



AREC info

Monthly newsletter of
Amateur Radio Emergency
Communications

APRIL 2020

Unite against COVID-19

New Zealand Government

Many of you would have read AREC's guidance for members during the COVID-19 response period shared by our National Director, Don Robertson ZL2TYR.

A quick re-cap:

AREC is an essential service and members may respond when called to assist by Police, Search & Rescue, Civil Defence and other agencies.

Our member's health and safety is paramount; older and health-compromised members should not deploy

Ensure the Government guidelines are followed, excellent guidance is available on <https://covid19.govt.nz>

Consider alternative ways of working such as operating radios from home, and collaborating with other members and agencies via online collaboration tools.

Be kind, we are all in this together and being patient and kind will help us all pull through this.

The full communication is on the arec.info website. Please check regularly for any updates.

Have your details changed?

We still have a number of newsletters that bounce-back every month – please send any updates to arec.newsletter@gmail.com

If you are an AREC member, and have received this newsletter from a friend, please confirm your details to the above e-mail address.

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

A warm welcome to all AREC members, and I hope that you are making the most of lock-down.

COVID-19 dominates the headlines at the moment, and will do for some time to come. However, what has impressed me is how the amateur radio community has, like most of the country, has pulled together to support one another during this time.

Daily "Welfare Nets" have become popular around the country, with many callsigns checking in – "if only our numbers could be like that all the time" commented one participant.

Radio clubs are embracing online video tools for their committee and general meetings – let's hope these innovations continue long beyond the current situation to keep members involved and engaged.

It has been great to see such a focus on our fellow Amateur's wellbeing – long may that continue as well.

We have long talked about how we can bring new people into the hobby, our response to the COVID-19 situation brings new perspectives that can only be positive in the longer term.

Within AREC, there is plenty going on. For those who are interested in taking on leadership roles, see elsewhere in this newsletter for a Wellington Group Manager vacancy. We are also seeking expressions of interest for the a Deputy National Director as David Wilkins ZL1MR is looking to step-down and concentrate on other activities within AREC.

Until next time, stay safe and 73's.



Don Robertson ZL2TYR, AREC National Director

North Shore AREC combined communications exercise with Auckland region community resilience groups.

Report by Andy Brill ZL1COP

North Shore AREC and a number of Community Resilience Groups (CRGs) around Auckland held a joint communications exercise on 24 February.

The exercise was designed to give CRG members and AREC base operators experience in message handling and relaying of messages on multiple channels.

CRG stations from Warkworth, Mahurangi East, Mahurangi West, Laingholm and Howick operated on three ESB band repeaters and two AREC field stations operating on 2 metre simplex channels. A number of special purpose VHF and UHF channels were also used.

Messages were passed from the field stations to net control operators at 400 East Coast Road, and from there they were relayed to their destination stations on other channels.

The exercise was designed to give the CRG members, many of whom had little experience in using radio, the chance to experience the problems of passing messages accurately and quickly. It also allowed the AREC members at the HQ station the chance to experience the problems involved in handling traffic in a high-volume multi-channel operation.



Andy Brill, North Shore Branch 29 AREC Group Leader and organiser of the combined communications exercise.

Pre-written and addressed messages were supplied to all field stations to be passed via the net. To test for accuracy the messages were chosen to be cryptic and use unfamiliar terminology, with a high level of abbreviations and numbers. We used aeronautical notices to airmen (NOTAMS) from the FAA NOTAM website as a source of message content, resulting in messages with a mixture of numerals, acronyms, abbreviations and plain text such as

SIDS RWY 04 BERGI 1F AND VOLLA 1F CHANGED DUE TO CRANE

and

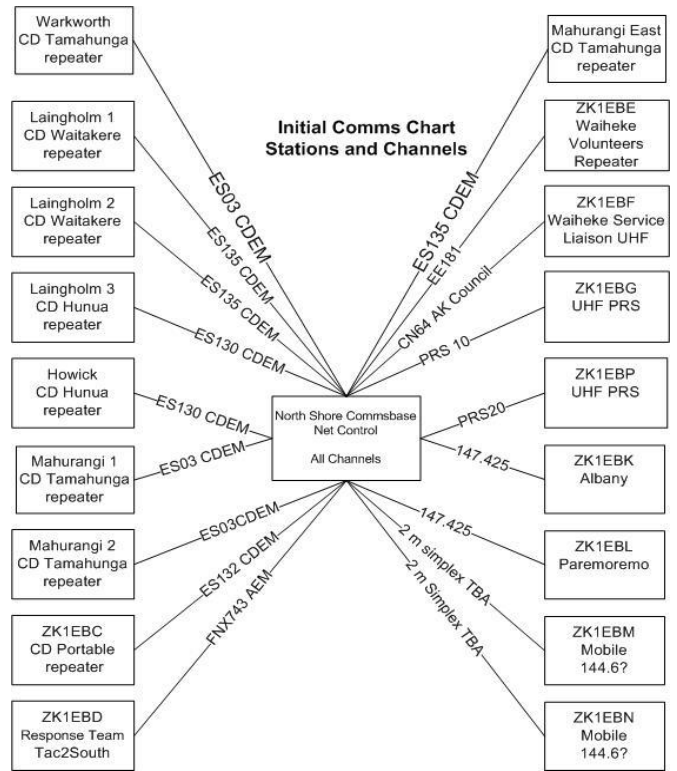
IFR TRAINING FLIGHTS (ILS, RNAV, VOR APPROACHES, ETC.) ARE SUBJECT TO PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE TOWER SUPERVISOR

As expected, the major learnings for the CRG members was the difference between conversational face to face or telephone communication, and the techniques required when using radio. Feedback from the participants was unanimous that more practice is essential!

