

2026 Winter Storm Comm Outage After Action Report Review

March 5, 2026
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Topics

1. CUP-26-29T Exercise
2. Summary of Findings
3. Pictures from the field
4. Summary of Recommendations



21 February 2026 WSCO Exercise

Objectives

1. Manage field responders assigned to specific locations throughout the city by the CARES SOP
2. Pass appropriate scenario messages designated as actionable 9-1-1 traffic from the field to Cupertino EOC by voice or packet.
3. Activate neighborhood CERT for message passing to the EOC via the ARKs
4. Staff the three SCCFD fire stations in Cupertino
5. Test the use of 2 community access points as emergency communication field locations.



CUP-26-29T Timeline (from ICS-214's)

Time	Description, Notes, Comments
Saturday 21-February	06:15 Arrived at Service Center to retrieve C469
	06:35 Depart Service Center for the City Hall
	06:48 Arrived at the City Hall
	07:15 C469 Setup Complete
	07:30 Started the MAC Resource (travel) Net
	08:25 DOC swears in 4 MACs as Cupertino DSW
	08:27 Closed the MAC Resource (travel) Net
	08:30 Started Exercise Briefing
	09:02 Briefing Complete, all responders received assignments
	09:05 Opened the Event (assignment) Resource Net
	09:11 Started the Message Net
	09:18 Activated CUPEOC Packet Station
	11:15 End of Event announced
	11:25 Opened Demob
	11:50 Closed the Message Net
	11:55 Closed the Event Resource Net
	12:00 Closed Demob
	12:21 C469 Departs City Hall for Service Center



By the Numbers

Time in the field (minutes)...	90
Total volunteer hours...	64
Total 911 messages passed...	46
Packet messages ...	26
Voice messages ...	20
Total participants...	28
CARES...	12
SCCo MACs...	4
CERT...	12
Sites activated...	7
GMRS Neighborhood Nets...	4



Our deployment

Senior Center, De Anza ARK



Our deployment

Jollyman Park



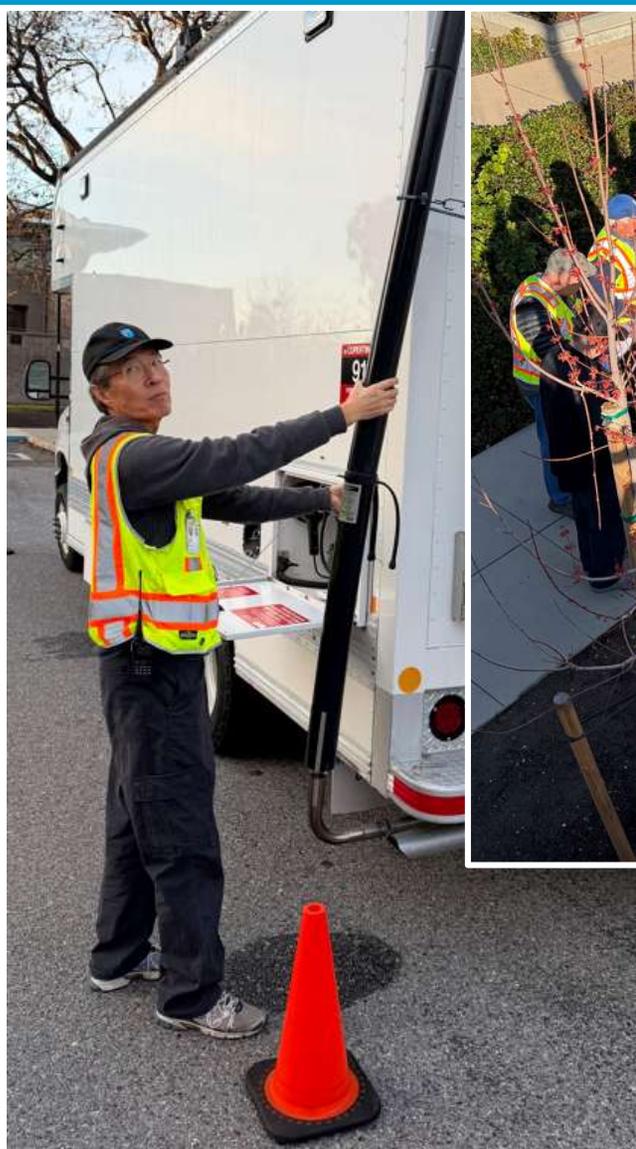
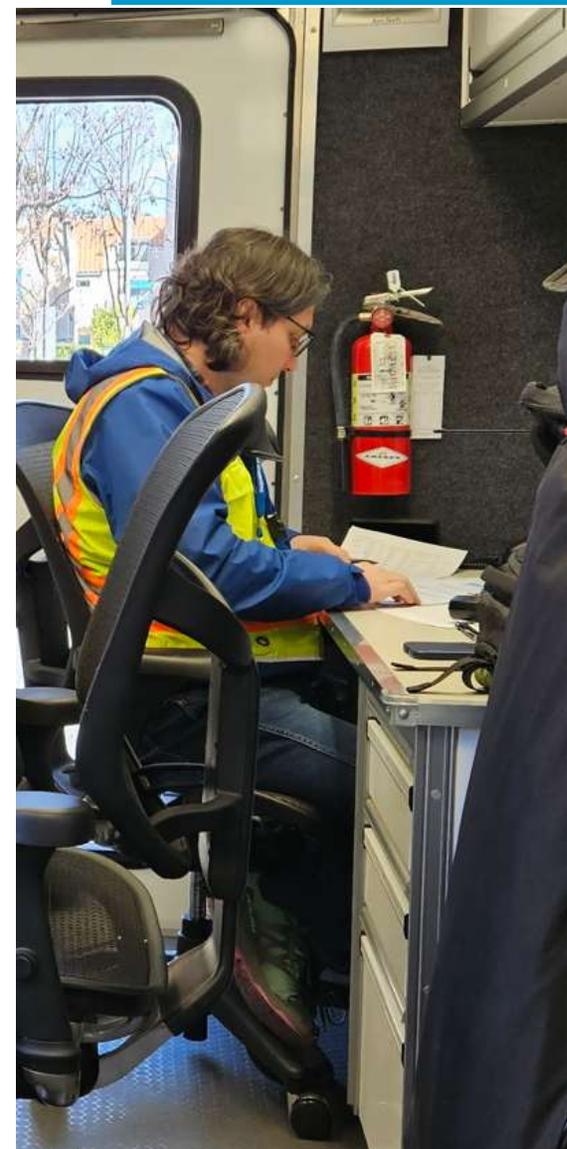
Our deployment

