

BLACK SWAN 20

Exercise Plan

3 October 2020 [Rev E]

The Exercise Plan (ExPlan) gives elected and appointed officials, observers, media personnel, and players from participating organizations information they need to observe or participate in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, controllers, and evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the ExPlan.

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EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	BLACK SWAN 20
Exercise Dates	29 September-6 October 2020
Scope	This exercise is a functional exercise, planned for seven days at locations throughout Ohio and supported by locations out of state. Exercise play is limited to radio communications functions.
Mission Area(s)	Mitigation, Response, and Recovery
Core Capabilities	1. Operation of radio nets to maintain communication in affected areas 2. Activation and management of volunteers 3. Coordination with served agencies and NGOs 4. Accurate origination, relay, and delivery of third-party traffic
Objectives	1. Receive activation notices from served agencies 2. Activate volunteers per SOP 3. Establish communication nets per SOP 4. Originate third-party traffic for served agencies 5. Originate third-party traffic for members of the public 6. Relay third-party traffic 7. Deliver third-party traffic to served agencies 8. Deliver third-party traffic to members of the public 9. Handle tactical communication for served agencies 10. Operate station on emergency (non-grid) power
Threat or Hazard	Man-made (technical) and natural (weather).
Scenario	Coordinated promotion of a weekend for mental and physical health dubbed BLACKSWAN20EXPLORE has a large number of Ohioans exploring local, state, and federal parks and nature reserves on 2-4 October. In the week leading up to the event, the major Internet service provider BLACKSWAN20NET suffers service degradation and failure that creates a cascading effect of network and phone service degradation and failure,

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	including in some cases 911 centers and internet-based radio repeater systems. As BLACKSWAN20NET engineers attempt to restore service and BLACKSWAN20EXPLORE gets underway, inclement weather takes a turn to the severe, physically damaging infrastructure, bringing power outages, and rendering many broadcast radio and television antenna installations inoperable.
Sponsor	Signal Section, Headquarters, 4th Civil Support & Sustainment Brigade, Ohio Military Reserve
Participating Organizations	National Traffic System, Ohio Section, American Radio Relay League Amateur Radio Emergency Service, Ohio Section, American Radio Relay League Affiliates of Radio Relay International Central Ohio Poison Center FEMA IPAWS R&D DHS SHARES 179th Airlift Wing, Ohio Air National Guard Ohio EMA
Point of Contact	C. M. Curtin, SGT (OH), OHMR NCOIC, BLACK SWAN 20 Ohio Military Reserve 4th CSSB 4094 Sullivant Ave Columbus, Ohio 43228-2127 +1 614 398 0045 Charles.Cutin@OHMR.Ohio.gov

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and aligned core capabilities are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

Not every operator, and not even every team will be given tasks to achieve every objective.

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
Receive activation notices from served agencies	Coordination with served agencies and NGOs
Activate volunteers per SOP	Activation and management of volunteers Coordination with served agencies and NGOs
Establish communication nets per SOP	Operation of radio nets to maintain communication in affected areas
Originate third-party traffic for served agencies	Accurate origination, relay, and delivery of third-party traffic
Originate third-party traffic for members of the public	Accurate origination, relay, and delivery of third-party traffic
Relay third-party traffic	Accurate origination, relay, and delivery of third-party traffic
Deliver third-party traffic to served agencies	Accurate origination, relay, and delivery of third-party traffic
Deliver third-party traffic to members of the public	Accurate origination, relay, and delivery of third-party traffic
Handle tactical communication for served agencies	Operation of radio nets to maintain communication in affected areas
Operate station on emergency (non-grid) power	Operation of radio nets to maintain communication in affected areas

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

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Players. Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.

Controllers. Controllers plan and manage exercise play, set up and operate the exercise site, and act in the roles of organizations or individuals that are not playing in the exercise. Controllers direct the pace of the exercise, provide key data to players, and may prompt or initiate certain player actions to ensure exercise continuity. In addition, they issue exercise material to players as required, monitor the exercise timeline, and supervise the safety of all exercise participants.

Simulators. Simulators are control staff personnel who role play nonparticipating organizations or individuals. They most often operate out of the Simulation Cell (SimCell), but they may occasionally have face-to-face contact with players. Simulators function semi-independently under the supervision of SimCell controllers, enacting roles (e.g., media reporters or next of kin) in accordance with instructions provided in the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL). All simulators are ultimately accountable to the Exercise Director and Senior Controller.

