

Georgia AUXCOMM

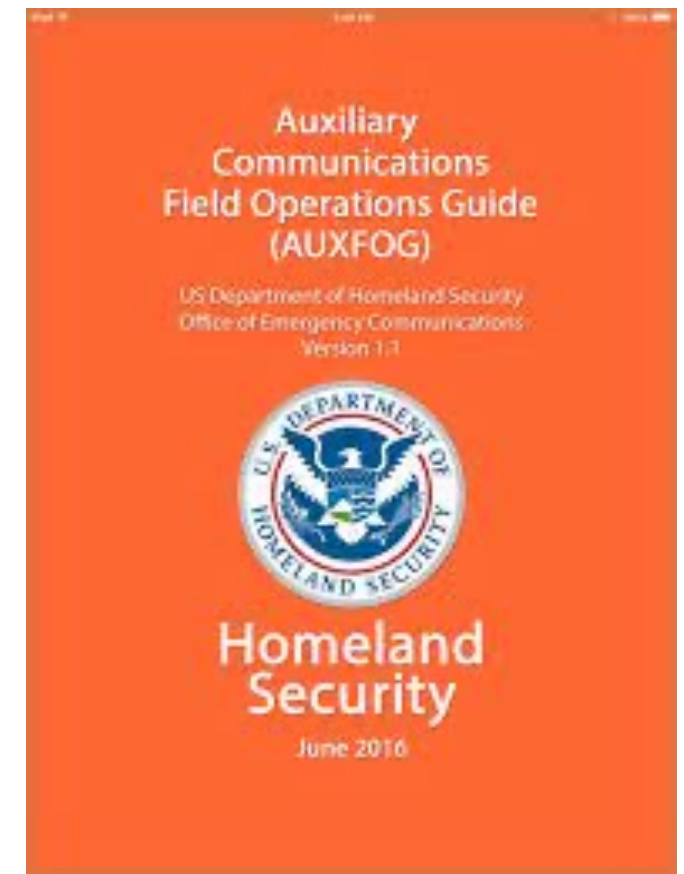
A quick overview of AUXC in the state of Georgia



