Kawailani Ino' Hawaii ARES® COMEX
Facilitator Guide
(April 16, 2022 Flood Drill)

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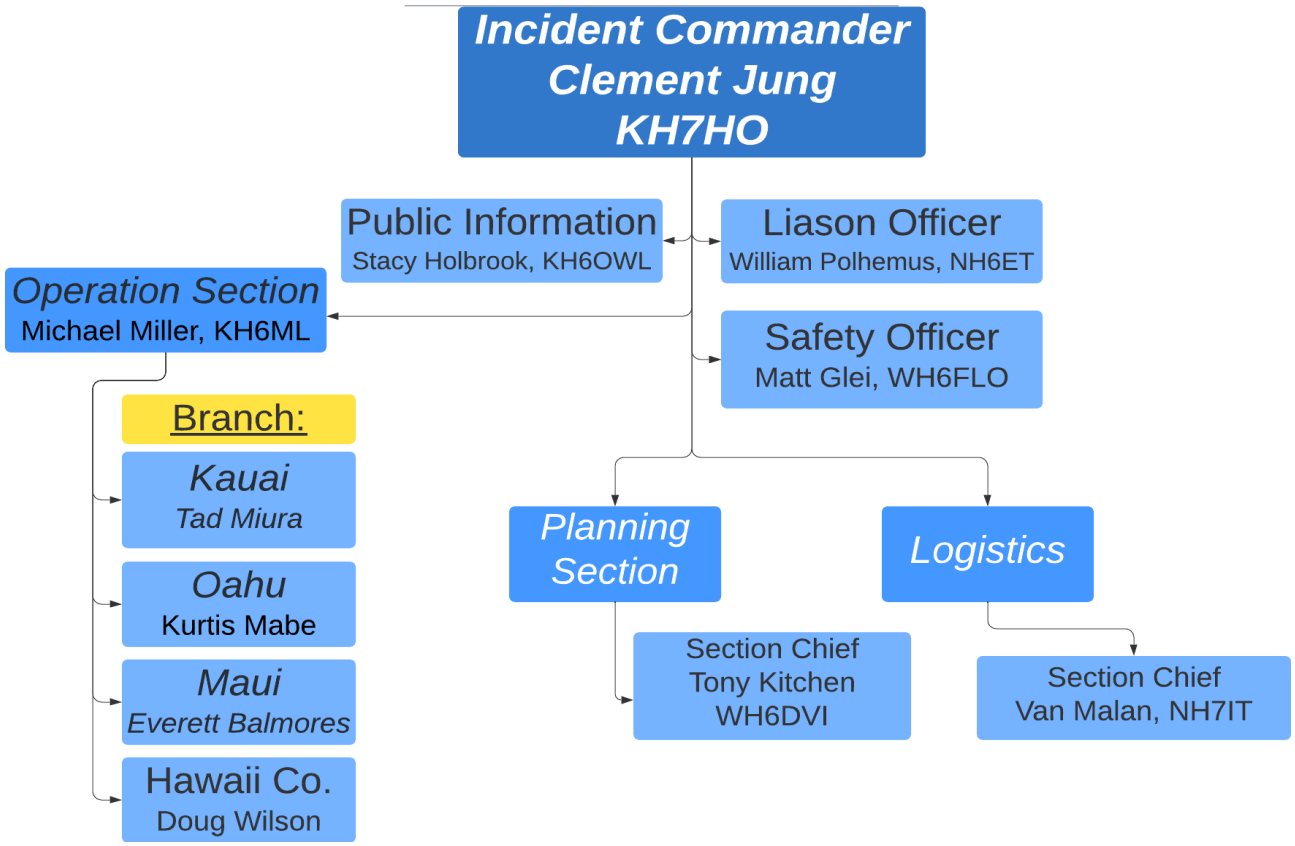

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Introduction:
(Drill Design & Purpose)

The HSEEP Method

The Kawaiilani 'Ino Hawaii COMEX was designed by following the methodology set forth by the Department of ***Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program.*** (HSEEP)

The HSEEP methodology encourages us to set goals, objectives, measure outcomes, and create improvement plans in a structured way that allows Hawaii ARES® volunteers to improve our capabilities as set forth in a ***multi-year Integrated Preparedness Plan.*** (IPP)

The planning team's design for the drill focuses on our group's core capabilities and objectives defined in 2021. These were reviewed at our Initial Planning and objectives meeting in January of 2022.

