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**State of Michigan  
Communications Unit**



**2018 COMMEX  
AFTER ACTION REPORT**

**September 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018 – Holly Michigan**

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

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Appendix A Michigan COMMEX - EXPLAN

## Executive Summary

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### COMMEX Overview

This exercise and training offering is a follow-up on to the Communications Unit Leader (COML) and Communications Unit Technician (COMT) training courses. The COMMEX provides an opportunity for COML and COMT trainees to demonstrate proficiency and complete requirements in the respective Position Task Books (PTB).

Public safety professionals who have completed a COML/COMT course must complete a series of competency tasks in their PTB as the next step in becoming a recognized COML/COMT for their agency. In this one day exercise, tasks are designed to simulate challenges COMLs and COMTs will encounter during an incident.

At the end of the exercise, locally recognized COMLs/COMTs sign off tasks within the PTB for trainees who have successfully demonstrated their proficiency at completing the task(s). If the requesting jurisdiction does not have qualified COMLs/COMTs, OEC/ICTAP will help the requestor identify qualified personnel to sign off the PTBs.

This offering is applicable to prospective trainees within the State with some or all of the following challenges:

- Providing opportunities for COML/COMT trainee proficiency testing.
- Achievement of State recognition and certification programs.
- Improve COML/COMT utilization both locally and statewide.
- Support of the Incident Command System (ICS) with integration of COMLs/COMTs

Customized support for this offering was designed to meet Michigan's unique needs. The design options, outcomes and deliverables are similar for the challenges listed above. Again, this is a direct benefit for each participating trainee. The deliverables include:

- Completion of COML/COMT PTB
- State recognition/certification for COMLs/COMTs
- Increased utilization of COMLs/COMTs

### Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the COMMEX exercise, several opportunities for improvement in for future exercises were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

The exercise scenario could be modified to include actual use of cross-band patches, as well as the use of other communication tools and equipment. The scenario also

could be modified to have the COMT perform specific tasks, such as setting up Internet connectivity, diagnosing and repairing simple things like broken/missing antennas or bad batteries.

Other considerations include expanding the tech room to include problems that actually come up in the field during deployments, such as coax connector installation, antenna installation, and even equipment problem solving tasks.

#### Use of Michigan Critical Incident Management System (MI CIMS):

Since 2012, Michigan has used MI-CIMS to support the mission of crisis management, public safety and emergency response personnel. The Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division along with local Emergency Management and emergency response partners use the MI-CIMS platform to provide simplified information access, establish efficient work flows, while promoting intelligent incident response and emergency management support through a uniquely customizable set of utilities for complete situational awareness.

MI-CIMS was used during the MI-COMMEX 2018 to simulate requests for additional “Communications Support” during an incident. At this point we are not going to create a generic COML or COMT position within MI-CIMS. If we did that they would not be integrated into any sort of processes that are specific to a local EM Program (EOC Schedule, Resource Request, Task Assignment, IAP Building). What will have to happen is when an COML/COMT is deployed to another jurisdiction they will need to be assigned that jurisdiction’s “ County of X LOG EOC Communications”. It really only takes a matter of minutes to assign this new position. When they are assigned that jurisdiction’s specific position they will be integrated into all of the processes, and work flows already built into the MI-CIMS platform.



## Exercise Overview

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### Exercise Name

Michigan COMMEX 2018

### Exercise Dates

September 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

### Scope

The scope of the COMMEX will focus on providing an opportunity for COMU personnel to complete their PTB. Completion of the PTB is a requirement to move from being a trainee to becoming certified by their agency. The exercise will focus on the position specific tasks and will use available communication assets to simulate the trainee's ability to perform the required tasks. The trainee will interface with other Incident Command System (ICS) positions using ICS forms, principles and processes during the exercise. An incident response scenario was developed by the Exercise Planning Team (EPT) for the COMMEX to provide an opportunity to complete all of the required tasks.

Throughout the exercise the emphasis will be on:

- COMU required tasks
- The EPT's goal and objectives
- Incident Command System (ICS) principles and processes
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance
- Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Guidance

### Exercise Mission

The COMMEX is designed to establish a learning environment for players to exercise emergency response plans, policies and procedures as they pertain to a disaster response.

### Objectives

The COMMEX focused on achieving the following objectives:

- Providing an opportunity for trainees to complete tasks within their PTB
- Observe the ability of trainees to establish, maintain and demobilize communication functions during a simulated incident response.

- Enhance National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) training skills and abilities for all exercise participants during a communication focused functional exercise.
- Test the capability and use of MiCIMS for requesting additional communications support and assets that would be called upon to better establish, maintain and support the response to a real world event similar to the one used in this exercise.
- Improve the use of and promote the development an After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) to help better educate, train and learn from the best practices used at any event.

## Scenario

This Exercise Plan (ExPlan) was produced by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP), at the request of the state and with the input, advice, and assistance of the COMMEX EPT.

The exercise scenario is based on an incident with extensive damage to areas within the region that will challenge but not overwhelm the players and provide an opportunity for the trainees to complete all of their required tasks within their PTB.

