

Michigan AUXCOMM Spring Exercise 2022

After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

5 May 2022 Draft

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Michigan AUXCOMM Statewide Spring Exercise 2022
Exercise Dates	April 29th, 30th and May 1st
Scope	This exercise was a Functional Exercise, for 3 days in the State of Michigan including the Michigan Section Amateur Radio Operators, Lake Superior AUXCOMM Group, and the Michigan Defense Force. Exercise play was limited to licensed Amateur Radio Operators of all classes.
Focus Area(s)	Response, and/or Recovery
Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Winlink using telnet or RF using an RMS Gateway. Peer To Peer (Within Community and District) • Use Winlink forms • Send Image by telnet only limit size as specified (not required for State-Wide Exercise, but can be used in exercise simulations at the district or county level) • Send the requested form to the SEOC as directed by the AUXCOMM Coordinator (AUXL) Incident Commander KE8DON during exercise briefing with District Emergency Coordinators (DEC)
Objectives	<p>Objective 1: Introduce new Operators to Winlink Objective 2: Introduce operators to Winlink forms Objective 3: Validate which counties can operate with Winlink, in support of emergency management. Objective 4: Send requested information accurately and concisely</p> <p>AUXCOMM Work Group: Strategic Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EM Engagement • AUXC Training • Operating Practices • Member Group Identity
Threat or Hazard	Statewide power brownouts
Scenario	There were sporadic statewide communications and power because of bandwidth and regulatory limitations, the State Emergency and County Emergency Operations Centers (On request) needs situation reports. The State AUXCOMM Coordinator requested support from the Michigan Section District Emergency Coordinators, who will in turn request support from the County(s) Emergency Coordinators or their representatives.
Sponsor	State of Michigan and County Emergency Operations Centers

Exercise Name	Michigan AUXCOMM Statewide Spring Exercise 2022
Participating Organizations	State of Michigan ARRL Section Leader, State of Michigan, Michigan Defense Force, Emergency Communicators, SATERN, American Red Cross, REACT, SKYWARN, Lake Superior Auxcomm Group, and CMEN, and other participants within AUXCOMM
Point of Contact	<p>Max Schneider KE8DON, Auxiliary Communications Work Group Co-Chair Michigan AUXCOMM Coordinator Michigan Section Emergency Coordinator FEMA Region V RECCWG AUXCOMM, Chair ke8don@arrl.net 989-859-4288</p> <p>Jaclyn Barcroft, Auxiliary Communications Work Group Co-Chair Emergency Communications Specialist Michigan State Police Emergency Management & Homeland Security Division BarcroftJ@michigan.gov 517-230-2279</p>

ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and capabilities provide a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned capabilities, and performance ratings for each capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Introducing new operators to Winlink.	The operator installs, registers and configures a Winlink installation on their personal computer and operates the Winlink software using Telnet or other Mode to send an email message		S		
Introduce operators to Winlink forms	Demonstrates basic familiarity with ICS Form 213 General Message Form by selecting it from the template list. Demonstrate the ability to correctly fill out an ICS Form 213 General Message with the requested information and send it to the the correct station based on the role they play in the exercise.		S		

Objective	Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Demonstrates basic familiarity with ICS Form 213 General Message Form by selecting it from the template list. Demonstrate the ability to correctly fill out an ICS Form 213 General Message with the requested information and send it to the the correct station based on the role they play in the exercise.	<p>County Emergency Coordination notifies the county Emergency Manager that there is a State Wide Winlink Exercise, and requests to use or coordinate the use of existing participating AUXCOMM organization with qualified and credentialed radio operator(s) in their facility.</p> <p>If there is not a county emergency manager the Emergency Coordinator should contact a COML or COMU point of contact in the county.</p> <p>The County Emergency Coordinator will personally approve all AUXCOMM operators for placement into an Emergency Operations Center prior to recommendation to their Emergency Manager</p>		S		

Objective	Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Validate which counties can operate with Winlink in support of emergency management.	<p>1. Radio operators need to have a place to send their reports.</p> <p>2. County Emergency Coordinators need to report capability to the State Emergency Coordinator please use this link to complete the survey on Winlink capability in your county https://bit.ly/michiganwinlink</p> <p>3. Emergency Coordinators should provide Radio operators with their contact information.</p> <p>4. In addition were feasible the District Emergency Coordinator should poll their ARES / AUXCOMM members to determine who has Winlink capability</p> <p>5. Emergency Coordinators should survey their counties Amateur Radio Operators for Winlink capability.</p> <p>6. Emergency Coordinators should be assembling or have assembled their team</p>	P			

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

Ratings Definitions:

Performed without Challenges (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

Performed with Some Challenges (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.

