EXERCISE • EXERCISE • EXERCISE

ATLANTIC COAST UNITED RADIO ASSOCIATION (ACURA)

EmComm Drill Master

Complete User Guide

How to build, run and grade a realistic ham radio emergency exercise for your net, set in your own county, with role cards on every phone and an automatic after-action report and ICS-309.

Inside this guide

- Planning checklist and drill-day timeline
- Step by step: building, joining and running a drill
- Net control and operator guides with screenshots
- Grading, the after-action report and the ICS-309
- Cut-out quick reference cards, sign-in sheet and checklist

acurahamradio.org/drill-master/

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Drill Master in 30 seconds

The short version. Net control builds a drill on the website, opens the private net control link on a laptop, and reads the opening script. Operators scan a QR code or type a 6-character code on their phones, pick a role, and pass the messages that pop up on their screens. Net control logs each message as it arrives. When the drill ends, Drill Master grades it and writes the after-action report and ICS-309. **No app, no account and no password are needed.**

1. What Drill Master Is

Every ARES group and EmComm club is supposed to practice. The ARRL even runs a national Simulated Emergency Test each fall. But writing a good drill takes days: someone has to invent a realistic disaster, write dozens of messages, hand them out at the right times, keep score and write the after-action report. So most clubs end up running the same easy check-in net over and over, and nobody learns where things would really break.

Drill Master does all of that work for you in about a minute. It writes a realistic emergency exercise set in your own county, using real towns, shelters, hospitals, fire companies, roads and repeaters. It hands each operator their messages at the right moment on their phone, lets net control log every message, throws in surprises and a repeater failure, plays breaking news bulletins, and grades the whole thing when you are done.



The Drill Master page at acurahamradio.org/drill-master/ (in the EMCOMM menu).

What it does

- **Builds the disaster around your area.** Pick one of 14 scenarios, from hurricanes and tornadoes to earthquakes, hazmat releases and public events, then your county and, in Atlantic County, a single town to center on.
- **Gives every operator a role** (shelter, hospital liaison, EOC or town OEM, Red Cross, field teams, fire/EMS) and a stream of “inject” message cards on their phone. Nobody sees the whole script, so it plays out like the real thing.
- **Runs the clock.** Messages, surprises, news bulletins and a repeater failure appear on schedule. Net control can pause, resume or end at any time.
- **Grades the drill** and produces a printable after-action report with strengths, gaps and suggested fixes, plus a completed ICS-309 communications log.

What it is not

- It is **not** a real alerting system. Every card, bulletin and report is marked EXERCISE.
- It does **not** transmit anything. All traffic is passed by your operators on the air, exactly as it would be in a real event.

- It does **not** replace your county or town Office of Emergency Management. The places are real, but every event in a drill is made up.

2. What You Need

Item	Details
People	One net control station (NCS) plus 2 to 24 operators. Drill Master supports 3 to 25 people in total, including net control. A net control assistant (logger) is a great idea for drills of 10 or more.
Net control device	A laptop or tablet with a web browser and internet, near the net control radio. A bigger screen makes the console easier to read. Turn the sound on so you hear the alert beep when new traffic arrives.
Operator devices	Any smartphone, tablet or laptop with a web browser: iPhone (Safari), Android (Chrome) or any computer. **No app to install, no account and no password.**
Radios	Whatever you would use for real: handhelds, mobiles or base stations on your planned repeater and simplex frequencies.
Frequencies	Your primary repeater(s) plus a **backup simplex frequency**. For ACURA drills the default backup is **146.565 MHz simplex**. Drill Master will "fail" one repeater partway through, so everyone must know the simplex frequency before you start.
Optional	A speaker or TV for the news screen, printed copies of this guide's quick reference cards, ICS-213 forms, and the SoundBridge page for sending forms over the air.

Do operators need the ACURA app? No.

Drill Master runs in the web browser. Operators open it by scanning the QR code on the net control screen, tapping a link net control texted or emailed, or going to **acurahamradio.org/drill-master/** and typing the drill code. That is all.

Who writes the script?

Writer	When it is used	Cost
AI writer	Drills for **any U.S. county**, when "Let AI write a fresh script" is ticked and that area's daily limit has not been reached. Writes a fresh, story-driven script every time.	A few cents per drill, paid by ACURA. Daily limits: **8** for Atlantic County; **5** shared by Cape May, Cumberland, Ocean, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Salem counties; **3** shared by all other U.S. counties; and no more than 3 per person.
Built-in writer	Any drill after an area's daily AI limit is reached, or when the AI box is not ticked. Still uses real local places from the map.	Free.

3. Planning Your Drill

A good drill is mostly planning. Use this timeline as a guide.

Two weeks before

- Pick a date, a start time and a length (30 minutes to 3 hours). For a first drill, 45 to 60 minutes is plenty.
- Choose a scenario that fits your area and the season: hurricane or nor'easter in the fall, blizzard or blackout in winter, tornado, flood or wildfire smoke in spring, a heat wave in summer, or a public event you will really be supporting.
- Decide who will be net control, and recruit a net control assistant (logger) if you expect more than 10 operators.
- If your town's Office of Emergency Management would like to take part or observe, invite them now.
- Announce the drill on your regular net, by email and in your club group. Ask people to reply with their call sign.

One week before

- Confirm the number of operators. You will enter this number (including net control) when you build the drill.
- Confirm your repeaters and the **backup simplex frequency**. Tell every operator to program it into their radio.
- Identify one or two stations that can act as **relays** if some operators cannot reach net control on simplex.
- Print the Net Control Quick Card and enough Operator Quick Cards for everyone (last pages of this guide).

The day before

- **Build the drill** (Section 4). You can build it the day before; the clock does not start until net control presses Start.
- Save the private net control link. Send the join link or drill code to your operators.
- Decide who gets which role, or let operators pick their own when they join.

Drill day: 30 minutes before

- Net control opens the net control link on the laptop and turns the sound up.
- If you are using a speaker, open the news screen on a second computer or TV (Section 7).
- Operators join the drill on their phones and pick their roles. Net control watches the Stations panel turn green as they join.

- Do a quick radio check on the repeater **and** on the backup simplex frequency.

Safety first

Before you start, make sure everyone knows the phrase **“REAL WORLD EMERGENCY.”** If anyone hears or sees a real emergency during the drill, they say it on the air and net control pauses the drill immediately.

4. Building a Drill, Step by Step

Building a drill takes about a minute. You can do it on a computer or a phone. Go to **acurahamradio.org/drill-master/** and scroll to **Build a Drill**, or click **Build a drill** at the top of the page.