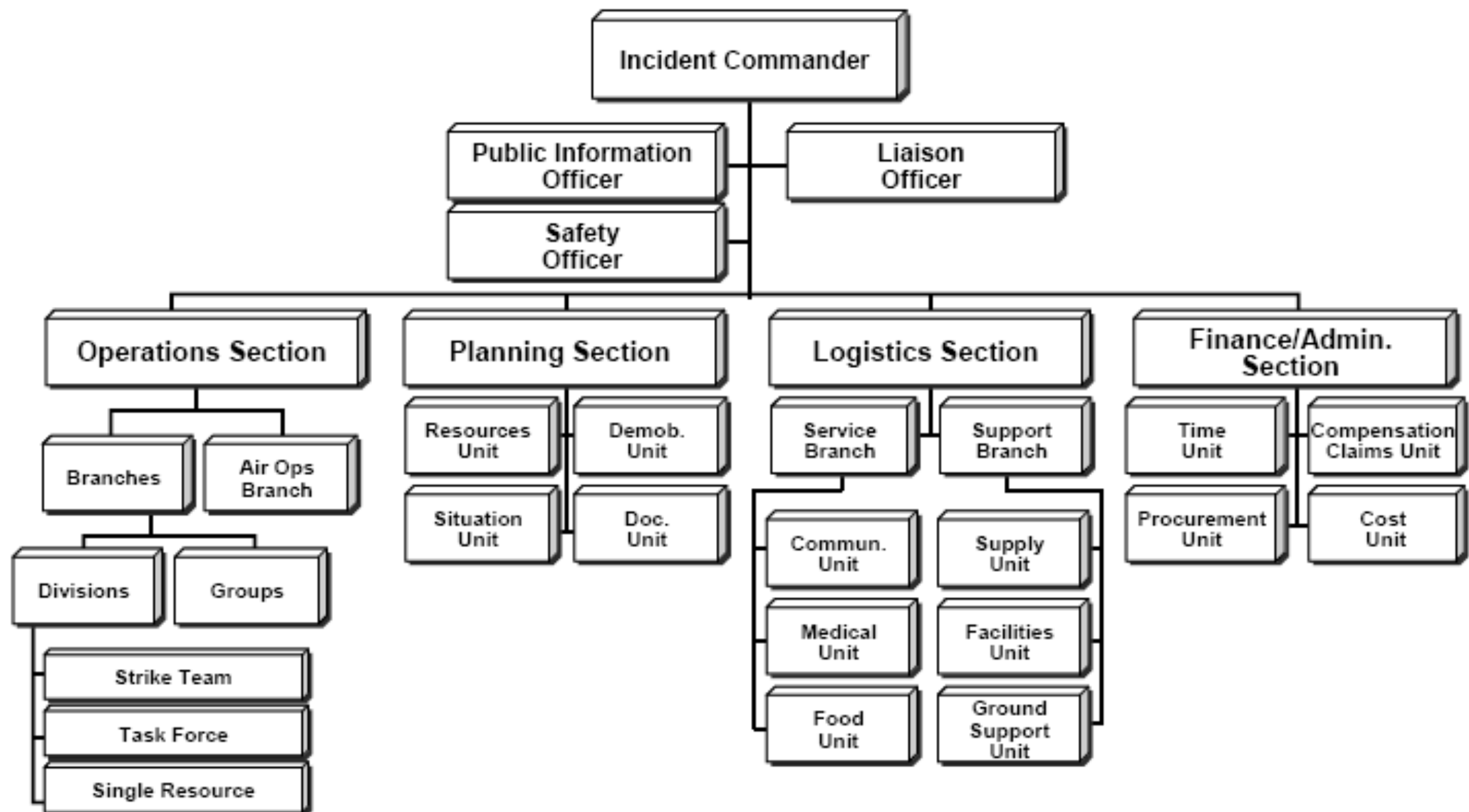
Winter 2023
Presentation Version 4.1

Agenda

- Review – ICS organizational structure
- ICS Communications Unit
- What is AUXCOMM?
- What is Georgia AUXCOMM?
- Georgia AUXCOMM Organization
- AUXCOMM selected missions
- How to get certified
- AUXCOMM Classes
- Current challenges & opportunities
- Planned 2023 AUXCOMM Events
- Where to get more information

