

Section Manager Message September 7, 2017

Good Evening All,

It is obvious Hurricane Irma is going to strike Florida in a bad way. While the exact landfall site remains a “moving target”, the SFL Section is going to get hammered, and if it comes up the middle of the state as it appears in the last advisory, both WCF and NFL Sections (East of Tallahassee) are also going to take a huge hit.

I have been buried in e-mails and phone calls. I have also received many requests from charities, hospitals, corporate groups, and countless others for pre-arranged “deployments”. Dozens of nets, thanks, prayers and folks looking to “send stuff”. Today, I received over 183 e-mails, and another 27 cell phone calls. The following response is what I have been providing to folks as fast as I can get to them:

- **Requests for Operators:** We are not “pre-deploying” any assets before landfall and the storm passes. Primarily, I am not sending folks into an impending, active hurricane zone as we are a peninsula – the storm comes North, you have to drive South. Seems like common sense, but some folks just don’t get it. Additionally, we STILL DON’T KNOW when landfall will be, what areas will receive what level of damage, and who will need the resources. Seems foolish to send resources somewhere they are not needed, and not have any available for desperate, critical needs elsewhere. I am directing organizations to the State EOC to request operators once the storm passes through and we all have some semblance of an idea of where they should go; then have a priority need based, coordinated effort.
- **Health and Welfare Messages:** Direct folks to their local Red Cross for this service – they will forward to the State EOC and back to our net systems for servicing - later, when the life safety priorities are resolved.
- **Offers of Assistance:** I appreciate the dozens and dozens and dozens of offers of help – I really do – but will no longer acknowledge them as there are just too many to respond to. Trust me, I am saving the messages and will scream, “Help” when needed! QRX!

What “WE” need to be doing (everyone!) KEEP MONITORING THE STORM – Irma’s track has stubbornly moved all over the place since it was first named. Shifts to either coast make HUGE differences to the other coast. Earlier today, I hoped the WCF Section, and the Tallahassee and West Panhandle areas would be safe, and could help support the adjacent NFL and SFL Sections. As of tonight, WCF is on the “hit list”, and now Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina are all in the cross-hairs! How quickly things change.

I am planning on invoking the SARNet System under Net Operations starting tomorrow at 12 noon to assist with monitoring traffic & weather conditions, and provide an alternate to communicate with County EOCs in the State. All of the Interstates were packed today (North and West bound) as was many of the US Highways. People are evacuating (as they should) from South Florida and the coasts, and we probably will see them packed again tomorrow and Saturday.

WORK WITH YOU LOCAL SERVED AGENCIES – PLEASE! Your local community will most likely need your support – if not, “stand-by” as we will send out requests for communications help and assistance

through multiple avenues specifying what is needed and where. If that need doesn't arise, VOLUNTEER WITH ONE OF THE RESPONSE ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH VOLUNTEER FLORIDA.

<https://www.volunteerflorida.org/>

Please.....

DO NOT SELF DEPLOY

DO NOT CONTACT/CALL THE STATE EOC

Lastly.....I have "heard" from three (yes – 3) ECs since Monday providing me with information on what they are doing. I AM ASKING ALL NFL ECs, ARES Groups, Leadership and Appointees to send me at least a short summary of prep actions, activations, any activities you are doing or involved in for pre-storm preparedness. I'd appreciate it before Saturday night if at all possible.

After the storm passes through the state and leaves us Monday night, if you are able to get a status report to me (e-mail, SARNet, carrier pigeon, yak!) let me know your local conditions and needs. If you can't get it to me, get it to another league official if possible.

Make your plans! Protect yourself, loved ones, and your home. If you are in a designated evacuation zone and you get the order to leave, get out of there! Your safety is paramount. Please stay safe – AND THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU DO!

EVERYONE COUNTS!

73, Steve WB4OMM

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