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**From:** Quistorf, William  
**Sent:** Tue 4/23/2019 2:01:25 PM  
**Subject:** 2019 COMME X AAR  
[2019 COMME X- AAR.docx](#)  
[2019 COMME X Results.xlsx](#)

Thank you all for participating in the 2019 COMME X. The AAR and spreadsheet results are attached. It's best to print the spreadsheet on 11 x 17 inch paper if you have that option. Some of the aircraft were called away for missions during the exercise, but we did get a good snapshot of what is working for us regionally. Some of the ground units will be switching over from 800 MHz to 700 MHz in the near future, so stay tuned for that change.

Thank you,

**Bill Quistorf**

Bill Quistorf, Co-Chair, Regional Aviation



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**Northwest Regional Aviation  
2019 Annual Communications Exercise  
NWRA COMMEX 2019**





## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** **NWRA COMMEM 2019**

Northwest Regional Aviation (NWRA) together with our military aviation partners and numerous local, county, and state agencies successfully planned, coordinated and executed the fifth annual Regional Aviation Communications Exercise on March 7, 2019.

The COMMEM involved all UASI partners and included Federal (FBI, DEA, CBP), military (USCG, Washington National Guard), WSP, WSDOT-Aviation and the State EOC. This exercise tested and evaluated regional interoperable radio and video downlink systems between local, state and federal aviation agencies.

Coordination, tracking and communicating with 10 aircraft at one time took place during the exercise. The COMMEM provided confidence testing of interoperable communications and video downlink reception with regional Emergency Operations Centers, Public Safety Answering Points and Mobile Command Vehicles. This capability supports informed decision-making by regional policy-makers during planned or unplanned disasters or other events.

Primary focus during the COMMEM was the region-wide civil/military TRIS Radio Communications Patching to the Federal Integrated Wireless Network (IVN) and the use of Non-Federal VHF Mutual Aid (VTAC) direct radio channels. These radio channels will prove vital during any large scale event involving multiple agencies and multiple aircraft.

The COMMEM demonstrated our region's ability to:

- Support both the Regional Inland and USCG JHOC Mission
- Establish a Multi-Agency Coordination System
- Manage and track Regional Aviation assets
- Communicate with all fixed and mobile command assets
- Further identify areas of communications systems needing improvement

**Bill Quistorf**  
**Mondragon**

**Bill Quistorf, Co-Chair**  
**UASI Avn Sub-Committee**

**Ron**

**Ron Mondragon, Co-Chair**  
**UASI Avn Sub-Committee**



### **OBSERVATION**

The “Northwest Network” works well once it is established and function tested. Know that this network will tie in the entire region and can be used for overall coordination and to talk to government aircraft even if they are not located in one of the sectors (North, Central, or South). This network should not be used to coordinate missions, but can be used to request specific aircraft tune to a VTAC channel (VHF-FM) or STATE OPS channel (800 MHz).

The VTAC channels work well and can be used in each sector as outlined in the EAP:

- **South Sector VTAC 11**
- **Central East Sector VTAC 12**
- **Central West Sector VTAC 13**
- **North Sector VTAC 14**

### **ISSUE**

Limited communications from “Seattle Command” on 123.1 VHF located at the JHOC. This handheld Air Band radio currently has very limited range especially when used in an area surrounded by high-rise buildings.

### **RECOMMENDATION**



Long "Whip Antennas" should be acquired, installed and used when communicating on the hand held Air Band radios. This will allow much further range for transmitting.



***John MacArthur in front of displays at WSDOT-Aviation showing aircraft tracking on both Spidertracks and the ADS-B systems.***

#### **ISSUE**

Pierce County DEM was unable to communicate over the patched "Northwest Network" during the first part of the exercise. The Exercise Communications Coordinator checked in with the all participating PSAPs on the day of the exercise to ensure the radio patches are in place for the Northwest Network. He conducted the initial ground communications check at 12:45 and verified all PSAPs were participating to ensure that the patches are in place and working.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is important that the participating Emergency Management Departments and EOC's have the 800 MHz radios available and staffed during the exercise in order to test the patched system. If an agency is unable to staff the radio's let the Exercise Communications Coordinator know prior to the start of the exercise so that the information can be passed on to participants.

#### **ISSUE**

Very limited reception on the handheld video downlink receivers when used at the JHOC. This is likely due to the surrounding high-rise buildings which interfere with direct line-of-sight between the downlink aircraft and the handheld receivers. Seattle Command thought the issue was some aircraft transmitting encrypted downlink, but that was not the case. All were transmitting un-encrypted.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Seattle Command should rely on the ISP video link associated with the Seattle Omni receiver. Seattle EOC uses this link and had good reception from the downlink transmissions from KCSO and SCSO. The handheld receivers must be positioned for good line-of-sight with the aircraft, something that is difficult to do in the urban areas.

#### **ISSUE**

City of Seattle EOC is getting good reception on nearly all the radios/channels. If the JHOC building is to be used as an additional EOC for mutual response, then the communications hardware, specifically the antenna array, should be planned out and installed.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Identify which radio systems and downlink systems are to be used at the JHOC and develop an approved plan, acquire funding and establish a timeline to support installation of the systems.

#### **OBSERVATION**

NWRA should conduct the COMMEMX each year to continue to test and validate the regional communications system in the region. Our state, federal and military aviation partners are vital to emergency response efforts during any large scale events. It is important to function test the communications to know where the limitations are and to ensure pilots are familiar with the various radio channels that are not used on a routine basis.











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**From:** Pratt, Dave  
**Sent:** Tue 11/6/2018 11:47:10 AM  
**Subject:** Land Mobile Radio System Upgrade Project Update

Good Afternoon.

The Washington State Patrol is currently underway on a project to update the Land Mobile Radio (LMR) System's core, as part of the Land Mobile Radio System Update Project (LMRSUP). As a part of this effort, WSP will relocate the LMR system core from its current location in Yakima, to the state data center in Quincy and link it with the FBI's LMR system. We will also develop and install a new code plug (programming) for our radios and upgrade the NICE recording systems used in WSP's dispatch centers across the state.

We anticipate minimal impact on LMR operations as a result of the project. Cutover to the new core is anticipated to occur in later March or early April, 2019, at which time operations should be impacted very briefly. Following that, we plan to upgrade each of our districts' dispatch centers in a wave that will last for several weeks, but which should impact operations minimally and for less than two hours for each district. In all cases, we will target the specific cutovers to occur on dates and times when operations are at their lowest levels.

More planning is being done as this message is being written. We plan to deliver future updates monthly over the next few months and then more frequently, as our plans mature and the situation warrants.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the phone numbers and email address listed below.

Thanks,

Dave

Dave Pratt, PMP  
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*WSP LMR System Upgrade Project*  
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