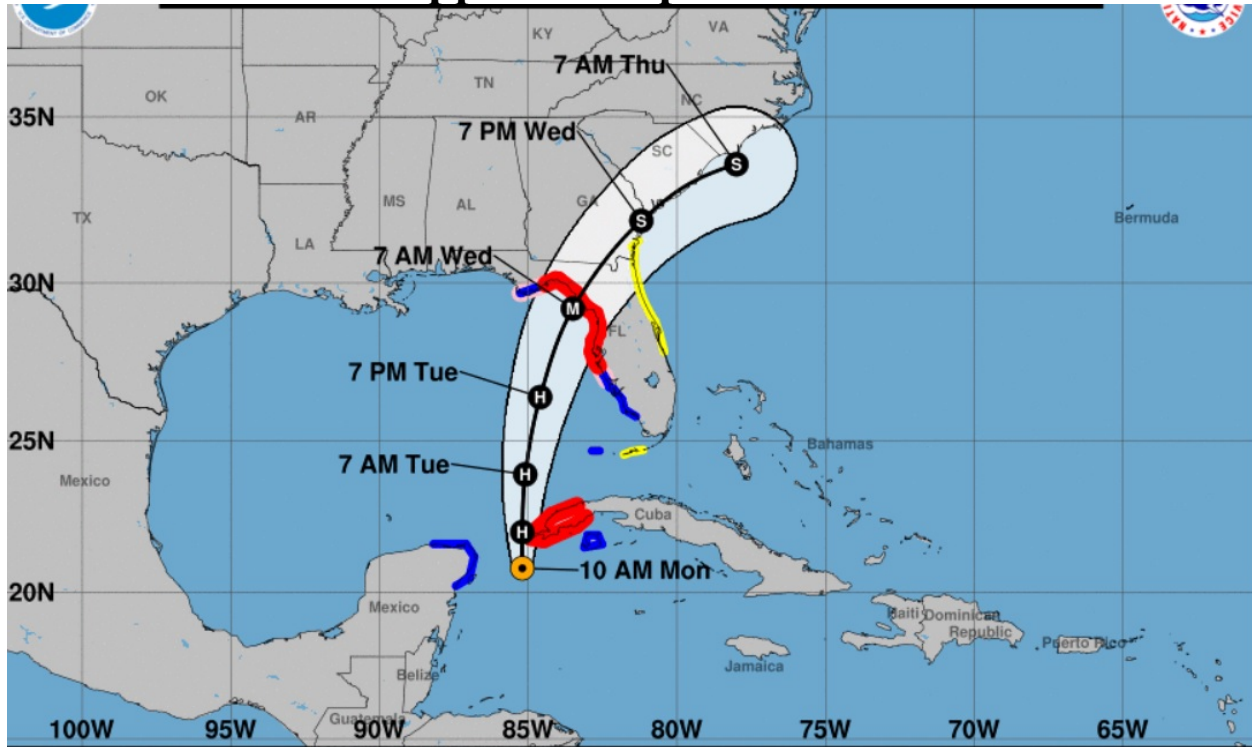


# Alachua County AUXCOMM Volunteers Response to Hurricane Idalia August 29/30, 2023 Approved Sept 13 2023



Advisory, Monday Aug 28 2023 10AM

## After Action Report/Improvement Plan

## **HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS**

Points of Contact:

**Alachua County AUXCOMM Volunteers:**

Name: Jeff Capehart, Asst. Section Manager.  
Emergency Coordinator  
FCC License: W4UFL

Name: Gordon Gibby MD, Asst. Emergency Coordinator  
FCC License: KX4Z  
SHARES License: NCS521

### **Acknowledgment**

*This document borrows heavily from the excellent AARIP for Nicole/Ian  
that was written by Brett Wallace, NH2KW.*

**Approved Version, Sept. 13, 2023  
FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hurricane Idalia was a rapidly intensifying tropical hurricane that was of great concern to emergency planners in Alachua County during Sunday/Monday Aug. 27/28, 2023 -- because this was predicted to be a Major Hurricane (Cat 3 or greater) that would pass right through Alachua County while still at hurricane strength -- a very rare event.

Alachua County EM planners rallied all the troops and planned very well for the predictions given them at that time, and Alachua County AUXCOMM volunteers developed eight potential deployment volunteers despite the predicted damage to our County. These volunteers deployed by 5 PM Tuesday August 29th.

Shortly before landfall, the situation changed and the hurricane, despite reaching Cat 4 strength briefly, went through an eye-wall replacement, and changed direction, largely sparing Alachua County.

Our volunteers carried out their assignments quite well and multiple advancements and issues were handled. Three shelters maintained radio communications with the EOC and the EOC maintained multiple potential radio communications with the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) and surrounding counties prior to, during, and following the approach of the hurricane. Our volunteers were demobilized at midday on Wednesday August 30, 2023.

An estimate of the hours volunteered is approximately 41 hours. If valued at \$20/hr and at an 8:1 match, this would result in approximately \$6,500 benefit for Alachua County. .

