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## LESSON LEARNED

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### Emergency Operations Center Management: Providing Operations Training to Amateur Radio Operators

#### SUMMARY

Emergency operations center (EOC) managers should provide operations training to all amateur radio operators assigned to their EOCs. This can help ensure that amateur radio operators understand EOC roles and responsibilities and can perform effectively during EOC activations.

#### DESCRIPTION

The Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) sponsored and conducted the Maine Statewide Communication Functional Exercise (FE) in conjunction with 14 county emergency EOCs on October 29 and 30, 2009. Participants included state and county EOC personnel, the American Red Cross, and the Maine National Guard. MEMA conducted the FE to test its state and county EOC communications capabilities after a statewide power outage. The primary objective of the FE was to demonstrate EOC continuity of operations, including maintaining communications after losing power and Internet service. The FE scenario was based upon a major ice storm in 1998 that caused blackouts throughout the state. This exercise simulated a solar storm that affected communications and required the use of amateur radio operators in the EOC to maintain communications.

Prior to the FE, York County emergency managers did not train amateur radio operators assigned to the York County EOC on operations procedures. Amateur radio operators did not fully understand EOC procedures and protocols during the FE. For example, radio personnel turned down the volume of the statewide radio system during response operations. This caused EOC staff members to miss important radio transmissions due to the inaudible levels of the radio system. The lack of training also caused confusion and delayed transfer of information from amateur radio operators to EOC staff members. The after-action report recommends providing EOC operations training for amateur radio operators assigned to the EOC. This can help amateur radio operators effectively respond to a communications failure that could occur in the EOC during an incident.

EOC managers should provide operations training to all amateur radio operators assigned to their EOC. This can help ensure that amateur radio operators understand EOC roles and responsibilities and can perform effectively during EOC activations.

#### CITATION

Maine Emergency Management Agency. *Maine Statewide Functional Exercise (FE) After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)*. 01 Apr 2010.  
<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=43216>

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