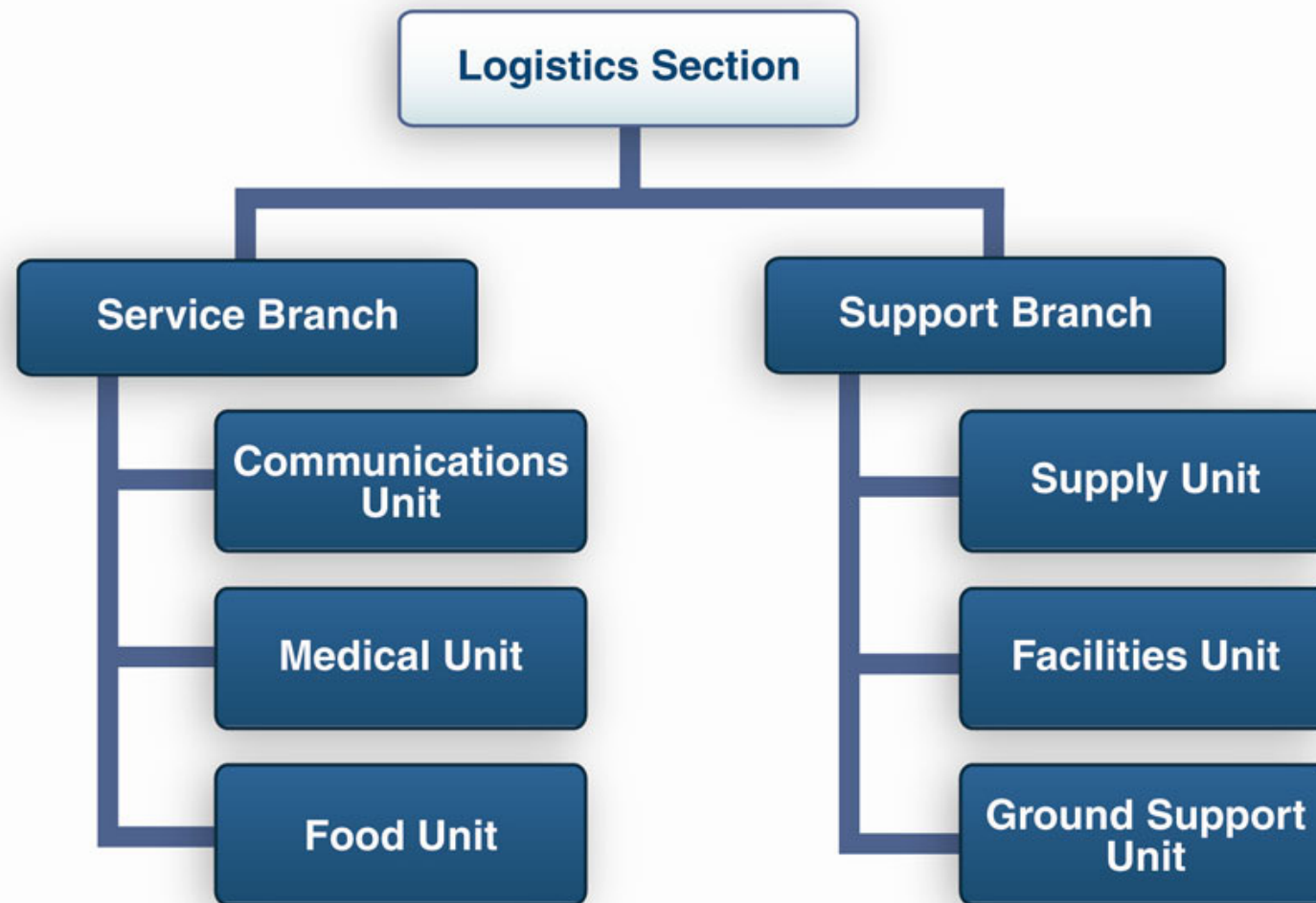


Review – ICS organizational structure



Source: FEMA ICS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System

Review – ICS Logistics Section



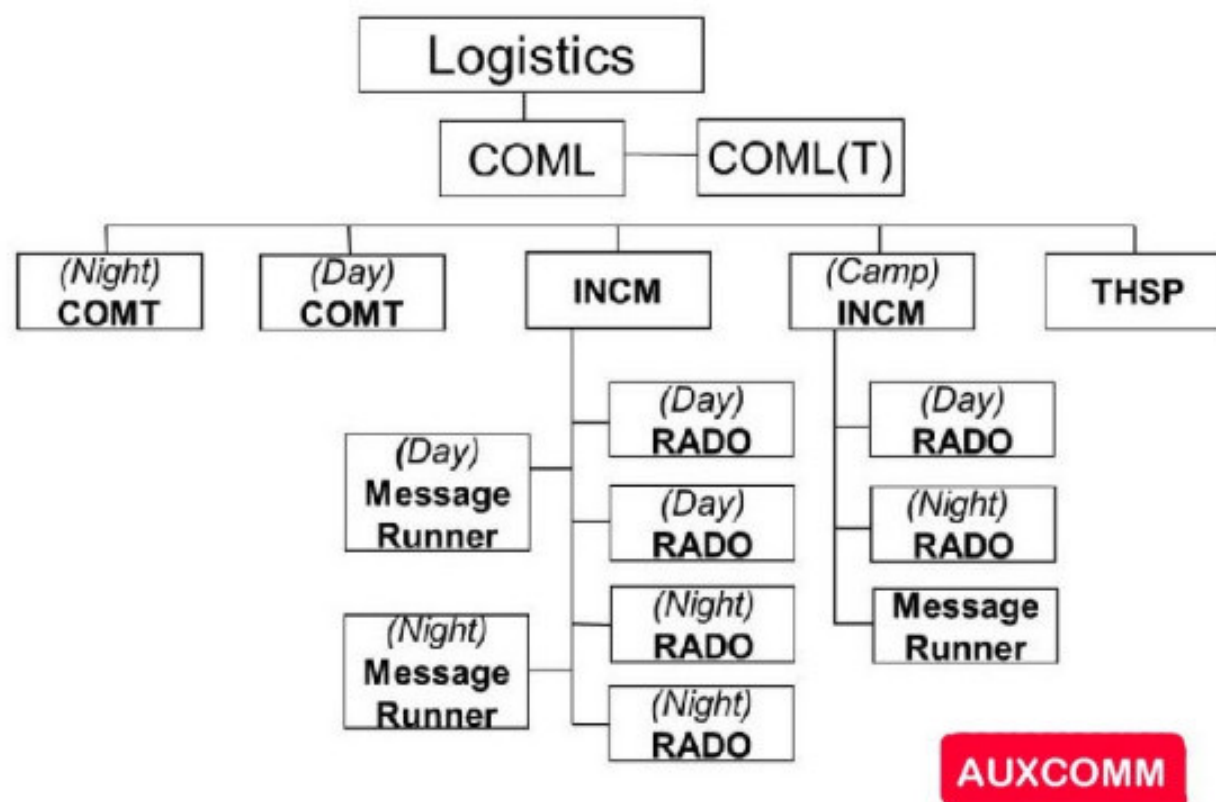
Source: FEMA National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) – Appendix B

