

Best Practices for Relay Stations - SulCom Programs

1. **Plan, Communicate the Plan, Update the Plan and Practice the Plan as Needed.**

This one is more for the teams themselves, there are some key points to remember.

Regardless of the tasks performed, program being supported, or just in everyday life, plan ahead as much as possible. This includes who (personnel), with what (assets), where "it" has to happen, when it starts and stops, and the purpose of deploying.

This is a little tricky, but "right-size" the plan for the task at hand. Some plans will have to be highly structured. Others may require the participants to think on their feet. There is no one recipe that works in all scenarios.

Once the plan is created keep it "alive." Document/communicate them, update them, and practice them on a regular basis.

2. **One person performs one, and only one role at any time in any activity.**

A single person performing more than one task in a program support activity is not feasible and not suggested. All roles are critical and all roles require appropriate attention from participants. Spread the load across the team. For example, many teams have employed a single person to fill both the team Net Control and the Relay Station roles at the same time. If activity increases that single person will never succeed in achieving the objectives of those tasks. Set people up to succeed and the support plan will succeed.

3. **Be ready to help and checked in on the SulCom backbone at least one hour, or one county, ahead of any activity in the service area.**

For example, in the convective weather program a team with a service area around Rock County should be ready to help (and checked in on the backbone) when activity hits the opposite borders of Jefferson, Walworth, Green and the opposite borders of the adjacent counties in Illinois. Any later, and it is scramble to get the ball rolling. Pre-storm data (normally handled with Meteorologist Info Requests, or MIRs) is equally important as during storm and after-storm data.

4. **Keep a receiver on the backbone channel and be available for all calls from Sullivan Weather when checked in on the backbone.**

By design the SulCom backbone is the main communications model for driving the needs of the office with the teams and for moving data from the field teams to the office. If the teams are not listening at all times, the needs cannot be met.

5. **Change personnel every three to four hours.**

Fatigue sets in, even when there are periods of light activity. This practice also splits the load among people and allows greater opportunity for people to gain experience.

6. **Remain checked in on the backbone for at least thirty (30) minutes after any activity is cleared from the service area.**

In the convective program post - event data collection is equally important as during storm and pre-storm data. Other program support tasks may require some after-event housekeeping as well.