Kennedy Middle School



Our deployment

C469 Setup, Staging



Summary of Findings

1. Operational Capabilities Were Validated

This exercise confirmed CARES' ability to manage several field responders and transmit actionable 9-1-1 traffic from different locations to the EOC by both voice and packet.

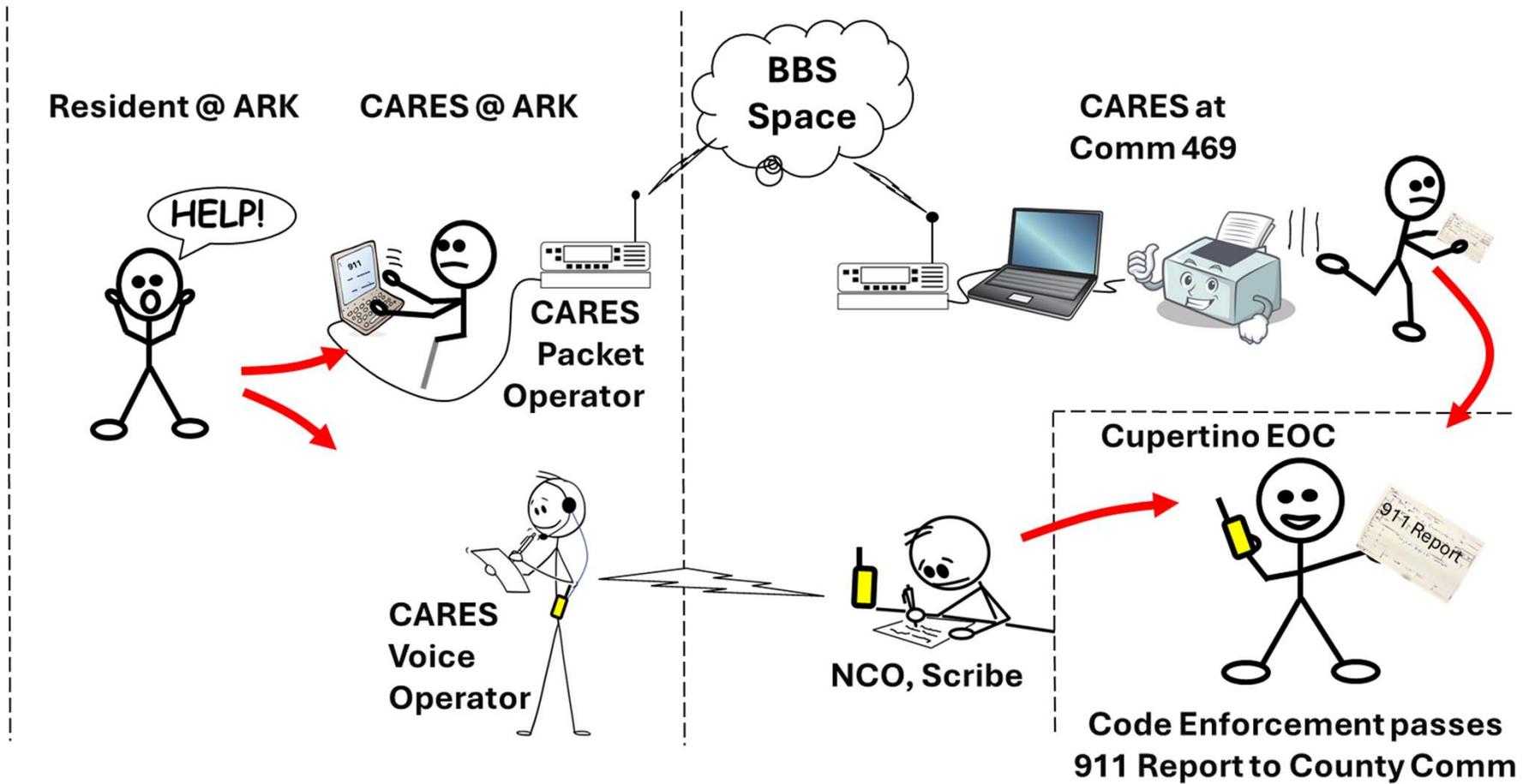
2. Message passing system performed at near capacity