Hawaii ARES organizes this drill using the **Incident Command System** (ICS) forms starting with the ICS-201 Incident briefing, 202, 203, etc. The combination of these forms defines the **Incident Action Plan.** (IAP)

This methodology is considered to be a "best practice" in exercise design.

We focus on this methodology in order to increase our interoperability with government and other organizations that also embrace NIMS and ICS.

Drill Organization via HSEEP and the Incident Command System:

Each county defines its plans based upon the "ground truth" in their region, as simulated for each phase of the exercise. The ground truth is detailed in the Participants "situation manual." It defines the course of the simulated events across the state. The Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) provides additional details for the exercise, based upon the timeline.

We recognize that during a disaster, or joint exercise with other groups, the Amateur Radio community's involvement falls under the logistics section, Communications Unit (ComU) which is a small subsection of the ICS Organizational chart. We would each perform our roles as assigned by the Incident management team, and not our role within ARES. This is necessary to assure a clear chain of command.

The following describes how Hawaii ARES® has organized this COMEX at the State, County, and Community levels.

This drill focuses on the operational capabilities of the Amateur Radio Service under part 97 of FCC regulations. It is difficult to gain access to agency facilities and personnel on a weekend. Therefore, it became necessary to organize our ICS structure by inserting ARES® leaders to represent several positions in the organizational chart, normally held by County Emergency Management personnel or others. Our focus is on operational capabilities. The structure of the Incident's operations section is organized as follows:

- The ARES® Section Emergency Coordinator represents the statewide Incident commander. Liaison, safety, and Public Information Officers are assigned.

- Each County is a Branch of the Operations Unit. Branch directors are assigned.

- Counties may establish divisions, with an assigned division supervisor. Typically this is the ARES® District Emergency Coordinator. (DEC)

- Communication Units (ComU) have been established, typically with the Community Emergency Coordinator (CEC) assigned as a unit leader.

The exercise planning group, in coordination with ARES® state and local leadership, represents the Planning Section. The planning team developing this COMEX is tasked with creating the ***After Action Report and Improvement Plan*** (AAR/IP) after the hot wash has been held.

Real Word Events:

In an actual disaster, our ICS 205 could contribute to the much larger plans of a County Comm Unit leader. (ComL)

Our goal in organizing under ICS is to start to build closer ties to HI-EMA, DEM, HC CDA, and other groups to facilitate future joint exercises.

We realize that for an incident like this, the IC would likely be set up at the County level. The statewide design of our first Hawaii COMEX developed under ICS spreads the planning workload across our leaders statewide. With a future COMEX, each County may be better served by having its own individual Incident Action Plan.

Real World Incidents:

Under ICS, we are all working under the incident command, as defined in the ICS organizational chart. We would <u>not</u> be participating as a member of an ARES field service organization. This is important for everyone to understand to assure that there is a clearly defined chain of command.

All people involved in an incident under ICS do not focus on their organization affiliation or title. Instead, we apply our skills, resources, and capabilities towards achieving the objectives defined in the incident action plan (IAP) for the operational period.

Amateur Radio Volunteers do need to comply with policies, rules, and regulations as defined by the organization, agency, or other authority. We must follow guidelines, especially in regards to sensitive or personal information we may become aware of. We must be in the habit of referring any media to the PIO or incident commander.

Authorized personnel in each agency or other organization provide the incident commander with Grants of Authority, Memorandums of Agreement, and Mutual Aid Agreements.

This provides the Incident Command with the authority to utilize the resources needed to achieve the mission defined. Under this structure we are all working together as a unified team.

Served Agencies and Groups:

Whether we are working with a County Emergency Management Agency, Non-Government Organization, or other groups, our role is to assist them with communications support under the Hawaii State Emergency Support Functions, typically under SESF#2.

Primary Goal:

Our goal is to assist the groups we serve in a manner that helps them continue to be effective at protecting life, safety, and property, even in the worst of conditions.

To accomplish this we need to engage in discussions, training, exercises, and maintain functional relationships. We need to ask what served agencies and other organizations want, in detail, and do our best to provide it. Fortunately our existing skills are applicable to a wide range of SESF#2 related applications.