Evaluators. Evaluators evaluate and provide feedback on a designated functional area of the exercise. Evaluators observe and document performance against established capability targets and critical tasks, in accordance with the Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEGs).

Actors. Actors simulate specific roles during exercise play, typically victims or other bystanders.

Observers. Observers visit or view selected segments of the exercise. Observers do not play in the exercise, nor do they perform any control or evaluation functions. Observers view the exercise from a designated observation area and must remain within the observation area during the exercise. Very Important Persons (VIPs) are also observers, but they frequently are grouped separately.

Media Personnel. Some media personnel may be present as observers, pending approval by the sponsor organization and the Exercise Planning Team. Any participating amateur radio organization using this exercise for their annual Simulated Emergency Test (SET) should have alerted media to their operation and may be visited (likely virtually in 2020) during exercise play.

Support Staff. The exercise support staff includes individuals who perform administrative and logistical support tasks during the exercise (e.g., registration, catering).

Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to complete play in the time allotted and/or account for logistical limitations. Exercise participants should accept that assumptions and artificialities are inherent in any exercise, and should not allow these considerations to negatively impact their participation.

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Assumptions

Assumptions constitute the implied factual foundation for the exercise and, as such, are assumed to be present before the exercise starts. The following assumptions apply to the exercise:

- The exercise is conducted in a no-fault learning environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated.
- The exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented.
- Exercise simulation contains sufficient detail to allow players to react to information and situations as they are presented as if the simulated incident were real.
- Participating agencies may need to balance exercise play with real-world emergencies. Real-world emergencies take priority.
- Most incident sites and participating locations will be virtual, where players and simulators will work together via Internet videoconference rather than face-to-face to avoid COVID-19 spread.
- Build-up will take place 29 September-2 October. Government players will undertake messaging tasks including the receipt and relay of messages, and retransmission to amateur message traffic circuits in regular operation.
- Players, simulators, and controllers will need to use Google Meet during the weekend play 3-4 October. This will require authenticating to Google and using a Web browser or mobile device app. A Google (or Gmail) account may be specifically created for this purpose.
- Amateur radio activations will come from agencies or NGOs requesting communication support. Those activations will come in the form of a phone call or email message from a Simulator on Friday.

Artificialities

During this exercise, the following artificialities apply:

Exercise communication and coordination is limited to participating exercise organizations, venues, and the SimCell.

No transmission of information from virtual site to virtual site may take place through any means but radio. Where a virtual site is made up of people in different locations, people “at the [virtual] site” may use phone, internet, email, etc., to exchange information just as if they could physically exchange paper or electronic media.

Take care to assign duties for message relay that consider real-world limitations on the station capability: don’t make someone with an HT and technician license responsible for relay to an HF Section Net.

VHF and UHF repeater systems may remain in play for this year’s exercise. For the purpose of exercise play, these are field expedient installations running on emergency power.

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EXERCISE LOGISTICS

Safety

Exercise participant safety takes priority over exercise events. The following general requirements apply to the exercise:

Each physical site will have a Safety Officer. Players at single-player sites are responsible for their own safety. Players are to follow local safety directives and good procedure, in accordance with COVID-19 spread control procedures, antenna, power, and inclement weather safety.

Any communication regarding any safety concern is to be transmitted using the most appropriate real-world means, and is to include the phrase “REAL WORLD.”

Site Access

Virtual Locations

All “sites” are Google Meets. Note that the Meet identifiers are all-alpha, and may be relayed by voice. Anyone joining a Meet may do so by going to landing page <https://meet.google.com/> and entering the Meet ID. Authentication might be required, so *try this ahead of time!*

Each location where players are deployed is virtual, a Google Meet. A Simulator will play the role of a served agency staff member activating the registered team of players, typically through contact of the ARES Emergency Coordinator.

The Simulator will establish a Google Meet for the operating period, allowing players to join as needed, removing any unauthorized person from the Meet if needed, etc.

When a Simulator is relieved, the relieving Actor must start a new Meet to keep it under control, allowing access to new participants, etc. Exercise play will need to shift to that new Meet. Participants should all join the new Meet before the old Meet is closed. This is simulating the act of moving an incident command post or radio station location similar to what happens in disaster scenes.

Meet is the Primary means of controlling a site. Should that fail, the Simulator will move to Alternate means.

Mutual Aid

One of the components of this exercise is the organization of local volunteers and neighboring counties to provide support to the locations affected by complex events. Registered teams might not be tasked by their local agencies, in which case their force strength and capabilities are

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“available” for deployment to support neighboring counties or districts. Players will not physically move locations but will be given Meet addresses that simulate their presence at the other location.