ICS Communications Unit



Homeland
Security

A Complex Organizational Chart



Source: CISA COML Training Course / CISA AUXCOMM Training Course

What is AUXCOMM?



AUXC: Both the person (Auxiliary Communicator) and the Incident Command System (ICS) position used to provide auxiliary communications.

Trained Auxiliary Communicators (AUXC) are a valuable communications resource tool that can be used by local, county, regional, tribal or state agencies/organizations.

Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM) is an all-inclusive term used to describe the many organizations that provide various types of communications support to emergency management, public safety, and other government agencies or describes the services themselves. This includes, but is not limited to amateur radio, military radio, citizens band radio (CB), etc.

The AUXC PTB are the minimum tasks required to become certified (at a state level) as an auxiliary communicator.

What is Georgia AUXCOMM?



AUXCOMM is an abbreviation for “auxiliary communications.” It was developed by OEC in 2009. The concept was to educate amateur radio entities to work and train with public safety personnel, understand the value of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) concept and the role of the communications unit leader (COML). In May 2019, the AUXCOMM position was officially recognized as part of the Incident Command System (ICS) under the Communications Unit as AUXC.

In Georgia, the AUXC position is officially recognized by the Georgia Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) to support auxiliary communications at the State Operations Center (SOC) and for official deployments requiring auxiliary communications. Georgia AUXCOMM has been formed to provide GEMA with trained communicators and provide information, ongoing training, and support for AUXCOMM operators in the state. Georgia AUXCOMM is a separate organization from GEMA but will receive direction from GEMA and provide communications support.

Source: Georgia AUXCOMM website

What is Georgia AUXCOMM?



The mission of Georgia AUXCOMM is to create a team of qualified auxiliary communicators, provide training and information supporting the Incident Command System and our primary served agency, Georgia Emergency Management Agency.

The purpose of Georgia AUXCOMM is to promote, support, and lead emergency communications activities that support community needs.

Legally, Georgia AUXCOMM, Inc. is a Georgia non-profit corporation.

Tactically, Georgia AUXCOMM is organized using an ICS structure.

