

## BACKGROUND

Each year FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) selects a state for a National Mass Care Exercise (NMCE), in 2024 it was Pennsylvania. PMEA (Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency) developed the exercise and invited Red Cross to provide the sheltering component. There are two Red Cross regions in Pennsylvania. Southeastern PA (SEPA) comprising Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties and Greater PA (GPA) for the rest of the state. Both regions have Red Cross EmComm teams who used this exercise as an opportunity to deploy and practice emergency communications skills. Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and hams from local clubs were also invited to participate.

The exercise scenario was for an incident occurring early January 2025 with a major natural gas utility outage and unseasonably low temperatures requiring the opening of 10 or more shelters across Pennsylvania.

The Red Cross EmComm teams in Greater PA and Southeastern PA Red Cross Regions used the exercise as an opportunity to practice providing communications support to the operation. Specific tasks were for teams to deploy to the shelter locations and send Shelter Opening reports and Shelter Staff requests to exercise headquarters.

The EmComm teams also staffed Red Cross EmComm Stations in GPA DRAs.

## Principal Tasks

- 1) Activate 11 Red Cross EmComm Stations (RCES) for emergency communications
  - a. Relay messages from Shelter teams to ARC HQ
  - b. Contact other RCES stations on HF phone
  - c. Check-in with PEMA HQ station on HF phone
- 2) Deploy teams to 9 Red Cross shelters
  - a. Communicate shelter opening and capacity to PEMA via EmComm
  - b. Send Shelter Staff Requests to ARC HQ
  - c. Send ARC 6409 Supply Request to ARC GPA warehouse
- 3) Activate Red Cross HQ station at the PMEA shelter
  - a. Relay messages from RCES and shelters to HQ staff
- 4) Activate Red Cross GPA warehouse RCES Lewisburg
  - a. Receive 6409 Supply Requests from shelters

## OUTCOMES

RCES stations were staffed mostly with Red Cross Emcomm team members. There were some guests.

Shelter Teams included RCES and ARES members, radio club and unaffiliated hams. The Red Cross Emcomm teams send their thanks and appreciation to all the ARES, clubs and other hams who participated in the exercise.

A Red Cross emcomm team deployed to the Shippensburg NMCE exercise headquarters. There they set up an outdoors VHF/UHF Winlink station and used RMS KC3OLO-15 for exercise traffic. Because they were stationed outdoors, they were not part of the indoor activities. It would have been advantageous to have one or two EmComm resources stationed inside to act as runners to collect and distribute messages to/from the outside station.

## RED CROSS EMCOMM EXERCISE PLANNING TEAM

### Co-Leads:

Richard Johnson -N3EPY – GPA EmComm Lead for Central DRA  
Jay King – W2AFE - SEPA DST, ARES EPA SEC, and primary exercise designer

### Team members:

Brett Saylor -W3SWL – GPA EmComm Lead for Mid-Central DRA  
Jeff Orner – WN3DX - GPA EmComm Team member  
Leslie Moskowitz -KC3ONE – GPA EmComm Team member  
Bob Mente – NU3Q - GPA EmComm Team member and ARES Allegheny County EC  
Cliff Hotchkiss – KC3PGT - SEPA DST Regional Lead  
Dave Herzog – GPA EmComm Regional Lead

## DAVE HERZOG - RED CROSS GREATER PA EMCOMM LEAD

This is the first large Red Cross EmComm exercise the GPA Region helped plan and participate in. It also gave us the opportunity to collaborate with the Red Cross SEPA Region's EmComm Team to work together to make this exercise a success. That partnership is yielding benefits which will carry well beyond this exercise.

In addition to inviting various EmComm participants for staffing the shelters on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the planning team created an Ancillary EmComm Exercise on May 25<sup>th</sup> to provide an opportunity to the ARES members, radio clubs and non-affiliated hams, who we could not accommodate for the main exercise. The purpose was to get them involved and to see what other additional counties we could have supported EmComm for shelters should they have been needed.

I would like to thank the two co-leads for the combined Red Cross GPA and SEPA EmComm Exercise planning team; Richard Johnson, GPA EmComm Lead for Central DRA, and Jay King, SEPA Red Cross EmComm and ARES EPA SEC. A special thanks to Jay for his expertise and effort in putting together these large exercises.

## CLIFF HOTCHKISS - RED CROSS SOUTHEASTERN DST REGIONAL LEAD

Overall, we had a very smooth and successful exercise in SEPA. In hindsight I would have added an extra person or two to the operation. The shelter team in particular needed a third member.