POST-EXERCISE AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Debriefings

Post-exercise debriefings aim to collect sufficient relevant data to support effective evaluation and improvement planning.

Hot Wash

At the conclusion of exercise play, controllers facilitate a Hot Wash to allow players to discuss strengths and areas for improvement, and evaluators to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes. All participants may attend; however, observers are not encouraged to attend the meeting. The Hot Wash should not exceed 30 minutes.

Controller and Evaluator Debriefing

Controllers and evaluators attend a facilitated C/E Debriefing immediately following the exercise. During this debriefing, controllers and evaluators provide an overview of their observed functional areas and discuss strengths and areas for improvement.

Participant Feedback Forms

Participant Feedback Forms provide players with the opportunity to comment candidly on exercise activities and exercise design. Participant Feedback Forms should be collected at the conclusion of the Hot Wash.

Evaluation

Exercise Evaluation Guides

EEGs assist evaluators in collecting relevant exercise observations. EEGs document exercise objectives and aligned core capabilities, capability targets, and critical tasks. Each EEG provides evaluators with information on what they should expect to see demonstrated in their functional area. The EEGs, coupled with Participant Feedback Forms and Hot Wash notes, are used to evaluate the exercise and compile the After-Action Report (AAR).

After-Action Report

The AAR summarizes key information related to evaluation. The AAR primarily focuses on the analysis of core capabilities, including capability performance, strengths, and areas for improvement. AARs also include basic exercise information, including the exercise name, type

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of exercise, dates, location, participating organizations, mission area(s), specific threat or hazard, a brief scenario description, and the name of the exercise sponsor and POC.

Improvement Planning

Improvement planning is the process by which the observations recorded in the AAR are resolved through development of concrete corrective actions, which are prioritized and tracked as a part of a continuous corrective action program.

After-Action Meeting

The After-Action Meeting (AAM) is a meeting held among decision- and policy-makers from the exercising organizations, as well as the Lead Evaluator and members of the Exercise Planning Team, to debrief the exercise and to review and refine the draft AAR and Improvement Plan (IP). The AAM should be an interactive session, providing attendees the opportunity to discuss and validate the observations and corrective actions in the draft AAR/IP.

Improvement Plan

The IP identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties, and establishes target dates for their completion. It is created by elected and appointed officials from the organizations participating in the exercise, and discussed and validated during the AAM.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Exercise Rules

The following general rules govern exercise play:

Real-world emergency actions take priority over exercise actions.

Exercise players will comply with real-world emergency procedures, unless otherwise directed by the control staff.

All communications (including written, radio, telephone, and e-mail) during the exercise will begin and end with the statement “This is an exercise” or similar. Radio messages will have the leading group TEST for their precedence. All agency traffic will be precedence TEST P (voiced, “test priority.”)

Be patient, be kind, and be calm. Things will go wrong. Messages will begin to back up in some places. Resources will probably be misallocated, especially in the beginning. There will be misunderstandings. People will feel stressed. These things all happen in emergencies. Do not rush. Stay focused on the problem at hand, resolve it, and then move on to the next. Never hesitate to ask for help if you need it. Do not overreact if help is unavailable or will be some time in coming. Always follow your training.

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This exercise does not specify message format. Use any appropriate format for the job at hand. Radiogram is fine. ICS-213 is fine. Remember that in origination, the radio operator is a layer between the message format and the person who needs to communicate. In delivery, the radio operator is a layer between the message format and the person who needs to receive communication. This is real-world, not an amateur radio invention.

Players Instructions

Players should follow certain guidelines before, during, and after the exercise to ensure a safe and effective exercise.

Before the Exercise

Review appropriate organizational plans, procedures, and exercise support documents.

Confer with your Emergency Coordinator at the county, or if you're an EC, with your DEC, or if a DEC, with the SEC. Be sure you have means of contacting one another to coordinate as the scenario becomes clear during the "build-up" period.

Be sure that you have conveyed your (or your team's) operating hours, capabilities, and expectations.

Activation will take place by email from the exercise director to the EC of the county whose agency is requesting the activation. That will take place on Friday afternoon, October 2. ECs will need to contact their DEC, who will contact the SEC, to organize response efforts.

During the Exercise

Respond to exercise events and information as if the emergency were real, unless otherwise directed by an exercise controller.

Controllers will give you only information they are specifically directed to disseminate. You are expected to obtain other necessary information through existing emergency information channels.