Performed with Major Challenges (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

Unable to be Performed (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Objective 1 and overall Capability:

Introducing new operators to Winlink. **Capability:** The operator installs, registers, and configures a Winlink installation on their personal computer and operates the Winlink software using Telnet or other Mode to send an email message.

Introduce New Operators to Winlink

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: 168 Participated

Strength 2: 38 Counties Participated

Strength 3: Some counties used the exercise to do additional training

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1:

Although participation increased over time. Some District and County Emergency Coordinators stated it was not easy to get the amateur radio operators engaged in the exercise. It had been described as general apathy, hostility, and low morale.

Apathy is lacking the motivation to do anything or just don't care about what's going on around them which could be caused by a number of reasons both internally and externally. Below are a few ways leaders can help manage apathy in themselves and the ones they lead.

- A. Leadership can encourage, often overworked EMCOMM and AUXCOMM operators to get out and spend time with friends and family, even if you don't feel like going because of lack of time, fatigue, or feel like the effort is useless.
- B. Encourage doing the things you used to enjoy, like going to concerts or watching movies with loved ones. Restarting an old hobby or starting a new one, especially ones related to amateur radio.
- C. Take a class and expand your knowledge because you want to not because you are required to. Completing a class can help with curbing apathy.
- D. Break big tasks into smaller ones so that you and the ones you lead feel a sense of accomplishment. Try to partner volunteers up so they can cover for each other as needed.
- E. Reward yourself and others whenever you finish an activity. the smallest of positive acknowledgment can have a significant impact on a volunteer.

Hostility is based on our perception of someone else's actions. Below are a few ways leaders can temper their own reaction to someone else's behavior.

- A. Get to know your volunteers you may learn more about them.
- B. Identify your volunteer's strengths. Take some time to see where their strengths lie and encourage or assign them to use those strengths.
- C. Problem solve. Try to find out the root cause of their hostility. It may have nothing to do with their volunteer work, they may be going through a tough personal situation with limited resources. You may be able to help your co-worker find the resources they need.
- D. Change your perspective. Everyone sees the world differently and reacts differently to situations as they come up.

Low Morale, Merriam Webster's definition of the word morale sums up whether an organization is productive or deficient. As defined Low Morale would be a deficit of the mental and emotional condition such as enthusiasm, confidence, or loyalty of an individual or group with regard to the function or tasks at hand. Lack of a sense of common purpose with respect to a group's esprit de corps. A low level of individual psychological well-being is based on such factors as a sense of purpose and confidence in the future.

To help prevent low volunteer morale, it's important for leaders to proactively build morale focusing on the points below could help create increased positive morale and increased productivity.

A. Poor leadership skills. leaders are often promoted because they are great contributors, but they are not always trained to lead. Leaders need to focus on their volunteer's performance and not their own. Train your leaders how to motivate, inspire, and lead.

B. Disconnection. volunteers who have been forced to work remotely or apart from their normal volunteer environment may feel disconnected. Leaders should take measures to build camaraderie and trust. Arrange for team building activities in virtual or face-to-face meetings to build/rebuild camaraderie among team members. never just think of volunteers as tools to get the job done. Encourage friendships and participation in activities outside of their volunteer positions

C. Unimportance. volunteers may not understand how they fit into the Vision and Mission of the organization. Make sure volunteers understand how their individual position goals are in alignment with the Vision and Mission of the organization. so they can see how their part is critical to the organization's success. It is also a good practice to recognize volunteers for their contributions when possible.