### Major Strengths

- Communication amongst team members (in planning and preparation) was noted as a major strength.
- Voice and data lines of radio communication were maintained continuously through the storm; our duplex-can system at the EOC functioned well. The previously RFI noted during Hurricane Ian has now been conquered.
- Activated 8 badged volunteers for the hurricane
- Staffed the EOC with 1 team-member, switching off between two volunteers..
- Staffed 3 shelters with 1-2 team-members at each location for the hurricane
- Operated net control from a remote location which reduced the burden on the EOC team.
- The team was able to serve the EOC by fulfilling an additional request for support: tested all "sat phones" and repaired the function of two, after contacting the vendor and arranging re provision.
- Operational testing of the newly-constructed QuintPlexor was judged a phenomenal success, for the first time allowing the EOC to monitor and interact simultaneously on multiple HF radio bands.

- First successful radio transfer of a signed ICS-214 from a shelter to the EOC in a radio test

### **Primary Areas for Improvement**

- Identified that we do not have a readily-available document to help volunteers set up the Mobile BroadBand Kit.
- Identified that ASO radio go boxes need to be paired with LIFEPO4 batteries before transport so that both arrive and return from shelters

## SECTION 1: RESPONSE OVERVIEW

<b>Response Name</b>	<b>Hurricane Idalia 2023</b>
<b>Response Dates</b>	August 29/30, 2023
<b>Scope</b>	The storms affected multiple jurisdictions. The scope of this AAR/IP is focused on Alachua County AUXCOMM Volunteer response.
<b>Mission Area(s)</b>	Response
<b>Core Capabilities</b>	Operational Communication, <sup>1</sup> Planning, Information Sharing, Public Information, and Community Resilience <sup>2</sup>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ensure health and safety of all participants</li><li>2. Prepare a local ICS 201 Form</li><li>3. Notify ARES Members and Northern Florida Section ARES of Activation Status.</li><li>4. Develop list of volunteers available for staffing shelters.</li><li>5. Maintain communications with State ARES Net and SARNET.</li><li>6. Deploy radio volunteers to staff shelters in Alachua County, as required.<sup>3</sup></li></ol>
<b>Threat or Hazard</b>	Very high winds, flooding
<b>Scenario</b>	Category 3-4 Hurricane
<b>Sponsor</b>	Mother Nature
<b>Participating Organizations</b>	DHS/FEMA, Florida DEM, Alachua County Office of Emergency Management, North Florida ARES ®, Alachua County ARES ® Volunteers.
<b>Point of Contact</b>	Dr. Gordon Gibby, MD, <a href="mailto:DocVacuumTubes@gmail.com">DocVacuumTubes@gmail.com</a>

1 [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema\\_ESF\\_2\\_Communications.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_ESF_2_Communications.pdf)

2 <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/mission-core-capabilities>

3 Our response did not actually have an Incident Action Plan, so it did not have written Objectives. These however, are quite reasonable ones and are taken from the previous AARIP for Ian/Nicole written by Brett Wallace NH2KW.

## **Disaster Planning Team**

Jeff Capehart W4UFL  
Gordon L. Gibby KX4Z  
Leland Gallup AA3YB

### **Active Volunteers**

Leland Gallup AA3YB- Alachua County EOC (ESF #2)  
Gordon L. Gibby KX4Z- Alachua County EOC (ESF #2)  
David Huckstep W4JIR- Alachua County Net Control Station  
Lorilyn Roberts KO4LBS - Senior Center Special Needs Shelter (ESF #8)  
(Assisted by Rosemary Jones KI4QBZ)  
Brett Wallace NH2KW- Easton-Newberry Shelter (ESF#6)  
Susan Halbert KG4VWI- MLK Shelter (ESF#6)  
Eric Please KO4ZSD- Logistics Support  
Jeff Capehart W4UFL- In Reserve  
Rosemary Jones KI4QBZ - In Reserve  
Earl McDow K4ZSW - Backup VHF Net Control

## SECTION 2: DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN DESIGN SUMMARY

### **Disaster Response Plan Purpose and Design**

The purpose of the Alachua County AUXCOMM Volunteers is to support the Alachua County Office of Emergency Management by providing auxiliary communication in the event that phone and internet communications are interrupted.

### **The Incident Action Plan (IAP):**

Our group did not create a specific IAP for Hurricane Idalia, in part due to the speed of its approach. However, our approved Communications Plan provided significant guidance, as well as our general ICS-205.

### **Incident Command System / Leadership**

The Alachua County AUXCOMM Volunteers are task organized under the Emergency Support Function #2 (Communications<sup>4</sup>).