Do not engage in personal conversations with controllers, evaluators, observers, or media personnel. If you are asked an exercise-related question, give a short, concise answer. If you are busy and cannot immediately respond, indicate that, but report back with an answer as soon as possible.

Local ECs may provide additional objectives for exercise play to start nets, move messages, or otherwise engage in play that comports with the activation. Please be sure that such local play does not interfere with the objectives from the coordinated assignments.

If you do not understand the scope of the exercise, or if you are uncertain about an organization's participation in an exercise, ask a controller.

Parts of the scenario may seem implausible. Recognize that the exercise has objectives to satisfy and may require incorporation of unrealistic aspects. Every effort has been made by the

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exercise's trusted agents to balance realism with safety and to create an effective learning and evaluation environment.

All exercise communications will begin and end with the statement "this is an exercise." This precaution is taken so that anyone who overhears the conversation will not mistake exercise play for a real-world emergency.

Speak when you take action around others. This procedure will ensure that evaluators are aware of critical actions as they occur, as well as other players staying in sync. It's not important that everyone hears every voiced action but it can help with the situational awareness.

Maintain a log of your activities. Many times, this log may include documentation of activities that were missed by a controller or evaluator.

Maintain copies of all messages originated, relayed, and delivered. Ensure that your records identify when messages were originated, relayed, and delivered.

Send copies of all messages originated, relayed, and delivered (original electronic is fine, scans of paper records are fine) to Exercise Director Charles.Curtin@OHMR.Ohio.gov.

After the Exercise

Participate in the Hot Wash at your venue with controllers and evaluators.

Complete the Participant Feedback Form to be sent by email shortly after play. This form allows you to comment candidly on emergency response activities and exercise effectiveness. The email will have a link to an online form.

Provide any notes or materials generated from the exercise to the Exercise Director for review and inclusion in the AAR.

Simulation Guidelines

Because the exercise is of limited duration and scope, certain details will be simulated. The physical description of what would fully occur at the incident sites and surrounding areas will be relayed to players by simulators or controllers. A SimCell will simulate the roles and interactions of nonparticipating organizations or individuals; players will engage with Simulators through their respective site's Google Meet.

Strike Teams will be made up of players from several counties, and may also span districts. During exercise play of SET, Internet and phone service are not usable. If players are in play sitting together, they can use phone, internet, email, etc., to exchange information between them, just as if one could hand a piece of paper or flash drive to the other. The use of phone, internet, email, etc., to talk across Strike Teams is prohibited for exercise play.

Similarly, care will need to be given to staffing of Strike Teams: don't assign message relay duty to a station that is real-world unable to go to HF or to a district net. Such a station is better tasked in origination and delivery in the Meet, with a better-located station performing relay duty.

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APPENDIX A: EXERCISE SCHEDULE

All times are listed here as local Ohio time (Eastern Daylight Time, UTC-0400).

Time	Personnel	Activity	Location
29 Sep 2020			
1900	Exercise Director	Release of Bulletin advising ExPlan Presentation.	HF: Amateur: Buckeye Net
2000		STARTEX Start of authorization for 60m Ch 4	
2000	FEMA	Release BLACK SWAN IPAWS TEST1	HF: SHARES
30 Sep 2020			
	Government / Amateur Radio	Interoperability nets. Exchange county reports, METAR or other weather data.	HF: 5 MHz Interop (Ch 4), 5373 kHz
1000	Exercise Director, Controllers, Simulators, Evaluators, Players, and Observers.	Player Briefing (ExPlan Presentation)	YouTube (video)
Upon Contact	NCS036	Relay: BLACK SWAN IPAWS TEST 1	HF: 5 MHz Interop (Ch 4), 5373 kHz or to HF: Amateur: Buckeye Net
1700	FEMA	Release of BLACK SWAN IPAWS TEST2	HF: SHARES
1 Oct 2020			
	Government / Amateur Radio	Interoperability nets. Exchange county reports, METAR or other weather data.	HF: 5 MHz Interop (Ch 4), 5373 kHz
1400	FEMA	Release of BLACK SWAN IPAWS TEST3	HF: SHARES
2 Oct 2020			
	Government / Amateur Radio	Interoperability nets. Exchange county reports, METAR or other weather data.	HF: 5 MHz Interop (Ch 4), 5373 kHz
1100	FEMA	Release of BLACK SWAN IPAWS TEST4	HF: SHARES
	Emergency Management Simulators	Activation requests will be issued to Emergency Coordinators whose served agencies are requesting service. ECs are to convey instructions to DECAs, who are to	