Step 1: Pick a scenario



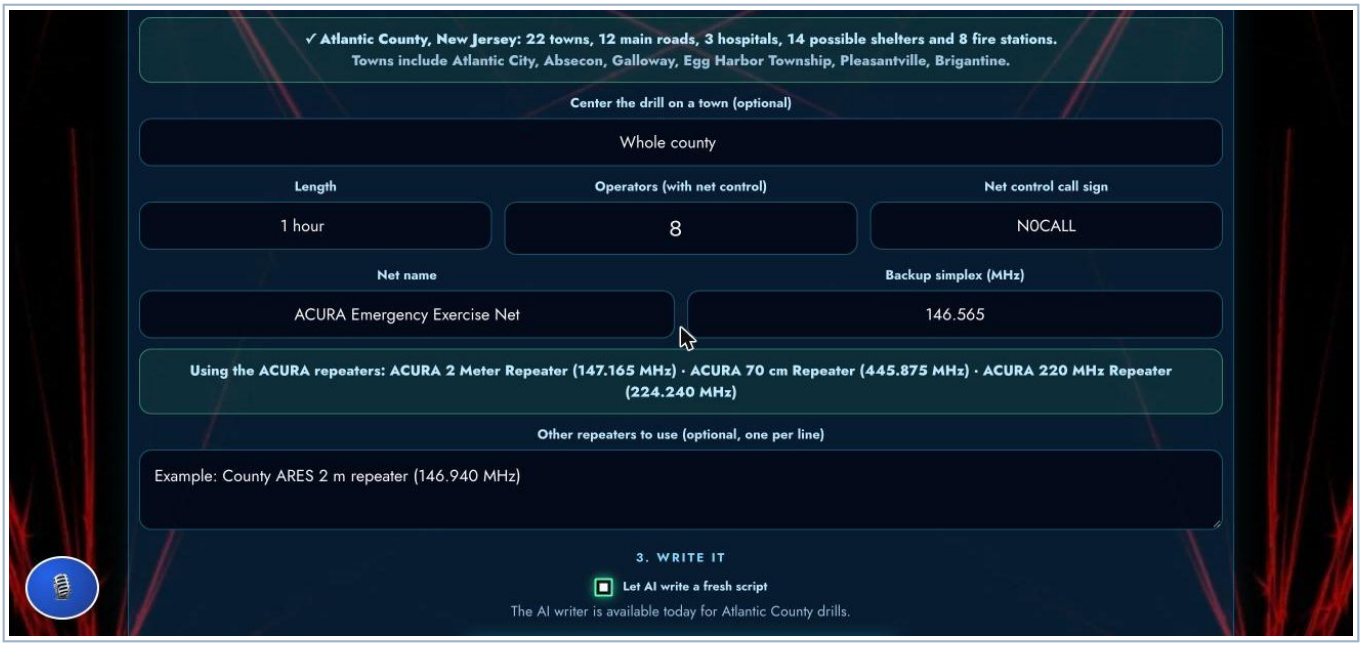
Tap one of the 14 scenario cards. The selected card glows green.

Drill Master has 14 scenarios, so clubs anywhere in the country can practice for the disasters they actually face.

Scenario	What happens in the drill
Hurricane	Storm surge, flooding rain and winds over 90 mph knock out power and phones. Expect shelter openings, flooded roads and hospital power problems.
Nor'easter flooding	Record high tides for several tide cycles. Coastal roads flood and barrier islands are cut off.
Multi-day blackout	An ice storm and grid failure leave the county without power for days. Cell towers run out of backup power and fuel is short.
Wildfire smoke	A fast-moving wildfire with strong winds. Thick smoke closes roads and forces evacuations.
911 cyberattack	The county 911 phone system and dispatch computers are down. Residents walk into fire stations to report emergencies and agencies fall back to radio.
Mass-casualty	A major crash involving a tour bus causes dozens of injuries. Hospitals activate surge plans and a reunification center opens.
Tornado outbreak	Several tornadoes cut damage paths through neighborhoods. People are trapped, power and phones are out, and new tornado warnings keep coming.
Blizzard	Two feet of snow and whiteout winds. A travel ban, stranded drivers, warming shelters and carbon monoxide dangers.
Earthquake	Damaged buildings, broken water mains and gas lines, aftershocks, a hospital moving patients, and phone networks down everywhere at once.

Scenario	What happens in the drill
River and flash flood	Rivers and creeks over their banks, road washouts, roof rescues, and a dam upstream that is being watched closely.
Hazmat release	A train derailment leaks a toxic chemical. Shelter-in-place orders, an evacuation zone, a wind shift and hospitals asking for decontamination help.
Nuclear plant emergency	A regional nuclear plant declares an emergency. Protective action orders, a reception center for evacuees and heavy evacuation traffic.
Extreme heat wave	A week of heat index values over 110 degrees. Cooling centers, rolling blackouts and a surge in heat illness calls.
Public event support	A marathon, parade or air show with thousands of people: first aid stations, course marshals, a lightning hold and lost children. Great practice for real public-service events.

Step 2: Where and how big



The county, town, size and frequency settings.

1. **County.** It starts as “Atlantic County, NJ.” For another county, type it the same way (for example “Ocean County, NJ”) and press **Check county**. A green box shows how many towns, roads, hospitals, shelters and fire stations were found. Other counties can take up to a minute the first time while the map is loaded.
2. **Center the drill on a town (optional, Atlantic County only).** Choose one of the 23 Atlantic County towns, from Absecon to Weymouth Township. The drill is then built around that town’s own schools, fire companies, roads and neighborhoods, and the EOC role becomes that town’s OEM (for example, “Absecon OEM”). Leave it on **Whole county** for a county-wide drill.

3. **Length.** 30 minutes up to 3 hours. Longer drills get more messages, more news bulletins and more surprises.
4. **Operators (with net control).** The total number of people taking part, including net control (3 to 25). Drill Master creates one role for every operator except net control.
5. **Net control call sign.** Used in the opening script and on the ICS-309. Optional.
6. **Net name.** For example, “ACURA Emergency Exercise Net.”
7. **Backup simplex (MHz).** The frequency everyone moves to when a repeater “fails.” Default for ACURA is 146.565.
8. **Repeaters.** For Atlantic County, the ACURA, SCARA and SPARC repeaters, plus the county AUXCOMM and New Jersey ARES/RACES frequencies, are filled in automatically (see the table below). You can add other repeaters, one per line, for example “County ARES 2 m repeater (146.940 MHz).” Other counties start with an empty list, so add your own.

Atlantic County repeaters and frequencies (filled in automatically)

Repeater or frequency	Output (MHz)	Offset	Tone (PL)
ACURA 2 m (AG2NJ)	147.165	+0.6	91.5
ACURA 70 cm (AG2NJ)	445.875	−5	85.4
ACURA 220 (AG2NJ)	224.240	−1.6	100.0
SCARA K2BR 2 m (AUXCOMM / SKYWARN)	146.745	−0.6	146.2
SCARA K2BR 70 cm (Egg Harbor Twp)	448.775	−5	146.2
SPARC W2HRW 2 m (Absecon)	146.985	−0.6	146.2
SPARC W2HRW 70 cm (Absecon)	443.250	+5	146.2
Southern NJ ARES Section, W3BXW	147.345	+0.6	127.3
NJ State RACES / OEM, NJ2EM	224.320	−1.6	67.0
Atlantic County AUXCOMM simplex	146.565	simplex	none
NJ RACES primary simplex	147.570	simplex	none
NJ RACES secondary simplex	145.680	simplex	none

Only a repeater can “fail” during a drill; the three simplex frequencies never go off the air. Every operator’s phone and the net control console show this whole list. Check frequencies and tones against your club’s current list before a real event.

Step 3: Write it

1. Leave **Let AI write a fresh script** ticked for an AI-written drill. The line under it tells you whether the AI writer is available today for your county, or whether today’s AI drills for your area are used up.

2. Press **Build my drill**. A progress list shows each step. The AI writer takes about 20 to 40 seconds; the built-in writer takes a few seconds.

