

Fall 2024 After Action Report

Held on October 30, 2024 6:00-9:00PM

The presumed disaster for this exercise was five days after a Cascadia Zone earthquake. We were a part of a much larger professional response exercise called IronOR 24.

The objectives were Building Size-up and injury Triage. We did not have AROs nor MCARES involved this time around.

Activities Conducted Based on Objectives

All teams made progress on the objectives outlined for the exercise:

- Teams arrived at an alternate staging area as the scenario had their usual staging area too damaged to use
- Upon arrival the team was given a completed form 201 as if they were doing a shift change – the 201 outlined what the “team before them” had done
- Teams were presented with tasks such as setting up a small rain shelter; a sanitation station; and identifying important emergency routes into their neighborhood
- Each team used FRS/GMRS radios for intra-team communication; AROs communicated with MCARES Bravo Team at the EOC

Teams

Twelve Portland Teams and one team in Salem (West Salem CERT) participated representing 43 neighborhoods

Each team had an exercise coordinator who was a member of the Planning Committee.

Arbor Lodge/PUP NET/St. Johns
Ash Creek/Hayhurst/Hillsdale/Maplewood
Collins View/South Buringame/West Portland Park
Grant Park
Irvington
Laurelhurst
Mt Scott/Arleta
NW District
Pearl District
Sellwood/Woodstock
South Waterfront
SW Hills
West Salem CERT

A Zoom Team was planned, only one person signed up so it was cancelled. The original premise of the Zoom Team was to show how those who cannot respond in-person can assist teams during a response.

The Numbers

Total number of registrants	163
Participants (day of, actually participated)	98
Number of teams	13
Exercise Coordinators	13
Subnets	4

Hours

392 hours logged

Feedback Scores

CDE Feedback Scores - Perfect Score is 5.00							
Date	The exercise was well structured and organized.	The overall exercise was plausible and realistic.	The individual scenarios were plausible and realistic.	The exercise will help me be a better NET member.	I felt that my participation was valued and necessary.	The Incident Commander built a strong plan.	Total Score
Fall 2024	3.75	3.6	3.68	3.84	3.91	3.4	3.69
Spring 2024	4.63	4.3	4.31	4.72	4.5	4.09	4.43
Fall 2023	4.41	4.3	4.3	4.7	4.67	4.06	4.41
Spring 2023	4.45	4.28	4.49	4.64	4.45	4.35	4.44
Fall 2022	4.28	4.21	4.16	4.47	4.4	4.05	4.08
Spring 2022	3.14	3.14	3.26	3.05	2.86	2.52	3.00
Fall 2021	4.31	3.79	4.32	4.03	4.35	4.08	4.15
Spring 2021	3.86	3.86	3.83	4.08	3.82	3.43	3.81

What do participants want to focus on for the Spring 2025 CDE

Exercise participants identified several items that need continued focus in the next CDE:

Working with forms, forms, forms...this continues to be an area we need to continue to practice
ICS Structure
FRS Radio Techniques
Filling out Form 8 from team to ARO
Mixing it up and working with other teams
More hands on training

Comments from participants

- The five days out scenario
- Working with FRS radios
- After dark deployment
- The hands on tasks such as emergency routes, sanitation and setting up a second rain tarp
- Realizing that help from the pros will be several days away

- Thinking through scenarios....such as could a NET really ignore a small child trapped in a building that is not safe to enter
- Liked the battery check – reminds people to update and refresh their kits
- Scenarios are theoretical – no real incident to respond to
- AROs tend to not be part of the exercise as they are physically removed from the team
- Incident Command was not set up outside in the rain
- The distinction between the incident command center and the operations center was not clear to me
- It was unclear what the outcome of some exercise components should be (tarp shelter, sanitation)
- FRS radios are a weakness. Communication was difficult at times
- Some details didn't scale well to smaller teams
- The weather hampered our ability to carry out real search and rescue

Exercise Follow-up

The planning committee encouraged each team to conduct a brief “hot wash” immediately following the exercise to report on their experience, give initial reactions to the planning committee through their exercise coordinators, and begin to identify areas where individual teams need to work on improvement and also where the team currently excels so that their skills can be maintained. It appears that most teams were able to have an on scene (or nearby) hot wash.

The planning committee conducted a follow-up survey offered to all exercise participants to gather more in-depth feedback on various aspects of the exercise. The summary feedback is presented in the chart on page two of this report in the Feedback Scores section.

This after-action report will be used in planning future exercises.

Notes From Spring 2024 CDE Hotwash



- Alternate staging area was a great idea
- Have a check in plan with a partner to make sure they are not on overload
- Teams were challenged to keep paperwork dry
- How do we keep the “floor” dry with rain? Tarps? Just deal with the mud?
- One team added fairy lights to their canopy which made it welcoming for team members
- Assign roles ahead of time
- Exercise Coordinator “handbook”
- Library of scenarios
- QR Code on signage about NET
- ICS 214 (Activity Log)

ICS 214 Activity Log

Purpose. The Activity Log (ICS 214) records details of notable activities at any ICS level, including single resources, equipment, Task Forces, etc. These logs provide basic incident activity documentation, and a reference for any after-action report.

Preparation. An ICS 214 can be initiated and maintained by personnel in various ICS positions as it is needed or appropriate. Personnel should document how relevant incident activities are occurring and progressing, or any notable events or communications.

Distribution. Completed ICS 214s are submitted to supervisors, who forward them to the Documentation Unit. All completed original forms must be given to the Documentation Unit, which maintains a file of all ICS 214s. It is recommended that individuals retain a copy for their own records.

Notes:

- The ICS 214 can be printed as a two-sided form.
- Use additional copies as continuation sheets as needed, and indicate pagination as used.