On HF we were able to reach KB3NIA. We also heard KC3WQI, KC3WQG, and K3ITH and relayed those stations which were not able to contact on their own.

We were able to pass all forms over VHF to the AA3E-10 gateway. Thanks to MCAR for the use of that.

We had a very enthusiastic Shelter Manager, Ed Robold who wanted to send additional information over EmComm channels. Included in his requests were an ambulance request which was one of his injects as well as confirmation of that action to the Regional Shelter Manager via the EmComm team in Shippensburg.

All in all it was a good first test of our new EmComm trailer and helped identify both procedural and material needs.

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Cliff Hotchkiss – KC3PGT - SEPA EmComm Regional Lead  
Dave Herzog – GPA EmComm Regional Lead

## RED CROSS EMCOMM STATIONS & STAFF

### HQ WA3ARC (Shippensburg)

Richard Johnson, N3EPY  
Jay King, W2AFE

### Lewisburg KC3WQH

Tim Gelvin, K3TEG  
Shawnee Baker

### Allentown KC3WQK

Sean Campbell, KC3LMZ  
Leslie Moskowitz, KC3ONE

### Pittsburgh KC3WMS

Ralph Moffat, KB3UYV  
Rich Kulbacki, KC3TOO  
Dave Herzog, KC3KAG

### Erie KC3TFM

Jeremy Korwek, KC3UXL  
Dave Morneau, KB3RIP  
Roger Koebe

### SEPA W3ERS

Cliff Hotchkiss, KC3PGT  
Sam Rausch, KC3VUR  
David Ellis, KA3NUV

### Harrisburg KC3WQM

Charlene Cash, WG3Q  
Bob Saver, K3RTS (Dauphin Co ARES)

### State College KC3WQG

Brett Saylor, W3SWL  
Bill Waite, K3WJW  
John Neilands, KC3VVD (Jefferson Co ARES)

### Johnstown KC3WQI

Carl Keller, KC3KFW  
Scott Hanak KC3VUH  
Joel Landis (Somerset Co EMA Director), AB3MT  
Kevin Broadwater (Somerset Co EMA), N3HEY

### Stroudsburg KC3WQL

Ruth Ann Rochio, W9FBO  
Julia Fernald, KC3TOF  
Martin Gonzalez, KC3TOE

**EXERCISE SHELTERS & EMCOMM STAFF**

Allentown YMCA -Virtual Shelter  
John Weaver, N3PFA

Corry First Church - Corry PA  
Jeremy Korwek, KC3UXL

Greene Co Fairgrounds - Waynesburg  
Tom Wright, N3WS (WPA ARES)  
David Colledge, KB3NFQ

Dormont Community Center - Pittsburgh  
Bob Mente, NU3Q (WPA ARES)

Davidsville Community Church - Johnstown  
Jim Crowley, N3EPY  
Tony Felan, KV3VTX  
Phillip Partsch, KC3RHF

PMEA Shelter – Shippensburg University, Red Cross HQ  
Jay King, W2AFE (EPA ARES)  
Richard Johnson – N3EPY

