

Exercise Plan: “Operation Talladega Signal”

This search and Rescue (SAR) exercise simulates a response to a lost and injured hiker on the Pinhoti Trail within the Shoal Creek District of the Talladega National Forest. The exercise emphasizes radio direction finding (RDF) techniques using Amateur Radio coordination to locate a low-power FRS transmission.

1. Scenario Overview

- **Scenario:** A solo hiker has sustained a non-life threatening leg injury and is disoriented off-trail in the vicinity of Section 10 of the Pinhoti Trail.
- **Equipment:** Carrying a standard FRS (Family Radio Service) handheld radio. No cell service is available.
- **Objective:** Triangulate the hiker’s continuous or intermittent FRS signal using four remote stations, calculate the location and deploy a hasty team for extraction.

2. Date & Time

- Date: March 28, 2026 (Rain Date April 11, 2026)
- Start Time: 11:00 Eastern Time (10:00 Central Time)
- Duration: Approx. 4 hours

3. Command & Control

- Incident Command Post (ICP): Big Oak Hunt Camp
- Location: Off Forest Service Road 548, Shoal Creek District
- Coordinates: 33.7213 N, -85.5596 W

4. Equipment Requirements: Triangulation stations must be equipped with 2-meter transceivers for communication Incident Command and 70cm/UHF receivers with Yagi/directional antennas tuned to FRS frequencies to detect the hiker. Wear hunters orange vests. Water, snacks, and a small first aid kit are desirable.

General Exercise Notes:

- There are venomous snakes, so please be vigilant.
- Stay on Roads or marked trails. There should not be a reason to wander off into the wilderness.
 - **We don’t want you to become the next injured hiker we have to find.**
- The triangulation teams may need to be relocated by net control, based on reception.
- If you will be in the field, pack some water and a snack or small lunch.
- Cell service is available in many places, especially the higher elevations but don’t depend on it.
- As with everything we do – all plans are subject to change