

Eastern MA ARES Mini-Exercise 2026 Scenario and Guidelines



Eastern MA ARES

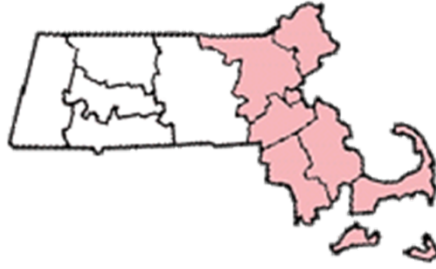
Section Exercise: **"Mini-Test 26"**

Frank O'Laughlin – WQ1O
and the Eastern MA
ARES staff

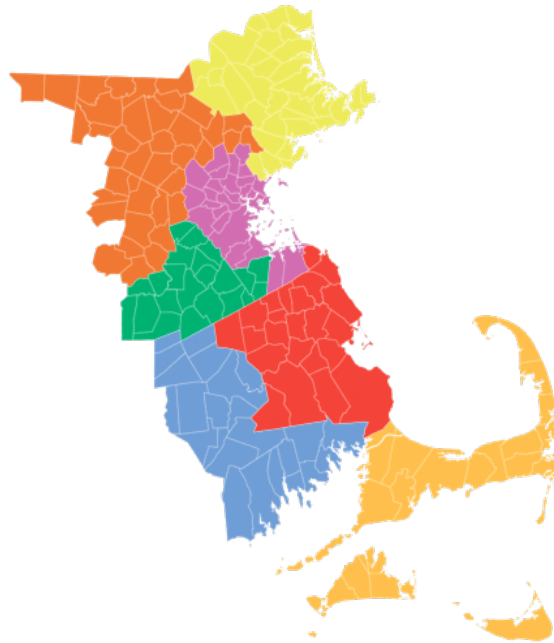
Version 1.3
07-20-26

Table of Contents

Purpose	4
Scenario	5
ARES groups and simulated activities	5
Exercise Objectives	5
Operational Ground Rules	6
ARES/RACES	6
Message Handling	6
Setup and Timeline	6
Exercise Disclaimers	6
Exercise activities	7
SKYWARN damage report	7
NETS and mode of operations.....	8
HF voice operation	8
75m Net operations.....	8
60m voice operations.....	8
VHF/UHF voice operation	9
HF and VHF/UHF Winlink operation	9
Echolink/IRLP operation.....	9
Minute Man Repeater System operation	10
Metrics for participation	10
Exercise Frequency Usage.....	10
Group Operations.....	12
Appendix 1: Cape Cod and Islands ARES Operation	13
Overview.....	13
Tactical Net Operation.....	13
Appendix 2: Other Group activity <i>TBA</i>	14



Eastern MA ARES Map



Date and time of Exercise

Saturday August 1st, 2026

Setup time: 8:30am

Start Time: 10:00am

End Time: Noon

Operational Duration: 2 hours

Purpose

The Eastern MA Section Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) will conduct a summer operational Mini-exercise to test its capability in establishing communications with stations within its section and outside it under simulated emergency conditions. It was a long winter and we did not have a winter exercise. With limited time and availability of many participants, we will only have a scaled back and limited exercise. After discussion with the ARES SEC and the Section Manager, the main purpose will be just to get our people on and communicating. A larger more comprehensive exercise will be developed for the winter time frame. The operational Mini-exercise called **“Mini-Test 26”** will test the ability of home stations, EOCs, possible field sites and other stations to communicate.

Scenario

As this is a mini test exercise only. There is no specific scenario.

ARES groups and simulated activities

This exercise guideline is deliberately generic in nature and is scaled back considerably compared to other similar exercises in eastern MA. ARES/RACES/AUXCOMM groups are free to adapt this scenario and conduct their operations as needed for their groups. Feel free to use your home stations or mobiles for this purpose. It is likely that many of the operations involved in this exercise will utilize home stations in many districts.

Exercise Objectives

The objectives of this exercise are as follows:

- Establish and conduct a tactical net on simplex 2m or FM repeater for your group
- Establish contact with any Town EOC RACES stations
- Establish contact with other ARES districts where possible
- Establish an HF 75m voice net for all of MA (and potentially other areas)
- Establish a 60m HF voice net for all of MA (and potentially other areas)
- Send SKYWARN tactical damage report by VHF or HF voice
- Send a SKYWARN damage report by Winlink on VHF/UHF or HF using ICS-213 or a Severe Weather Report Form
- Check in on the MMRA repeater network
- Check in and/or pass information the NEW-ENG3 9123 Echolink node

Note that not all objectives will apply to every group.

Operational Ground Rules

ARES/RACES

ARES/RACES/Auxcomm groups can fully adapt and change their individual plans to suit the needs of the local group.

Message Handling

Message handling, on voice, will occur on 2 meters, 60m, 75/80m HF (75m alternate). On Winlink, any mode or usable band is permitted.

Setup and Timeline

Setup time will be 830am. The exercise will begin promptly at 10am. It will last approximately 2 hours and will end at Noon. Timelines may be adjusted accordingly in response to turnout and early completions of primary objectives.

