

AmRRON FTX 5

Exercise Plan

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16)

Please note: this exercise is a departure, both in objectives and operations, from previous FTXs. Therefore, participants must read/study this document **thoroughly** prior to joining the exercise.

Objectives:

1. For all AmRRON operators to increase proficiency through continued practice
2. *Measure how well AmRRON Corps operators can follow specific instructions when faced with a potential national emergency.*

Exercise Focus: JS8Call program, directed message, group message, mapping.

Venue: Operators are encouraged to participate from whatever location and with whatever equipment/antenna they choose. Operators that need further experience with off-grid power and field-deployable antennas are encouraged to participate from a location other than their normal ham shack (backyard, park, etc.), in other words, truly a *Field Training Exercise*.

Date: Saturday, December 5, 2020

ExerciseTime: 1500-1900 Zulu

Time/Frequency	Eastern	Central	Mtn	Pacific
1500Z 7.120 MHz	10:00 AM	9:00 AM	8:00 AM	7:00 AM
1600Z 7.120 MHz	11:00 AM	10:00 AM	9:00 AM	8:00 AM
1700Z 10.141.5 MHz	12:00 N	11:00 PM	10:00 AM	9:00 AM
1800Z 7.120 MHz	1:00 PM	12:00 N	11:00 PM	10:00 AM

Frequencies: **7.120** (primary), **10.141.5** (alternate). Note: some operators will be running dual stations on both frequencies for the duration of the exercise. All operators should QSY from 7.120 to 10.141.5 at 1700Z as a nationwide test of this frequency. This exercise will use these frequencies to keep the AmRRON SOI frequency of 7.110 open for persistent nets.

Mode: JS8Call using the group address @AMRFTX, with a JS8Call offset transmitting between 1900 and 2300 on the waterfall.

Overview:

This exercise simulates a National Signals Center (SigCen Nat) attempting to fill an intelligence void by having remote stations report a Priority Intelligence Requirement (PIR) within their area of operations (AO). Reporting station's PIR will be sent to **ONLY ONE** of several regional Aggregating Stations (AS) which will then pass the information to SigCen Nat for consolidation.

Message Aggregators

This exercise will utilize multiple Aggregation Stations (AS), in each time zone (Eastern/Central/Mountain/Pacific), that will be collectors of PIR reports. Aggregation Stations will be identified with a "slash A" (/A) at the end of their call sign (similar to the designation of /B for Backbone stations). At the end of the exercise (shortly after 1900Z), each AS will compile a short summary of the intel they have collected and transmit that information in a short (less than two minute) message via JS8Call to the @AMRFTX group address. For example:

- FTX5 Summary for Mtn: ND, SD, WY not reporting; CO = G; AZ, NM = Y
- FTX5 Summary for Ctrl: 16 reporting. All G except IL. (pls relay)

In addition, each AS will forward their compiled information to SigCen Nat via HF.

Participant Requirements:

1. This exercise is open to all AmRRON members.
2. JS8Call installed and settings adjusted to "Mode Settings" section of this document.
3. Functional familiarity with JS8Call (Send, Receive, Retrieve and Relay).

Participant Goals:

1. Formulate your "Station Info" precisely as directed in these exercise instructions.
2. Listen for an AS, and then report your PIR in a "directed" message to an AS assuring the message was received by getting an acknowledgement.
3. Periodically (~ every 30 min) transmit your "Station Info" to the group (@AMRFTX).
4. Monitor the "Station Info" you receive, record that information, and create a map for your personal situational awareness.

AS Goals:

1. Identify your station to the exercise group as an AS.
2. Collect and acknowledge PIRs from reporting stations.
3. Summarize PIRs received during exercise and send summary to exercise group at the end of the exercise.
4. Transmit PIRs collected to SigCen Nat via HF.

SigCen Nat Goals:

1. Aggregate all PIRs received from AS stations.
2. Analyze PIRs creating a summary report.
3. Share that report via AIB (if space permits) on Tuesday, November 8, 2020.

Participant Assistance: Though the exercise simulates a “grid down” scenario, exercise organizers will be available on the Zello Breakout channel to assist participants with questions regarding the exercise and use of the exercise mode. Assistance should not be given to clarify a particular radio transmission (example: “I didn’t get the call-sign of that last TX” or “I didn’t get the last part of that TX”.) These type questions should be solved over the air as if there are not grid-up resources. Stations with questions will be asked to QSY to another AmRRON Zello channel for these discussions, thus keeping the Breakout channel open for exercise operations.