Strengths and Capabilities of the Amateur Radio Service

- Existing stations on the ground in most communities allow us to provide situational awareness that would otherwise be unavailable.

- Technical knowledge and a diverse range of equipment, enables us to maintain communications in most circumstances.

- **Redundant Infrastructure:** We maintain modern and legacy systems that have withstood the test of time. Our systems can remain functional, or be repaired by us during times of disaster.

- **Off-Grid Power Capability:** We are experienced at safely generating, storing, and using off grid power.

- Modes supporting low power operations. (QRP) Digital modes that work when signal propagation is difficult.

- **Our Can do Attitude:** We make things work despite the challenges.

Facilitator Instructions:

Each participant serving as a facilitator of this COMEX would:

- Attempt to find a station as backup in case you have technical difficulties or an emergency.

- Ask stations to act as a designated relay in areas where you have players out of range.

- Announce the drill introductory message at the defined time. Open your voice net and take check-ins.

- Make sure to announce any alternative frequency or operator assigned as backup NCS. Share information about other frequencies, suggest relay options, and provide other helpful details to participants as needed.

- Ask another operator to volunteer to take over your role if you must leave the exercise before the scheduled COMEX end time.

- Do your best to help others be successful in sending traffic and receiving acknowledgement that the message is received.

Message Examples for Facilitators:

These examples are a guide for volunteers with less experience in facilitating a COMEX. They are not meant to dictate what you must say. Modify your message as you feel is appropriate to your local circumstance. **All ARES leaders are exercise facilitators.** Each of us takes responsibility for making exercises successful in our community.

Drill Introduction:

(Sample message for broadcast by hubs to open the drill)

This is *(amateur call sign)* opening the Kauailani 'Ino Hawaii COMEX on *frequency of operation*.

This COMEX simulates emergency communications during a severe weather event. Operations will continue on this frequency until *(state end time).* Stations have received simulated messages prior to the beginning of this COMEX, which indicate a time and specific ground truth used as a basis for their transmissions.

As I open this drill the ground truth is that damaging wind and flooding has caused a loss of power, telephone service, and internet service island wide.

This station is here to relay situational awareness based upon the simulated storm events happening in the scenario, and to forward participant messages to the Emergency Operations Center.

You may use a direct frequency to your EOC if available. Please refer to your players guide and incident action plan for additional information.

All information regarding this COMEX is posted at hawaiiares.net. The drill will begin after I open the net and take check-ins. All stations standby. <Reset>

Opening a Hub Net:

This is *(amateur call sign)* opening the Hawaii ARES April Flood Drill COMEX. This is a directed net. All transmissions are directed to net control, unless given permission to do otherwise. <reset>

I will take check-ins from the registered participants list. When called, Respond with your callsign using ITU phonetics.

(Take check-ins and acknowledge each from your list.)

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(If your district choses to accept ad-hoc check-ins, you may add the following paragraph)

Stations not registered for this COMEX may check-in to this net. If you wish to

participate, first send an email to *(email address of CEC or DEC)* to request a reply with a specific time and circumstance to which you will respond. Most message traffic will require the use of a form, such as the ICS-213 general message form. Put your callsign in the email subject followed by the words inject request. Check the hawaiiares.net website for details. New participants may check-in when ready when the frequency is open.

Beginning the COMEX:

This is *(your FCC Callsign)* operating under the tactical call sign of *(your tactical call.)*

All stations checked in to this net are asked to contact this station and check out before leaving the frequency. Stations may check in at any time before the end of the drill as needed.

(Skip this next paragraph if you feel that it not needed for your area)

Use best practices in EMCOMM including Prowords and Break tags. If you have traffic for the net, transmit your tactical call or the suffix of your amateur call and one or two words, known as break tags to indicate your purpose. Examples include: Check-in, check-out, Emergency, Priority, or routine traffic.

Initiate Traffic from Stations:

This is *(your tactical callsign)* standing by for exercise trafic.

Note: At this time at least one player should be ready to call with traffic.

Periodic Station Announcement:

This is *(Your tactical Call)* standing by for exercise traffic. *(Your FCC Call)*

(Every 10 min, even if there is no traffic.)