Block Number	Block Title	Instructions
1	Incident Name	Enter the name assigned to the incident.
2	Operational Period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date and Time From • Date and Time To 	Enter the start date (month/day/year) and time (using the 24-hour clock) and end date and time for the operational period to which the form applies.
3	Name	Enter the title of the organizational unit or resource designator (e.g., Facilities Unit, Safety Officer, Strike Team).
4	ICS Position	Enter the name and ICS position of the individual in charge of the Unit.
5	Home Agency (and Unit)	Enter the home agency of the individual completing the ICS 214. Enter a unit designator if utilized by the jurisdiction or discipline.
6	Resources Assigned	Enter the following information for resources assigned:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name 	Use this section to enter the resource's name. For all individuals, use at least the first initial and last name. Cell phone number for the individual can be added as an option.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS Position 	Use this section to enter the resource's ICS position (e.g., Finance Section Chief).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Agency (and Unit) 	Use this section to enter the resource's home agency and/or unit (e.g., Des Moines Public Works Department, Water Management Unit).
7	Activity Log <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date/Time • Notable Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the time (24-hour clock) and briefly describe individual notable activities. Note the date as well if the operational period covers more than one day. • Activities described may include notable occurrences or events such as task assignments, task completions, injuries, difficulties encountered, etc. • This block can also be used to track personal work habits by adding columns such as "Action Required," "Delegated To," "Status," etc.
8	Prepared by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Position/Title • Signature • Date/Time 	Enter the name, ICS position/title, and signature of the person preparing the form. Enter date (month/day/year) and time prepared (24-hour clock).

ARO Survey for Citywide Deployment Exercise (CDE) on October 30, 2024

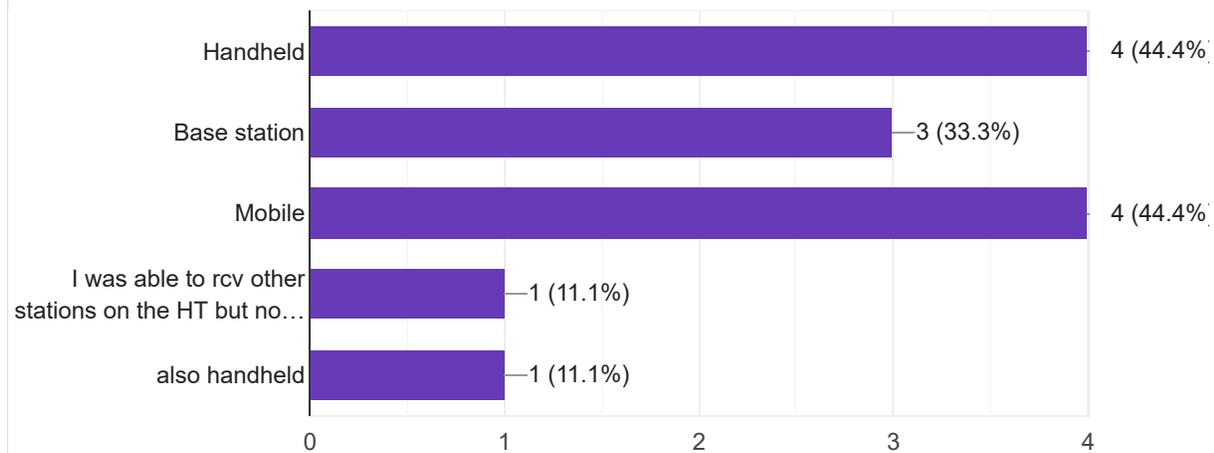
9 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

Type of the radio you used during the CDE on October 8th (check all that apply)

[Copy](#)

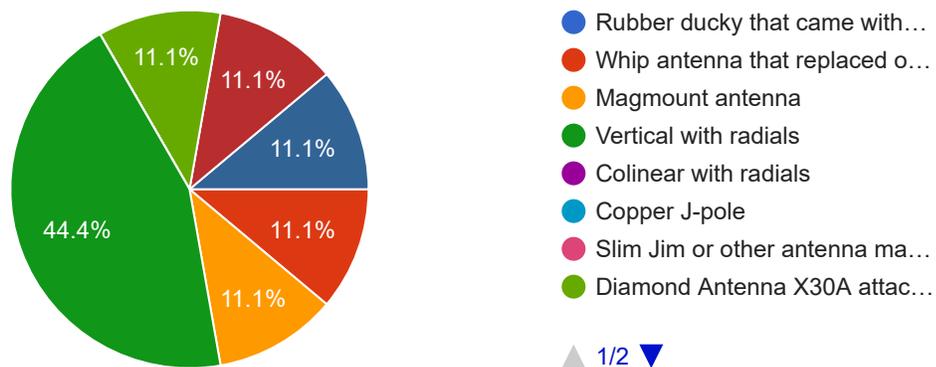
9 responses



Type of the antenna you primarily used

[Copy](#)

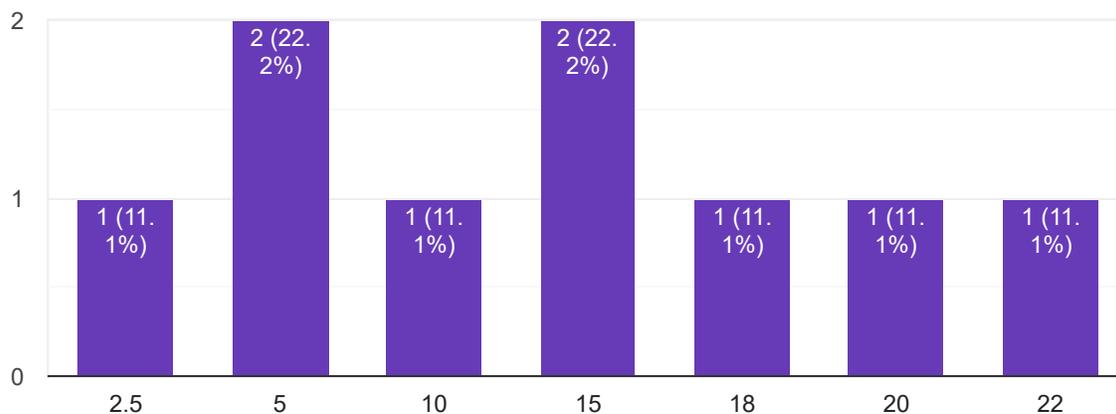
9 responses



Rough estimate of height of the base of your antenna **above ground level** (not above sea level) in feet during contacts with subnet control.