Exercise Disclaimers

Due to the proliferation of radio scanners and the possibility of misconstrued information by the public, all tactical voice messages *that can be misconstrued* will be preceded by the words “**This is a Drill**”. *If the messages are not considered to be able to be misconstrued, then the disclaimer will not be needed.*

Exercise activities

There will be one primary operational activity aside from checking into the HF/VHF/UHF nets. It will involve the sending of a SKYWARN damage report. This can be sent using Winlink. Messages can use the ICS-213 message form or the severe weather report form (Your choice). This can also be sent by voice on VHF 2m or by the HF Nets.

You do not have to do all of the activities to be successful! This a minimal exercise just to keep us active. Do the activities in which you feel comfortable.

SKYWARN damage report

The reports should be sent to the Eastern MA ARES SEC/SKYWARN Coordinator Rob Macedo KD1CY. On Winlink, they will be addressed to **WX1BOX**. The report should include the time of the report, the source, the location and the details of the damage. The report should be as concise and brief as possible as this may be received on voice nets. Please send your report by only one method to avoid duplication.

If the reports are being sent on voice, they will be tactical in nature and read as plain text to the Net control stations (NCS). The NCS should log these reports. It is up to those NCS operators to determine how they will get the reports to SKYWARN Coordinator Rob Macedo KD1CY. This could be done by a bulk sending on Winlink to **WX1BOX** or by other means at their discretion.

NETS and mode of operations

HF voice operation

An HF net will be started on 60m and 75m in MA. They will operate concurrently. Participants can send their SKYWARN tactical damage if they wish. If you have already sent included this information by Winlink, please do not send by voice in order to avoid duplication.

75m Net operations

A 75m net will be established on 3930kHz LSB (See frequency listings section). Note that 75m operations can be difficult during this time of the day in the current phase of the solar cycle. If 75m proves to be unusable, the *Net Control Station (NCS) may move the net to 7243kHz by his or her discretion*. If a participant does not hear any activity on 75m after a time, try the fall back frequency of 7243KHz.

60m voice operations

HF 60m operation will be first attempted on Channel FOUR 5403.5 kHz. As we are a secondary user on 60m, any primary user (US Government stations) cannot have interference from a secondary user. Primary users will have priority access at all times. If a *primary user* is operating on channel FOUR, the net will fall back and be conducted on channel THREE: 5371.5 kHz.

NOTE: *With the recent changes to our 60m allocations, the old legacy channel 3 is now part of the continuous new band allocation and is no longer a full power 100W ERP channel option. The ARRL is now listing the remaining full power channels renumbered in order from 1-4.*

See the frequency section.

VHF/UHF voice operation

ARES groups are requested to set up voice nets as you normally do for exercises. These nets can be repeater, simplex or any combination of the two. Participants can send their primary voice activity involving a SKYWARN tactical damage report if they wish. Any additional voice components for the exercise can be set by the local ARES/RACES/AUXCOMM group to fit their needs. NCS stations can determine how to pass any reports at their discretion.

HF and VHF/UHF Winlink operation

The primary operations activity of sending the SKYWARN damage report can be sent by ICS-213 or the Severe Weather Report Form using Winlink HF and VHF/UHF Winlink. A list of currently operating HF winlink RMS stations with locations and modes can be found on the winlink.org online site. The reports can be sent to **WX1BOX**.

Echolink/IRLP operation

Echolink will be operational for this exercise. It will be the *NEW-ENG3* Echolink conference node 9123/IRLP 9123. It will be monitored by several ARES leaders and will serve as an online component.

Minute Man Repeater System operation

The Minute Man Repeater system (MMRA) will be active during the exercise and will be linked up in the same configuration as the monthly ARES Net. See the following link: https://mmra.org/repeaters/repeater_linking.html (Click the ARES box to see the repeaters and other systems linked).

Metrics for participation

All ARES groups participating in the exercise are encouraged to send a list of participants and activities by email after the exercise so a good overview of participants can be established. Send to your local ARES EC and/or DEC. If you are unaware of who your leader is, Visit the Eastern MA ARES website at <https://ema.arrrl.org/ares/>

Exercise Frequency Usage

Two meter and 440 MHz local voice nets: - The following is a list of key frequencies with any additional frequencies at the discretion of local ARES Group

147.000-Dartmouth Repeater (PL: 67.0 Hz) – local net than linked into the MMRA Section Net via IRLP
147.180-Bridgewater Repeater (PL: 67.0 Hz) -Will be linked into the MMRA Section Net via IRLP
146.895-Walpole Repeater (PL: 123.0 Hz)
146.955-Westford Repeater (PL: 74.4 Hz) (net at 1130 AM) Echolink Node: 380799 Allstar node: 29769
147.435-Western Middlesex ARES Simplex (PL: 110.9 Hz)
146.580-Cape Cod ARES Simplex (No PL) (1030 AM Start time)
446.675-Marlborough Repeater (PL: 88.5 Hz)

The MMRA Network will be utilized at the section level – a link to the repeaters linked up is listed in the MMRA Repeater section above.

