

MERT

Marion County Emergency Radio Team



Marion County Sheriff's Office
Division of Emergency Management

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

November 2024

MERT's primary role is to support all open Evacuation Shelters throughout Marion County during declared Emergency events. We also support EOC and emergency personnel along with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) with voice, image and data communications resources. ***"Call MERT... When all else fails!"***

MERT Monthly Meeting

The next meeting is on November 16th, 10:00 am.

All Amateur Radio Operators are Welcomed!

The Emergency Operations Center and MERT's Role



Harlan Cook (KN4VRM)
MERT Coordinator

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) serves a critical role in every phase of emergency management, from being the hub for all coordination during an incident to facilitating and directing recovery/clean-up. However, a common misconception is... the EOC does not manage an incident — it coordinates.

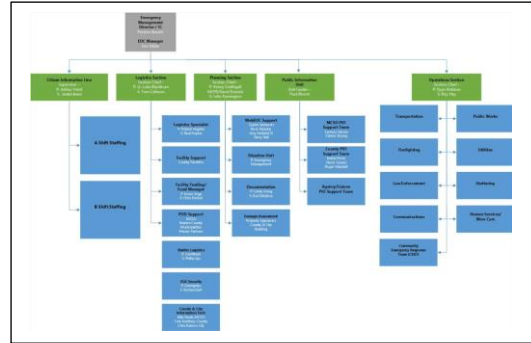
Various situations will trigger the EOC's activation, but as we know most commonly in Florida when a local or state emergency is declared, we have a hurricane coming! When that happens, the key objective is maximizing the **successful oversight** of that event.

The EOC is the centralized location of emergency response and recovery support operations during incidents. That's why senior emergency management designed MERT's communications resources to be co-located with the EOC. **Why?** Because MERT provides unique and difficult to replicate information (incident knowledge outside the EOC) assisting the EOC Incident Command personnel with information needed to better coordinate an emergency. This specifically includes the **resident Shelters when opened**.

As members have learned, ICS procedures are used as the command-and-control structure. Within this structure, the EOC is organized into five sections to manage overall operations in Marion County.

"To bring about change, you must not be afraid to take the first step. When you change your thoughts, remember to also change your world." – Rosa Parks

The Division of Emergency Management created this chart showing the overall organizational groups and sections.



These EOC sections include:

1. **Emergency Management:** Under the guidance of the EOC Director or Deputy Director, this section has overall responsibility for the management and direction of all EOC activities including development, implementation and review of strategic decisions. Management directly coordinates with each section ensuring its strategic direction is implemented in EOC operations.
2. **Citizen Information Line:** Responding to and answering citizen questions before, during and after emergencies reduces uncontrolled rumors leading to panic situations. An informed public is better prepared by knowing what government officials are saying, planning and doing. It is then that an intelligent public can make the best decisions for their personal safety and security.
3. **Logistics:** Logistics is responsible for procuring supplies, personnel and material support necessary to conduct emergency responses (e.g. personnel call-out, equipment acquisition, lodging, transportation, food, etc.). This section supports Shelter activities (organization, security, etc.)
4. **Planning and Intelligence:** This section is responsible for receiving, evaluating and analyzing all disaster information and providing updated status reports to EOC management and field operations. The planning and intelligence section is also responsible for damage assessment and developing specialized technical assessments of events which may include maps and physical inspections.
5. **Public Information Unit:** Keeping the public informed during emergencies falls upon the Public Information personnel who collect, prepare and disseminate factual details and information via multiple formats from videos with key public officials to timely updates on popular Internet websites.
6. **Operations:** This section supports these units;
 - a. Law Enforcement
 - b. Fire Fighting
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Public Works
 - e. Utilities
 - f. Human Service - Mass Care
 - g. Sheltering
 - h. Communications
 - i. **MERT**
 - j. **CERT**

"I believe it's time that women truly owned their superpowers and used their beauty and strength to change the world around them." – Janelle Monae

I trust this bigger picture of how the Division of Emergency Management is organized and operates during emergency events helps in understanding how the Marion County Emergency Radio Team (MERT) provides one important support element to a “successful oversight” of emergency events.

TO YOU... members of MERT... know that you are making a difference by your membership, active participation, training and support to accept a shelter assignment when we receive an Activation Order! I know it isn’t “easy”... but our actions and the results we provide and document are *significant and truly meaningful*.

It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize the follow individuals who honored their membership commitment during Hurricane Milton:

Bill Gillespie	KW5BG	MERT IC	EOC
Bill Sobel	K1WLS	MERT IC	EOC
Pat Davis	KQ4BRW	Leader	North Marion Middle
Cindy Sheffield	K9LRX	Trainee	North Marion Middle
Ray Woody	KB6FKN	Leader	West Port HS
Tim Trombly	K8TAT	Trainee	West Port HS
Gary Neron	KS4TSX	Leader	Ft. McCoy
Phil Lewis	W4EVV	Leader	Liberty Middle
Nick Kiddey	W4NFK	Leader	Horizon Academy
Mike Condon	W9MNC	Radio Operator	EOC
Gray Moffett	KC3DWY	MERT IC	EOC
Ryan Salom	N8GLX	Radio Operator	EOC
Carl Berry	KC5PMX	Radio Operator	Dunnellon PD

To all MERT Members... thank you for your enthusiasm and support of our mission...
“When all else fails. Call MERT!”



Hurricane Milton Facts

Some facts we learned about this hurricane:

- * In Marion County, the maximum sustained winds reached 33 mph with the highest recorded gust of 44 mph.
- * The maximum rainfall recorded was 9.42 inches.
- * About 75,000 customers lost electricity out of a total of 220,000.
- * 37,000 people from other parts of Florida sought refuge in Marion County.