9 responses



Transmit power that you used in watts. (Most handhelds use 5 watts when set to high power.) If your radio has L, M or H power settings instead of watts and you're not sure what they correspond to, indicate L, M or H instead of watts.

8 responses

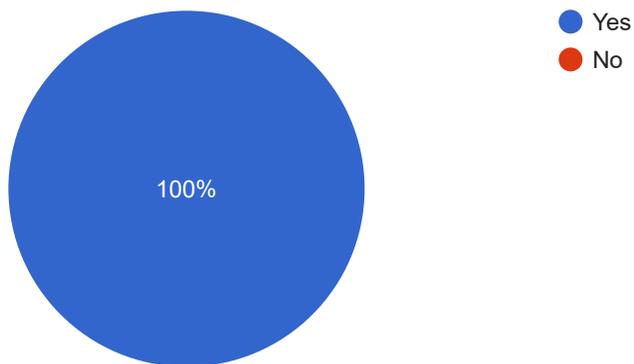
- 5
- 10 watts
- medium
- 50
- 12 w emergency power
- M
- 50W
- 5W



Were you able to check into the Resource Net?

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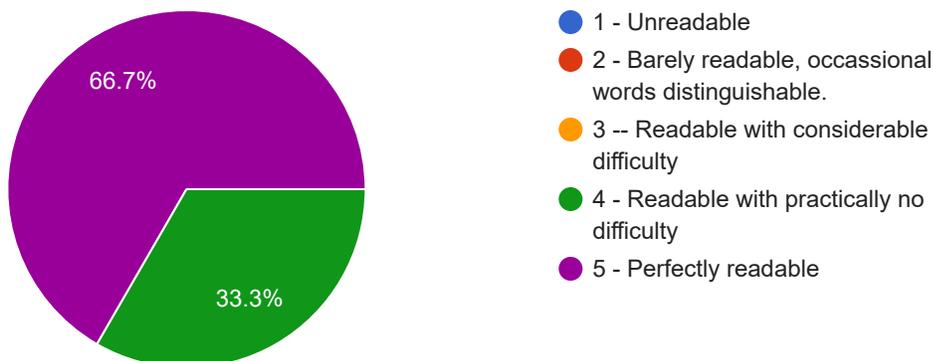
9 responses



How well could you hear the Resource Net?

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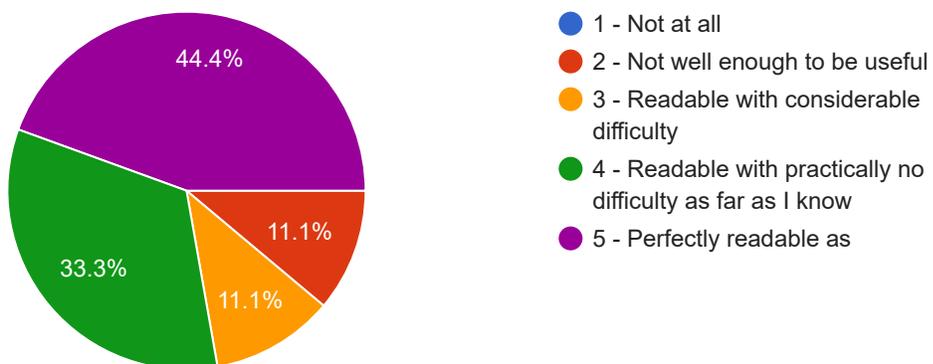
9 responses



How well was your subnet controller able to hear you?

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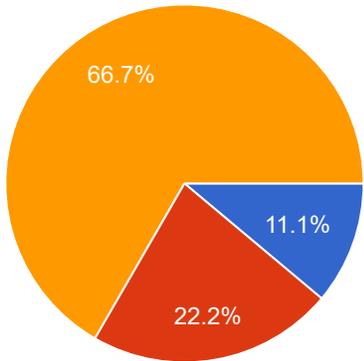
9 responses



Did another ARO relay some of your communication to or from your subnet controller

 Copy

9 responses

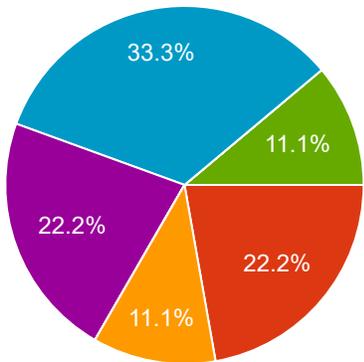


- Yes, that was only way we could communicate
- Some of the time during the exercise
- No, all my communications with the subnet controller were direct

What subnet region did you participate in?

 Copy

9 responses

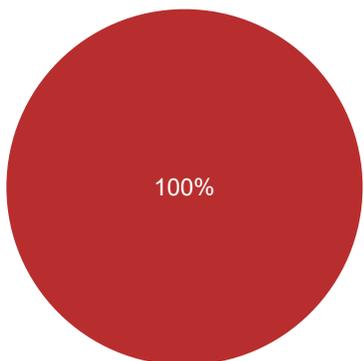


- Alameda North and New Northeast
- Alameda South
- Columbia
- Outer East
- River North
- River South
- Southeast
- Westside
- None of the above as I didn't t...

If you tried another subnet before the one you selected above, what was that other subnet?

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3 responses



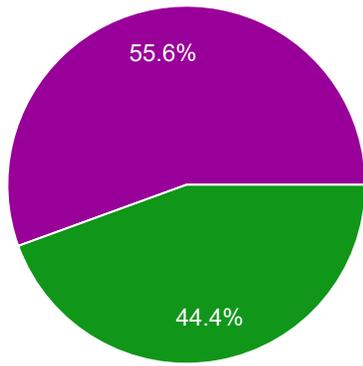
- Alameda North and New Northeast
- Alameda South
- Columbia
- Outer East
- River North
- River South
- Southeast
- Westside
- None of the above as I check...