Additional 2 meter Nets

Cape Cod and Islands 2m simplex net (1030am)

146.580 FM simplex

147.420 FM simplex (alternate if needed).

Winlink Express VHF (non-P2P): 145.090 FM frequencies –

Local VHF RMS Stations – Some stations may offer both Packet and VARA FM modes

N1XTB-10 connect direct or via digipeaters WA1PLE-2, W1STR-3 or BROCK

AB1PH-10 connect direct or via digipeaters WA1PLE-2, W1STR-3 or BROCK

W1SHS-10 connect direct or via digipeaters WA1PLE-2, W1STR-3 or BROCK

KF1D-10 connect direct or via digipeaters WA1PLE-2, W1STR-3 or BROCK

W1SGL-10 connect direct or via digipeaters WA1PLE-2, W1STR-3 or BROCK

Note: *W1SGL-10 has been moved from Barnstable to Falmouth. A New Digi (N1YHS-7) has been placed at the old Barnstable location and can be used to get to W1SGL-10*

WZ0C-10 connect direct or via digipeater W1STR-3

Or other VHF RMS stations available from Winlink Express station lookup.

Also see http://www.n1xtb.net/EMA_packet_map.html for locations of local RMS stations

Telnet may be used if available and necessary.

HF Winlink stations (Non-P2P):

Local HF RMS stations - VARA HF Preferred mode

W1EO: 3937.900 KHz center, 3936.4 KHz dial

KF1D: 7101.3 KHz center, 7099.8 KHz dial

W1EO: 7102.5 KHz center, 7101.0 KHz dial

Or other HF RMS stations available from Winlink Express station lookup.

Telnet may be used for training purposes if RF capability is not present.

NOTE: Some HF Winlink stations may be unavailable or have changed.

Primary region wide 75m HF Operations: 3930 kHz LSB

75m net will move to 7243kHz LSB 40m if 75m is deemed unusable by the NCS.

Primary 60m HF voice operations: 5403.5 kHz (USB), fall back to 5371.5 kHz if needed. Note that newer HF radios that have 60m as a standard feature often have the frequencies displayed as channelized (center frequencies) whereas radios that have been modified for 60m operation often display the dial frequencies. Power limit is 100 watts ERP.

Center	'Dial' Frequency (USB)		'Unofficial' Channel Designation
5332.0 kHz	5330.5 kHz		Channel 1 (100W)
5348.0 kHz	5346.5 kHz		Channel 2 (100W)
5373.0 kHz	5371.5 kHz		Channel 3 (100W)
5405.0 kHz	5403.5 kHz		Channel 4 (100W)
5358.5 kHz	5357.0 kHz	<i>(Former Channel 3, Now 9.15W in Cont. Band)</i>	

HF Winlink stations: See online list on the winlink.org site. You can also check your path to other Winlink stations from within the program (if you are online)

Echolink: *NEW-ENG3* node 9123/IRLP: 9123

Minute Man Repeater system (MMRA) linked repeaters VHF/UHF (see MMRA.org for repeater list and look at the ARES configuration): http://www.mmra.org/repeaters/repeater_index_by_linkstate.html
 *** If available

Group Operations

There will be several groups operating during this exercise. They may be RACES/ARES/Auxcomm or some combination thereof. Information regarding their operations can be added below if needed.

Appendix 1: Cape Cod and Islands ARES Operation

Overview

The Cape Cod and Islands ARES will follow the section exercise and its objectives. It will **NOT** have a separate document as it normally does as this is a section exercise. It will however, have a field team that will deploy to Dennis as our Net Control station. The station will conduct an FM simplex Tactical Net on **146.580**. Most stations in this exercise will utilize their home stations as we do need to verify their operations from time to time. **We will have at least on fixed field site and possibly two.** The main NCS field site will be in Dennis. The Upper Cape field site may or may not occur in Falmouth (To be announced). Exercise participants are allowed to try mobile operation if they wish to do so from an area. Be sure to notify NCS if you are doing this during the net check-in process.

Tactical Net Operation

*The Cape and Islands ARES 2M simplex tactical net will begin at **1030am** to allow participants time to get on HF first for the sections nets.* The operating procedure for this exercise will consist of a roll call format. The NCS station will do a staggered priority and geographical call up. 1st call will be for any Field Sites or EOC stations in our district (including the Islands) and for any mobile stations. The second call up will be for home stations by order of zones in sequence (Outer Cape, Lower Cape, Mid Cape, Upper Cape, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard). Last call up will be for stations outside the Cape/Islands district. After the initial call up, NCS will designate one station in each zone (if available) that will call out for any stations that the NCS could not hear. NCS will then poll all individual check in stations which will read aloud those stations they could hear on the net. We will evaluate successful communications paths based on that data. All stations will keep a log of whom they can hear and send it to the ARES DEC by email after the exercise. Mobile units (if any) may call NCS outside of the roll call when any mobile operators feel the necessity of doing so.

When participants are recording/reporting the received signals of incoming stations, we will use terminology similar to that used in the Upper Cape Falmouth ARES simplex net.

Signals will be reported by:

1. **No signal**
2. **Weak readable**
3. **Good readable**
4. **Strong readable (if signal is exceptionally strong)**

Appendix 2: Other Group activity *TBA*