Reference:

Bizjournals.com. (n.d.). Retrieved June 26, 2022, from <https://www.bizjournals.com/nashville/news/2019/03/29/5-dale-carnegie-principles-for-cushioning.html>

Hebebrand, K. (n.d.). *Difficult people at work: How you can maintain working relationships*. WebMD. Retrieved June 26, 2022, from <https://www.webmd.com/balance/features/how-to-work-with-difficult-person>

VerBurg, S. (2021, May 6). *5 common causes of low morale and keys to preventing them*. Dale Carnegie of Orange County. Retrieved June 26, 2022, from <https://ocdalecarnegie.com/5-common-causes-of-low-morale-and-keys-to-preventing-them/>

Watson, S. (n.d.). *Apathy: Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment*. WebMD. Retrieved June 26, 2022, from <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-is-apathy>

Area for Improvement 2:

- A. Have at least three Winlink operators in each county that have an AUXCOMM program by the end of 2022.
- B. Every County will have a County Emergency Coordinator in place. District Emergency Coordinators make contact with all counties that do not have Emergency Coordinator to confirm their interest in having it and someone who would want the position. By the end of 2022
- C. For each Emergency Coordinator to work with their radio operators to install and learn how to use Winlink. Ongoing
- D. Developing a best practices document for using Winlink. To be published by September 2022
- E. Encourage operators to participate in the various Winlink exercises once a month

Area for Improvement 3:

Work towards having at least one RMS Gateway in 80% of the counties by end of 2023.

Objective 2 and overall Capability

Introduce operators to Winlink forms. **Capability:** Demonstrates basic familiarity with ICS Form 213 General Message Form by selecting it from the template list. Demonstrate the ability to correctly fill out an ICS Form 213 General Message with the requested information and send it to the correct station based on the role they play in the exercise.

Demonstrates basic familiarity with ICS Form 213 General Message Form Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Most stations sent a ICS-213 to the SEOC

Strength 2: Emergency Coordinators report that there was a high level of interest in knowing how to use forms.

Strength 3: Operators and Emergency Coordinators are interested in having additional exercises to challenge operators and improve skills.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Provide Clear instructions on the parameters of the exercise and how to send the requested information on a form for the next exercise.

Area for Improvement 2: Outline the process of the exercise play using a leader's summary in the exercise plan when distributed.

Area for Improvement 3: Training on using different forms such as resource request forms, check-in forms, etc. Consider participating in the FEMA Region 5 AUXCOMM Winlink Net. American Red Cross Winlink Net

Objective 3 and overall Capability

Emergency Management Engagement **Capability:** County Emergency Coordinator notifies the county, Emergency Manager, that there is a State-Wide Winlink Exercise, and requests to use or coordinate the use of existing participating AUXCOMM organization with qualified and credentialed radio operator(s) in their facility.

Emergency Management Engagement

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Contacted Emergency managers were receptive to supporting county Emergency Coordinators in the exercise.

Strength 2: Emergency Managers who did not have Winlink capability were interested in getting it in the EOC.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: County Emergency Coordinators or the District Emergency Coordinators should inform emergency managers of AUXCOMM exercise date(s), the scope of the exercise, and requested support. To include why it is important to them. Emergency Coordinators should have a regular dialog with their Emergency Managers. Explain the purpose of the exercise(s) in layman's terms to try to pique their interest. Ongoing

Area for Improvement 2: Emergency Coordinators to raise awareness to Emergency Managers about why Winlink is a valuable tool for them and provide live demonstrations.

Reference: For calendar of events. *Michigan Section ARES*. Michigan Section ARES/RACES.
<http://ares-mi.org/index.php>

Objective 4 and overall Capability

Validate which counties can operate with Winlink in support of emergency management.

Capability:

1. Radio operators need to have a place to send their reports.
2. County Emergency Coordinators need to report capability to the State Emergency Coordinator please use this link to complete the survey on Winlink capability in your county <https://bit.ly/michiganwinlink>
3. Emergency Coordinators should provide Radio operators with their contact information.
4. In addition when feasible the District Emergency Coordinator should poll their ARES / AUXCOMM members to determine who has Winlink capability
5. Emergency Coordinators should survey their county's Amateur Radio Operators for Winlink capability.
6. Emergency Coordinators should be assembling or have an assembled their team

County Emergency Coordinators need to report Winlink capability to the Section Emergency Coordinator

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Initially 20 Counties completed the online survey form at the conclusion of the exercise 35 counties participated

Strength 2: The post-exercise survey indicated many operators were able to connect to an RMS gateway using more than 1 method. Figure: Figure 5.B