Source: Georgia AUXCOMM website and Georgia AUXCOMM Constitution

Georgia AUXCOMM Organization



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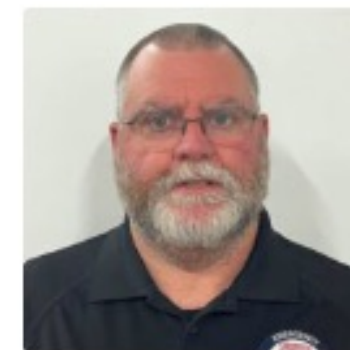
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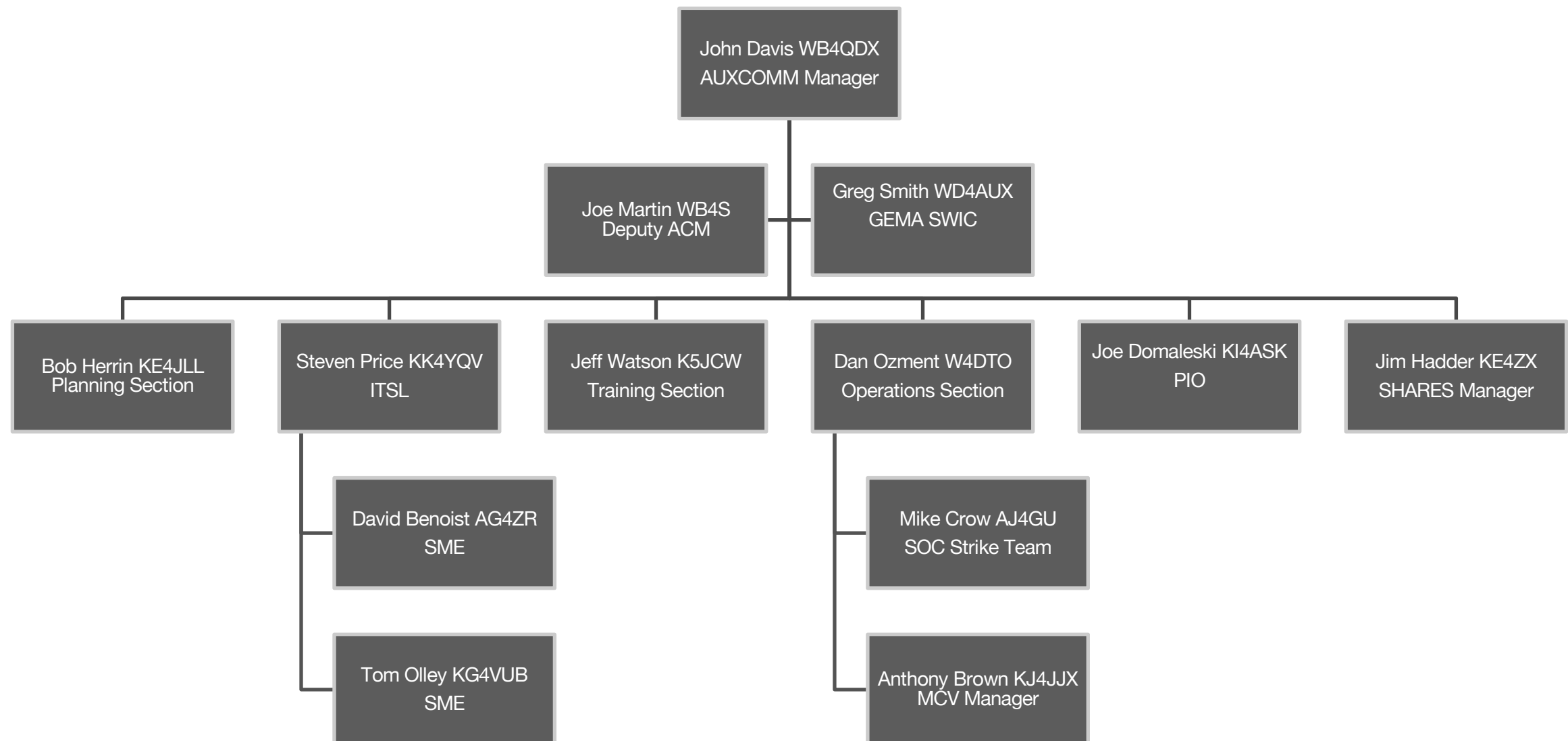
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Georgia AUXCOMM Organization



Updated as of November 2023

AUXCOMM selected missions

- MCV Exercise (11/2020)
- Operation Clean Sweep (2/2021)
- Operation Corral (2/2021)
- Operation Vax (3-6/2021)
- Operation Southwire (9/2021)
- Ice Storm Izzy (1/2022)
- MCV Exercise (3/2022)
- NVIS Exercise (10/2023)




MCV Exercise (11/2020)

- Purpose – assist GEMA and Gilmer County in planning and implementing the MCV exercise.
- Activities
 - Assist with planning and staging
 - Assist with setup
 - Assist with activities
 - Assisted with airborne operations (fixed and rotary wing)
 - Completed assigned tasks
- Technologies used
 - Satellite phones
 - VOIP systems
 - 700/800 MHz state communications
 - Amateur radio
 - Drone surveillance



Operation Clean Sweep (2/2021)

- Purpose – assist GEMA in reorganizing radio room at SOC.
 - Activities
 - Planning layout
 - Moving equipment
 - Configuring gear
 - Testing equipment
 - Technologies used
 - HF radios
 - Computers
 - VHF / UHF radios
 - Network gear
 - Telephone gear
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Operation Corral (2/2021)

- Purpose – assist Dept. of Corrections in programming radios
- Activities
 - Setting cache radios
 - Using programming software
 - Testing radio configurations
 - Deploying radios
- Technologies used
 - Dept. of corrections UHF radios
 - Programming software
 - Programming cables
 - Charging stations
 - Cache boxes



