

## February 28, 2021 WC-ARES Net Training:

### What did I Learn?

Presented by: Doug, W5DMD

So, for anyone who have been in Cancun for about a week and half, we just got out of a pretty difficult weather event here in Texas. The main issue was this event was so wide spread, none of us could get away from it. We could not drive for two hours or less and be where this storm wasn't. A hurricane or a tornado, you can get away from the devastation if you need. Here, we were all stuck. Over the next few weeks, we as an organization as well as we individually will be talking about things such as how did we do, what we can do better, what needs to change. So, I thought I would take a few minutes to share some of my thoughts.

Over all, we (my wife and I) did pretty well. Not perfect by any stretch of imagination, but OK. Most of that had to do with the fact, that we had power for most, if not almost all of the event. So, we were NOT tested as much as some of you. Yes, I kept batteries and flashlights plugged in almost all of the time along with my phone just in case the power did leave for an extended period of time. But as far as power went, we were lucky. In Austin, one of my son's had power and water the whole time, but the other had neither for 5 days. So again, yes, we were lucky.

We almost always are prepared in the area of food. Staples and other things are kept here so we were not shot of food or water. We filled the tubs for use in toilets, and I usually have several containers of water that I rotate out of potable water just in case. Worst case scenario, we just have to boil it. We did have several means of cooking the food including a camp stove and if needed, we could just move into our RV trailer and be totally self-sufficient. I did and do have some backup power for my radios. But I did discover, it was not as easy to go to back power as I would like. So, switching that is something I need to work on. Speaking of power, I want to commend, Becky, KI5AHF, Alejandro KX5ALE, and Greg K5GRG for not only continuing to work as Net control operators but during so using their back up batteries as they were without power for an extended period, Alejandro even went so far as charging up the batteries on solar so he could be net control. While there was other also, you all are my hero's.

So how else did I screw up? Well, one was firewood. I buy firewood about every other year. This was the year, but I was running out. We had some fire wood but we were saving it in case the power did go out. So, we were NOT as comfortable as we should have been. In case you didn't know this... propane tanks freeze. So even out door cookers, or propane generators could not be used to their max. Go figure. Also, longer propane hoses are a good thing. And don't forget the connectors, do you have the right connectors to hook up propane or a plug into your house power for a clean connection without running extension cords into the house? Which breakers do you turn on? Or off? All things that were not as clear as they should have been before I needed the information. But remember, power out in cold and power out in heat is to different subjects. So, think of both sides of this.

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For me, one of the last things was that I could talk to the repeater that was used most of the time. I guess it is my antenna as I could hear in and the programming appeared right, but believe me I will be working on that. Speaking of that repeater, Jeff Schmidt should be congratulated for keeping that repeater up and running. Batteries failed as did back up power in many of the other repeaters, but Marks just kept on working. Perhaps we all need to contribute to Mark to keep that repeater up and running. It was there when we needed it, so let's make sure we help to keeping it that way.

Well, I think that is enough for now. Yes, I did bust three pipes and had other issues. But because we were here in the house, we got the water turned off and the damage mitigated relatively quickly. We also had help from the Ultimate Boy Scout, Ken Malgren who had the parts I needed, when all the stores were sold out. So, we had water back pretty quick. This certainly isn't all I learned and all I am going to try and fix, but it is the high lights, or low lights depending on your point of view. So how about you. What is on your list? New four-wheel drive truck? New Generator? More and bigger UPS's, Bigger Propane tank? More batteries, more switching devices? Well, whatever it is, I want to encourage everyone to participate in these discussions on the after-action report. See what worked, and what didn't. None of us were perfect, so we all have some work to do.

Thanks, concludes this week's training. This is W5DMD, hold me short time in respects to the remained of the net. Back to Net Control.