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Very low response to the initial survey. Give a longer response window for future surveys with a reminder given prior to the deadline. Ongoing

Appendix A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Introducing new operators to Winlink.	A general apathy, hostility, and low morale.	Identify the causes, and how to prevent and how to reverse the effects of these psychosocial issues that may affect the Michigan Section.					
Introducing new operators to Winlink.	Low Participation	Have at least three Winlink operators in each county that has a AUXCOMM program by the end of 2022.					
Introducing new operators to Winlink.	Introducing new operators to Winlink.	Every County will have a County Emergency Coordinator in place. DEC's make contact with all counties that do not have EC to confirm their interest in having it and someone who would want the position. By the end of 2022					
Introducing new operators to Winlink.	Introducing new operators to Winlink.	For each Emergency Coordinator to work with their radio operators to install					

Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
		and learn how to use Winlink. Ongoing					
Introducing new operators to Winlink.	Best practices support document for County Emergency Coordinators in training	Developing a best practices document for using Winlink. To be published by September 2022					
Introducing new operators to Winlink.	Ongoing skills development	Encourage operators to participate in the various Winlink exercises once a month					
Introducing new operators to Winlink.	Not all counties have a VHF/UHF, RMS HF gateway in range for every county	Work towards having at least one RMS Gateway in 80% of the counties by end of 2023					
Introduce operators to Winlink forms.		Provide Clear instructions on the parameters of the exercise and how to send the requested information on a form for the next exercise.					
Introduce operators to Winlink forms.	Leadership desires summarized information to	Outline the process of the exercise play using a leader's summary in					

Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
	move quickly when activated	the exercise plan when distributed.					
Introduce operators to Winlink forms.	Ongoing skills development	Train on using different forms such as resource request forms, check-in forms, etc. Consider participating in the FEMA Region 5 AUXCOMM Winlink Net Or the American Cross Winlink Net.					
Emergency Management Engagement	Coordinators should have a regular dialog with their Emergency Managers. Explain the purpose of the exercise(s) in layman's terms to try to pique their interest. Ongoing	Emergency Coordinators should inform emergency managers of AUXCOMM exercise date(s), the scope of the exercise, and requested support. To include why it is important to them. Emergency					
Validate which counties can operate with Winlink in support of emergency management.	Very low response to the initial online survey.	Give a longer response window for future surveys with a reminder given prior to the deadline. Ongoing					

Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date

This IP is developed specifically for Michigan AUXCOMM Workgroup as a result of Michigan AUXCOMM Spring Exercise 2022 conducted on April 29th – May 1 2022

