

Twin County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) Standard Operating Procedure REV. DEC. 2008

1. Introduction

1.1 The Twin County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) group, is composed of FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators who have voluntarily registered their capabilities and equipment for public service and emergency communications duty.

1.2 Under Federal regulations, Amateur Radio public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind.

1.3 The Twin County RACES group function under this Emergency Plan, (SOP) and the direction of the Emergency Management of the jurisdiction and the Radio Officer of RACES for the Counties, of Carroll, Grayson and the City of Galax.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this plan is to provide a written guide containing the minimum information that would be needed in an emergency. Each emergency is different and flexibility to provide an adequate response to each situation is a necessity.

2.2 The primary responsibility of the Twin County RACES is to furnish communications in the event of a disaster or communications emergency when other communications fail or are inadequate.

2.3 All drills, training and instruction shall be carried out to insure readiness to respond quickly in providing effective amateur emergency communications wherever an occasion may arise.

2.4 The following agencies could be served during a communications emergency, Office of Emergency Management, Twin County E-911, Woods River Chapter of the American Red Cross, VOID , National Weather Service, police, fire, rescue squad, Carroll County Search and Rescue, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security and other disaster response groups that request our assistance. Twin County Hospital will be supported by Amateur Radio operators approved through the hospital volunteer program.

3. Activation of the Plan

3. Upon notification from the OEM or E-911 Director the plan will be set in motion. If no notice is given and it is apparent that a disaster or communications emergency exists the RO (Radio Officer) or Assistant RO will be serving as the contact with government agencies, and put the “action plan” into motion if there is a need from any agency.

3.2 Any member of Twin County EARS/RACES who for any reason suspects a communications emergency exists should monitor the assigned net frequency (147.09 primary, 146.13 secondary and if no signals are heard, monitor 146.52 simplex) for activity.

3.3 If local telephone service is available, the RO and assistant ROs should be notified by telephone. They in turn will notify the membership.

3.4 In an emergency in which Amateur Radio might serve the community, Amateur Radio operators may be alerted by any city, Red Cross, Civil Preparedness, E-911 Coordinator or similar official, notifying the RO or Assistant Radio Officers.

4. RACES Mobilization Procedure

4.1 Local broadcast stations may be contacted by the RO or his representative, if possible, for spot announcements alerting RACES members.

4.2 If telephone service is available a telephone “calling chain” will be utilized to notify members.

4.3 Upon notification, members will check into the net on 147.09 or alternate frequencies for instruction.

4.4 Mobile units are then to be dispatched to agencies or a staging area and “RED Teams” (Rapid Emergency Deployment Teams) will be directed to where there is a communications need.

4.5 The RO will assume net control or will assign net control (NCS) to other persons. EOC locations may be activated and covered with Amateur Radio but net control should be posted outside this busy area.

5. Duties of NCS

5. The Twin County Emergency Net will be called by the NCS.

5.2 Members of the Twin County area should be checked into net from their homes or mobiles. Base stations and mobiles should then await further instructions from net control or RACES leadership.

5. Liaison stations to the following National Traffic System nets will be assigned. (Old Dominion Emergency Net-3947) (Old Dominion Emergency Net 7240) (Virginia Emergency Net 3910)

5.4 Net control will shift all formal written traffic to a nearby repeater or simplex frequency to be passed.

5.5 Mobile stations will be dispatched to the Red Cross Center and shelters as required. A station will be set up at the Twin County Hospital if needed. An Amateur Radio Hospital Volunteer will activate this station. Stations may be sent to local fire or rescue buildings to supplement communications at those locations. In the event of a crisis at remote locations where public service radio communications are not adequate, RACES members may be dispatched to provide reliable communications to and from that area.

5. Operations

6.1 All health and welfare messages will be in ARRL Radiogram form. The exception is the American Red Cross and they may choose their message form for health and welfare information. All government agency messages will be written on FEMA style (ICS-213) message forms.

6.2 All messages must be signed by the official who originates the message, with his or her title, thus taking responsibility for their content.

6.3 Message procedure of EMERGENCY, Priority, Welfare and Routine, as defined on ARRL form FSD-3 shall be used on all messages.

6.4 Stations do not transmit unless invited to do so by net control. The only exception to this rule is for stations having EMERGENCY traffic.

7. Drills, Test and Alerts

7.1 An annual test will be conducted in conjunction with served agencies.

7.2 The Twin County RACES and the Emergency Amateur Radio Service will regularly supply public safety communications in conjunction with local events (such as walk-a-thons, parades, sporting events and other community events) to test the effectiveness of their operation and to provide a service to the community.

7.3 The Twin County RACES Emergency net operates as the Virginia/Carolina Training and Information Net and meets every Sunday at 3:00 pm (1500 hrs) on the Fishers Peak repeater (145.130 – 600 with a tone of 103.5)

7.4 At the discretion of the RO the RACES unit will be activated unannounced via the “phone chain” at least once per year.

8. Mutual Aid

7.1 The Twin County RACES group will be available to support the Virginia Department of Emergency Management if called upon to assist other localities.

7.2 The Twin County RACES group will also be available to assist other RACES groups in mutual support.

7.3 If called upon for emergency communications by affiliated or not affiliated Amateur Radio groups we will also respond with available resources.

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