How well could you hear your Subnet Controller?

 Copy

9 responses

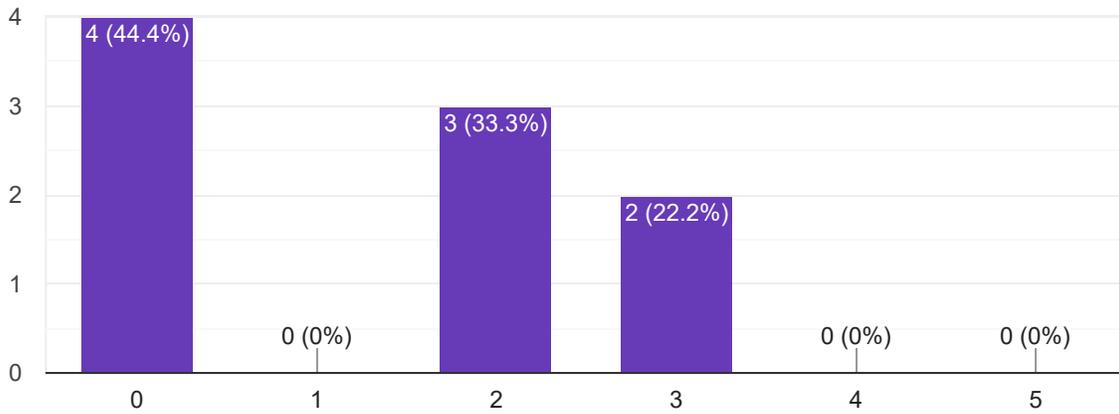


- 1 - Unreadable
- 2 - Barely readable, occasional words distinguishable.
- 3 -- Readable with considerable difficulty
- 4 - Readable with practically no difficulty
- 5 - Perfectly readable

How many NET Form 8s did your subnet controller read to you during the exercise?

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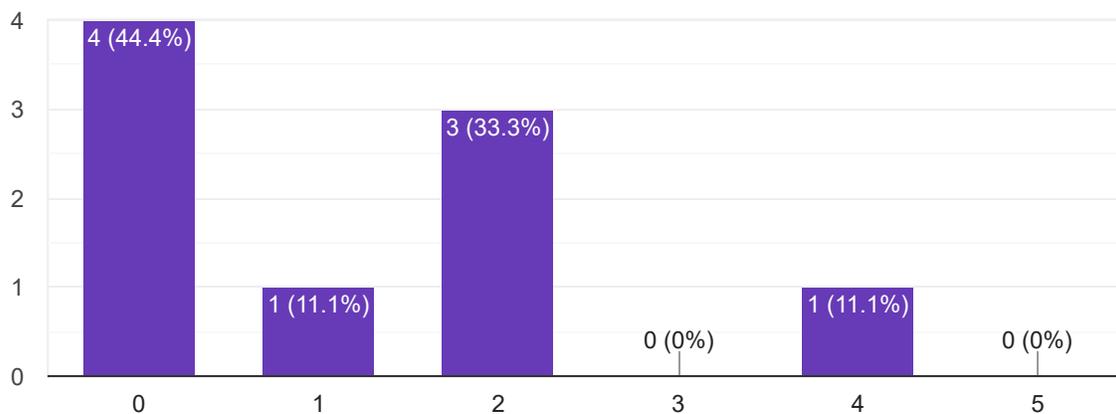
9 responses



How many replies to NET Form 8s did you read to your subnet controller during the exercise?



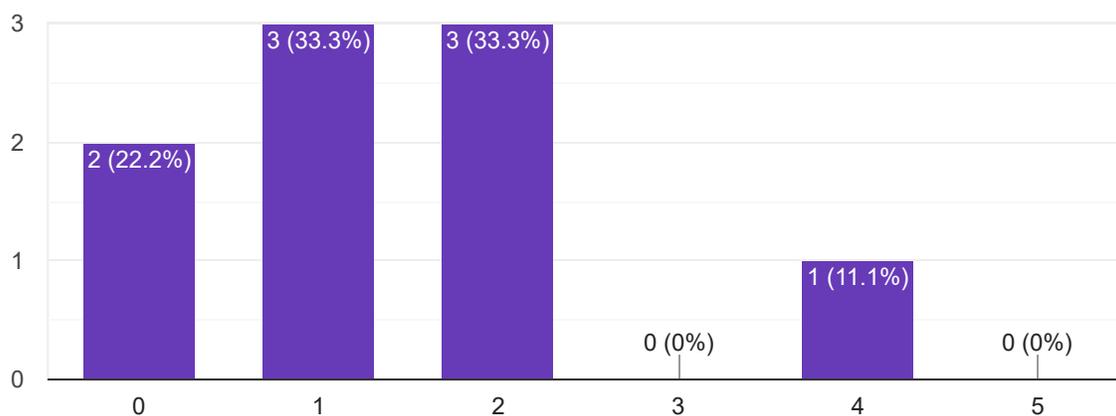
9 responses



How many NET Form 8s did you read to your subnet controller?



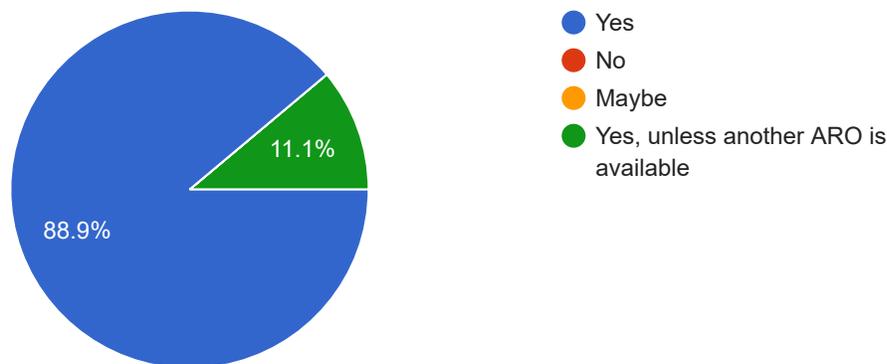
9 responses



Do you expect to participate again as an ARO in the future?