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE MAPS AND CHARTS

Figure B.1: Counties Reporting as Winlink Ready March 2022

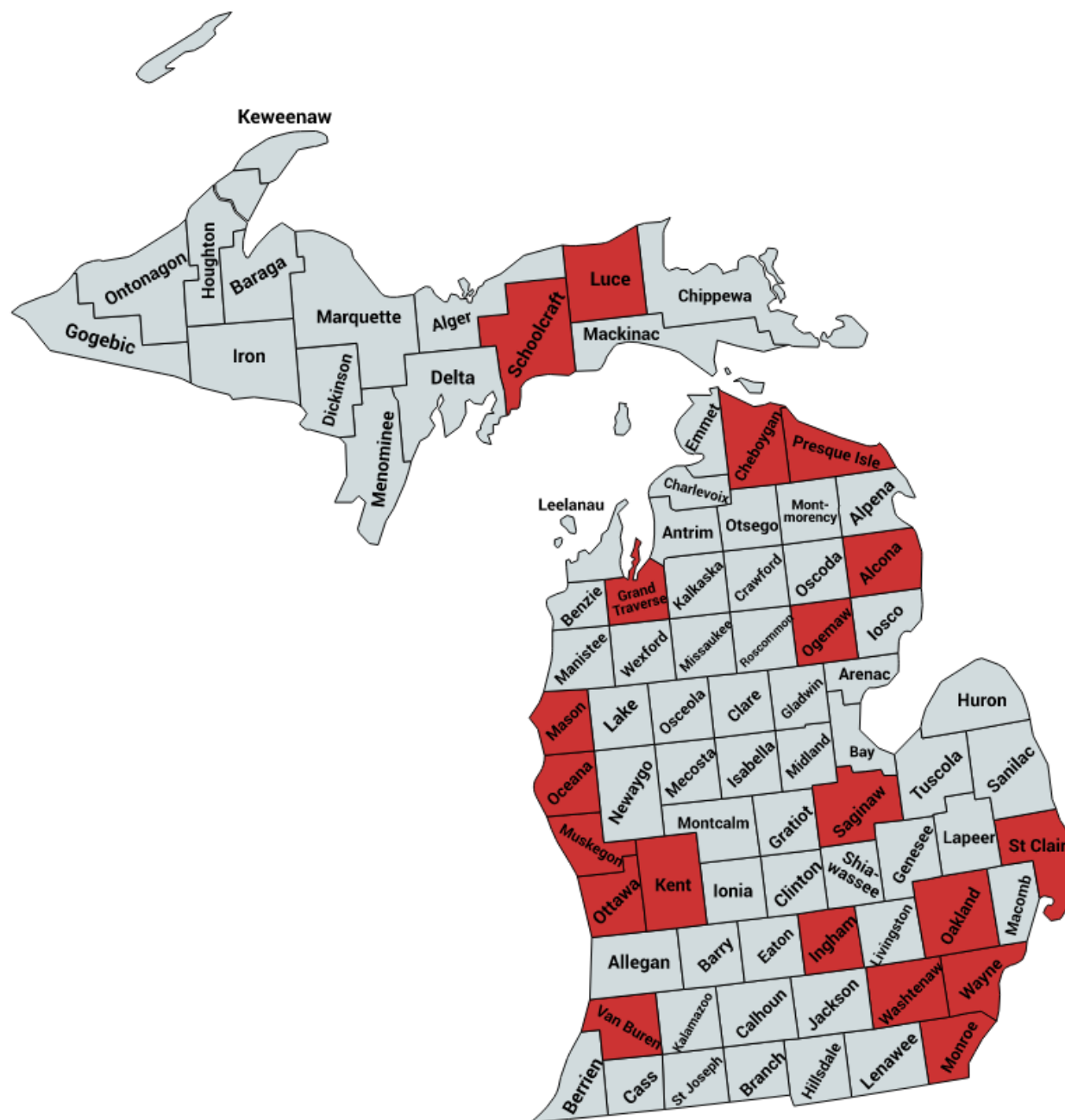
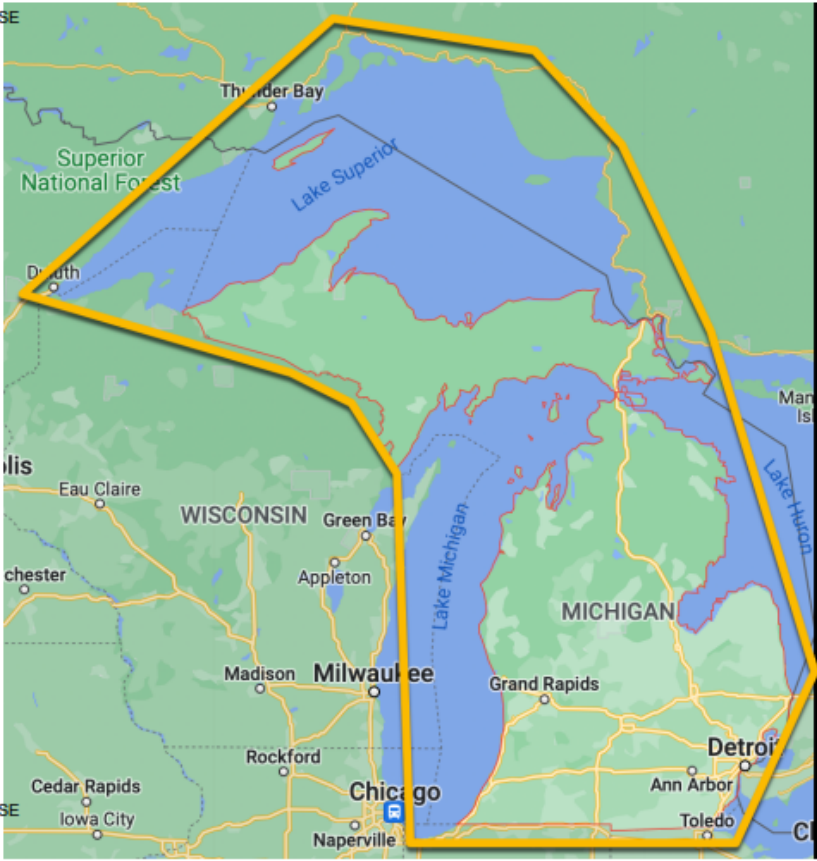