High volumes of immediate-priority messages placed significant demand on Net Control and our message handling processes. While the system functioned as designed and successfully processed all traffic, operations frequently approached or exceeded workload limits.

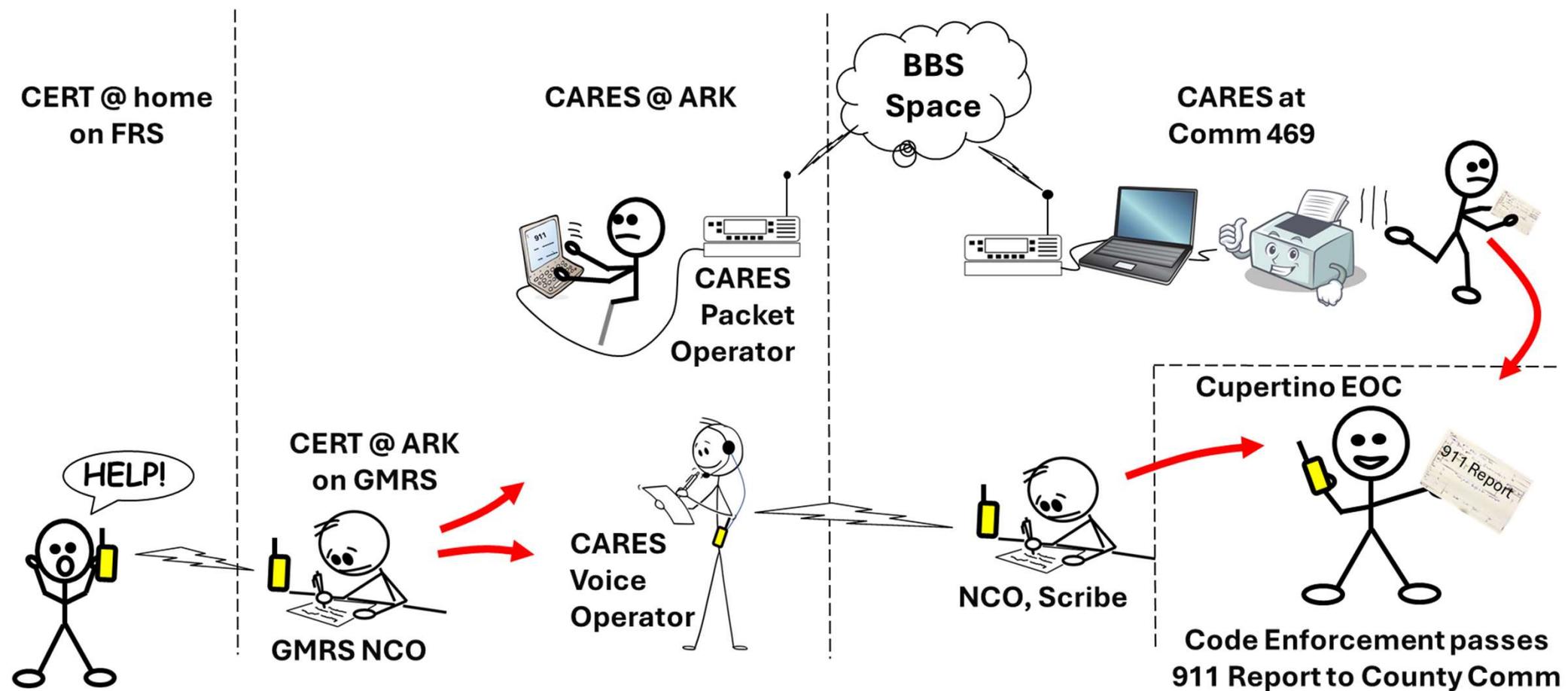
3. Procedural Refinement and Deployment Realism