Step 4: Save your links

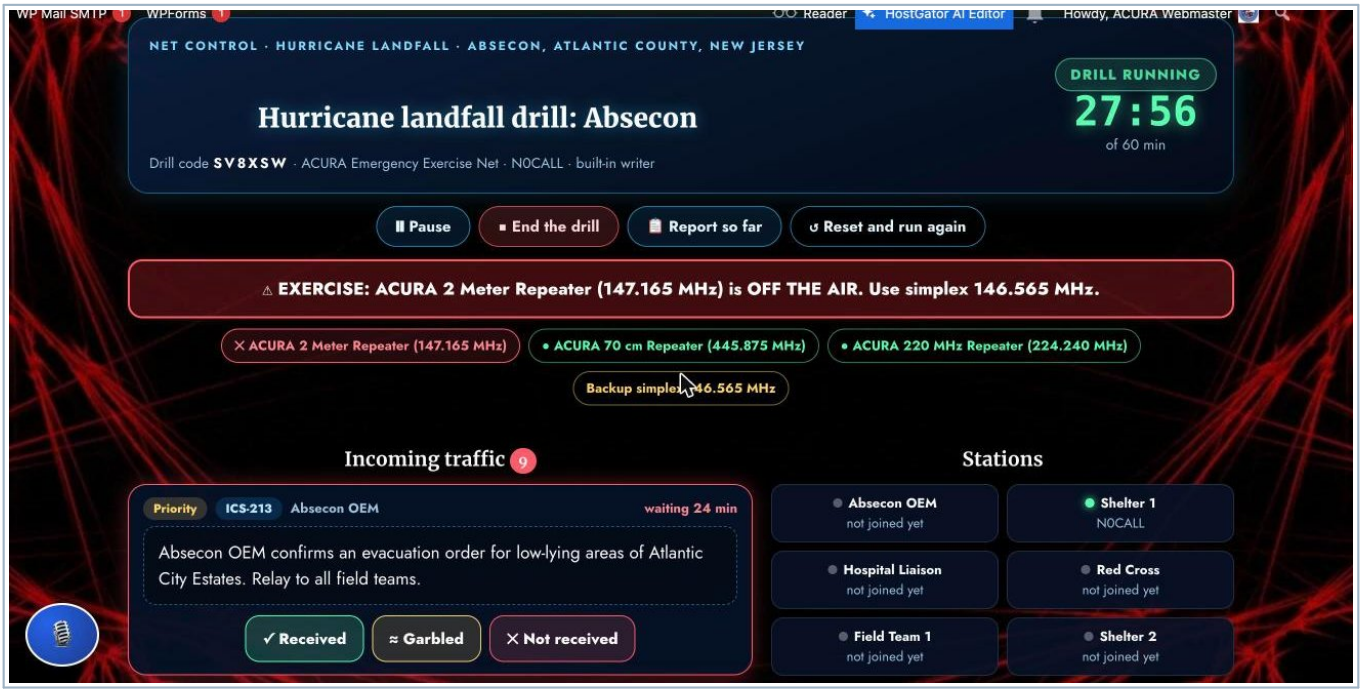
When the drill is ready, a green panel shows:

- The **6-character drill code** in large letters, for example **SV8XSW**.
- Your **private net control link**, with Copy and Open buttons. **Keep this link private.** Anyone who has it can start, pause, end or reset the drill.
- The **operator join link** and a **QR code** to share with your operators.

> **Tip**
>
> Drill Master also saves your drill on that device under **“Your drills on this device,”** with buttons to open net control or the report. If you build the drill on one computer and run it on another, email yourself the net control link. Drills are kept on the website for 45 days.

5. Net Control Guide

Open your private net control link on the laptop at the net control position. This is the “console” you will use for the whole drill.



The top of the net control console during a drill, with the repeater-failure alert showing.

The parts of the console

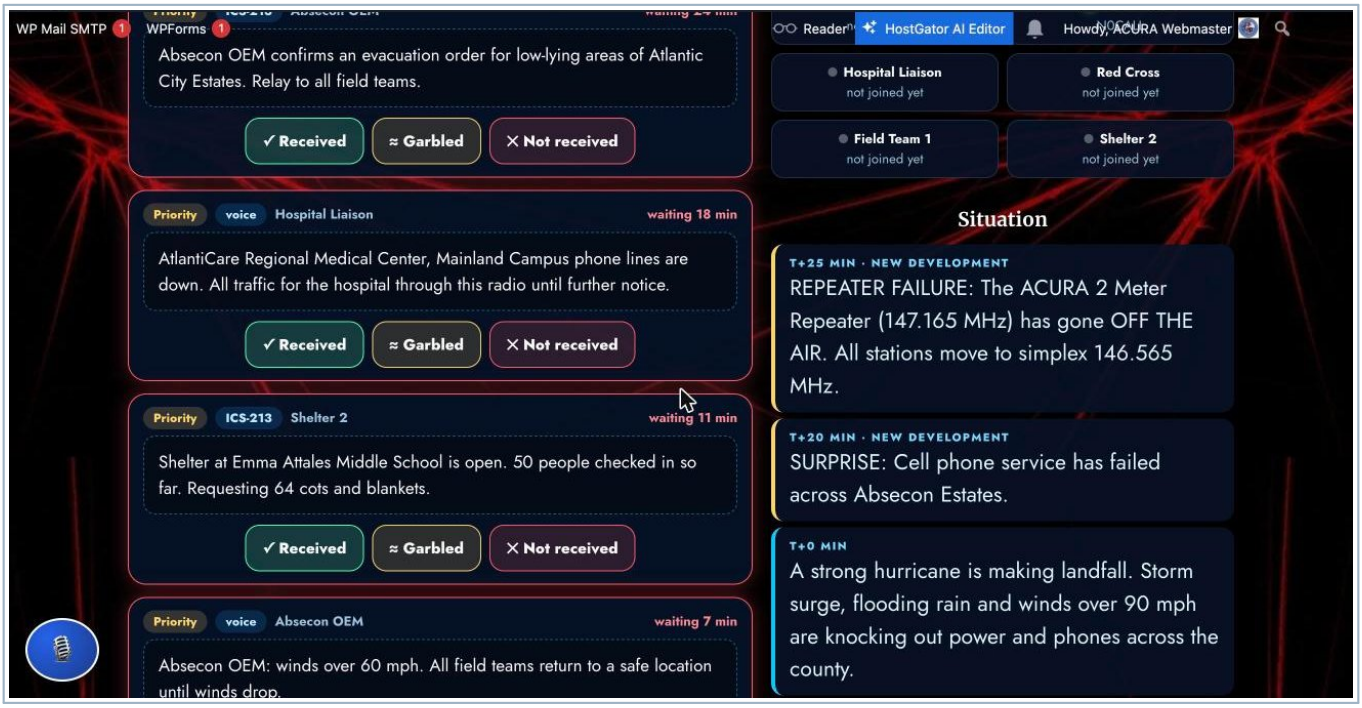
Part	What it does
Header	Scenario, place, drill title, drill code, net name and your call sign. On the right: the drill status (Waiting to start, Drill running, Paused or Drill ended) and the drill clock.
Control buttons	**Start the drill** starts the clock. **Pause** and **Resume** stop and restart the clock (messages wait while paused). **End the drill** stops everything. **Report so far** opens the after-action report at any time. **Reset and run again** erases all logging and puts the drill back to the start, so you can run the same script again. End and Reset must be pressed **twice** to confirm.
Repeater bar	Shows each repeater as up (green dot) or down (red X), plus the backup simplex frequency. When the script fails a repeater, a flashing red alert appears on every screen.
Incoming traffic	Every message that is now due and has not been logged yet. Emergency messages are listed first, then Priority, then Routine. The red number shows how many are waiting.
Log other traffic	For anything that was not on the script: a station reporting something on its own, a relay, a question. Fill in From, To (optional) and Message, then press Add to log.
Handled	Everything you have logged, newest first, with an **undo** button on each line in case you tap the wrong button.