Jeff Capehart is the Emergency Coordinator. Dr. Gordon Gibby attended first of the County planning meetings for Hurricane IAN on Monday Aug 28 (via Zoom).. Leland and Gordon manned the EOC radio room during Hurricane Idalia

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4 <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrf-esf-intro.pdf>



<b>INCIDENT BRIEFING (ICS 201)</b>			
<b>1. Incident Name:</b> Hurricane Ian	<b>2. Incident Number:</b>	<b>3. Date/Time Initiated:</b> Date: 28 Sep    Time: 1000	
<b>9. Current Organization</b> (fill in additional organization as appropriate):			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>Incident Commander(s)</b>                      Jeff Capehart                      Gordon Gibby                 </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>Liaison Officer</b>                      Gordon Gibby                 </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>Safety Officer</b> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>Public Information Officer</b> </div> </div>			
<b>Operations Section Chief</b> Leland Gallup	<b>Planning Section Chief</b> Gordon Gibby	<b>Logistics Section Chief</b> Eric Please	<b>Finance/Admin Section Chief</b> Jeff Capehart
Net Control Station: David <u>Huckstep</u>			
Shelter 1 Shelter 2 Shelter 3 Shelter 4			

### SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVES / RESULTS

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

*Unfortunately we didn't have a written IAP for this Hurricane.....but we can review the Objectives that Brett utilized for Hurricane Ian and TS Nicole.*

Objective	Core Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
1. Ensure Health and Safety of all participants	Community Resilience <sup>5</sup>	<b>P</b>			
2. Prepare local ICS-201 Form	Planning				<b>U</b>
3. Notify ARES Members and Northern Florida Section ARES of Activation Status	Planning	<b>P</b>			
4. Develop list of volunteers available for staffing shelters	Planning	<b>P</b>			
5. Maintain communications with State ARES Net and SARNET	Operational Communication		<b>S</b>		
6. Deploy radio volunteers to staff shelters in Alachua County, as required	Operational Communication		<b>S</b>		

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/mission-core-capabilities>

## OBJECTIVE 1:

Ensure Health and Safety of all participants

### Strengths

*Strength:* Leland and Gordon traded off; Gordon's house has auto-solar & Leland's a transfer switch. Other volunteers included single people who didn't have to be concerned with a spouse.

### Areas for Improvement

*Area for Improvement:* Find ways for teams to improve care for spouses/etc of deployed persons.

## OBJECTIVE 2:

Prepare local ICS-201 Form

### Strengths

*Strength:*

### Areas for Improvement

*Area for Improvement:* We did not have an IAP for this event. Creating a "boiler-plate" IAP might make creating a local plan easier.

### OBJECTIVE 3:

Notify ARES Members and Northern Florida Section ARES of Activation Status

#### Strengths

**Strength:** Multiple methods were used to contact the members to determine availability; email/Groups.io, Winlink, VHF Voice, and Everbridge notifications via SMS. <sup>6</sup>

#### Areas for Improvement

**Area for Improvement:** This storm was billed as quite significant. We had a modest paucity of potential volunteers.

### OBJECTIVE 4:

Develop list of volunteers available for staffing shelters

#### Strengths

**Strength:** Accomplished promptly after the Monday night weather net and information provided per the Communications Plan.

#### Areas for Improvement

**Area for Improvement:** None

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<sup>6</sup> We attempted to follow the notification and security procedures outlined in our Draft Comms Plan, which was well accepted and subsequently approved as a result. See: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/AlachuaCountyCommsPlan2022.pdf>

## OBJECTIVE 5:

Maintain communications with State ARES Net and SARNET

### Strengths

*Strength:* NF4AC was able to check into the HF ARES net twice.

### Areas for Improvement

*Area for Improvement 1:* Although the SARNET receiver was on, it was actually not much monitored. Setting it for a low volume would be an improvement.

*Suggestion 1:* Do not rely on the serial-linked SARNET UHF repeater system for emergency communications; always have additional techniques available. Be aware of, and have programmed, the nearby OCALA SARNET entry point, which works from our EOC.

## OBJECTIVE 6:

Deploy radio volunteers to staff shelters in Alachua County, as required

### Strengths

*Strength:* We were able to staff all three shelters and potentially had 2 additional volunteers in reserve

### Areas for Improvement

*Area for Improvement:* Increase the number of Level III volunteers, currently at only 3. Encourage other volunteers to make it to higher levels as well.

## SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The Alachua County AUXCOMM Volunteers (ACAV) performed very well during the responses to Hurricane Idalia. All requests for support by the Alachua County EOC were met, including making all the satellite phones function and fully charged.

The EOC and each shelter were staffed by at least one volunteer at all times. Communication between the shelters and the EOC were maintained by VHF throughout the response. Updates on the current weather conditions were somewhat limited to the shelters as the EOC briefings didn't tend to include a lot of information and Jeff Capehart was having problems with one of his applications.

Our VARA-FM local network performed very well this incident and we were able to move signed ICS-214 forms successfully after some trial and error

Our biggest improvement during this incident was the addition of our locally developed "QuintPlexor" that allows us to run all three HF radios on a single antenna, if the antenna provides a workable SWR without the need for a tuner on each band.