9 responses

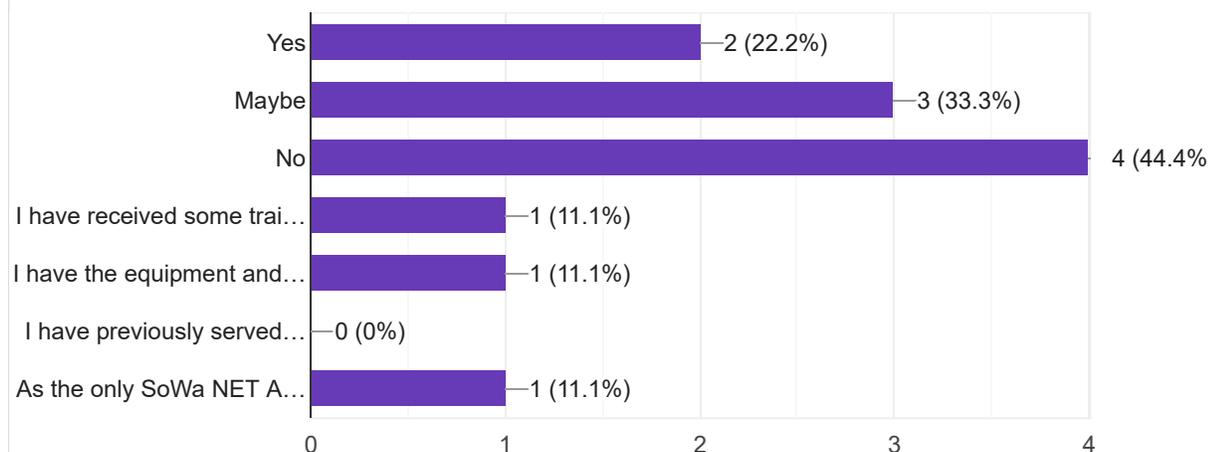


Would you be interested in serving as a subnet controller in the future?



(Check all that apply)

9 responses



How could the ARO instructions provided for this exercise be improved?

6 responses

Standard cliff notes for NET ARO could be published on a wiki to help build a book of knowledge (BOK).

There are a couple of "The SNC may..." have messages or ask for counts. Where are these messages coming from? To speed things along, it might be helpful to have the AROs and/or Exercise Coordinators have messages ready at the start of the exercise.

they are quite good

I think the start time for the exercise should be 1/2 hour before the radio checkin with resource net. It takes time to set up the radio station and the command base, and get equipment from the cache. The assistance with setup and security from other team members is essential.

Too long, too many links embedded in the text, hard to print and read in the rain. Write it for people with the attention span of a squirrel or ask ChatGPR to do it for you ;)

NA, the instructions were great.



How could these exercises be made more valuable in preparing you to help in an actual emergency?

7 responses

Coaching and shadowing for new NETs to promote greater interest.

I would like to see longer exercises, where there's time to generate a stream of radio traffic, messages back and forth through changing situations. It often seems that by the time we're all set up and working, there's barely time for scenarios before the hot wash. Again, having some messages front-loaded might speed things up.

After check-ins first half of exercise was dull - which is hopefully the situation, but it would have been more interesting to have to write one incoming message during that time.

the radio communication with subnet is a small part of the total ARO experience. Setting up a workspace, having adequate lighting, a reliable power source, organizing forms, keeping forms from getting wet or blowing away, perhaps having a scribe are all elements of a well managed communication center. I think tapping into the pool of knowledge from other radio operators to develop a reliable protocol would be good. Michael Schumeler (sp?) had a great list for setting up a workstation. I can anticipate a point at which Winlink would be used for communication with the subnet. Winlink has its own set of hardware and protocols. Meshtastic may become a more useful tool in addition to FRS/GMRS radios.

Also, helping AROs decide what setup is best for the situation. I think having optional protocols for working from home, or from a vehicle would be good. If paperwork cannot be managed effectively at the command base, it's my opinion that the radio coordination and documentation will be compromised.

I think the City Wide Exercise planning team has a tendency to greatly over estimate the number of NETs participating. For example, if the NET group is less than 6 people activities like search and rescue or offering medical treatment is not likely to happen. The focus will be on establishing situational awareness and stabilizing the neighborhood. It will be gathering and disseminating information within NET teams, between neighborhood teams and Subnet/ECC communication. The ARO will be an itegral part of that process.

I think this exercise—at night and in adverse weather conditions—was the best one I've participated in. It truly tested our gear and pushed us, making us noticeably cold and uncomfortable. Let's keep that up!"

More traffic; was very valuable in that I had a mechanical breakdown I had to fix on the fly.

There was a lot of dead air when SNC was off frequency passing messages to the EOC or others. Perhaps an exercise instructions could include transmissions between AROs, asking for or offering help from/to another NET.



Please provide any other comments you may have.

7 responses

Had problems with Diamond antenna

It would be useful for every NET to have a class on How To Fill Out a Form 8- the fields that must be filled in, how to keep it short, etc. Remind everyone that AROs do not generate messages, that we read them, not write them.

In general, I'd like the AROs to be more integrated into the exercise somehow. I feel sometimes like we AROs are running a parallel exercise that barely intersects with the other exercise. I have no suggestions as to how.

a good test re getting all the right equipment to the site, improvising for missing pieces, and using an unfamiliar radio (i borrowed a mobile from a team member)

Our NETs could benefit from some coaching on writing Form-8s. Our AROs received several messages that were overly long, poorly written, and grammatically messy. Even after sending them back for clarification, the process created unnecessary stress for the AROs. Writing concise, precise messages in clear, readable print—with complete sentences—is essential and needs to be prioritized.