Example: Designated Relay Station

This is *(callsign)* operating under the tactical call of "Punaluu Relay" standing by for relay traffic. I will take your voice message traffic on this frequency and relay it to the EOC via Winlink RMS or HF. Punaluu relay standing by. *(Modify as needed to describe your relay details.)*

Example: Relay station periodic station ID *(Every 10 minutes)*

This is Punaluu Relay standing by for exercise traffic. *(FCC callsign)*

Help players that fail to ID Properly:

Participant Callsign, Do you have additional traffic for the net?

(This gentle reminder is enough to prompt most stations to reply by saying negative, followed by their call sign at the end of their exchange.)

Guidance for hub Stations:

- **Suggestion:** Before the COMEX, ask a specific player to give the first inject following your opening message.
- If you have many voice players using your hub, it is helpful to have a 2nd operator who takes traffic or transmits to EOC.
- Listen for, record, and relay simulated messages/bulletins to your spoke stations when received from the EOC.
- Provide/relay band condition reports to other (HF) operators.
- Assist field stations (spokes) in pushing their messages forward to the EOC by available options specified in the ICS-204 & 205 for your Branch or Division.
- Relay confirmation of message receipt from EOC/ACS to spokes as soon as possible. (Refer to the relay section for guidance on logs, and message ID or ticket IDs.)
- Message priority guides which traffic you pass first. 1) Life/Safety, 2) Priority 3) Routine.
- If players cannot be copied well, suggest relay stations and frequencies. Simplex is best, but some plans have repeaters specified as an alternative option.
- If no traffic, announce your station every 10 minutes: (see sample)
- Be efficient: Use pro-words and remind stations to use break tags as needed.
- Control your net. Help players follow FCC regulations. Player's need to speak their FCC amateur call at the end of transmission, within the 10 minute window.
- At the end of the exercise:
    - Remind participants of Hot wash, thank your "players."
    - Close your net.
- Turn in all ICS-309 logs to a member of your County's local planning team.
- Participate in Hot wash at 13:00 HST.
- Enjoy the COMEX!

Notes for Simulated EOCs:

In addition to the facilitator instructions above, EOC operators would:

- Take voice traffic on HF, and potentially on VHF/UHF. (More than one radio & operator may be needed.)

- If using Winlink RMS, initiate a session at least every 10 minutes to an RMS server. This could be done by another operator who works the digital Amateur Radio side of the EOC, possibly at a separate location if needed.

- If operating in Winlink P2P mode make sure your listening station remains on-line and on frequency as much as possible. Check the in-box regularly.

- We encourage EOC to EOC Communications tests on HF, either via voice SSB or P2P Winlink prior to the COMEX.

- Respond to incoming message traffic.
    - If you are able to run the drill with someone qualified to use a County dispatch or another electronic records system in a test mode, record the applicable "ticket ID" and include it in the confirmation reply.

    - If your reply goes back via a hub or relay, be sure there is a way the hub or relay can recognize which message you are responding to. On voice relays this can be done by referencing the hub/relay stations message number. (Winlink messages automatically include the message ID in the reply)

- When a message is received via hub or relay, direct your confirmation of receipt (reply) back towards the originating station via the same path or mode it was received, whenever possible.

- Realize what an important service the staff at an EOC and ACS are providing to us all!

These suggestions are meant only as a helpful guide. Please work with a COMEX planning team member in your County, or other ARES leaders so we can adapt to your needs.

Guidance for Relay Stations:

All Relay Stations:

- Check in to your EOC/ACS net via any mode you are able to based on options listed on the ICS-205.
    - You may use the Winlink check-in form if operating in that mode to check directly into the EOC.
    - Make sure to include what band/frequency/mode you intend to monitor and details on how you intend to monitor and relay traffic to and from the EOC/ACS.
    - Example: WH6XYZ monitoring 40 meter voice on 7.088 mHz LSB. Will also monitor and relay to EOC via Winlink RMS.
- Check into the nearest hub station and inform them that you will be acting as relay. If you will be listening on VHF during the COMEX, the hub station may want to off load voice traffic to your station if the hub becomes busy, provided that you have a communication pathway available to the EOC/ACS.