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		advise the SEC, and SEC/DEC/ECs start Strike Team support.	
3 Oct 2020			
	Government / Amateur Radio	Interoperability nets. Exchange county reports, METAR or other weather data.	HF: 5 MHz Interop (Ch 4), 5373 kHz
0800	FEMA	Release of BLACK SWAN IPAWS TEST4	HF: SHARES
0800	ALL OHIO PARTICIPANTS	BLACK SWAN 20 ARRL OHIO SECTION SIMULATED EMERGENCY TEST BRIEFING	Videoconference: https://meet.google.com/ugo-exiv-onj Join by phone (US) +1 315-925-6349 PIN: 507 662 283#
0900	ARRL Ohio	Start of coordinated SET play Day 1.	
0800	Amateur Radio	ARES groups start operations: Franklin Co (D7) Licking Co (D7) Coshocton Co (D9) Guernsey Co (D9) Medina Co (D10) Wayne Co (D6) Wyandot Co (D1) Montgomery Co (D3) Greene Co (D3) Warren Co (D4) Hamilton Co (D4) State agency stations start: Ohio EMA (W8SGT) Ohio Military Reserve (W8OMR)	
1000	Amateur Radio	ARES groups start operations: Delaware Co (D7) Fairfield Co (D7) Jefferson Co (D9) Noble Co (D9) Mahoning Co (D5) Cuyahoga Co (D10) Lake Co (D10) Lorain Co (D10) Seneca Co (D1) Clinton Co (D4) AUXCOM team starts operation: Marietta Memorial Hospital (D9) NTS nets start operations: Northwest Ohio ARES Traffic Net (until traffic cleared) Ohio Single Sideband Net (at 1030 until traffic cleared)	

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1200	Amateur Radio	ARES groups start operations: Belmont Co (D9) ARES groups stop operations: Marietta Memorial Hospital (D9) Wayne Co (D6) Montgomery Co (D3)	
1400	Amateur Radio	ARES groups stop operations: Fairfield Co (D7) Belmont Co (D9) Mahoning Co (D5) Lake Co (D10) Clinton Co (D4) NTS nets start: Northwest Ohio ARES Traffic	
1600	Amateur Radio	ARES groups stop operations: Coshocton Co (D9) Lorain Co (D10) Wyandot Co (D1) Hamilton Co (D4) Greene Co (D3)	
1759	ARRL Ohio	End of coordinated SET play Day 1.	
4 Oct 2020			
	Government / Amateur Radio	Interoperability nets. Exchange county reports, METAR or other weather data.	HF: 5 MHz Interop (Ch 4), 5373 kHz
0900	ALL OHIO PARTICIPANTS	BLACK SWAN 20 ARRL OHIO SECTION SIMULATED EMERGENCY TEST BRIEFING	Videoconference: https://meet.google.com/ugo-exiv-onj Join by phone (US) +1 315-925-6349 PIN: 507 662 283#
1000	ARRL Ohio	Start of coordinated SET play Day 2. <i>The following schedule is based on registrations before the start of Saturday play. Teams looking to revise their hours of operation may have a representative register with updated information to be included in exercise play.</i> <i>Day 2 activation and assignment will be handled directly by the exercise controllers rather than through mutual aid requests and response.</i>	
1000	Amateur Radio	ARES groups start operations: Delaware Co (D7)	