I am grateful for our subnet controller but he/she needs to be slower in reading the NET form 8s and not say "how copy" after each phrase in the message, especially if it's a lengthy one

Very little traffic for our team.

Potential topic for a Chat Net or NET Net meeting: future of texting via satellites, as was done in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.



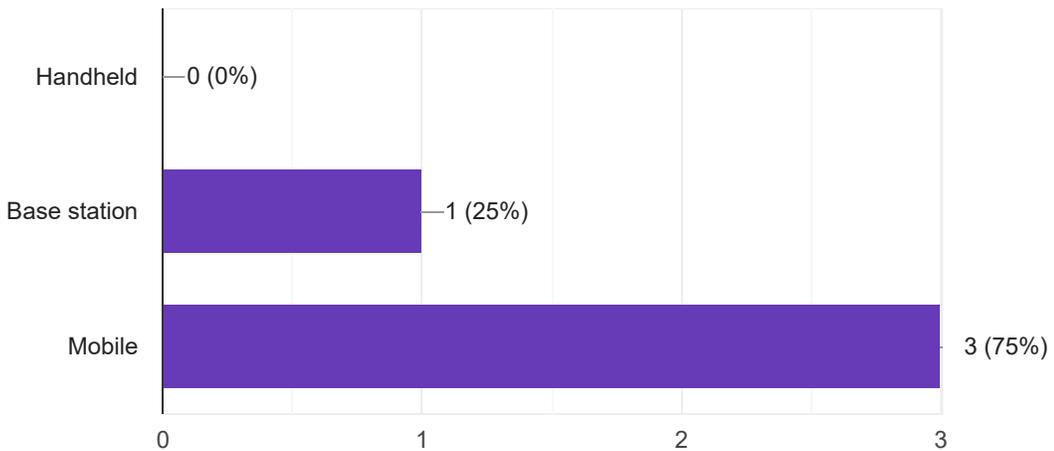
SNC Survey for Citywide Deployment Exercise (CDE) on October 30, 2024

4 responses

Type of the radio you used during the CDE on October 30th (check all that apply)

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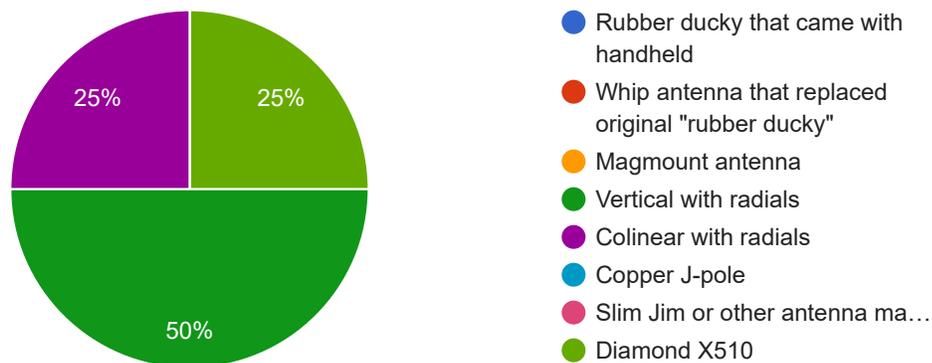
4 responses



Type of the antenna you primarily used

 Copy

4 responses



Rough estimate of height of the base of your antenna **above ground** level (not above sea level) in feet

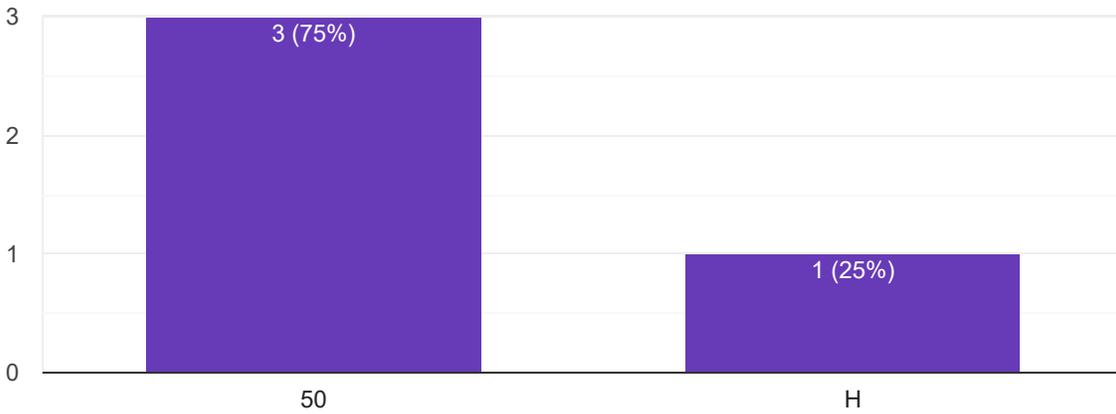
4 responses

40
35
120
20

Transmit power that you used in watts. If your radio has L, M or H power settings instead of watts and you're not sure what they correspond to, indicate L, M or H instead of watts.

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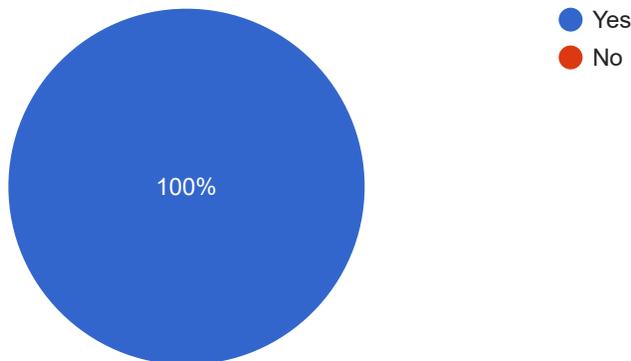
4 responses



Were you able to check into the Resource Net?