## APPENDIX A

### IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Finding	Remedy	Assigned to	Target Completion
1. Only 1 person is getting Flash Reports from EOC	Ask for additional persons to receive flash reports.	Gordon Gibby	COMPLETE Sept 13 2023 <sup>7</sup>
2. Unfamiliarity with the EOC satellite phones	Training in an upcoming ARES/NFARC meeting	Leland Gallup	Christmas 2023
3. Batteries weren't shipped along with radio boxes	Both volunteers and EM staff to understand to pair them up	Leland Gallup	October 2023
4. Lack of documentation of where equipment was transferred	Better paper documentation arrangement with EOC	Gordon Gibby	October 2023
5A. Shelter "Go boxes" were not set up for Winlink	(A) Create RJ45 cables to allow go-box ham radios to connect to Signalink or Signalink equivalent; 11 units	Gordon Gibby	September LabNLunch <sup>8</sup>
5B. Shelter "Go boxes" were not set up for Winlink	(B) Survey badged volunteers to find how many can provide a Signalink or equivalent (or an entire digital station + coaxial antenna switch)	Gordon Gibby	<i>COMPLETE September ARES/NFARC meeting; &gt;= 8 indicated can provide.</i>
5C. Shelter "Go boxes" were not set up for Winlink	(C) work to acquire or build enough additional units to have 6 shelters covered for digital operation	Gordon Gibby	Christmas 2023
6. Uncommanded frequency changes by Yaesu Series 600	(A) test extensively to see if this is due to some incorrect setting (B) find replacement for unit if cannot be fixed	Gordon / Leland	COMPLETE Sept 6, 2023 <sup>9</sup>

7 Emergency Management D Peaton advises that four of our group are now on the notification list.

8 Scheduled for Sept 23, 2023 -> 8 volunteers expected; 2 designs provided.

9 Power supply for Yaesu unit found to be inadequate current rating; changed to adequate power supply; no further uncommanded frequency changes.

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Remedy</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Target Completion</b>
7. Lack of timely refresher course on go-box radios	Training at October meeting (may begin at Sept meeting)	David Huckstep	By end of October meeting
8. Lack of local IAP	Create a boiler-plate IAP that can be updated for a typical hurricane scenario	Gordon Gibby	Present at October meeting
9. Need for a "logistics person"	Add to our IAP and discuss possibilities with EM personnel	Leland Gallup	By October meeting
10. Antenna failure at MLK	Go to MLK, test SWR and antenna	David Huckstep, Eric Pleace	COMPLETE <sup>10</sup> Sept 13 2023
11 Lack of testing of antennas annually	Discuss with EM whether to add to testing sequence	Leland Gallup	By Thanksgiving
12. Better communication with GPD offices	Offer to do small presentation for GPD	David Huckstep/ Gordon / Jeff	By Christmas 2023
13. Availability of ladders to reach outside boxes	Logistics person to have access to a collapsible ladder (e.g. from Gordon) Add to IAP <sup>11</sup>	Gordon (IAP)	By October meeting
14. Easton - IT folks need their own private room	Discuss with EM staff	Gordon	By October meeting
15. Easton - missing ground wire (damaged) - antennas present a Ben Franklin type lightning risk to our volunteers and the Easton-Newberry facility	9/18/23 UPDATE CORRECTION: There is actually a ground on that system, through a new conduit to a ground a little farther away. Although more distant, it solves this issue.	David Huckstep	COMPLETE Sept 19 2023
16. PACTOR connection to ICOM7300 makes voice unintelligible during SSB operations.	Training to manage Settings   Connections so that AC is not enabled when doing voice operations	Gordon Gibby	At September & October meetings & in operations manual by October meeting

<sup>10</sup> In two or more sessions of multiple hours in hot sun, David & Eric discovered an inadequate crimping of a coax shield in a connector, and an unexplained "mixup" of cabling to the VHF/UHF, Public Service, and "Long Wire" connectors at the MLK center in the outside box 12 feet above ground level. All problems were corrected and antenna system worked correctly when they concluded repairs.

<sup>11</sup> Lack of known storage space for ladders at the EOC was cited as a hindrance. Gordon can make available a ladder to Eric. We expect only one more hurricane season at the current EOC.



Finding	Remedy	Assigned to	Target Completion
17. Susan unable to get accurate shelter resident count at MLK	Inquire as to the issue from Claudia after discussing with David Peatman	Susan Halbert	COMPLETE Sept 13 2023 <sup>12</sup>
18. Incorrect listing of Level III volunteers on website	Correct to include Wendell Wright	N/A	COMPLETE Sept 13, 2023
19. Size of signed ICS-214 is large	Check out compression options, find out if county has licenses for Adobe	Gordon	October meeting
20. Lack of instructions for the Mobile BroadBand Kit	Find or create local instructions  Instructions found and stored at: <a href="https://www.nf4rc.club/mobile-broadband-kit-introduction/">https://www.nf4rc.club/mobile-broadband-kit-introduction/</a>	Gordon / Leland	COMPLETE Sept 13, 2023 <sup>13</sup>
21 Improve our Neighborhood Watch outreach as hams	Create sample emails and encourage members to find ways to reach out to their communities	Reid Tillery	Christmas 2023
22 Improve our engagement of other clubs.	Consider actively recruiting members of GARS, GARC, Lofton High School Club, etc., to fill specific helpful positions including Neighborhood Watch, HF NVIS Net Control, Section Emergency Net Control., etc.	Group	Thanksgiving 2023
23. Find solutions to reaching the HF antennas in the "chigger woods"	Ladders vs driving around / showers / DEET / permethrin?	Huckstep and Gordon to discuss ladder Storage.	By November meeting

12 Susan found that the Shelter Manager advises that the problem was with their software/computer setup.

13 Our documentation filed on our web page; documentation provided in the unit box that was missing; demonstration carried out at September meeting.