Part	What it does
Stations	Every role, with the call sign of the operator who claimed it. A **green dot** means their phone checked in within the last minute or so.
Situation	The story so far: the opening situation, new developments, surprises and the repeater failure, newest first.
Exercise news	Breaking news bulletins as they are released, each with a Read button. Tick “Sparky reads new bulletins aloud” to have them read over the laptop speaker.
Operators join here	The QR code, drill code and join link, plus buttons to copy the link, open the news screen, the ACURA Net Control board and SoundBridge.
Net control script	The opening words, the list of assignments and the closing words, filled in for this drill.

Running the drill

1. **Open the net** on your primary repeater a few minutes early. Read the **opening script** from the console, word for word.
2. **Take check-ins.** Each station gives its call sign and assignment. Confirm on the Stations panel that each role shows the right call sign and a green dot.
3. **Press “Start the drill.”** The clock starts at 0:00 and messages begin to appear on operators’ phones at their scheduled times.
4. **Take traffic.** When a station calls with traffic, find its card in Incoming traffic (it has the station name and message on it), copy the message, and then tap one of the three buttons in the table below.
5. **Watch the timers.** Each card shows how long it has been waiting. A card turns yellow after 2 minutes and red when it is late for its priority.
6. **When the repeater fails,** a red alert appears on every screen. Announce the move to the backup simplex frequency, then continue the net there. Use relay stations for anyone who cannot reach you.
7. **Use the news bulletins.** When one appears, read it on the air (“This is an exercise. Exercise news bulletin...”) or let Sparky read it on the speaker.
8. **When time is up,** press **End the drill** (twice) and read the closing script.

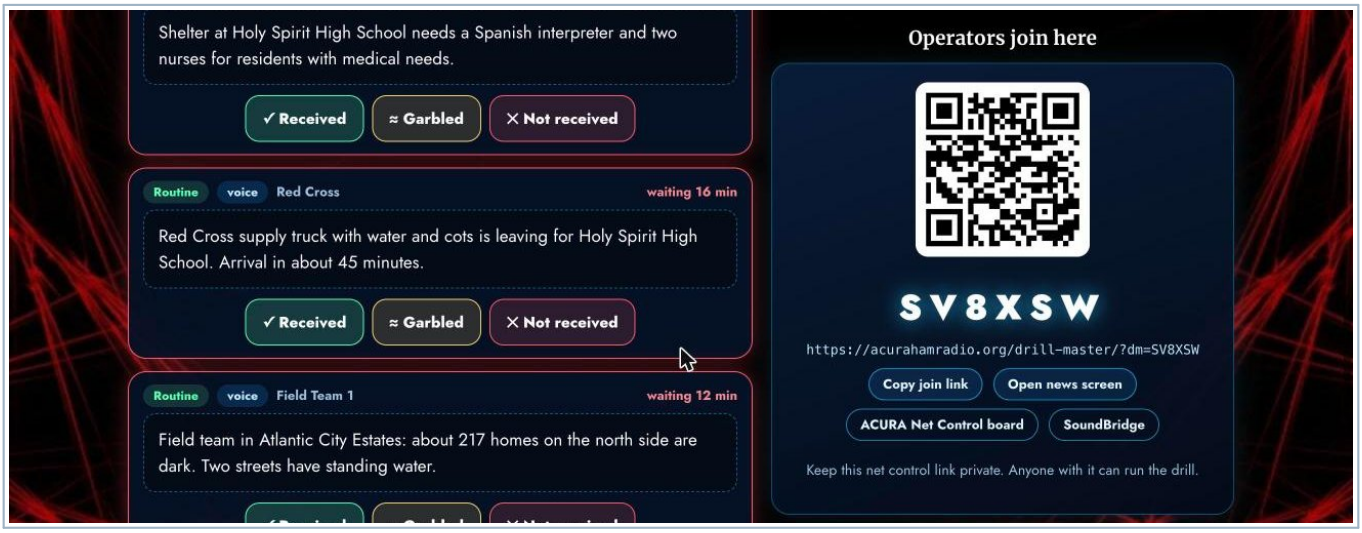
Button	Tap it when...
Received	You copied the whole message correctly.
Garbled	The message came through, but parts were missing or wrong and needed repeats or fills.
Not received	The station tried but the message did not get through (for example, they could not reach you after the repeater failed).



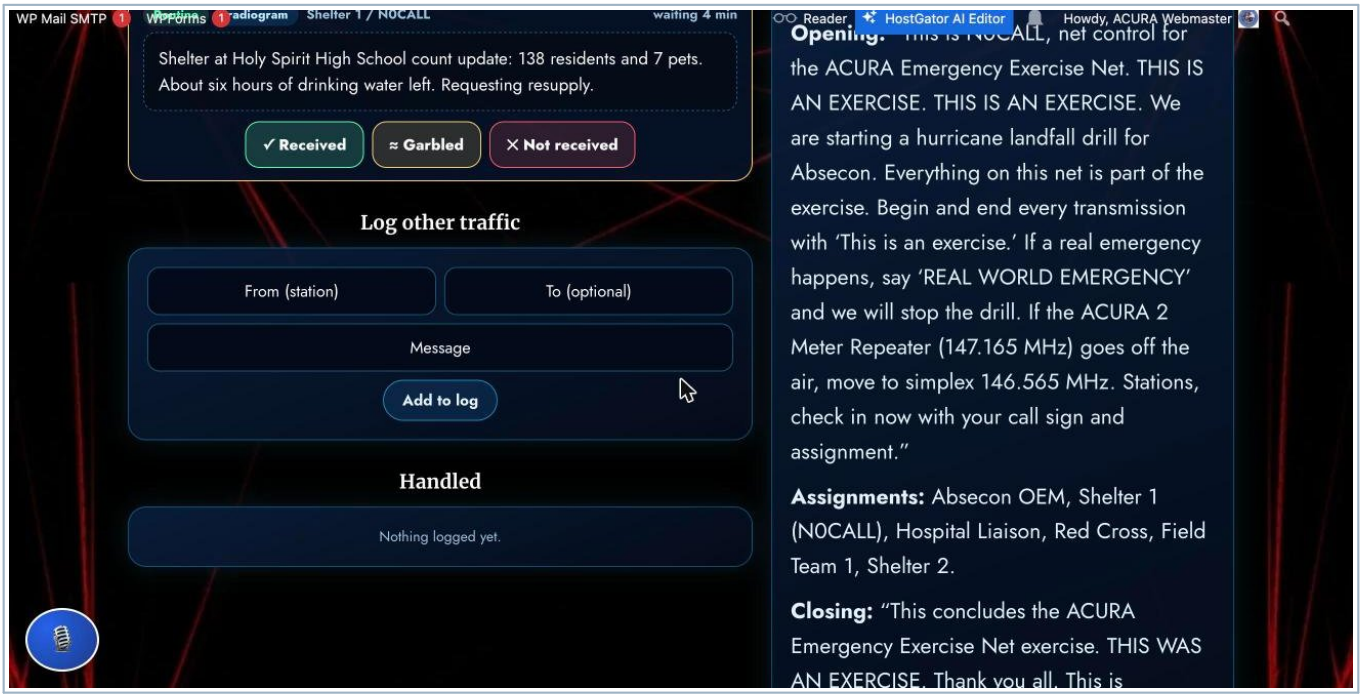
Incoming traffic on the left, with Received, Garbled and Not received buttons. The Situation feed is on the right.

Good to know

Operators can tap “I passed this to net control” on their phones. That does **not** log the message for you; it only shows you a note like “Operator marked it sent at T+12:30.” Only your Received, Garbled or Not received tap counts, just as in a real net.