Operation Vax (3-6/2021)

- Purpose – assist GEMA in setting up communications at six mass vaccination sites around the state
- Activities
 - Planning communications setup
 - Deploying network / communications gear
 - Testing network setup
 - Deploying portable FM transmitter
 - Setting up Incident Command
- Technologies used
 - VOIP
 - Cradlepoint
 - FM transmitters
 - 700/800 MHz radio system
 - iPad configurations
 - Networking gear



Operation Southwire (9/2021)

- Purpose – assist GEMA in setting up communications at an undisclosed location in preparation for visiting dignitaries
- Activities
 - Planning network layout
 - Implementing network design
 - Preparing network cables
 - Setting up VOIP, LAN, WAN
- Technologies used
 - Networking tools
 - Analyzers
 - Networking gear
 - Cable supplies



Ice Storm Izzy (1/2022)

- Purpose – assist GEMA in monitoring storm-impacted areas
- Activities
 - Monitor 60m / 80m watch net on HF
 - Conduct net on D-Star REF030B and D-RATS
 - Pass traffic using Winlink
 - Monitor local media sources in the affected areas
 - Monitor NWSSChat (Skywarn-certified only)
 - Monitor WebEOC
 - Put AuxComm MCV on standby
- Technologies used
 - HF amateur radio
 - D-Star / D-RATS
 - Winlink



ACTIVITY LOG (ICS 214)		
1. Incident Name: Winter WX Storm Izzy - 15 Jan 2022	2. Operational Period: Date From: 1/15/2022 Date To: 1/16/2022 Time From: 5:00pm Time To: 6:00pm	
3. Name: Joe Domaleski	4. ICS Position: AUXC / PIO	5. Home Agency (and Unit): GEMA/HS AUXC
6. Resources Assigned:		
Name	ICS Position	Home Agency (and Unit)
7. Activity Log:		
Date/Time	Notable Activities	
1/15/22, 5pm	Received mission briefing	
1/15/22, 6pm	End of briefing. End of day.	
1/16/22, 7am	Setup radio station and monitoring - NWSSChat, WebEOC, D-Star REF030B	
1/16/22, 9am	Test of D-Star REF030B with WX4GMA, Begin monitoring and support	
1/16/22, 1pm	Setup and test of D-RATS, Begin monitoring D-RATS	
1/16/22, 2pm	Test of 60m HF with WX4GMA on Channel 5	
1/16/22, 4pm	Send out social media press release about GA AUXC operations	
1/16/22, 5pm	Check into Georgia ARES D-RATS net	
1/16/22, 6pm	End of operations. Note: all radio and communications systems worked fine during incident.	