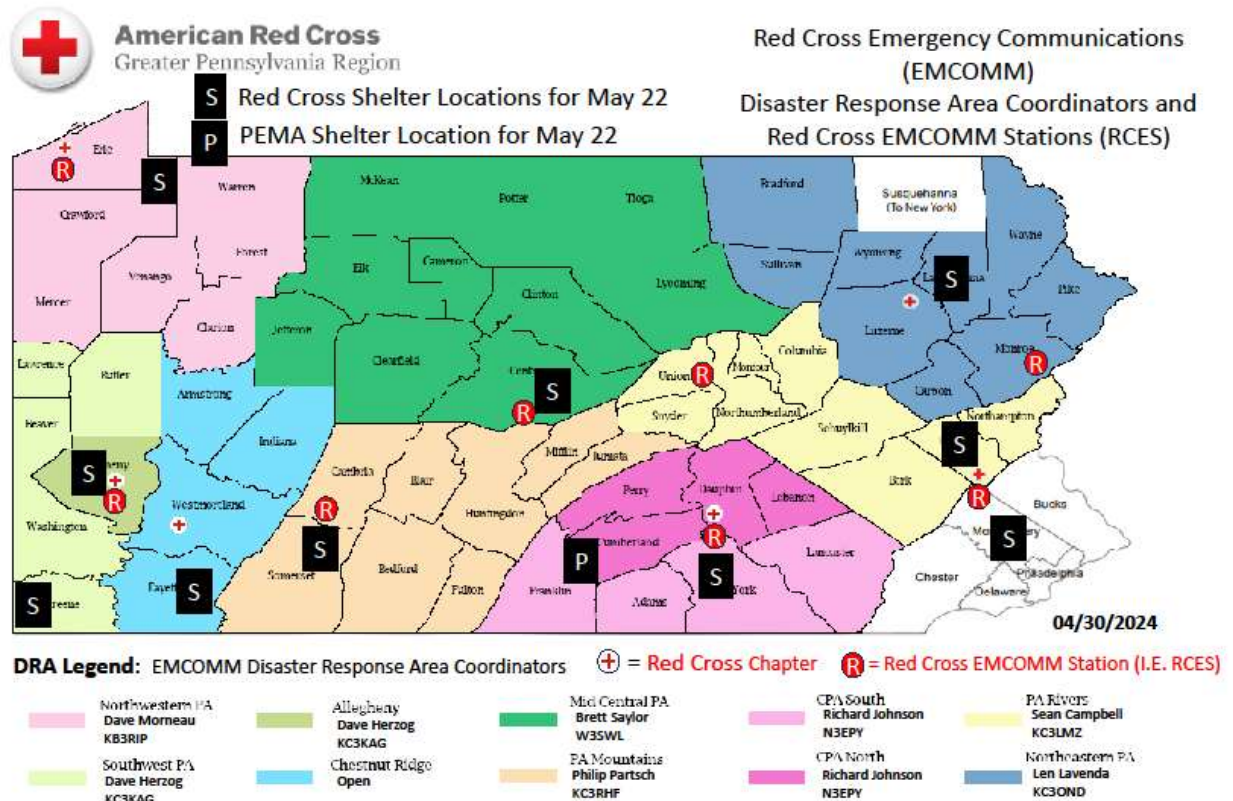
Milesburg Community Center - Milesburg  
Rick Gilmore W3TM (NARC & ARES)  
John Daniels KC3VVD

Philadelphia - Norristown  
Steve Davidson, K3FZT  
Phil Milazzo, KC6OEI

Elm Park United Methodist Church – Scranton  
Luzerne County Dept. of Emergency Services  
AUXCOMM/ARES  
Alex, K3EAM  
Chris Keller, WA2EXI  
Jack Rose, KE3NGF  
Tom Davis, NW3X  
Rob Nygren, N3RN  
Len Lavenda, KC3OND (Red Cross)

York County 4H Complex - York  
Ralph Brandt, K3HQI (EPA ARES)

**SHELTER AND RCES LOCATIONS**



RED CROSS - SHIPPENSBURG HQ



Logistics Team



Red Cross HQ Operations Room



WA3ARC Red Cross VHF Station at Shippensburg



SHELTER EMCOMM AT ELM PARK METHODIST CHURCH SCRANTON





Ann (r) W9FBO and Julia KC3TOF

## ANCILLARY EXERCISE

On 25 May, GPA and SEPA Red Cross Emcomm provided an additional opportunity for PA hams to participate in the NMCE. The hams were invited to check in via Winlink with their Red Cross region. They were asked to provide their call, name, county, affiliations (Red Cross, ARES, etc) and information on their deployment location or if operating from home.

### ARC-SEPA CHECK-INS (17 total)

(Call, Name, County, Affiliation, Location)

K3BLA, JOE, PHILADELPHIA CO, NON-AFFILIATED HAM, JEFFERSON TORRESDALE HOSPITAL, NE PHILADELPHIA, PA

K3ITH, Dick Stewart, EPA District One DEC, Montgomery County, ARES, American Red Cross, PEMA ACS, Home Base, available to depoy (if needed)

KA3NUV, David Ellis, Montgomery County, MCAR, SEPA ARC ,Virtual Red Cross shelter, Plymouth Meeting Mall, Plymouth Meeting PA

KB3JC, Tom Pleva, Montgomery County, ARES, Vacation Base, Pocono Lake, PA (Monroe County)

KB3PCY MARTIN ODOM, CHESTER CO. ARES, HOME BASE, BATTERY POWER

KC3JUD, PERRY, MONTGOMERY CO. ARC-PCARES, DEPLOYED GLADWYNE FIRE COMPANY, RT 23 & BLACK ROCK RD ECOM POWER

KC3PGT, Cliff, Montgomery Co, ARES, ARC, ACS, Home Base

KC3QVF, Chris Beggy, Philadelphia County, ARES and SEPA Red Cross, Home Base

KC3UTO, Jeffrey Rodgers, Montgomery County, ARES, Red Cross, Perkiomen School, Pennsburg, PA, Montgomery County