Figure B.2: Exercise Incident Briefing ICS-201 Page 1 and Page 2

INCIDENT BRIEFING (ICS 201)		
1. Incident Name: Spring 2022 AUXCOMM Ex	2. Incident Number: This is an Exercise	3. Date/Time Initiated: Date: 4/29/2022 Time: 18:00EDT
4. Map/Sketch (include sketch, showing the total area of operations, the incident site/area, impacted and threatened areas, overflight results, trajectories, impacted shorelines, or other graphics depicting situational status and resource assignment): THIS IS AN EXERCISE 		
5. Situation Summary and Health and Safety Briefing (for briefings or transfer of command): Recognize potential incident Health and Safety Hazards and develop necessary measures (remove hazard, provide personal protective equipment, warn people of the hazard) to protect responders from those hazards. A severe weather system is moving through the state, bringing high winds and rainfall. A number of counties across the state have reported utility and communication disruptions, and the SIOC has been activated. AUXCOMM has been activated to help with gathering ground truth data through site status reporting.		
6. Prepared by: Name: Max Schneider Position/Title: State AUXCOMM Coord. Signature: _____		
ICS 201, Page 1 This is an Exercise		Date/Time: 4/29/2022 18:00EDT

[illegible]

Figure B.3: Actual Exercise Participants by County Chart

County	Participants	Total Score
MARQ	13	493
KENT	11	471
OAKL	11	421
SAGI	11	402
LIVI	14	386
KZOO	11	369
WASH	9	312
WAYN	8	309
BARR	7	288
INGH	7	275
CHIP	5	198
MASO	5	187
CALH	4	155
MONR	4	155
STCL	4	147
HOUG	3	119
VANB	3	111
TUSC	4	103
MIDL	3	99
BAY	2	85
LAKE	2	79
LAPE	2	65
MACK	2	63
ALGE	2	59
OTTA	2	59
MENO	2	57
BARA	1	49
NEWA	1	44
MONT	1	37
CHAR	1	36
IRON	1	35
STJO	1	35
MUSK	1	35
PRES	1	35
MANI	1	22
Grand Total	160	5795
County	District	Data

Figure B.4: Map of Counties that successfully sent a message to the State Emergency Operations Center

