Illinois ARRL ARES Winlink Exercise

Date: Friday, October 30, 2026

Time: 1:00 – 3:00 PM CDT

Sponsoring Agencies: IEMA and IL Section ARRL ARES

Mission:

1. Demonstrate Amateur Radio operator's ability to generate and send field reports from across the state to NC9IL via Winlink, utilizing Amateur Radio Infrastructure. Participants are encouraged to utilize Amateur Radio equipment and frequencies to demonstrate the ability to send Winlink formatted messages independent of the internet.
2. Demonstrate that when internet access is available, radio generated Winlink messages can be forwarded to conventional email addresses, enhancing the reach of message handling possibilities when only local or regional internet outages have occurred. This capability will be demonstrated by sending the information contained in the report to your county's EMA Director. After the event we encourage you to review the email with your Director, explaining the significance of the exercise and the capabilities of the technology.

Methods:

1. ARES amateur operators should generate a message utilizing Winlink resources that depend solely on radio transmission. Any Winlink Session mode other than Telnet is acceptable. The message should be sent to NC9IL utilizing the Field Situation Report (FSR) found at: Select Templates/Standard Forms/Field Situation Report.
    a. To begin, you can customize the label on the top of the form to your ARES group clicking on the Setup Button.
    b. Put your call in the FROM Box.
    c. In the TO box (Please note the TO box does not have a TO Label next to it; it is the box immediately below the FROM box): Type in NC9IL as well as the email address of your county's EMA Director. Separate the entries with a comma. If you want a copy sent to you (to be sure it went through) add your call sign or email address, or both.
    d. Complete the data fields in 2 and 3.
    e. As an exercise, leave fields 4a through 11b checked as unknown.
    f. In field 12, we encourage you to describe the location/call of the RMS station you in intend to utilize, including Session Mode and Frequency.
    g. In field 13 POC, we suggest you put your name, call, title and regular email address
2. Submit your form, post to outbox and complete the send of your WinLink Message. (Note, Winlink will create a separate Session message for each address in the TO box on the FSR. For example, if you put in NC9IL and your EMA Director's email address, 2 messages will post to the outbox). The NC9IL Control Operator will forward the received FSRs to the appropriate IEMA staff for this exercise.
3. If you wish to share with other operators in your county/club, please do as exercise is the path to perfection!

Written by Gary Knepp, WB9IFL Woodford County, IL ARES EC

The author requests any improvement to these instructions (so they may continue to be used as training material on how to complete and send a Winlink FSR) be sent to him at WB9IFL@winlink.org.