CARES

Cupertino
Amateur Radio Emergency Services

CARES Drill CD-0001
Report

February 9, 2000

Summary
This report covers the results of the second CARES Drill on the Preliminary Damage Assessment Procedure. Twenty-two CARES members participated in one of two drills on January 29 and 30. All feedback has been collected and logged for action as appropriate.

Overview
The **primary objective** of this CARES Drill was to test the changes to the PDA procedure identified during last year's PDA drill. **Secondary objectives** were to practice the Preliminary Damage Assessment data collection, participate in an emergency net, and practice local radio traffic handling.

The drill was run twice to accommodate the availability of as many CARES membership as possible over two days. All CARES members received the drill notification and scenario information by U.S. Mail.

Event Specifics

Event Time	Activation No.	Num. Participants
Saturday, January 29 at 9:00 a.m	CD-0001	12
Sunday January 30 at 1:00 p.m.	CD-0002	10

Drill Set-up
The following support material was developed and used to support the drill scenario.

1. General Situation Description. This information was sent to all CARES members prior to the drill.

We just had an earthquake that resulted in strong shaking for about 40 seconds. Some aftershocks have occurred, but not as strong.

The lights flickered briefly, but remained on. A quick check of the phones reveals they do not work. As you check around your house, you see that loose objects have been fallen off shelves. Bookcases not bolted to the wall have toppled over. Family and other household members are shaken, but ok. Other than the above, there doesn't appear to be any other significant damage inside your house.

Using your portable AM/FM radio, your favorite local stations are off the air... not a good sign. You can hear a weak AM station out of Modesto playing country music, but there's no news about any quake in the Bay Area.

This felt like a big one. As a member of CARES, you begin to think about providing a preliminary damage assessment of your immediate neighborhood. You grab your CARES PDA data collection sheet (attached), 2M radio, and tune in the CARES frequency and check into the CARES Emergency Net.

2. Personal Situation Description. Five versions of specific situations were randomly distributed to all CARES members to provide a variety in the reports radioed in.

Drill Execution

Both Drills began on time and included the following activities:

1. Drill initiation
2. Net activation
3. Member check-ins
4. Report of simulated Preliminary Damage Assessment
5. Securing the Drill
6. On-radio critique of the drill
7. Securing the Net

Both drills took approximately 30 minutes to execute. The on-line critique took 25 minutes and 35 minutes for the Saturday and Sunday drills respectively. Two different Net Control Station (NCS) operators were used during each drill. Where possible, general conclusions reached and improvements identified during the Saturday Drill were applied to the Sunday drill.

Results of Critique

Immediately following each drill, an on-air critique of the drill was held. All participants were polled for his/her comments on (i) what went right, (ii) what went wrong, and (iii) what could use improvement. The following is a combined summary of feedback from the participants. Duplicate comments are listed only once.

1. COMMENT: Overall, a good drill, went well, getting better. One member had a Homeowners Association Board member present to listen in.
   - RESPONSE: The things we identified last year were rolled into the SOP and implemented for this drill.
   - RECOMMENDATION: none.

2. COMMENT: Regarding MAPS: There were plenty of comments on the use of maps and map references. Specifically, all CARES members need to (a) have a Cupertino Chamber of Commerce Map in their position and (b) know their map coordinates.
   - RESPONSE: As stated by one member, for reporting immediate traffic (life threatening, meaning: you want help to show up), reporting stations must give an exact address. For urgent traffic (non-life threatening), a map coordinate (ie: H4) is sufficient.
   - RECOMMENDATION: Ensure all members have a Cupertino Chamber of Commerce Map.

3. COMMENT: Regarding RELAYS: There were a few stations that commented that they had to use relays to pass in their report. "I used my HT and was not heard by NCS, had to reply on a relay." Multiple stations used an HT, some deliberately as a test of their ability to be communicate with NCS.
   - RESPONSE: When we operate from the Cupertino EOC Radio Room, CARES will have good coverage of the city. However, relays will be a part of our life and CARES members must know how to pass traffic by relay "just in case" (Murphy's Law).
   - RECOMMENDATION: Consider developing an exercise to practice passing traffic by relay (suggested by one CARES member: everyone on HTs trying to pass traffic from one side of town to another). The objective would be to give everyone a chance to pass and relay traffic (more on an exercise than an anticipated scenario to be practiced).

4. COMMENT: Regarding CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE TRAFFIC: There was also good feedback on the use of IMMEDIATE traffic… people liked being able to pass these messages first.
   - RESPONSE: Agreed. Passing IMMEDIATE Traffic first worked out well. This also needs to be sufficiently documented so that the message is actionable by a responding agency (when they're available). See also Comment #2 above.

- RECOMMENDATION: For collection of IMMEDIATE traffic, we need to form. Look at current traffic handling forms first. Make sure they are available to everyone who may take NCS and build into the SOP.

5. COMMENT: Regarding PASSING TRAFFIC: There were comments on the need for shorter transmissions, more breaks between transmissions, the need for more terse messages, and slower transmission speeds
   - RESPONSE: Agreed. There are techniques for pacing messages. We need to practice this more.
   - RECOMMENDATION: Need practice on originating messages to ensure delivery. Tie in with the up-coming Field Assignment Drill.

6. COMMENT: Regarding NCS OPERATIONS: Good comments on how well the NCS performed. Additionally, controlling a net and collecting traffic is difficult.
   - RESPONSE: Agreed. Need to look at the work performed by NCS vs the need to pass traffic. Also, during Initial Response Operations, NCS may be the only station capable of calling the net and initially collecting reports. During Extended Response Operations, NCS should also look for opportunities to link stations that have reports with stations that need to receive reports (get out of the middle). This has an implication on staffing (ie: a NCS Operator and EOC Radio Operator as two separate positions).
   - RECOMMENDATION: Need to practice more effective message handling between all parties.

7. COMMENT: Regarding LOCAL PREPAREDNESS: Some comments on the need for better personal DC power backup. Trouble occurred when the AC Power "went out" per the drill scenario.
   - RESPONSE: All CARES members are asked to consider their personal power situation. As a reminder, your vehicle is an excellent "backup battery" PROVIDED you have the adapter.
   - RECOMMENDATION: CARES members are encouraged to BUILD or BUY cigarette lighter adapters for your radio. This is a minimum requirement for an extended response. CARES to schedule a "build your own" session for power management.

8. COMMENT: GENERAL: There were a variety of other comments including:
   - What is the process for handling PDA reports after they are submitted?
   - Don't forget 10 minutes FCC identification rule… 10 minutes went fast, per one NCS Operator
   - It took 20 minutes from time the drill started until I could check-in
   - Need to watch giving advise; not our role and it ties up the frequency
   - RESPONSE: All good comments. On PDA data handling: we haven't described or practiced the correlation process for the data once it has been collected. The "backroom" process needs to be defined. What does the city want to see based on what we have?
   - RECOMMENDATION: Review the current Preliminary Damage Assessment and data collection process with the City Manager, Logistics Chief for alignment with city needs.

END OF REPORT