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Remedy</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Target Completion</b>
24. Improve our local internal weather report documents for internal dissemination (Susan asks for every 3 hours)	If possible, create weather reports; do the best that we can. If possible put it together and send out over data systems.	Group <sup>14</sup>	COMPLETE Sept 13 2023
25. Be extremely friendly and gracious to the professionals running the Shelters <sup>15</sup>	Remind everyone that they are under great stress and a nice gesture goes a long way.	Group	COMPLETE Sept 13, 2023

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14 No specific person was willing to take up this item; current EOC management does not always have specific detailed weather briefing more than twice per day; Jeff Capehart had difficulty with some of his applications, but may be able to provide more frequent updating.

15 Added by Eric Pleace, who notes how much more easily he is able to make logistics deliveries and adjustments by simple kindnesses to the Shelter supervisory personnel.

## APPENDIX B

### TIMELINE HURRICANE IDALIA

DATE	EVENT
Friday Aug 25 1:54 PM 12:57PM	Jeff Capehart sent out a great list of hurricane prep ideas, and included a graphic that showed the string models of Idalia
Saturday Au 26 6:29 PM	Jeff Capehart sent a note to Gordon & Leland looking for any more ideas -- and include a note that appeared to have come from the Alachua County EM -- Gordon was not receiving anything direct from Alachua County EM but had not realized this yet
Sunday August 27 6-8 PM	Eric asked if we were having a Tropical Weather Net  Jeff sent out a note over the groups.io @ 7:43PM that we WERE and Leland cranked up the EVERBRIDGE to notify people.  The resulting net was a record for the 1st Tropical weather net with 20 participants.  Jeff got an initial list of who might be able to deploy -- 8 persons
Sunday August 27 8:37 PM	Jeff sent out the Flash Report 3 for Tropical Storm Idalia -- Gordon and Leland are NOT getting these -- without Jeff forwarding them we would not have known.  Critical Information  Tropical Storm Idalia is currently located east of the northern portion of the Yucatan Peninsula. The National Hurricane Center expects this system to begin moving north or north northeastward later Monday. The system is then expected to quickly develop into a Category 1 Hurricane over the eastern Gulf of Mexico on Tuesday. This system is expected to make landfall somewhere in the Florida West Coast, Big Bend, or Florida Panhandle <b>with winds arriving sometime during the day Tuesday</b> . Consensus is growing on the system's track and intensity, but specific local impacts cannot yet be determined. [Emphasis Added]  The Governor issued Executive Order 23-171, declaring a State of Emergency for Alachua County as well as 32 other counties throughout Florida. Personnel that are working for this incident should begin documenting the hours they work and their actions using an Activity Log ICS 214.  Local Significance  Alachua County is currently predicted to experience Strong Tropical Storm force winds with potential for stronger gusts

DATE	EVENT
	<p>West of the I-75 corridor. Portions of Alachua County east of the I-75 corridor are predicted to experience Tropical Storm force winds with potential for Strong Tropical Storm force wind gusts. There is marginal potential for tornadic activity. <b>Winds are expected to arrive later on Tuesday. [Emphasis added.]</b></p> <p>Waves of heavy downpours are expected Tuesday through Thursday. Alachua County is expected to receive 3 - 6" of rain Tuesday night through Thursday, depending on the eventual track. There is a risk for flash flooding with limited risk for river flooding.</p> <p>NWS – Jacksonville briefing slides: <a href="https://www.weather.gov/media/jax/briefings/nws-jax-briefing.pdf">https://www.weather.gov/media/jax/briefings/nws-jax-briefing.pdf</a></p> <p>Public Information</p> <p>Public information should emphasize that impacts to Alachua County are dependent on the eventual track and intensity of Tropical Storm Idalia. All messaging should focus on promoting personal preparedness and should also direct the public towards official channels for information such as the Alachua County Communications Office, National Weather Service in Jacksonville, and the National Hurricane Center.</p> <p>Residents and visitors should be encouraged to sign up for text alerts by texting the word ALACHUA to 888-777.</p> <p>Necessary Actions, Precautions, and Recommendations</p> <p>Alachua County Emergency Management is continuing to monitor this system and participate in Statewide Coordination Calls and National Weather Service (NWS) – Jacksonville stakeholder calls. Alachua County Human Resources has distributed preparedness messaging to employees designated for shelter work.</p>
NOTE	<p><i>Note that the information provided early from the weather predictions was that tropical storm winds might arrive sometime on TUESDAY. This drove a lot of local preparation, but turned out to be INACCURATE. Only later in the day MONDAY did the predictions become obviously for much later arrival of tropical storm winds. As a result, Alachua County and some private schools were closed on Tuesday....which was a nice day! But this allowed for more prep time.</i></p>