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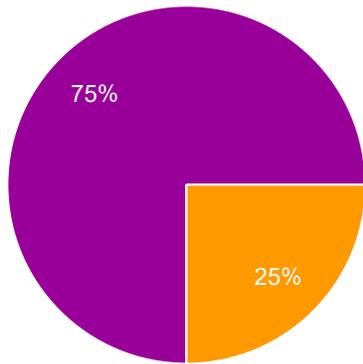
4 responses



How well could you hear the Resource Net?

 Copy

4 responses

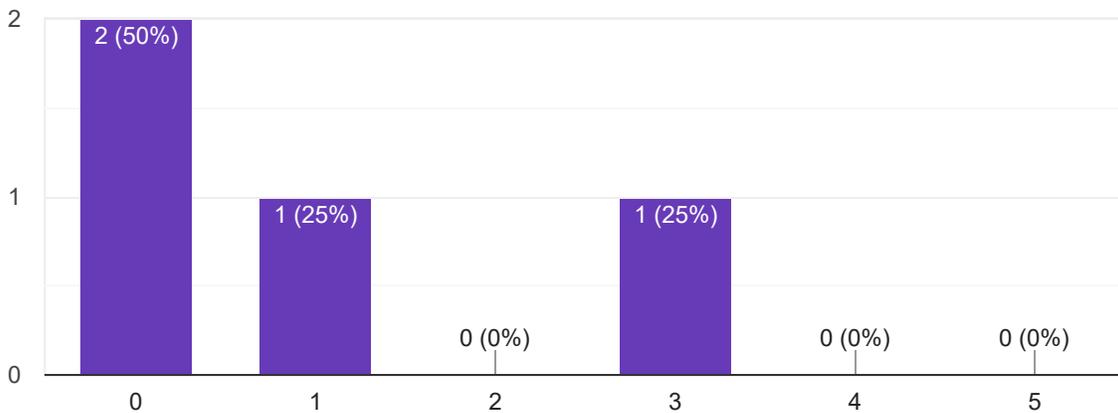


- 1 - Unreadable
- 2 - Barely readable, occasional words distinguishable.
- 3 - Readable with considerable difficulty
- 4 - Readable with practically no difficulty
- 5 - Perfectly readable

How many messages from the Portland EOC radio room did you receive by Winlink during the exercise?

 Copy

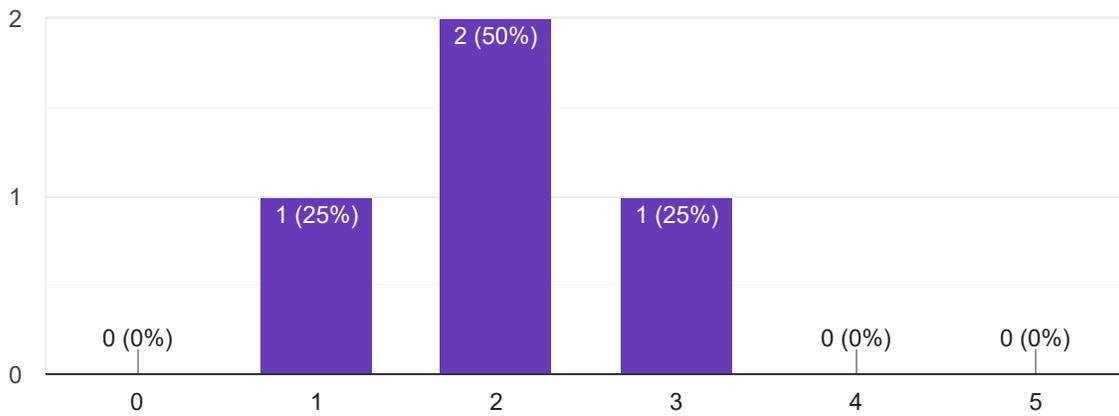
4 responses



How many messages from the Portland EOC radio room did you receive by voice during the exercise?



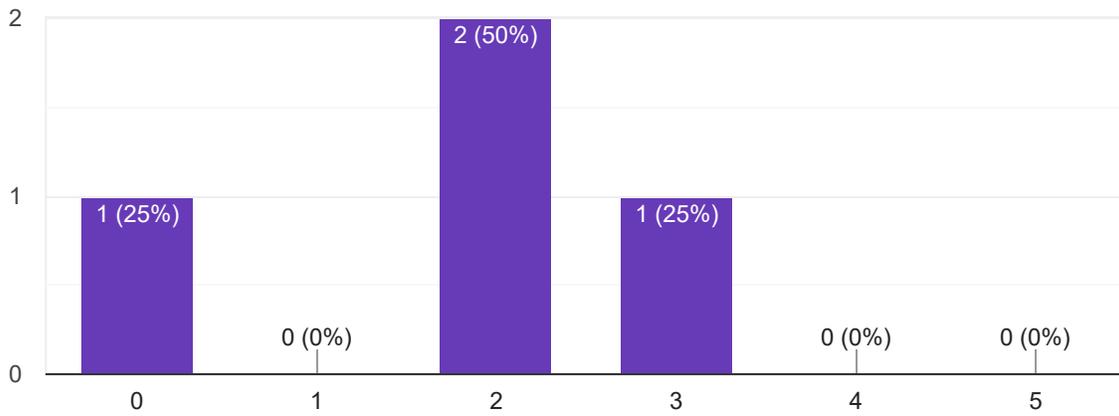
4 responses



How many Form 8s or ICS 213s from Portland EOC did you read to the AROs on your subnet during the exercise?