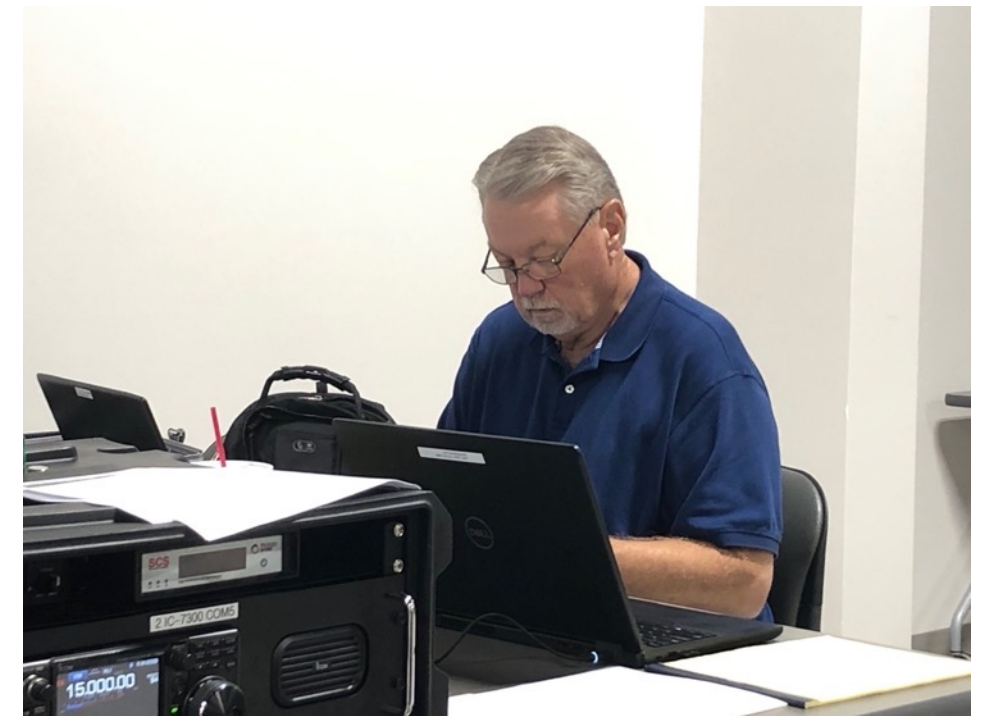
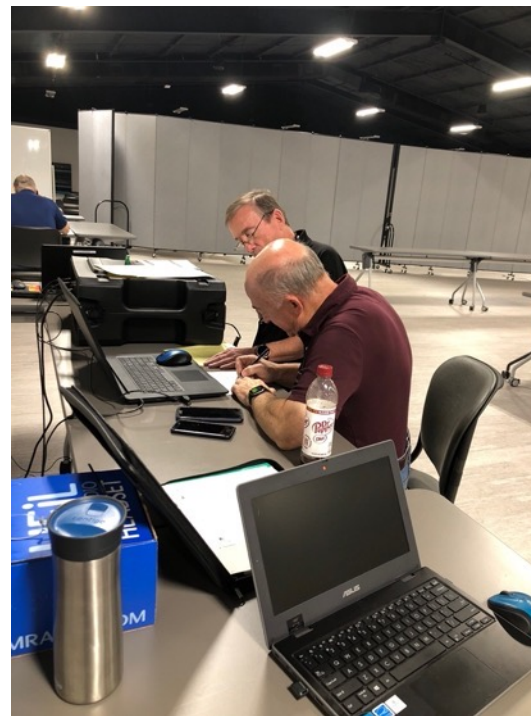
MCV Exercise (3/2022) – Lake Blackshear

- Purpose – assist GEMA in planning and implementing the MCV exercise.
- Activities
 - Assist with planning and staging
 - Assist with setup
 - Assist with training activities
 - Assist with exercise activities
 - Completed assigned tasks
 - PTB sign-offs
- Technologies used
 - Satellite phones
 - VOIP systems
 - 700/800 MHz state radio
 - Amateur radio
 - Drone surveillance



NVIS Exercise (10/2023) – Atlanta / Forsyth

- Purpose – serve as liaison between ARES and GEMA during the State ARES SET / NVIS exercise by staffing the State Operations Center in Atlanta and the Alternate SOC in Forsyth.
- Activities
 - Coordination with exercise lead W8BYH
 - Assist with planning and staging
 - Assist with setup at both SOC locations
 - Assist with exercise activities
 - Completed assigned tasks
 - PTB sign-offs
- Technologies used
 - HF SSB amateur radio
 - HF PSK31 digital
 - DSTAR VHF/UHF
 - DRATS



How to get certified

1. The first requirement is to complete the U.S. Department of Homeland Security / CISA two-day AUXCOMM class. Classes are held around the country on a periodic basis, including here in Georgia through the Georgia Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (GEMA).
2. The second requirement is to complete the National Qualification System Position Task Book (PTB) for Auxiliary Communicator (AUXC). The PTB must be signed off by the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC).



Source: DHS / CISA / GEMA

AUXCOMM Classes

- Three-day class taught by a certified AUXCOMM class instructors.
- National, standardized curriculum managed by CISA, an agency of FEMA.
- Most recent Georgia classes were held in October and November 2023.
- Lots of fun and great information that's really centered around how Auxiliary Communications fits into NIMS / ICS.
- Features both classroom, case study, and hands-on components.
- In Georgia, classes are managed by GEMA and announced on their training system AND in the official Georgia AUXCOMM newsletter.
- In order to complete the certification, there is a Position Task Book.
- Georgia AUXCOMM is here to help you get certified.



November 2022 Class



October 2022 Class

Relationship with ARES



In the state of Georgia, Georgia AUXCOMM and Georgia ARES have a great working relationship.

AUXCOMM amateurs are also a part of a local ARES organization but have chosen to obtain additional training and certification to be able to support the GEMA State Operations Center (SOC) or to be deployed as a part of a Communications Unit for an official event. AUXCOMM volunteers often use a broader range of skills and equipment beyond amateur radio. AUXCOMM is a national-level certification that is managed at the state-level.