DATE	EVENT
<p>Monday Aug 28 11:56 AM</p>	<p>Since we were unable to get the INVITATION to the Virtual Meeting, Dalton sent it out as a personal Email. As a result, Gordon Gibby was able to zoom into the 12 noon meeting 4 minutes later and take detailed notes.</p> <p>Those notes were redacted to remove confidential information and published to the entire groups.io group, as per our Communications Plan</p>
<p>Monday afternoon Aug 28</p>	<p>In the Afternoon -- Alachua County Schools decided to close Tuesday and Wednesday</p> <p>In the early evening -- Gordon's school decided to close Tuesday and Wednesday -- but moments before that was sent out, Gordon realized the time of arrival had been moved &gt; 12 later and that Tuesday might be a fine day. Too late to change anything at Cornerstone Academy</p> <div data-bbox="391 705 1198 1159" data-label="Figure"> </div> <div data-bbox="391 1163 1198 1241" data-label="Text"> <p><b>Hurricane Idalia</b> Wednesday August 30, 2023 2 AM EDT Intermediate Advisory 14A NWS National Hurricane Center</p> <p><b>Current information:</b> ● Center location 28.3 N 84.5 W Maximum sustained wind 120 mph Movement N at 15 mph</p> <p><b>Forecast positions:</b> ● Tropical Cyclone ○ Post/Potential TC Sustained winds: D &lt; 39 mph S 39-73 mph H 74-110 mph M &gt; 110 mph</p> </div> <p>The Forecast Cone from Wednesday 2 AM shows how drastically the actual hurricane tracking was differing from the projections of two days earlier.</p>
<p>Monday Evening Tropical Weather net</p>	<p>Jeff gained final information on who could deploy by a simple request on the evening 8PM net. Using this information, Gordon, Jeff, Leland came up with a deployment list and sent it out individually to the volunteers deploying in accordance with the Communications Plan.</p>
<p><b>Tuesday Morning Aug 29</b></p>	<p>Gordon send an email to 27 neighbors advising them that Nancy KM4YGI would be able to monitor FRS Channel #1 and assist if there were any communications difficulties, as she had VHF ability to reach out for help. Multiple very appreciative email responses resulted.</p>
<p>Tuesday Aug 29</p>	<p>On Tuesday, Dalton /EM managed to get radios delivered to shelters.</p> <p>David Huckstep pointed out the importance of getting the LIFEPO4 Batteries</p>

DATE	EVENT
	<p>also delivered -- ? Eric Pleace helped with this?</p> <p>Since the weather was actually nice, and the EOC asked that ALL sections be present by 5PM Tuesday, Gordon/Leland/Jeff concluded we should have the shelters STAFFED and the EOC STAFFED by 5PM. Our volunteers took care of that.</p> <p>Since Leland &amp; Gordon's wives were nervous, they worked out a deal where Leland would handle the "setup" and just before dark Tuesday evening, Gordon would take over at the EOC and remain there until roads were passable again, leaving one of the two always within Steeplechase.</p> <p>Gordon spent the day building the 80-meter Low Pass Filter portion of the QuintPlexor and showing Nancy how to run the solar system and the 2nd backup - the generator.</p>
<p>Tuesday 5PM</p>	<p>Leland was at the EOC much earlier in the afternoon and handled the Sat Phone request from the EM. 2 of the units appeared nonfunctional. With better instructions from the vendor, one worked, and with a "re provisioning" the last one worked.</p> <p>Gordon arrived well before dark, and Leland demonstrated and tested a sat phone so Gordon would understand how to use them. All the units are now charged and working.</p> <p>Gordon installed the QUINTPLEXER, with cans on 80/40/20 meters, and 50-ohm loads on the other ports. The IC7300 and the Yaesu Series 600 and the Heathkit were functioning well with this system.</p>
<p>Tuesday evening</p>	<p>David Huckstep handled the NCS for the VHF Net. Susan Halbert found the existing external VHF antenna at MLK unworkable, with confirmation by using her own radio and also trying various coaxial cables to the inside connector. Using a simple indoor antenna, she was able to make connection to the 146.820 repeater well enough, and later she proposed and successfully carried out a simplex test on 146.550 to the EOC (great thinking!)</p> <p>Gordon made contact with the amateur State emergency net in the evening but did not stay on the net frequency. This was done through the QuintPlexor without amplification.</p>
<p>Tuesday Night</p>	<p>Local VHF net shut down.</p> <p>Total shelter residents in the 90's.</p> <p>Gordon slept on Nancy's "pillow pad" on the floor of the radio room, very comfortably until about 3:30 and then couldn't get back to sleep. Worked on various tidying up of radios.</p>
<p><b>Wed morning</b></p>	<p>Gordon was able to check into the amateur State emergency net on 80 meters through the QuintPlexor (by switching the 7300 to the 80 meter setup)</p>

