4KSD: “Net Control” NCA “I can help. I have some tools and a winch. I am about a mile away.”

**The responding actor suggested the two go to a different simplex frequency rather than tie up the net. This is good ops. The two should also agree to return to the net if contact is not established in a set time. A final aspect of this scenario is the dependence on others for help. The true first responder is the guy standing there when a disaster strikes. Do you have the tools and knowledge to attempt a rescue in your neighborhood?**

2016

Fireman W4QYV : “Break, Break, Break” NKA “This is a drill. I am a volunteer fireman at Fire Station XX located in XXX, off XXX Road. Net Control our regular fire radio system is down. Can you relay to any EOC or fire dept for us?”

Net Control may attempt to contact EOC. If so KC6YLH will reply he is stuck and cannot reach the EOC because of live power lines and trees lying across 17A.

**This scenario combines a few elements. The isolation of an earthquake applies to emergency services. In this case, the fireman had a radio capable of Ham frequencies. Ideally, during a wide comm out disaster, we could station hams with the fire crews to act as their communications. The second part of this was designed to show that even those who are a short distance away may have trouble getting to places such as the EOC. Since our EOC actor didn’t check in and the Net Control hadn’t tasked anyone, this part did not play well.**

2018

KI4TVA “Break.” NKA “This is a drill. The I-26 Ashley Phosphate overpass has collapsed. The 52 connector has also. There are several cars trapped in between. This is an exercise input.”

**Bridges and overpasses are dangerous during a disaster. Be prepared. Stretches of undamaged road may be isolated because of the debris in the road. Have a small disaster**

**kit in your car, including an emergency blanket, water, and food. Have at least enough for one day, but more is better.**

2024

KI4UIR “Emergency” NKA. “This is a drill. There are two houses on fire at (SAME ROAD AS FIREHOUSE) and fire is spreading to a third house. If it gets into the pine trees, the whole subdivision will go. We have no phones or power here. This is a drill”

Net Control should contact fire house.

**Secondary disasters such as fire are often the result of the main disaster. Open gas lines, downed power wires, and phone outages are all dangerous. If a fire gets started, it will often spread. In this scenario, we had a fire station down the block, but since the phone lines were down they couldn’t be contacted. The correct response was for net control to contact the fire house and see if they could respond. In our scenario, the station had a heavy accent and also doubled with the net control and the fire station response. Net control did call to confirm that KI4UIR did copy the fireman.**

2025

KE4RVF : “Break, this is a drill. Net Control, I have message traffic for State EOC. “

Net control Response

KE4RVF: “ Please copy #2 Precedence-Emergency, Handling-HXD, KE4RVF Check 21 Summerville, SC , 2020 July 13. Address TO: State EOC Manager // Break for Text” “NEED ALL AVAILABLE AIR AND GROUND SAR ASSETS X STAGE AT DORCHESTER EOC ON 78 X COMMS ON AMATUER FREQUENCY 3.993 / SIGNED Mike Jones, Dorchester Incident Commander”

Net Control Response

**If you have never passed or taken message traffic, a disaster is not the best time to start. In our scenario an inexperienced traffic handler is passing an EOC message. Another station The net control was experienced and took the message. Kudos for doing a complete readback. However his readback did not match the count for the message (see highlight). SAR is Search and Rescue. An additional note: Hams should pass messages exactly as written. However, in an emergency people may not make the best message. Read over the message before accepting it and if there are obvious errors, ask for clarification and have the sender rewrite it, you might save a life. This message could have been improved if an address and GPS coordinates were added to the EOC location, however EM officials at state should know where their EOC’s are normally located. A method of contact is a great addition to a message.**

**In one of several wonderful examples of exercise creep, KA4JJ announced that the state EOC was manned and Berkeley #2 message had been delivered. It’s great to have extra players in a scenario. However, be carefull if you jump into an exercise as your response may throw specially scripted elements out of wack. In this case, it was good stuff that the state EOC was activated a little earlier than we would have expected.**

2030

KB3AMH: "Break, break, break" NKA "This is a drill. Net Control. The small bridge at the entrance to our housing area has collapsed. This is our only entrance and exit point and we can't ford the river. We have injured people who need transport to a hospital."

**Survey your area. Where are the choke points for traffic? Our area has lots of single entrance housing areas. In this case, that entry was blocked. Injured were being triaged by neighbors and the only method of asking for transport was via radio. However, net control did recover and acknowledge the station.**

Let Alt Net Control continue net until all are checked in.

2040

Transfer Net Control back to KB7QVG

KB7QVG: "Net Control, on behalf of Berkeley ARES, I wish to thank everyone for their unexpected participation in this drill, especially our unsuspecting net control station.

This has been a small sample of the chaos and expected types of bad and good transmissions you would hear during an actual emergency. I know many stations would volunteer if it was a real emergency, but to be an effective emergency communicator you must know the rules, procedures, and people that would be used during a crisis. I encourage all stations to become involved in their local ARES or RACES group and learn about the new requirements of things such as the Incident Command System. If you are interested in emergency service and do not have an amateur radio license, do a web search and contact a local amateur to get started. With practice and effort, our next disaster response can be the one that people will say "Amateur radio saved the day!"

For those interested in tonight's exercise scenarios, we will conduct a review during next weeks net. The scenario and review will be also be posted on the Berkeley ARES website at <http://www.w4brk.org> , select 'Lowcountry ARES' button, then training topic. For the benefit of those who can't make next week, I will be available for questions after the net."

**Close Net**

**Overall, this was an excellent exercise and well run net. Just like in a real emergency, the alternate net control was not aware he would become net control. AJ4DW is to be commended for his performance under pressure. Although these transmissions were intentionally poor, they are representative of those that would be heard during an emergency. Hopefully a good deal can be learned from analyzing these different elements. Remember, the goal was to encourage both a greater participation in ARES and talk among the various response agencies and the amateur radio community.**