The share panel: QR code, drill code and join link for operators.



The "Log other traffic" box, the Handled list and the net control script.

6. Operator Guide

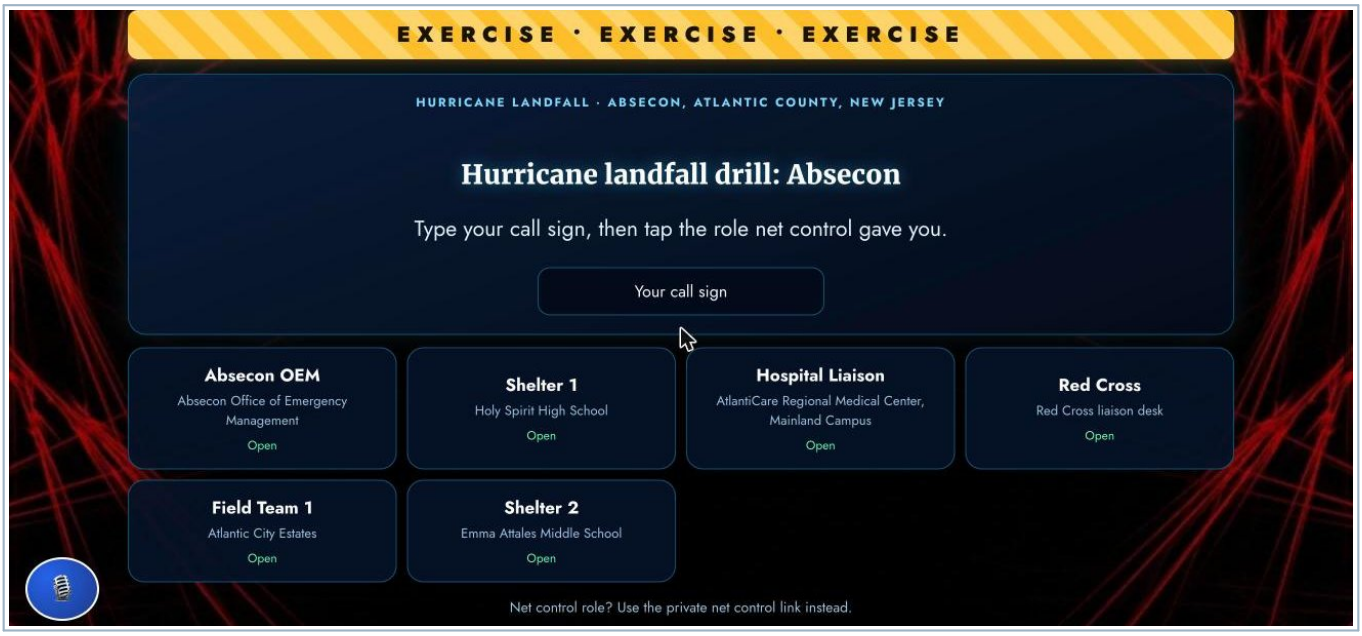
This section is for everyone taking part in the drill. All you need is your phone's web browser and your radio.

Joining the drill

1. Open the drill one of three ways: **scan the QR code** on the net control screen with your phone camera, **tap the join link** net control sent you, or go to **acurahamradio.org/drill-master/**, scroll to **Join a Drill**, type the 6-character code and tap **Join**.
2. Type your **call sign**.
3. Tap the **role** net control gave you (for example, "Shelter 1, Holy Spirit High School"). Roles already taken show the call sign of the person who has them.



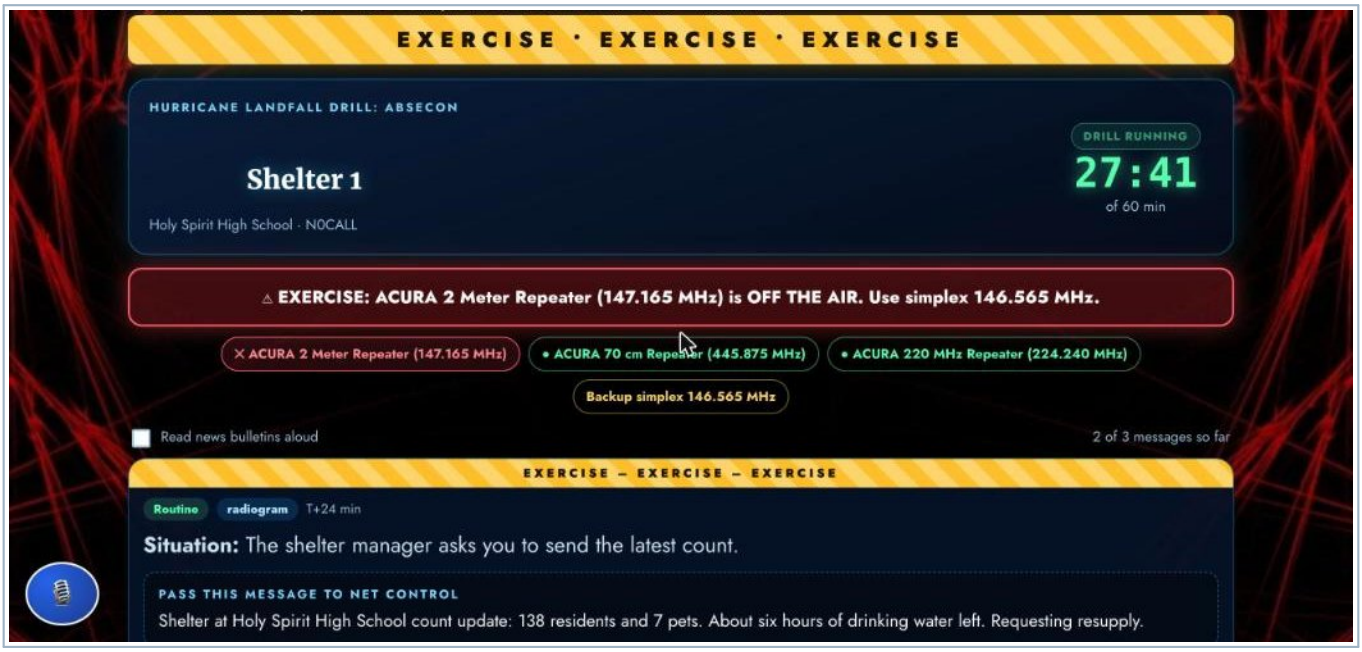
Joining with the drill code on the Drill Master page.



Type your call sign, then tap your role.

Your role screen

After you join, your phone shows your role, your location, your call sign, the drill status and the drill clock. Before net control starts the drill it says “You are checked in.” Keep this screen open.