The exercise was built with assumptions, to constitute the implied factual foundation for the exercise and, hence, are assumed to be present before the start of the exercise. The following general assumptions applied to the COMMEX exercise:

- The exercise provided a no-fault learning environment
- Exercise simulation was realistic and plausible, containing sufficient detail to provide the trainees an opportunity to complete all of the tasks within their PTB.
- Trainees were evaluated on how they reacted to the information and situations as they were presented, in the same manner as if this incident involved a real disaster response.
- Each participating trainee was offered an opportunity to complete the required tasks in their PTB, but were only signed off on the tasks they completed successfully during the exercise.
- Trainees benefited from what they put into the exercise.
- Each trainee had a full advantage of the opportunity to enhance their COMU skills and abilities.

## Constructs and Constraints

Constructs are exercise devices and injects that were designed to enhance or improve exercise realism. Alternatively, constraints are exercise limitations that may detract from exercise realism. Constraints may be the inadvertent result of a faulty construct or may pertain to financial and staffing issues.

## Sponsors

Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP)

Michigan Public Safety Interoperable Communications Board (MIPSCIB)

Michigan Communications Unit Working Group (COMU-WG), COMMEX EPT.

## Exercise Planning Team Leadership

The following individuals participated on the Exercise Planning Team:

Last Name	First Name	Agency Title	Agency	Exercise Position
Becker	Jerry	Director	Clair Co Emergency Management & Homeland Security (CCEMHSD)	COML Team Leader T3
Bush	Ron	Sgt. Assistant EM Coordinator	Berrien County SD	COMT (T)/Team Simulator T2
Bzak	Kris	COMM Supervisor	MMR	RADO T1 D2
Chewning	Chad	Director	Livingston Co 911	Observer
Cooper	Jay	Director	Mobile Medical Response	Observer
Corbin	Kirby	COMT Tech	Mobile Medical Response	Observer
Cribley	Chuck	Logistic Chief	IMT	COML Team Leader T2
Ernst	Chris	Dispatcher	Mason Oceana 911	RADO T2
Fechter	Kurt KF	Capt.	Oxford FD/CST	Team Simulator
Harvey	Joni	Deputy Director	Livingston 911	RADO T3 D2
Hasil	Ray	Director	Mason – Oceana 911	Exercise Director
Imeson	John	Radio System Manager	Eaton County 911	MSEL Author RADO/INTD Team Lead/COMT Team Leader
Jannereth	Kate	Lead Controller	MPSCS	Controller
King	Hillary	Dispatch Supervisor	Montcalm County 911	RADO T1 D1
Lupo	Tony	Supervisor	Bay County 911	Team Simulator T3
Meek	Steve	Lt.	GT Metro FD	COMT Team Leader T3 D1/D2

Last Name	First Name	Agency Title	Agency	Exercise Position
Myers	Todd	OPS Manager	Mason – Oceana 911	Tech Room
Simon	Chelsea	Administrative Assistant	MPSCS	Deputy Lead Controller
Stryd	Steve	Technology Sgt.	Kalamazoo Co SO	COMT Leader
Thomas	Amy	911 Director	Montcalm	Observer
Tracy	Bryce	911 Coordinator	Mackinac	Team Simulator T1
Vogel	Terry	Technology Director	Meceola Central Dispatch	COMT Team Leader T2
Weil	Matt	Assistant Chief Team Coordinator	Oakland CST/NOCA	Facilities Manager / Logistics
Williams	Randy	Public Safety Enterprise Services Unit Manager	MPSCS	COML (T) Setup Day/COML Team Leader T1
Winters	Rich	MPSCS/radio Tech	MPSCS	Observer
Coates	Terri	Editor/Data Specialist	DHS/OEC/ICTAP	Data Specialist
Kempker	Patrick	Senior Training Analyst	DHS/OEC/ICTAP	Tech Room Lead

## Participating Organizations & Data

The following organizations participated in this exercise:

### Federal

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Office of Emergency Communications (OEC)

### State of Michigan

- Communications Unit Work Group (COMU-WG)

### Local

- **(Exercise Venue)** North Oakland County Fire Authority (NOCA) Station #1, 5051 Grange Hall Rd, Holly, MI 48442

- Oakland County - (Command & Communications Trailer, Equipment)
- Mobile Medical Response - (Communications Trailer & Equipment)
- Michigan Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS) - (Satellite Trailer, Equipment, and Support staff)
- Berrien County Emergency Management - (Communications Trailer, Equipment)
- Livingston County 911 - (Mobile Command Communications Unit)

## **Participants**

Over 40 total participants in the 2018 COMMEX

- Players: 13 Trainees for COML (10/13 passed)
- Players: 3 Trainees for COMT (All or 3/3 Passed)
- Facilitators or Controllers: 4 (Exercise Directors/Admin Clerks)
- Evaluators: 12 (Team Leaders/Simulators/Tech Room Leads)
- Observers: 7 (Agency Representatives/Technical Specialists/Vendors)
- Actors: 4 (Dispatchers/Radio Operators)