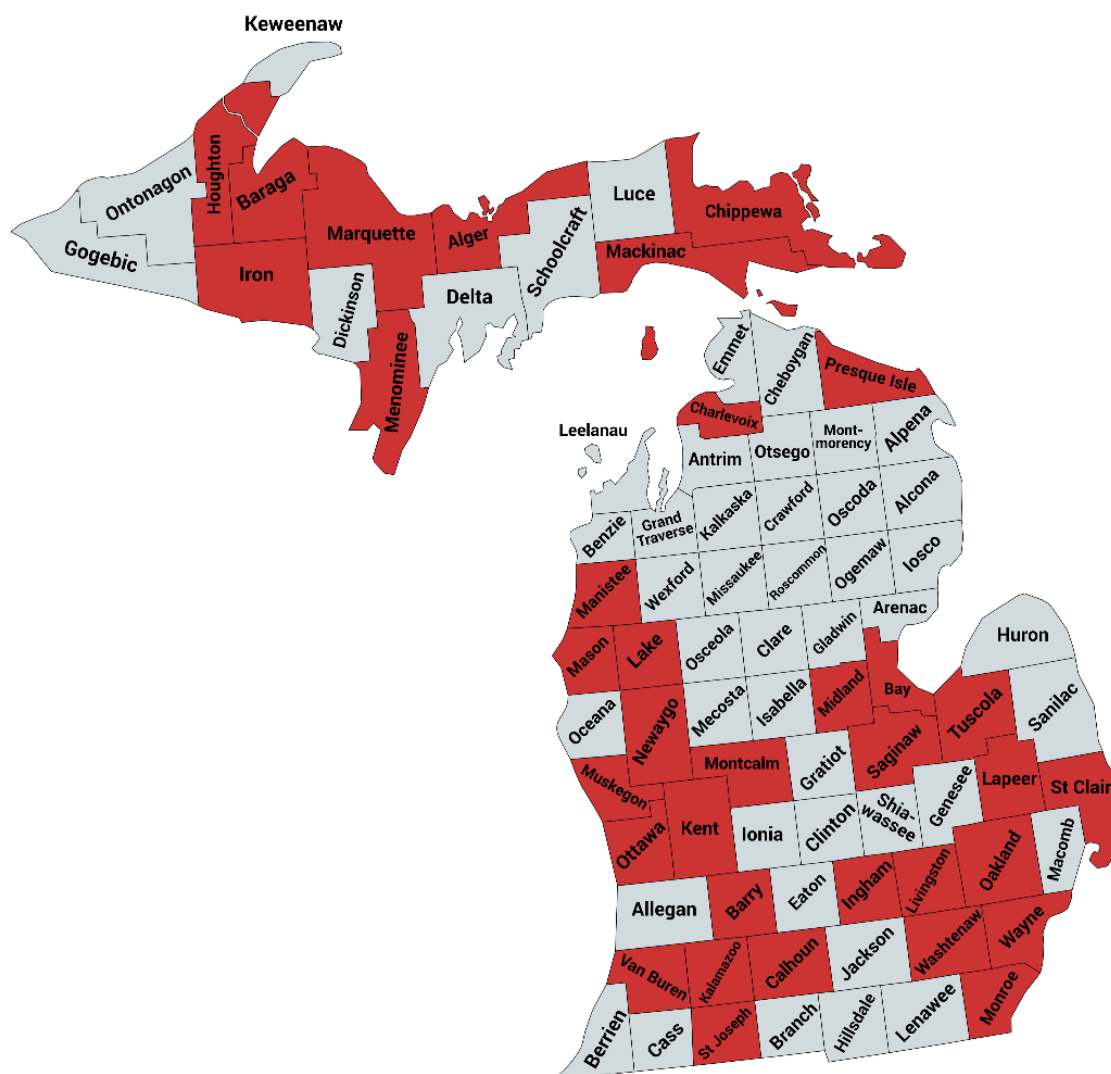


Figure B.5: Winlink Capabilities – Most respondents choose multiple connection methods.

4. Optional - What Winlink Capabilities do you have available for your use Choose all that apply - Optional

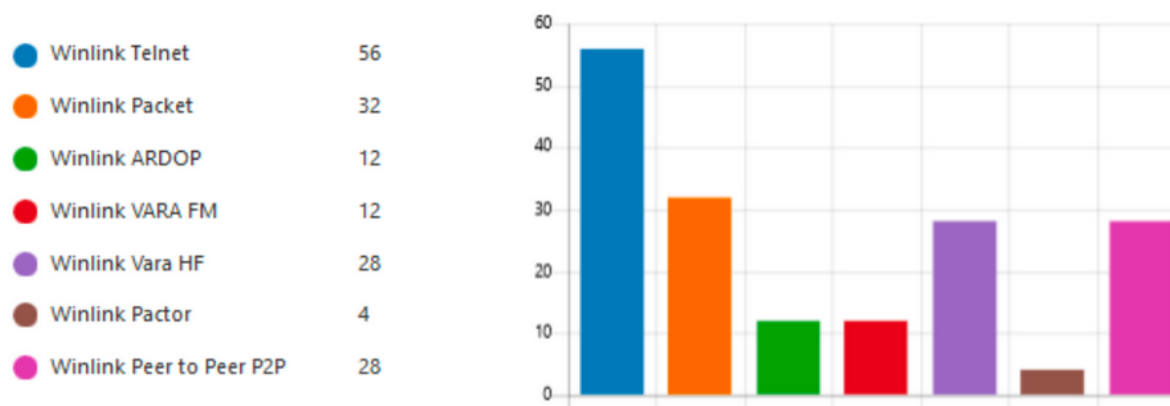
[More Details](#)

Figure B.6: Communications Mode Capability – Most respondents have multiple capabilities

5. Optional - On which amateur modes can you operate - Choose all that Apply - Optional

[More Details](#)