VHF/UHF Relay stations Options:

- Listen to voice frequency(ies) for any station having trouble reaching or communicating with their local hub and/or EOC/ACS or anyone calling your station.
- Make contact with that station and offer to act as a relay.
- Let your partners know how your relay works. (Example: WH6XYZ available to relay to EOC via 80 meter Winlink P2P)
- Help them by prompting them for the information they need to give you to complete the relay process as needed.
- Examples: What form are you using? (or) at completion of message ask: Would you like the message read back?
- As a relay you are often the more experienced operator. Use best

practices, set an example: (Use Pro-words, break tags, and phonetics as needed)

- If you have more than one message coming in at the same time, or another comes before you complete the relay of the previous, handle them in order of priority. 1) Health and Safety, 2) Priority 3) Routine.

- You may operate as a VHF to VHF, VHF to HF, or VHF/HF to Winlink, or other combinations as needed depending on your equipment and capability.

- Use your best judgment to determine the best way of handling any relay situation.

- Log all traffic on the manual ICS-309.
    - Make sure to record time received, call sign, originating station message number, destination, and the outgoing message number.

    - Log the message form type (ICS-213, ACS-SitRep, etc.) or the subject in the message column.

- After the message reaches the EOC, relay confirmation of the receipt of the message back to the originating station.

<u>HF Relay Operations:</u>

- You may have to change to the defined alternate, contingency, or emergency frequencies on the ICS-205.

- If it becomes necessary to move off of the frequency you've been operating on, attempt to inform other stations you've been in contact with as to where you intend to move to.

- **Frequency Agility:** You may temporarily move to other bands and frequencies if necessary. First confirm with the other station that they are able to operate on the proposed band and frequency.

- As needed and able, update Hub/EOC or ACS of band conditions. Listen first. Check into the net with your call sign or tactical call using the proword "Relay Info" Check-out before leaving the net.

Winlink Relay Guidance:

- If receiving traffic via voice:
    - Many find it works best to write the message on a paper form as it is received. (Instead of typing it in.)
    - Manually log traffic on the ICS-309 after you receive it. Make sure to include the time of message receipt, the message number of the originating station, the destination, and either the form used or subject in the message column.
    - Ask stations to slow down, say again, stand by, etc. as needed. Keep control of the frequency.
- Enter/submit the message via the appropriate form. (If a form is used.) Do not check the "Request Message Receipt" Checkbox.
- Check that the frequency is clear: Initiate a session when the frequency is clear, and when instructed to do so if you are operating as part of a combination voice/data Winlink net.

After completing the Winlink session:

- Verify by checking that the message(s) are no longer in your outbox.
- Check your sent items and note the time completed, message destination and the last 4 digits of the Winlink message ID or the EOC "Ticket ID" if provided . Log it on your manual ICS-309 form under the "To" column in the record of the voice message log entry.
- Watch for message confirmations coming in each time you initiate a session.

As message confirmation(s) show up:

- Cross reference Winlink message ID No. with manual ICS-309 log and write down the time the confirmation was received beside the correct entry.
- Contact the originating station via the band/mode they contacted you, and provide confirmation. (Winlink ID or EOC "Ticket ID" as applicable to your EOC.)
- Example: WH6CCL, your message

number 1 was received by the EOC at 1035. Message ID Mixed Group Charlie-Sierra-Quebec Four. (Use the last 4 digits of the Winlink Message ID or appropriate letters/numbers of ticket ID from EOC, if provided.)

- Indicate on your ICS-309 the time confirmation was completed, on the far right side of the ICS-309 entry for the applicable message.

Why Record Message ID or Ticket ID Relay Confirmation this way?

- This method helps you easily see which message confirmations have been relayed back to the originating station and are completed.

- This allows the exercise evaluation team the ability to easily see when messages and confirmations were completed.

- The message ID or Ticket ID is now also on the spoke station's ICS-309, assuring the originating station that the message was indeed received by a person at the EOC, and closing the loop between originating station and destination station.

- This process does not mean that the EOC will be able to dispatch a response, it only demonstrates that the Amateur Radio Operators confirmed that the relay was complete, by recording the ID associated with it.

- Winlink assures that the transmission of the message was accurate by including a checksum value in the transmission, and automatically re-transmitting portions if an error occurs.

- It is up to the operator to double check that the message was entered properly before initiating the session to send a message.

- As the Amateur Radio Service operators become better aligned with each Emergency Management Agency's response system, the "Ticket ID" is a better confirmation method then Winlink ID as it may be used to connect the originating station's transmission to an actual response entered into the EMA's electronic records.