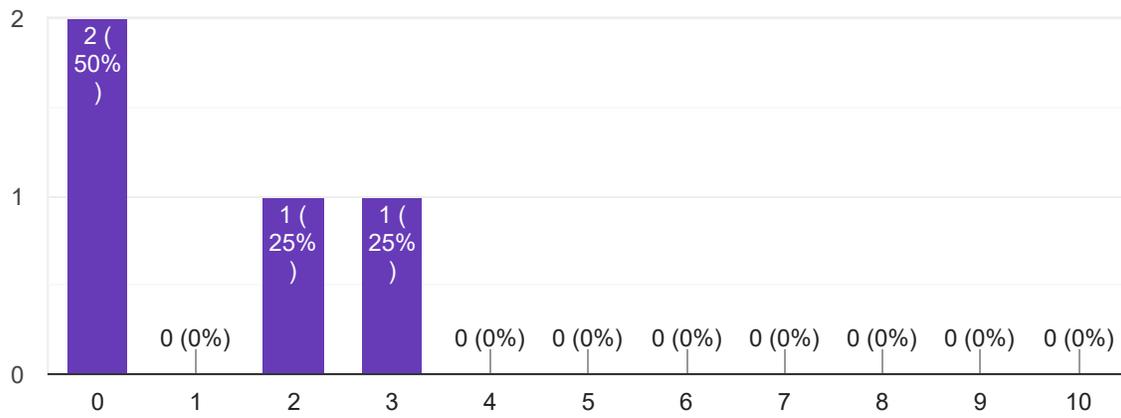
4 responses



Approximately how many Form 8s did you receive from the AROs in your region during the exercise?



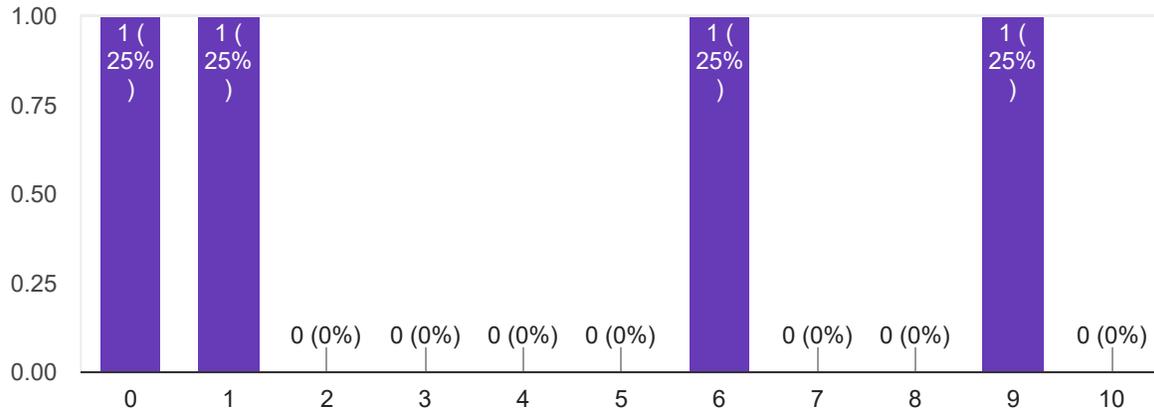
4 responses



Approximately how many total replies did you receive from AROs to Form 8s or ICS 213s?



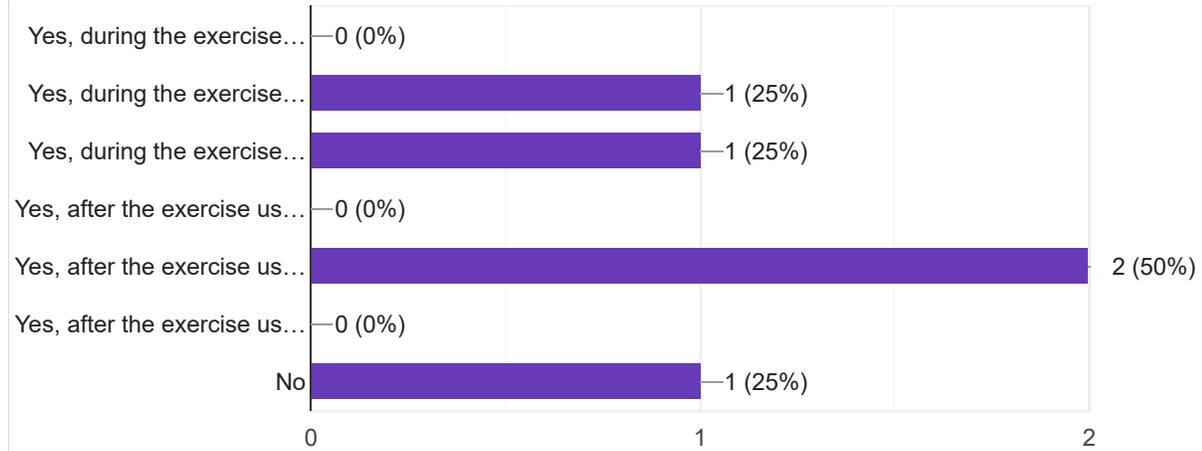
4 responses



Did you send message(s) to the EOC using Winlink? (Check all that apply.)



4 responses



How could the SNC instructions provided for this exercise be improved?

4 responses

bullet point major key items such as using KI7QIB-12

Instructions were quite good

The instructions were excellent. I was too tired to function well, and then I got very anxious. I couldn't think or problem solve very well. Perhaps a page early in the instructions listing the radio set-up changes unique to this exercise would help prevent errors like I made.

They were excellent - like the idea of them being a more permanent template

How could these exercises be made more valuable in preparing you to help in an actual emergency?

4 responses

brief outline of drill

The problems in this exercise made for a very realistic scenario

I think this exercise was excellent training. I learned I should not serve as a SNC again.

I had trouble with the Winlink connection, and probably missed some of the instructions until later - so wondering how we might get instructions from command



Please provide any other comments you may have.

3 responses

the instructions were clear and I was glad I reviewed all the readings

Winlink in post office mode only works when the gateway works. Are there any in-scenario alternatives to that gateway that will work for both the radio room and SNCs?

I recommend teaching ITLs to make messages as brief as possible. On River South, one ARO, Collins View, had to have all messages relayed, and transmissions were difficult even then.. South Waterfront did a great job providing relays, but that process slowed us down a great deal. One message took about 40 minutes and even then I was not sure it made any sense. Messages in this exercise were very long and complex for relaying.

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