# Drill Report

**Cupertino**
ARES/RACES

## 1. Overview

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| **Report Date:** | 10 February 2002 |
| **CARES Drill ID:** | CUP-2002-02T |
| **RACES Activation:** | None |
| **Control:** | Cupertino ARES |
| **Drill Date:** | 9 February 2002 |

## 2. Planning

**Reference Docs:**
- 020207 Precedence Exercise.doc; training handout, Feb'02 General Meeting
- 020207 Message Handling.ppt; training handout, Feb'02 General Meeting

**Drill Objectives:**
- Practice message handling between CARES field responders and the EOC
- Test a new Net Control Station Operator logging procedure

**Scenario:** A 7.5 magnitude earthquake just occurred. CARES members perform the Preliminary Damage Assessment Procedure and report the situation for their neighborhood.

## 3. Preparation

**Orientation Training:** The February CARES General Meeting was a review of message handling, specifically messages that are self-originating. Message precedence and examples of messages were reviewed.

**Drill Prep:** Drill traffic was to be selected from the list of "situations" used during the Feb'02 General Meeting Precedence Exercise. CARES members were asked to pick 3 messages to pass.

## 4. Results

**Participants:** Ten (10) CARES members participated. These members were:
Andy W9BJX
Ken KR6CO
Gene KG6HIJ
Bill KF6MCG
Jack W6MGL
Kurt N6OLQ
Jim KN6PE
Janet KF6PUQ
Eileen KF6PUT
Vince K6TEN
Bill KD6TQJ

**Narrative:** At 9:30am, Ken KR6CO opened the CARES net and took check-ins for those participating in the drill. Jim KN6PE reviewed the drill objectives and summarized some operating points from the February General Meeting. Ken then initiated the drill and began calling for Drill Traffic.

Over the next 40 minutes, all participating CARES members initiated and passed

20 messages to the EOC. Messages were passed based on the priorities assigned.

As part of the test, NCS assigned message numbers to all passed messages.

At 10:15, Ken secured the drill and an on-air critique was held.

**What worked:**
1. All members reported that this was a good drill. Some members stated that they could use more practice (a poll of the participants indicated a willingness to hold quarterly message handling drills).
2. This was a good test of the message protocol. The way messages were passed was fairly realistic.
3. NCS reported the NCS Log worked out well. Didn't get backlogged. All the pertinent information was there.
4. EOC reported that most members passed their messages at a good pace. There was also some good use of Breaks. Message repeats were called when necessary.

**What didn't work/could be improved:**
1. This drill didn't tax the system (NCS or the net). It is anticipated that during an Initial Response, a backlog of messages will develop as high priority messages are first passed. Some members would like to try this drill with a larger backlog.
2. Some members couldn't hear all the other traffic on the net; they may need an outside antenna.
3. This test raised the question around the Precedence definitions that were used. In some cases, Emergency and Priority (based on their definitions) did not make sense. Need to review and resolve.
4. Some people used the word "Break" to separate portions of their messages, other members paused (let the carrier drop). We need to get consistent with the use of "Breaks" for passing long messages.
5. Change the arrangement of the NCS log columns

## 5. Conclusions

**Observations:** I definitely heard a rhythm to the communications that all participants got into (NCS polls for all traffic, stations announce they have traffic, NCS checks that the receiving station is ready, assigns a message ID number, the message is passed, breaks and acknowledgements occur, and return to NCS). By passing 20 messages, there were plenty of examples to hear and opportunities for members to refine their operating techniques.

I agree that this drill did not stress the system. With the NCS log procedures refined, a future drill can be defined with this objective in mind.

**Recommendations:**
1. Plan for quarterly message handling drills to (i) provide on-going message handling practice, (ii) rotate members through the NCS and EOC positions, and (iii) refine the message handling tools and procedures.

**Next Steps:**
1. Resolve Precedence Definitions.
2. Finalize the NCS Log Forms.
3. Update the NCS checklist with an overview of this template.
4. Define and test a field responder message form.