Scenario: the fallout of the 2020 election has been tumultuous thus far, with social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) firms frequently accused of limiting free speech. It has been speculated that these Big Tech firms (or malicious actors) may hit the “kill switch” on their networks if news that is significantly opposed to their objectives begins to flow through their networks. **If Big Tech did shut down, alternative means of information dissemination would be required.** For the situational awareness of SigCen Nat (primarily) and all participants (secondarily), we will report social media operational conditions in each participant’s area of operation (AO), and then transmit that information to regional Aggregation Stations (AS). The AS will provide a short summary at the end of the exercise, and also forward data collected to AmRRON National for further analysis and mapping.

PIR(s) for this exercise:

1. What is the status of social media applications in your AO?

JS8Call Station Info Field Settings: enter the information requested in the PIR(s):

1. Your Four-or Six-character grid locator (depending on your comfort level), e.g. EN09ab
NOTE: we have discovered during previous FTXs that a station’s Maidenhead grid information is only transmitted when it sends out a heartbeat (HB) message, or responds to another station. For this reason, we are including the Maidenhead grid information in the Info field for completeness.
2. One semicolon character (;) and NO SPACES. (Semicolons also separate multiple PIRs, when present.)
3. Social media operational status, with Green/Yellow/Red/Unknown (abbreviated G, Y, R, U) conditions. The conditions are defined as follows:
 - a. Green (**G**): Normal operation for all Internet/Social Media platforms.
 - b. Yellow (**Y**): Abnormal service (slow or degraded performance).
 - c. Red (**R**): No service (all Internet/social media platforms are down).
 - d. Unknown (**U**): You are unable to determine the requested condition.
4. Example "Station Info" field messages:
 - a. DN09ab;PIR1=G < North Dakota location; operation is normal >
 - b. FN56cd;PIR1=Y < Maine location; operation is degraded>
 - c. BQ40ef;PIR1=R < Northern Alaska location; operation is down >

JS8Call Mode Settings:

1. JS8Call (Normal....) However, stations may try different (faster/slower modes) depending on their signal strength with the AS. For example, transmission times for the "Station Info" field *DN09ab;PIR1=G* are: Normal=45sec, Fast=30 sec, Turbo=18 sec).
2. Enable Simultaneous Decoding of all Speeds...
3. Enable Autoreply (Auto)
4. Enable Heartbeat Networking
5. Enable Heartbeat Acknowledgements
6. Enable Grid Locator Column (View>Show Call Activity Columns>Grid Locator)
7. Turn OFF all reporting (Settings>Reporting), and verify that the SPOT button (upper right-hand corner of the main screen) is grayed out

JS8Call Best Practices for FTX5

1. This is a "directed and listen" exercise. You will **NOT** be querying any station for their info. Direct your Info to an AS station, and once you get an acknowledgement, DO NOT send again to an AS station. This will allow the AS station to create a summary for the region, then pass the info "up the chain" for SigCen Nat to create a report.
2. Periodically (approximately every 30 minutes when the frequency is available) send your "Station Info" to the group. This will allow other stations to identify regional conditions.
3. Log the reports that you hear on your map for your own situational awareness.

Participant Responsibilities:

1. Formulate your "Station Info" **precisely** as directed in these exercise instructions.
2. Report your PIR in a "directed" message to an AS assuring the message was received by getting an acknowledgement.
3. Periodically (approximately every 30 minutes as frequency allows) transmit your "Station Info" to the exercise group.
4. Monitor the information you receive and create a map for your personal situational awareness.
5. Review your map and notes, and report the following in an After-Action Report (AAR), rating yourself on a scale of 0 (I was totally unsuccessful to 5 (I was highly successful):
 - a. How successful were you meeting Participant Goal #1?
 - b. How successful were you meeting Participant Goal #2?
 - c. How successful were you meeting Participant Goal #3?
 - d. How successful were you meeting Participant Goal #4?
 - e. What questions regarding JS8 would you like answers to?
 - f. Send your AAR to: AMRFTX@protonmail.com

Appendix:

What is a Priority Intelligence Requirement (PIR)?

PIR(s) identify specific pieces of intelligence needed in order to accomplish a task or mission. A leader may be assigned to do a task in a hostile environment, and in order to progress his planning he may determine he needs one or more pieces of information (PIR). Example: a relief mission to a town isolated by flooding is assigned to a pastor. The pastor determines he needs the following information (PIRs) to progress the mission.

PIR 1: Is there a usable vehicle route to the town?

PIR 2: What are the primary needs of the town?

PIR 3: Who in the town is in charge of the distribution of relief materials?

Maidenhead Grid Map

If you do not have a mapping solution, you can use the Maidenhead U.S. Grid Square Map (available from

http://www.icomamerica.com/en/amateur/amateurtools/2013_GridSquareMap.pdf.