N3FLL, Frank, Chester Co, ARES, Home Base

N3GE, ROGER BURKHART, ARES, MVARC MASONIC VILLAGE, ELIZABETHTOWN, PA

N3PEG Peg Daly, Chester County, ARC, ARES/RACES (PCARES, CCAR), PMRC, Home Base

NC3O, Jack, Cumberland County, ARES, Home Base

W2AFE, Jay, Chester Co, ARES ARC, Home Base

W3AFV, Chuck Farrell, ARES, Red Cross, PEMA ACS, Home Station in Upper Merion Township

W3BIG, Bob Wilson, Delaware County, ARES, Base Station, Home

WA3NOA, Jim Harris, Chester County ARES/RACES, Grove United Methodist Church, West Chester, PA

### ARC-GPA CHECK-INS (54)

(Call, Name, County, Affiliation, Location)

AB3X George Irwin Cumberland County, Dickenson Twp, SMRA ACS, ARES. Home Base Emergence Power

AC2GI, Rich, Wayne County ARES

AC3JR, Dan McClure, Blair County, ARES, Home Base Station

K3CSG, Heath Goldstein, Lackawanna County, Non-affiliated ham, Home Base

K3FXA, Frank X Aponte Alsina, Dauphin County, ARES, Home Base

K3HGG, Heath Goldstein, Lackawanna County, Non-affiliated ham. Home Base

K3IR Southern PA Amatuer Radio Club, Lancaster County ARES PEMA, 1715 Breneman Road, Manheim

K3LAB, Doug Fitzsimmons, Indiana County, PEMA ACS, ARES, ICEMARC Club, Home Base

K3RTS, Bob, Dauphin County, ARES, East Shore Baptist Church, Paxtonia PA

K3URT, Curt Sanders, Dauphin County PA ARES/RACES, Home Based (solar/batt), Lower Paxton Twp.

KA3NUV, David Ellis, Montgomery Co, MCAR, SEPA ARC, Virtual Red Cross shelter, Plymouth Meeting Mall, Plymouth Meeting PA

KB3DXU, Lycoming County EOC, Lycoming County, ARES / ACS, Lycoming County EOC

KB3KLG, David Bupp, Cumberland County, Non-affiliated HAM, Home Base

KB3NFQ David Colledge Allegheny County ARES, Home Base Penn Hills



KB3NFQ, David, Allegheny County. (Non ARES), Red Cross, ( Non - Affiliated Club ) Auxcomm-T, Penn Hills "

KB3NFQ, David, Non ARES, Red Cross, Non Affiliated Club, Auxcomm-T, Penn Hills

KB3YOT, Scott Leichssenring, Lehigh County, W3OI Lehigh Valley Amatuer Radio Club, ARES, Emmaus High School  
Parking Lot

KC2LEB, Jim Kettle, Wayne County, ARES, Home Station

KC3FGB, RAY VAUGHAN, MASONIC VILLAGE ARC, LANCASTER COUNTY, CLUB STATION LOCATION

KC3JD, JACK DELLINGER, YORK COUNTY ARES, YORK TOWNSHIP EMA EOC

KC3NAF, Ed, Bedford Co, BCARS ARES, Somerset Co SCARC ACS, Blair co HARC ARES and PEMA ACS RO. QTH  
Breezewood PA, Not deployed

KC3NDU, Keith Lynn, Wayne County, ARES, Home Base

KC3OND, Len, Monroe County, ARES, Red Cross EmComm, Home base with battery power

KC3POC, Peter Marcano, Wayne County, ARES, Home Base

KC3TGO, Steve, Dauphin. ARES, Harrisburg Area Radio Club. Milton S Hershey Medical Center, Hershey, PA

KC3UWB, Deb Brown, Lycoming County ARES / ACS, Home Base

KC8T, Tom, Lycoming County, ARES, BERA, Lycoming County ACS, Home Base

KZ3MW, Mark, Pike County, Wayne County Amateur Radio Club, Home Base

N3FMO Harry Bauder, Dauphin County, Salvation Army SATERN Eastern Territory Asst. Coordinator, 4319 Snavely  
Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022

N3GE, ROGER BURKHART, ARES. MVARC MASONIC VILLAGE, ELIZABETHTOWN, PA

N3HCC, Richard Warzel, Indiana County, ACS, Home Base

N3JPV, Columbia County ARES, Columbia-Montour ARC, Home Bsse, Dist 5 DEC"

N3JXB, Doug Gontz, Monroe, ARES, Home Station"

N3QZS, Jim Woof, Lancaster County, Red Cross ARES PEMA ACS, Masonic Village in Elizabethtown PA,