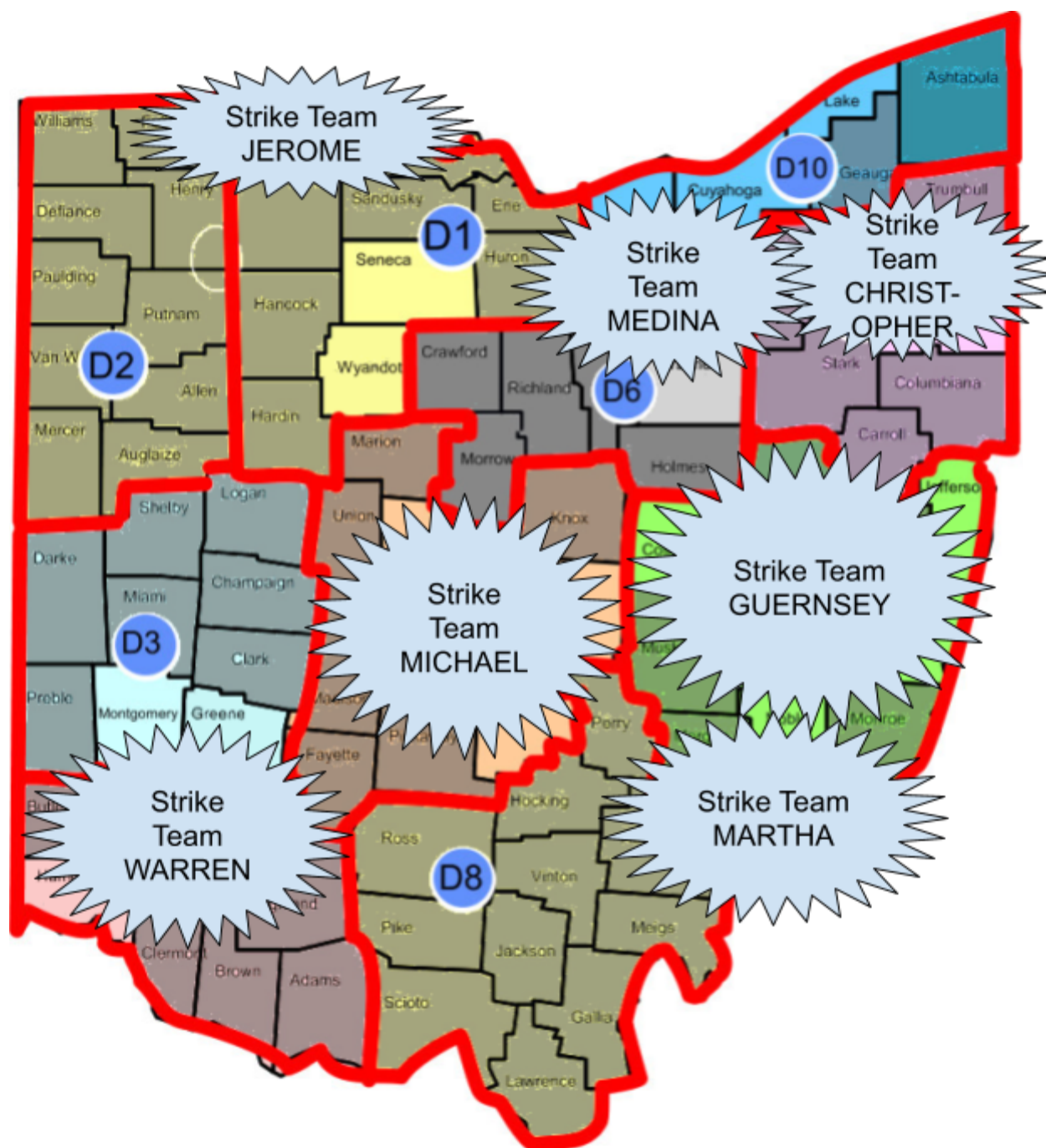
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		Franklin Co (D7) Cuyahoga Co (D10) Lorain Co (D10) Medina Co (D10) Seneca Co (D1) Hamilton Co (D4) AUXCOM teams start: Marietta Memorial Hospital (D9) NTS nets start Northwest Ohio ARES Traffic Net Agency stations start: Ohio EOC (State) Ohio Military Reserve (State)	
1200	Amateur Radio	AUXCOM teams stop: Marietta Memorial Hospital (D9)	
1400	Amateur Radio	ARES groups stop operations: Cuyahoga Co (D10) Lorain Co (D10)	
1559	ARRL Ohio	End of coordinated SET play Day 2.	
5 Oct 2020			
	Government / Amateur Radio	Interoperability nets. Exchange county reports, METAR or other weather data.	HF: 5 MHz Interop (Ch 4), 5373 kHz
6 Oct 2020			
	Government / Amateur Radio	Interoperability nets. Exchange county reports, METAR or other weather data.	HF: 5 MHz Interop (Ch 4), 5373 kHz
1959	All	ENDEX End of authorization for 60m Ch 4	All

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APPENDIX B: EXERCISE SITE MAPS

Figure D.1: Sites With “Intense Activity” Participation 3-4 Oct



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APPENDIX C: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
ARRL	American Radio Relay League
DEC	District Emergency Coordinator
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EC	Emergency Coordination
ExPlan	Exercise Plan
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
NM	Net Manager
OHANG	Ohio Air National Guard
OHARNG	Ohio Army National Guard
OHMR	Ohio Military Reserve
RRI	Radio Relay International
SEC	Section Emergency Coordination
SM	Section Manager
SME	Subject Matter Expert
STM	Section Traffic Manager

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