**Facilities:**
The exercise was a 2 hour table top, as part of the EMRG General meeting on January 22, 2005. The location was the Ottawa Fire Training Centre. There were 4 rooms in use, one with two groups as follows:

1) EMRG Randall Communications with NCS
2) Shelter 1 & Shelter 2
3) Red Cross headquarters
4) Salvation Army headquarters

Radio communications between locations was done on simplex using portable radios. A list of equipment available from central storage was provided, so shelters could get additional radio equipment.

**Things To Think About:**

- In a real event, communications will probably use a repeater and just a handheld radio, may not get out of the building.
- Depending on the event, there may not be enough people available.
- People sending messages may produce them faster than you can send them.

**Scenario:**
The weather is 21 degrees centigrade, overcast with heavy showers on and off over the past 24 hours. The time is 10PM. Ottawa Fire has received alarm activations on several floors of a 20 storey apartment building. Per Incident Command procedures the district chief immediately requests Victim and Firefighter Support and 10 OC Transpo Buses.

Victim and Firefighter Support is an arrangement set up with the Ottawa Red Cross and Salvation Army, which provides support for individuals up to 50 in number. The program is called Personal Disaster Assistance or PDA for short.

EMRG Members have only the equipment that they have with them at this point in time, for real.

**Debrief Notes:**

1. Good experience overall!
2. Having a board at net control/main operations site to write on was useful. Keep information posted in front of everyone.
3. As the action picks up, there are more people required to manage and run the operation. This is above and beyond the radio operators at shelters etc.
4. With 15 people per shift x 3 shifts = 45 people per day!
5. Understanding the organizational chart or model of how things flow normally or how they are supposed to flow would be useful. Who does what for example at the EOC or Red Cross.

6. Passing information requires paper to hand off messages. Duplicates preferred to avoid re-writing.
   - Duplicate memo forms might be good.
   - Need a solution to handle pending items so they don't get forgotten.
7. May need a dedicated radio channel between the EOC and the EMRG Communications Centre.
8. Difficulty getting into the net. Shelters had information to send, while other stations were sending messages about equipment requirements.
   - Need to clarify from the originating station what level of priority a message needs.
     - Need to document words to use so everyone has the sae concepts and key word to define priority traffic.
   - Net Control Station may be able to ask for types of information, for example, are there any requests for equipment?
   - Net Control Station can loose the concept of priority. May need to request priority traffic every so often.
   - Calling stations can identify priority based on need. I need cots in 3 hours, I need batteries in 2 hours. This helps the Net Control Station understand.
9. Direct frequency might be useful to talk directly with an agency. For example a direct Red Cross net. Needs equipment and people to operate.
10. Managing Stations – Some stations told to stand by, but they were never called back.
11. Need a chain of command at remote sites. Who makes final decision to avoid conflict.
12. Some resources missing in the exercise scenario, such as the Red Cross manager. Makes it more difficult to determine what decisions to make.
13. Need to be able to move EMRG equipment. Delivery of equipment to remote sites.
14. Access at remote sites; EMRG ID + being dispatched by some one to somewhere. Need to avoid self dispatch.