DATE	EVENT
<p><b>Aug 30</b></p>	<p>With the hurricane now significantly NORTH of our area, tensions in the EOC were much less.</p> <p>Gordon was able to carry out some QuintPlexor tests, with successful NVIS contacts on 80 meters to Reid Tillery. 40 meters wasn't supporting that level of local comms at those hours but reception of 40 meters appeared absolutely unaffected by usage of the 80 meter port with 100W SSB.</p> <p>Testing of the Yaesu System 600 showed that it would consistently make an uncommanded frequency change to a frequency in the 7800 kHz range, observed at least 2-3 times. Gordon tried "locking" the interface and it still did it. Unknown why.</p> <p>Susan Halbert carried out a series of VHF tests sending in .jpg-image-signed ICS214s using WINLINK. The first problem as a limiting setting on the NF4AC user preferences that would not allow a file &gt;40kB. Oversize files appear to be "lost" afterwards and cannot be re-received.</p> <p>Secondly, the "image" was not able to be transferred via WINLINK inside a .docx Word file (cause unknown). A repeat test using a PDF file -- worked very successfully. Transfer time for this type file was 10 minutes over VARA FM on our 2-meter system.</p>
<p>Wed Noon</p>	<p>Dave Huckstep suggested there was little further need for backup communications as the hurricane was now past us and into GA. Checking with David Peatman and Jenn Grice -- both agreed that we could demobilize with all ICS-214's turned in.</p>
<p>Wed early afternoon</p>	<p>HOTWASH session carried out from the Shelters and EOC via ZOOM</p>

## APPENDIX C

# HOTWASH DOCUMENTATION

**Hotwash - ARES - Idalia 2023**  
**(Notes by Jeff Capehart)**

**8-30-2023 Noon**

Only Newberry had a mobile broadband kit. Need a quick-guide or manual for how to set it up.  
Eric:

Impressed with how organized the shelters were. Right place. Very impressed with everyone who was there. We dodged this one.

David H.

We are going to need someone to do logistics. We always need that. Something always got missed. Go boxes went out but forgot the batteries. Having a logistics person would be great. Eric solved a lot of problems doing that. Would be great if we could assign someone for that. We also need more volunteers. Everyone has a story.

Antennas are a gray area – ASO owns the go-boxes. Hopefully the relationship with EOC improves. The governor will announce soon. Also some equipment in the EOC room, but it falls under EOC. You need a good relationship to work with that. Now, someone needs to go recover the go-boxes. Logistical issues. Best to work with the relationships with ASO, radio shop, EOC, etc. Have to go through proper chain of command.

Levy County had a request for messages. He was trying to send messages to Arc to show he could do that.

Public Safety radio is not well known outside of ASO. In Gainesville, GPD does not know about the radio. They rely on their vehicle for everything. Talk to them. Let them know, develop a relationship, and do it all over again if another officer due to shift change.

Lorilyn:

Everyone was super nice. Impressed with everybody there. It was my 3<sup>rd</sup> time. It was ran very well. Go-box was already in place. Just had to plug it in. I used the book, opened it up, and plugged it in. Rosemary checked-in as a client and we set it up together. Lost power for a bit. Mostly a non-issue. I asked for a ladder and they brought it. I was glad that I had 214s but they already had a signature. I whited-out the signature and copied it to use and fill out. Would have been nice to have an HF radio, just to listen in on the experiments. No Winlink here. David, you were great!

Susan:

It was well organized. Cops stayed in their cars. No PS radio was used. The people here really wanted me there. It was good to have net control outside of the EOC. Was good to be able to do radio experiments. The antenna for this facility is kaput. I tried 3 coaxes. Then I inspected the antenna and it is pointing south of west and to the ground.<sup>16</sup> So something happened to it and needs to be fixed.

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<sup>16</sup> This was a misunderstanding. The antenna is an 800 MHz vertically-polarized YAGI and it appears to be correctly positioned.



Winlink experiment was good. You have to use a PDF because signature is erased with a Word doc. I would like more weather reports.

(Huck) Need a picture of the bad antenna. There is a YAGI that points to Gainesville to nearest 800 MHz tower. It should not be pointing at the ground.

(Gordon) having spare gear is very helpful. A VHF antenna analyzer would have made the problem clear.

Leland:

I am still without power. Personal issue.

Sat Phones. 6 of 8 worked. The other two were resolved with the vendor to get them working. Dalton released the go-boxes, but radio shop (Scott) did not know about it. We got him the #s on the go-kits and he was mollified. We need to make sure this works smoothly.

Batteries—thanks to Eric running logistics courier service. They need to go out and come back together.

Manning – as the saying goes... each of us have our issues that prevent us from deploying to the extent that we might want to. I had to leave the EOC at 9pm. Having more than one person in the radio room – we need to be able to sustain over many days. It will be an issue if it had gone on for days, or we couldn't have gotten out on the roads, etc.

The county manager went out of their way to thank us volunteers. We were especially noted. It has gone noticed! Thank you very much. It did go well. You cannot do a net out of the EOC. You have to be going in multiple directions. Attend briefings, handle tasks, and man the radio. You can't run a net.

It went well as far as I could see from the EOC. Would like a status report at the end.