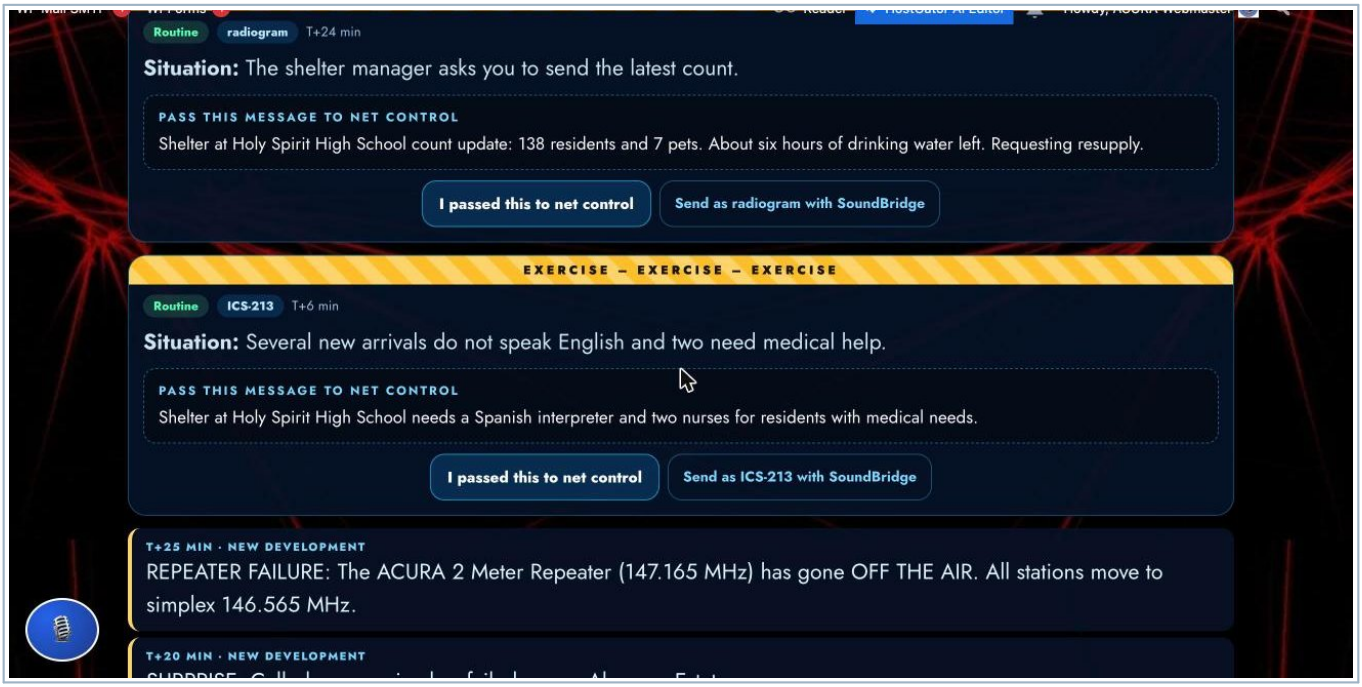


An operator’s role screen while a repeater is “off the air.”

Inject cards: your messages

When it is time for you to send a message, a new card appears at the top of your screen and your phone beeps and vibrates. Each card has:

- A yellow **EXERCISE – EXERCISE – EXERCISE** stripe.
- The **priority**: Routine (green), Priority (yellow) or Emergency (red). Emergency traffic goes first.
- The **form**: voice, ICS-213 or radiogram.
- The **time** it was released, such as T+24 min (24 minutes into the drill).
- The **Situation**: what you see or have been told. This is background; you do not read it on the air.
- The **message** to pass to net control, in a dashed box.



Two inject cards. Newer cards are on top.

Passing a message

1. Wait for a break, then call net control with your traffic and its priority. For example: *"This is an exercise. Net control, N0CALL, Shelter 1, with priority traffic."*
2. When net control says go ahead, read the message clearly. Spell names and numbers phonetically if asked.
3. Wait for net control to confirm they copied it.
4. Tap **I passed this to net control** on your card. (Tap again to undo if you made a mistake.)
5. For ICS-213 or radiogram cards, you can fill in the form and send it with the **SoundBridge** button, or read it by voice in form order.

When a repeater fails

A flashing red alert appears: "EXERCISE: (repeater) is OFF THE AIR. Use simplex (frequency)." Pretend the repeater really is gone. Switch to the backup simplex frequency, listen for net control and continue there. If you cannot hear net control, ask a relay station to pass your traffic.

Other things on your screen

- **New developments** show surprises and situation changes, newest first.
- **Exercise news** shows the latest bulletin. Tick **Read news bulletins aloud** to have your phone read them.
- **"2 of 3 messages so far"** shows how many of your messages have been released.
- **Switch role** at the bottom lets you pick a different role if net control reassigns you.

Phone tips

Plug your phone in or set Auto-Lock to “Never” (iPhone: Settings, Display and Brightness, Auto-Lock) during the drill so the screen stays on. Keep the volume up so you hear the beep. If your screen goes blank, just open the page again; your role is remembered on that phone.

7. The News Screen and Sparky

Real emergencies come with a steady stream of news. Drill Master adds breaking exercise news bulletins on a schedule (for example, an evacuation order or a road closure) to keep the pressure on.



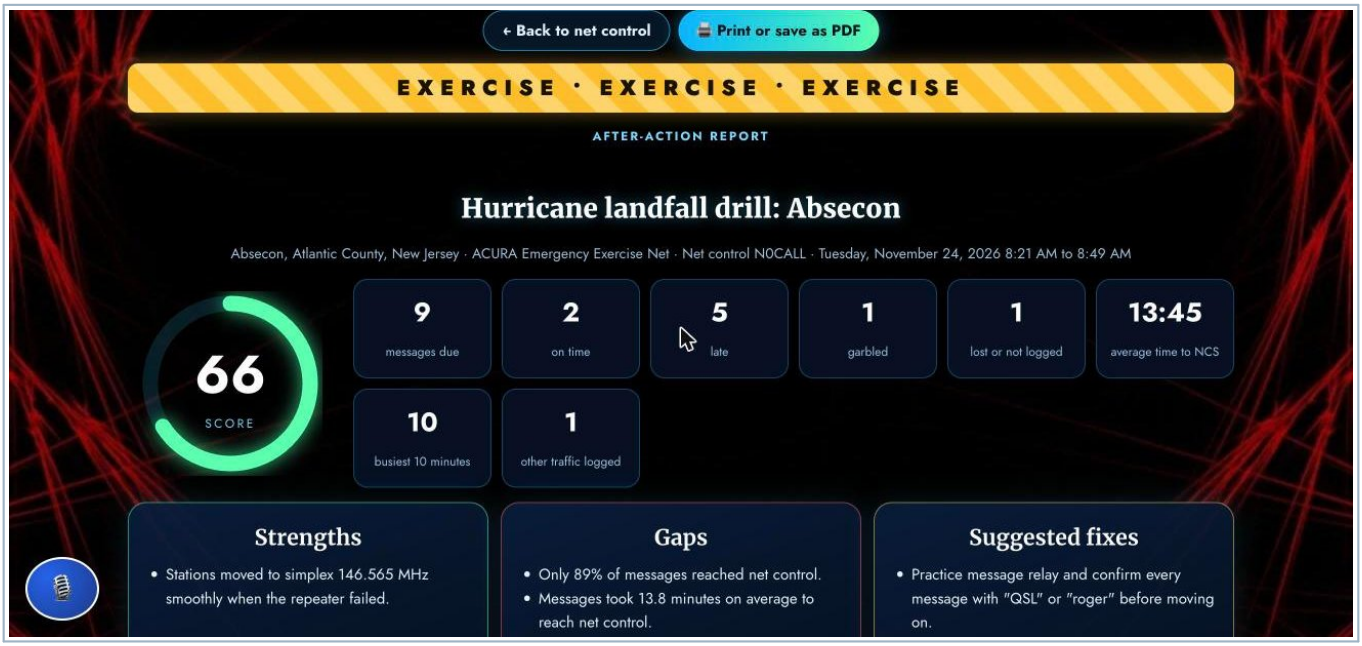
The news screen: the latest bulletin in large type, the drill clock and repeater status.

1. On the net control console, press **Open news screen**. It opens in a new tab or window.
2. Move that window to a TV or projector, or open the same link on another computer connected to a speaker.
3. Click **Tap to turn on Sparky's voice** once. (Browsers need one click before they are allowed to speak.)
4. From then on, each new bulletin appears in large type and Sparky reads it aloud: "Exercise news bulletin... End of exercise bulletin."