The exercise validated existing processes while highlighting areas for refinement -- realistic setup timelines (i.e.: packet operations), radio readiness standardization ("normal your radio"), and clearer CERT integration procedures, to name a few.

RACES with scripted injects



CERT with FRS/GMRS injects



Summary of Recommendations (1/4)

Message Passing

- ✓ 1. Revisit the required 911 form fields and what must be filled in.
- ✓ 2. Update the CARES Field Communications Handbook with the 911 question flow (see Cupertino Packet addendum)
- ✓ 3. Develop an approach and tools to produce a plain text 911 message to be delivered to SCCo EOC (Plan D).

Operational Timeline & Deployment Readiness

- ✓ 4. Consider adjusting future exercise timelines to include realistic setup periods.
- ✓ 5. Build into future plans staggered activation times (e.g., open GMRS/FRS nets “x” minutes after CARES stations are anticipated to be operational).
- ? 6. Evaluate extending exercise duration by 30–60 minutes.
- ? 7. Alternatively, reduce the scenario number and pace that messages should be passed (e.g., 4 or 5 instead of 6 messages; trigger every 30 minutes)



Summary of Recommendations (2/4)

Net Control & Traffic Management

- ✓ 8. Develop procedure and criteria for activating a second message NCS during message surges.
- ✓ 9. Re-implement split Resource and Message Nets; Update the CARES SOP to reflect this approach

Fire Station Equipment Readiness

- ✓ 10. Coordinate with SCCFD for inventory, storage, and radio tests
- 11. Document equipment readiness status.
- ✓ 12. Address fire station access by CARES responders with SCCFD operations staff.

Community Access Point (CAP) Operations

- ✓ 13. Create CAP site evaluation and selection criteria
- 14. Conduct pre-exercise site walk-throughs where feasible



Summary of Recommendations (3/4)

Organization Integration, ARK Operations, and Training

- ✓ 15. Include the message flow diagram to address uncertainty with message routing responsibility to packet vs voice.
- ✓ 16. Clarify for CARES responders who is the site unit lead.
- 17. Clarify at the ARK level:
 - Who determines the transmission method,
 - ✓ • How CERT forms transition to CARES for sending.
- 18. Include expectations for CERT (FRS) Health & Welfare checks if applicable.
- 19. Enhance pre-exercise outreach to the CERT communities.
- ✓ 20. Update the CERT Field Communications Handbook to add message form examples
- 21. Consider developing a CERT Net Control Station Handbook
- 22. Consider developing a GMRS Net Control class for Cupertino Community volunteers.



Summary of Recommendations (4/4)

Organization Integration, ARK Operations, and Training

- 23. Schedule periodic CERT Comm Refresher and Radio Basics class and Hands-on Training for interested Cupertino Community volunteers.
- ✓ 24. Continue the pursuit of an SCCo RACES Type IV Credential (C4) for all CARES field responders.
- ✓ 25. Encourage CARES members to take SCCo Field and Packet training.
- ✓ 26. Look for opportunities to deliver more On-The-Air (OTA) training without the overhead of a full field deployment.

Documentation & Interoperability

- ✓ 27. Continue to focus on documentation completion from all participants.
- ✓ 28. Create a short reference document for MACs outlining key procedural differences between Cupertino procedures and county training (e.g., message numbering, no staging net, 911 handling conventions).
- 29. Include in future exercise packets.



After Action Report

After Action Report Winter Storm Comm Outage Communication Exercise CUP-26-29T

See the After-Action
Report for all the
details.....

Overview

Description:	Winter Storm Communications Outage, Communications E
Event Type:	Cupertino ARES Exercise
Event Name:	WSCO CommEx
Activation No:	CUP-26-29T
Managing Entity:	Cupertino ARES
Event Date:	21 February 2026
Report Date:	2 March 2026
Report Revision:	1.2, Final
Submitted by:	Jim Oberhofer

[Cupertinoares.org](#) > Exercises & Events > CUP-26-29T

<https://cupertinoares.org/docs/CUP-26-29T-WSCO-CommEx-AAR.pdf>

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Thank you

Any Questions?