(Huck) – New EOC. We could use a larger room. You can't run net control without a separate room, like a closet. They don't realize what we need unless we tell them and sell them on it. The antenna situation at the new location. We will need \$ for commercial antennas. If they don't move the tower, then a tower will be needed. Commercial antennas will be needed. The triplexer is being used for sharing one antenna with multiple radios. We will only get one opportunity to do it right. Antennas, wires, etc. There is no woods behind them. No tree farm. We will have to have a discussion ourselves. When they are ready with the checkbook, we need to be ready with a plan! It is a perfect opportunity to share from this event for the future.

(Leland) – Only MLK had antenna problems?

David and I talked about "when to start a net". Tactical net?

These events are not comm-heavy at the start. Usually, it is once started.

Plus nothing was really happening overnight. That was to get rest. Don't run tactical nets before the storm. Let them get sleep.

(David) Agreed. We fine tune every time we do this. Yes, MLK was the only one.

(Leland) 3 shelters were on stand-by.

David- Eric has a good point. EOC says – they aren't ours. ASO says – who is going to pay for it? We volunteers can go check it. We have authority, we can pay for it, we can fix it. We can bring the antenna to the radio shop.

(Gordon) – Limit tactical stuff before the hurricane?

David- no reason to roll-call at 5pm. Just let folks get squared away. Don't add to their burden. We gave them 6pm and then we had a 5pm briefing. Then we had roll-call so we could do a briefing.

Every ESF lead has to brief their people and how it fits with everyone else's schedules. They follow the media schedule for like the 6pm news or something.

Leland- conventions for shift change. They moved it from 7-7 to 5-5. That made it hard to determine when to have roll call, situational status reports, etc. I couldn't leave the briefing.

David-right. Everyone was in a hurry-up-and-wait mode.

Leland- our physically being there... that is really important for us.

Jeff:

Alert worked really well. We had over 20 people on the first night (Sun). 2<sup>nd</sup> night (Mon) we had 22 even without the alert. 3<sup>rd</sup> night (Wed) we were already activated on the net so did not run the tropical status. Weather monitoring was challenged... I have two apps and one was crashing on the radar and the other would not show the zoomed-in views of the radar. The NWS radar is not high-resolution enough to use effectively.

Brett- he was crammed in with the IT guys. That was an issue. Easton Archery is a bad location. Is there a second room to be able to make it work better? The room is more for us than then. We could ask shelter manager to get a better room for IT. The IT people need to move.<sup>17</sup>

David – That room belongs to the city of Newberry. The county has some limitations. They own it. They control it. They got a grant for it. After we got permission to put the antennas in, he didn't like the ground wire where it was. He thought it was a hazard. They had to drill a hole in the sidewalk. [redacted] It is not our building and everything has to go through them. The antenna is still not grounded. The box is reachable from the ground although others may need a ladder. There is a lightning risk there. They thought tripping was a bigger risk. There is not even copper wire running down the side of the building. There is a hole there, but unknown if ground rod is still there.

Brett- I can use a screwdriver to test to see if the ground rod is still there.

Gordon – Maybe we can use a mechanical connection with an alligator clip.

I thought we had a limited number of people. This was a big storm. We got to see whose wives can let them go.

We had the 7300 microphone problem again with Pactor.

Luckily we have an antenna with reasonable resonance and I could put the quint-plexor on it.

We could monitor two bands on HF at the same time.

17 Helping the IT people have their own room would make it much more comfortable for them.

They were trying very hard to use HF at the state.

We only have two people qualified at Level 3 at the EOC. <sup>18</sup> We need EOC operators to be able to operate every piece of equipment if there by themselves.

Gordon was offered a cot but had something his wife made.

Need more jumper cables. Needed more!

The ICS-214 signature project worked fine. Winlink won't pass a DOC file but it will pass a PDF.

Shannon showed up on the repeater at the end to drive around Waldo. We had relatively little participation from GARS.

(Earl) – Trying to get to NF4AC. Using a digital signature it was still 56k. It would not go there.

Gordon- I had a permissible size at 40k and that was the main problem. The signatures are small but we may have to get them smaller.

Lorilyn – How do people get trained for Level 3?

Gordon – People can do personal experience, reading, and LabNLunch. The more you do yourself the better. The professional development series is something all the EOC staff have had to do. That is their initial training, as well as ARRL Board of Directors requirement for all Field Organization leadership.

Susan – Whenever I ask for a shelter count, the people did not know. I never got an accurate one.

Leland – They do ask for that information. Somehow they are getting it from the shelters. If communications go out, then we may need to get that.

Wendell – Check with the front desk?

Susan – No, it seemed like no one knew.

Wendell – I am a Level 3. Suggestion for volunteers is to bring a switch so that you can easily switch back and forth between your two radios. For Brett – there should be a manual there in the go-box that tells you how to hook everything up. Dalton may have removed it to do the updates.

Gordon – We have a few loose ends with data cables and training sessions before hurricane season.

Ended 12:40 pm

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<sup>18</sup> Incorrect: Wendell is also Level III Alachua County, so we have 3.

This document is available at:

<https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2023/AARIPHurricaneIdalia.pdf>