The news screen updates by itself about every 10 seconds. Net control can also read any bulletin with its **Read** button, or tick "Sparky reads new bulletins aloud" on the console.

8. The After-Action Report and ICS-309

Press **After-action report** on the net control console when the drill ends (or **Report so far** at any time). Use **Print or save as PDF** at the top to print it or save a copy for your records and your OEM.



The top of the after-action report: score, totals and the start of Strengths, Gaps and Suggested fixes.

How the score works

Each scripted message is judged by how long it took from the moment it appeared on the operator's phone until net control logged it:

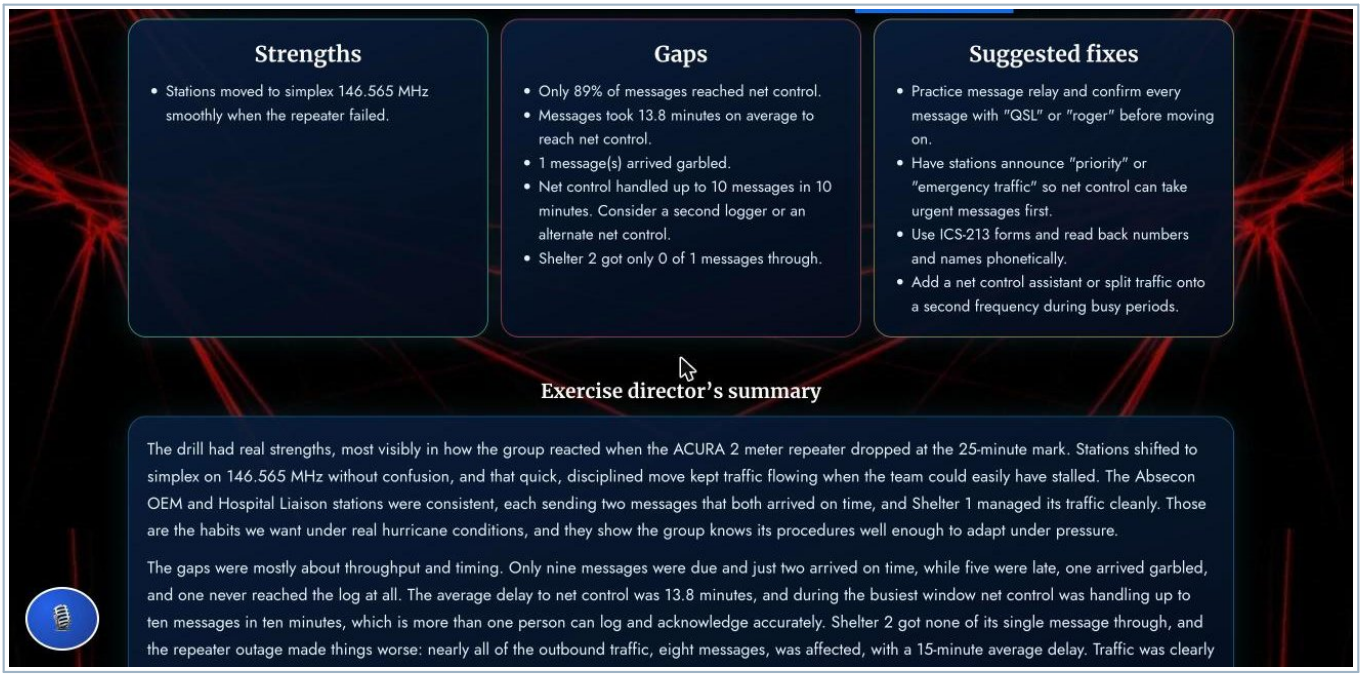
Priority	On time if logged within	Points
Emergency	3 minutes	On time: 1 point. Received but late: 0.7. Garbled: 0.4. Not received or never logged: 0.
Priority	6 minutes	Same as above.
Routine	10 minutes	Same as above.

The score is the total points divided by the number of messages that were due, shown as 0 to 100. Messages that net control never logged count as lost, so log every message, even late ones.

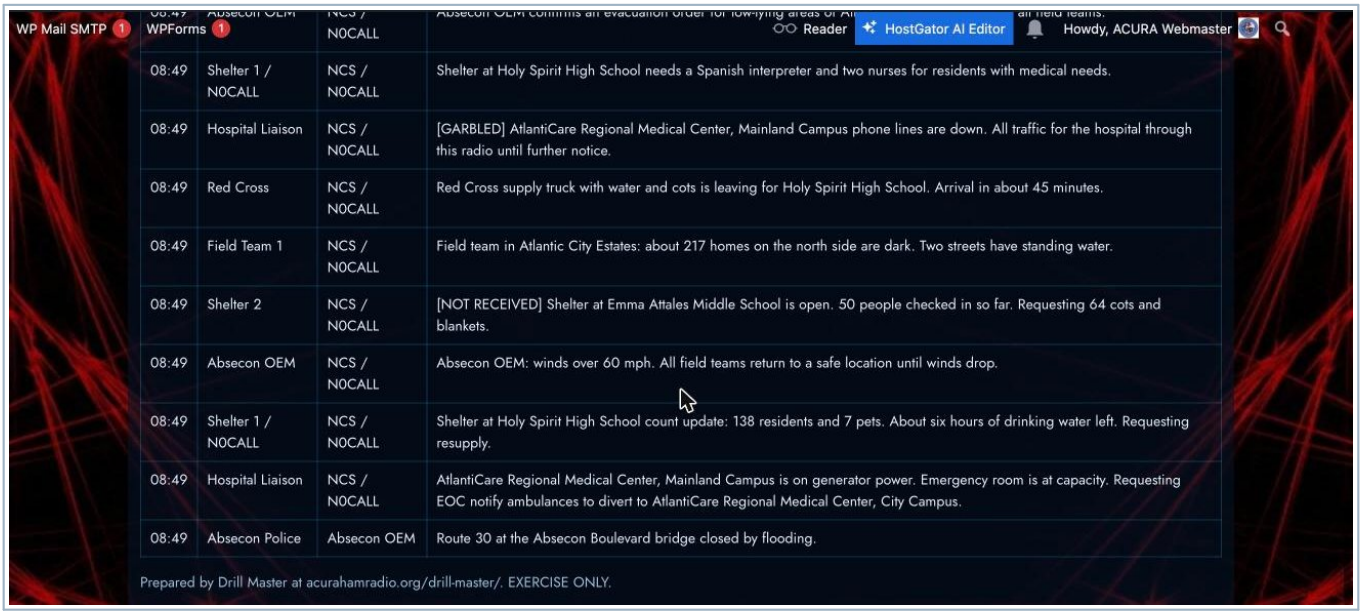
What is in the report

Section	What it tells you
Score and totals	Messages due, on time, late, garbled, lost or not logged, the average time to net control, the busiest 10 minutes, and other traffic logged.
Strengths, Gaps, Suggested fixes	Plain-language findings, such as how well stations moved to simplex, whether net control was overloaded, and which stations struggled.

Section	What it tells you
Exercise director’s summary	For AI-written drills, a three-paragraph narrative: what went well, the gaps, and the top three fixes before the next drill.
Net control load chart	How many messages net control handled in each 10-minute block. Tall bars show where a logger or second net would help.
Repeater failure	When the repeater went down, and how many messages got through during the outage compared with the rest of the drill.
Stations table	Each role and call sign, how many messages it had, how many got through and its average time.
Every scripted message	Each message, when it was due, who sent it, its priority, the result and the time to net control. Messages sent while the repeater was down are marked.
ICS-309 Communications Log	Incident name, operational period, net name, radio operator, and every logged message with time, from, to and message, ready to file.



