

SC4ARES Joins South Coast CERT in Evacuation Operation
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The SC4ARES group joined South Coast CERT in a joint exercise to notify residents in the CZU Lightning Complex burn scar areas of mandatory evacuations in front of a moderate Atmospheric River event that had the potential to cause debris flows in those scarred areas.

Fire chief Ari Delay of La Honda Volunteer Fire Brigade (served agency for SC4ARES) called together the leaders of both SC4ARES and CERT to evaluate the areas to be evacuated on Sunday, January 24, 2021, and assess who hadn't already left the area. Angelo Dragone, N6QAD; Bob Smith, W6RES; and Peter Chupity, KI6FAO used Radio Mobile to assess likely relay spots in the mountainous terrain of the areas of Whitehouse Creek, Gazos Creek, Butano Creek, Dearborn Park, and Loma Mar, and then tested these areas using UHF as a stand-in for the GMRS radios that CERT members would be using for the actual exercise.

On Tuesday morning, January 26, both CERT and SC4ARES met at Pescadero High School to deploy teams to warn evacuees and leave literature describing the nature of the incoming weather. The CERT members communicated with the ARES team, and the ARES team kept in contact with temporary operations center at the high school. In Whitehouse Creek canyon, all the CERT members were also Hams, so GMRS radios were not needed. The CERT/ARES operators communicated with KI6FAO who was perched on a hilltop to relay to the operations center. The operation was a success, and thankfully the hourly rainfall rate did not reach the threshold to trigger debris flows in any of those areas.