ARES members will always be needed at the local level to provide support to their local served agencies and will communicate with AUXCOMM operators at the SOC to provide valuable information during events. ARES members tend to use amateur radio equipment and technology. ARES is a program developed and owned by the ARRL.

In short, **AUXCOMM tends to have a state mission while ARES tends to focus on a local mission.**

Both organizations work together to provide communications assistance that supports community needs.

NOTE: As of 2019, the ARRL has added AUXCOMM training as an optional task for Level III of the ARES STANDARDIZED TRAINING PLAN TASK BOOK v. 2.1.1.

Current challenges

- Attending the AUXC class is a pre-requisite for getting the certification. Getting classes scheduled and conducted by properly credentialed instructors is a challenge that we're currently working through. The most recent classes were held in October and November 2022.
- There is some understandable "training fatigue" among amateur radio volunteers. AUXC is designed for people who want to take their training to the next level.
- AUXCOMM is a state program with a wide geographic coverage area. It's been challenging to conduct exercises and develop teams at the local level with such a large geographical coverage area.
- Getting certified requires sign-off on the Position Task Book (PTB). It's not a hard set of tasks, but it does require the AUXCOMM course participants to actively seek opportunities to get sign-offs. That's one of the reasons we created Georgia AUXCOMM – to help.



Current opportunities

- AUXCOMM is a much-needed program. It finally provides a nationally recognized credential for emergency communications volunteers across the US.
- AUXCOMM finally answers the question, “where does amateur radio fit in ICS?” In the past, the THSP was a “catch-all” ICS position. Now, amateur radio has a place on the organization chart.
- Because AUXCOMM is managed at the state-level, official credentialing (when needed) is provided for formal deployments. The credentials are recognized vs. the “informal badges” that ARES traditionally provided that had no official recognition.
- AUXCOMM exposes emergency communicators to operations at a higher level than is normally available to a local ARES deployment. One gets to meet and interact with wide variety of agencies.
- AUXCOMM provides an opportunity to learn about a vast array of communications equipment and technologies that are not available to amateur radio – trunking systems, public safety radios, satellite phones, complex networking gear, and other communications technology.
- AUXCOMM has momentum and energy that can give a much needed “booster shot” to the amateur radio community by giving it official recognition beyond the ARRL.
- *RECOMMENDATION – Get AUXC certified, even if you have no intention of deploying at the state level. It’s good to have just as most of you get Skywarn and, perhaps, CERT certifications.*

2023 AUXCOMM Events

- TechFest – January 14th at the Gwinnett County Fairgrounds (Lawrenceville, GA)
- Winter Field Day – January 28 & 29th at GEMA/HS Training Center South (Forsyth, Georgia)
- Georgia ARES Statewide Meeting – February 11th at GPSTC (Forsyth, Georgia)
- Dalton Hamfest – February 25th (Dalton, GA)
- Georgia Parks on the Air – April 1 & 2nd at Don Carter State Park (Gainesville, Georgia)
- ARRL Field Day – June 24 & 25th Cloudland Canyon State Park
- Huntsville Hamfest – August 19 & 20th Von Braun Center (Huntsville, AL)
- Stone Mountain Hamfest – November 4 & 5th at the Gwinnett County Fairgrounds (Lawrenceville, GA)

Where to get more information

- Georgia AUXCOMM website – <https://gaauxcomm.org>
 - FAQ
 - Sign-up for newsletter (official monthly communication)
 - Links to social media, including YouTube Channel
- CISA / COMU page - <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/comu-training-documents>
 - Complete AUXC training slides online
 - Training material for other COMU certifications – COML and COMT
 - Copy of the AUXC PTB
- ARRL / ARES page - <https://www.arrl.org/ares>
 - Official ARES Manual
 - Official ARES PTB
- Georgia AUXCOMM 60m Training Net, 2nd Sunday of the month at 1400 local on 5.403.5 MHz, USB
- Georgia AUXCOMM D-Star Net, 3rd Monday of the month at 2030 local on REF030B (REF030A backup)
- Georgia AUXCOMM Training Meeting, last Thursday of the month at 2000 local via GoToMeeting
- Georgia AUXCOMM Facebook page