Strengths, Gaps, Suggested fixes and the Exercise director’s summary.



The ICS-309 Communications Log at the bottom of the report.

Hold a hot wash

Right after the drill, while it is fresh, spend 10 to 15 minutes on the air or in person going over the report. Ask every station three questions:

1. What went well for you?
2. What was hard or confusing?
3. What one thing should we change before the next drill?

Write the answers down and keep them with the printed report. Then use **Reset and run again**, or build a new drill, to practice the fixes.

9. Exercise Rules and Radio Wording

The rules

- Every inject card, bulletin and report is marked **EXERCISE**.
- Begin and end every transmission with **“This is an exercise.”**
- The places are real, but every event is made up. **Do not contact real hospitals, shelters, agencies or 911** during a drill.
- If a real emergency happens, anyone says **“REAL WORLD EMERGENCY”** and net control pauses the drill right away.
- Use only the frequencies your group planned for the drill.
- Identify with your call sign at least every 10 minutes and at the end of each exchange, as FCC rules require.

Sample exchange

Shelter 1: *“This is an exercise. Net control, N0CALL, Shelter 1, with priority traffic.”*
Net control: *“This is an exercise. Shelter 1, go ahead with your priority traffic.”*
Shelter 1: *“Shelter at Holy Spirit High School count update: one three eight residents and seven pets. About six hours of drinking water left. Requesting resupply. How copy? This is an exercise.”*
Net control: *“Copied, one three eight residents, seven pets, six hours of water, requesting resupply. This is an exercise. N0CALL.”*

Standard phrases

Phrase	Meaning
“This is an exercise.”	Said at the start and end of every transmission during the drill.
“Emergency traffic”	Life or safety at risk. Net control takes it before anything else.
“Priority traffic”	Important and time-sensitive, but not life-threatening.
“Routine traffic”	Everything else.
“REAL WORLD EMERGENCY”	A real emergency is happening. Stop the drill.
“Say again” / “I say again”	Asking for, or giving, a repeat.
“QSL” / “Copied”	Message received and understood.

10. Troubleshooting and Questions

An operator's phone shows no messages.

Messages appear only at their scheduled times, and only after net control presses Start. Check that the drill status says "Drill running." Some roles have only two or three messages in a short drill. The screen refreshes every 12 seconds or so; pulling down to refresh also works.

An operator picked the wrong role.

They tap **Switch role** at the bottom of their screen and pick the right one.

The operator's screen went to sleep.

Open the page again (the same link). The role is remembered on that phone. Set Auto-Lock to Never during drills.

Net control tapped the wrong button.

Find the message in the Handled list and press **undo**. It goes back into Incoming traffic.

We need a break.

Press **Pause**. The clock and all messages stop until you press **Resume**.

We want to run the same drill again.

Press **Reset and run again** (twice to confirm). All logging is erased and the drill goes back to the start with the same script.

I lost my net control link.

On the device where you built the drill, open the Drill Master page and look under **Your drills on this device**. If you built it somewhere else, use that device, or build a new drill.

The county check says the map server is busy.

The free map service is sometimes overloaded. Wait a minute and press Check county again. Atlantic County drills always work, because their places are built in.

The AI writer is not available.

Today's AI drills for your area, or your own 3 for the day, are used up. The free built-in writer is used instead; it still uses real places.

Sparky does not talk.

Click "Tap to turn on Sparky's voice" once on the news screen, and check the computer's volume. On the console, tick "Sparky reads new bulletins aloud."

Can clubs outside ACURA use Drill Master?

Yes, for any U.S. county. Each area has a daily AI limit; the free writer is always on.

How long is a drill kept?

45 days. Print or save the after-action report as a PDF before then.

11. Quick Reference Cards

Print this page and cut along the dashed lines. Give one Operator Card to each operator and keep the Net Control Card at the net control position.

OPERATOR CARD | EmComm Drill Master | EXERCISE

1. Join: scan the QR code, tap the join link, or go to **acurahamradio.org/drill-master/** and enter code: _____
2. Type your call sign and tap your role: _____. Keep the screen on and volume up.
3. New card = beep and vibrate. Read the **Situation** for background. Pass the boxed **message** to net control.
4. Call: “This is an exercise. Net control, (call sign), (role), with (emergency / priority / routine) traffic.”
5. After net control copies it, tap **I passed this to net control**.
6. Repeater OFF THE AIR alert: move to backup simplex **146.565 MHz** (or: _____). Use a relay if needed.
7. Begin and end every transmission with “This is an exercise.” Real emergency: say “REAL WORLD EMERGENCY.”

NET CONTROL CARD | EmComm Drill Master | EXERCISE

1. Open the private net control link on the laptop. Sound on. Open the news screen on a speaker if used.
2. Read the opening script. Take check-ins. Check the Stations panel shows each call sign with a green dot.
3. Press **Start the drill**. Take Emergency traffic first, then Priority, then Routine.
4. For each message tap **Received**, **Garbled** or **Not received**. Mistake? Press **undo** in Handled.
5. Unscripted traffic: use **Log other traffic**. Watch the timers: yellow at 2 minutes, red when late.
6. Repeater failure: announce the move to simplex, continue the net there, and use relay stations.
7. Read news bulletins on the air or let Sparky read them. **Pause** any time; real emergency = pause.
8. **End the drill** (press twice), read the closing script, open the **After-action report** and print it.

Drill Sign-In and Assignment Sheet

Drill date: _____ **Drill code:** _____ **Scenario:** _____

Net control: _____ **Logger:** _____ **Backup simplex:** _____

#	Role	Call sign	Name	Location / phone	Joined
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					

Hot wash notes (what went well, what was hard, what to change):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Drill Day Checklist

- ☐ Drill built and net control link saved (and emailed to yourself)
- ☐ Join link or code sent to all operators
- ☐ Everyone has the backup simplex frequency programmed
- ☐ Relay stations identified
- ☐ Net control laptop charged, online, sound on
- ☐ News screen and speaker set up (optional)
- ☐ Quick reference cards printed and handed out
- ☐ Everyone knows “REAL WORLD EMERGENCY”
- ☐ Radio check on the repeater and on simplex
- ☐ Opening script read and check-ins taken
- ☐ Drill started
- ☐ Drill ended and closing script read
- ☐ After-action report printed or saved as PDF
- ☐ Hot wash held and notes written down
- ☐ Report shared with the club and any OEM observers

Glossary

Term	Meaning
ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Service, the ARRL’s volunteer emergency communications program.
EmComm	Emergency communications: what hams do to support served agencies in a disaster.
EOC / OEM	Emergency Operations Center / Office of Emergency Management, the government office that leads the response.
Inject	A scripted message or event released into the drill at a set time.
NCS	Net control station: the operator who runs the net and logs traffic.
ICS-213	The standard Incident Command System general message form.
ICS-309	The Incident Command System communications log.
Radiogram	The ARRL National Traffic System message format.
Simplex	Radio to radio on one frequency, without a repeater.
SoundBridge	The ACURA page that sends text messages and forms over any radio using audio tones from a phone.

Term	Meaning
T+	Minutes since the drill started. T+24 means 24 minutes into the drill.
Hot wash	A short discussion right after an exercise about what went well and what to improve.

Questions or ideas for Drill Master? Contact the ACURA webmaster through **acurahamradio.org/contact/**.