N3RPB, Bob Brown, Lycoming County, ARES / ACS, Home Base

N3RPB, R Brown, ACS Team Leader, Lycoming County

N3UTN, Douglas Motter, Cumberland County, ARES, Home Base

N3YFO, Dave Hunter, Cambria County, ACSO and ARRL/EC, Non-affiliated ham, Mt. Calvary Luth. Church, 1000  
Scalp Ave. Johnstown, PA 15904

N3YFO, Dave, Cambria County PA, ARES/EC and ACSO, Not affiliated with any radio club, Working from home via  
Telnet

NC3O, Jack, Cumberland County, ARES, Home Base

ND3L, Des Warzel, Cambria County, ACS, Home Base

NJ3T, Jim Crowley, Somerset County, PEMA ACS RO, Somerset Co. RACES/ACS, Somerset Co. ARC, Home Base

NW3X, Tom, Lackawanna, ARES, Scranton Pocono Amateur Radio Club, Murgas Amateur Radio Club, Home base.

W3AND, Andrew, Cumberland County, SMRA ACS/ARES, Allen Middle School, Lower Allen Twp, PA

W3AND, Andrew, Cumberland County, SMRA ACS/ARES, Christian Life Assembly Church, Lower Allen Twp, PA

W3ETO, Ed Otto, Cumberland, ARES Level II, SMRA Club, Operating at home, Carlisle PA, under Battery Power."

W3JAW, John Walters, Centre Cty, non-affiliated ham, home base

W3PTH Paul Harig, Cumberland County, ARES, Home Base

W3PTH, Paul Harig, Cumberland County, ARES, Dogwood Acres Campground, Newville PA

W3XOX Kevin Lear, Blair County, WPA SE DEC, Horseshoe Amateur Radio Club, Blair County Convention Center

WB2HJQ, Ken Katzmann, Wayne County, ARES, Home Base

WE3H, Tracey Richard, Franklin County, SMRA-ACS/ARES, Home Base

## SCRANTON SHELTER NOTES

Len Lavenda, KC3OND

The NEPA shelter in Scranton performed all requested tasks during the NMCE today. It was staffed by ARES members from Lackawanna and Luzerne counties.

The day got off to a slow start due to a malfunctioning antenna tuner. Fortunately, a backup unit was available and operations were quickly resumed.

The only disappointment was our inability to achieve voice communications with the RCES in Stroudsburg. Although we were able to hear them clearly on the W3WAN Wide Area Network Repeater System, they could not hear us. This is a connection we need to address in the near future.

We set up early outdoors, however, we later toured the church building with Red Cross disaster personnel and identified an area where we could setup indoors in the future.

## RCES STATE COLLEGE NOTES

Brett Saylor, W3SWL

I talked with Lewisburg ARC and Harrisburg ARC on the Ellendale 145.11 repeater (via the K3HOT UHF repeater link in State College) so I was able to check in with both. I also could talk with Lewisburg ARC on the State College 146.76 repeater (same one that I used to talk with the Milesburg shelter). Both of these connections with Lewisburg ARC were new, which is good to know. The connections were nice and clear both places.

I can normally talk with Johnstown ARC on the State College 146.85 repeater but didn't today since HF was "useable" so I talked with them on 40 meters HF before talking with Travis. At the time of connection the signal was ok, but the band was up and down all morning.

I checked in with Travis at PEMA on 7250.2 kHz HF. I also heard Lewisburg, Johnstown, Stroudsburg and an Erie station all check in there on HF. The band was up and down all morning, however, so I can't say that it was a great connection. When I talked to Travis I think it was ok.

Our shelter hams successfully sent out all their messages using HF Winlink (no Telnet this time).

We successfully co-existed with another local ham radio-covered event, the Transylvania Bike Race, which had hams using the 146.85 repeater at the same time as we were on 146.76. Good to know we can run simultaneous events without overlap or interference.

I would classify the exercise as successful from our perspective.

## RCES LEWISBURG NOTES

Tim Gelvin, K3TEG

I did receive all 8 6409 forms. I noticed a very important piece of information missing from the 6409s. This should be included on all forms we use... Somewhere in the form, include the chapter name. Addresses are great but having the chapter name would be a great help for any department needing that information for their records.

2nd issue, when a chapter cannot make contact with their primary contact, then they should try another chapter to check in with. Also, before securing the station, let that chapter know so they can relay to HQ chapter.

That's all I noticed, It was very successful.

I'm going to activate the local Red Cross Emergency net on our (new partner, Milton ARC repeater 146.985 tone 110.9) 1 of many repeaters in the area Saturday May 25th.