At the HQ station the problems of high noise levels in a restricted operating space, even when operators were using headphones was highlighted. Other seemingly small issues (such as illegible handwriting) revealed themselves as potential problems. The differences between amateur radio operation and the channel discipline needed for emergency communication was also highlighted.

Considering that the vast majority of the people involved in the exercise were fairly inexperienced and were operating in a new environment the results were encouraging. A whole range of areas for improvement were identified. These included technical (need for improved speaker muting on radios, foot operated PTT, additional antenna access points throughout the building), environmental (excessive heat in the operating room due to lack of air conditioning), procedural (need for improved channel control and assertiveness by base operators), and training and more practical exercises for everyone.

A debrief of all participants indicates that everyone enjoyed the experience, and there is considerable enthusiasm from the CRG members for more training and practice in all aspects of radio communications.



Left – Terry ZL1BTS taking part with his “go-kit” that includes a Yaseu FT-7900, SLA battery, home-brew 400 ohm ladder line “slim jim” antenna, and VHF and UHF hand-helds.

This year we hope to be able to provide additional training support to both AREC members and CRGs and run more exercises at a local level to address the needs identified in this regional exercise.

Participants:

- North Shore Comms base, - Vaughan ZL1VH, Dennis ZL1TAY, Julian ZL1ABX, Kieran ZL1GER, Leith ZL1LAC, Graham ZL1GMB
- Mahurangi West CRG members plus Cluny ZL1MAC, Rob ZL1EMR
- Mahurangi East CRG members
- Warkworth CRG members
- Laingholm CRG members plus Darryl ZL1TCI, Kevin ZL1KG
- Howick CRG David Gordon

AREC field stations Terrence ZL1BTS (in the wilds of Paremoremo) and Chris ZL1CLM at Albany.

Many thanks to all the participants for your enthusiastic support!

Police National SAR Course – Postponed

Steve Davis ZL2UCX reports that Police have postponed their National SAR Course, scheduled for early May, due to COVID-19 concerns.

Steve would like to thank those who expressed an interest in representing AREC, further information will be made available once known.

Amateur Radio Emergency Communications

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Further information about AREC, including regional contacts, can be found online at arec.info

Situations Vacant

AREC District Manager, Wellington

This role has recently become vacant. This is one of 10x District Manager roles across New Zealand. It covers the geographical area bounded by the NZ Police Wellington district and includes all Branches and AREC Group/Sections within.

See this link: <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/structure/police-districts/wellington>.

General Duties:

- Liaison with the Police Co-Ordinator and/or Rescue Coordination Centre (RCCNZ) to support search and rescue operations (SAROPS) within their district.
- Represent AREC at district Search and Rescue meetings.
- In Category 2 searches under the control of RCCNZ, the AREC District Manager will liaise with the Communications Co-ordinator and AREC groups involved in the search to provide communications facilities as required.
- Assist Group/Section Leaders in their Civil Defence and search and rescue activities as requested.
- Build and maintain the required level of operational readiness for each Group/Section within their District as specified in the NZSAR Service Level Agreement.
- Liaise with partners to meet Service Level Agreement obligations.
- Report on AREC activities and operations, and meetings with other agencies and SAR organisations within their District
- Ensure that all LandSAR Operations attended by AREC members has required data provided to NZ Police IC on the conclusion of the SAROP.

All expressions of interest in this role should be sent to the AREC Nation Director, Don Robertson, ZL2TYR/ZK6EX by email AREC-MGT@gmail.com. Please include a short BIO/CV with your background and AREC and SAR experience.

Expressions of Interest

AREC Deputy National Director, Northern Region

David Wilkins ZL1MR is looking to step-down from the AREC Deputy National Director position he currently holds, to enable him to focus his attention on other AREC interests.

We are looking for someone who may be interested to fill Dave's shoes and take on this role.

There are two AREC Deputy National Directors, and together with the National Director – make up AREC's Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The ELT is responsible for establishing and implementing AREC's strategic direction; national integration and collaboration of technology and skills-based training needs; and overall attention to AREC's ongoing effectiveness as an essential component of New Zealand's search and rescue environment.

Each National / Deputy National Director has responsibility for a particular region, David currently looks after the Northern Region which covers the Northland, Auckland (combined), Waikato and Bay of Plenty Police districts.

All expressions of interest in this role should be sent to the AREC Nation Director, Don Robertson, ZL2TYR/ZK6EX by email AREC-MGT@gmail.com. Please include a short BIO/CV with your background and AREC and SAR experience.

Health and Safety is the responsibility of us all

Remember to:

STOP – In your mind you need to be constantly pausing and evaluating no matter the task or the location.

THINK – You need to think about what you see. Identify Hazards and associated Risk (the chance of it going wrong)

PLAN – Talk to others, compare notes, make a plan

COMMUNICATE – Brief the plan and plan to brief others as they arrive.

ACT – Execute the plan, monitor and review progress.

As required – STOP again and then re-Think, re-Plan, Communicate & re-Act.