

# **VIRGINIA EMERGENCY NETS - Standard Operating Procedure**

**Initially published/effective date: August 24, 2000**

**Revised: March 15, 2003**

**1. Introduction** – The Virginia Emergency Nets (VEN) exists to provide communications for state and local government agencies in time of an emergency and for periodic drills to hone skills in support of the VEN mission. Usually this service will be provided as formal written traffic following ARRL/NTS format but is not limited to this format. At times, however, informal tactical communications may be required, or specialized served agency traffic may be necessary for the urgent protection of life and property, where time is of the essence.

**2. Coverage** – Coverage area of the Virginia Emergency Nets is the Commonwealth of Virginia. While our primary concern is the Commonwealth of Virginia, out of section stations may, at times, be able to provide helpful information. If such information is required and can be easily obtained from out of the section stations, then they should certainly be utilized. Utilization of out of state stations may be helpful in acquiring informal information, but with respect to formal traffic, proper NTS routing should normally be followed. In the case of Priority and Emergency traffic, traffic may be routed to out of state stations if the NCS determines that this will be more expeditious than normal NTS routing.

**3. Nets** – The Virginia Emergency Nets (VEN) are listed at the end of this document.

**4. Activation and duration** – Either the SM or SEC shall activate The Virginia Emergency Nets. The Nets shall not be terminated without the approval of either the SM or SEC. During the duration of the activation, and subject to the oversight of the SM and SEC, the STM shall direct, supervise, and maintain all nets. There may be activation without using VEN HF. In the past nets have been called on VHF / UHF repeaters in conjunction with VHF / UHF digital operations. These repeaters are used when a specific area or region can be serviced without the need of HF operations.

**5. ARES Wide-Area Tactical Repeaters** – The use of VHF and UHF tactical repeaters for wide area coverage has been proven in the Virginia Section during hurricanes, floods, and other activation. A "designated tactical repeater" is one that has broad coverage, and the trustees agree to certain terms of use, in activation. The terms of use are common sense applications (e.g., no bells and whistles, no auto patch [except for ECOM by designated officials] abbreviated courtesy tone, no announcements save for FCC ID at 15+ wpm, and others). A full list of the requirements is available from the SEC. Upon agreement to the "terms of use" by the repeater trustee's and, approval by the DEC and ASEC for the covered area, the SEC will issue a designation certificate.

**6. Assignment of net managers** – The regular Net Manager (NM) of the Old Dominion Emergency Net (ODEN) shall be responsible for the VEN/A. The NM of the Virginia Sideband Net (VSN) shall be responsible for the VEN/B. The NM for the Virginia Net (Early) (VN(E)) shall be responsible for VEN/C. The Assistant Section Manager/Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator, for Digital Operations, (ASM/ASEC/D) or individual or individuals designated by the ASM/ASEC/D shall be responsible for the all the digital nets.

**7. NM responsibilities** – Once it is determined that the Virginia Emergency Nets will be called to session, each NM shall arrange NCS schedules. NCS duty should not last longer than 2 hours at a time whenever possible, ideally, not longer than 1 hour. Also, after receiving net statistics

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from each NCS, the NM should report them to the SEC with a copy to the STM. NMs may also help arrange for liaisons to be on board when needed.

**8. NCS qualifications** – VEN Net Control Stations should be drawn from the regular NTS NCS ranks whenever possible. They must be capable of maintaining net discipline and handling nets with high traffic loads. They must also be well acquainted with the Virginia NTS net control SOP. Since the use of 80 and 40-meter frequencies will be necessary, VEN NCS must have good 80 and 40-meter capabilities.

**9. Liaison qualifications** – VEN liaison stations should be capable of both phone and cw operation. They must be well acquainted with the Virginia NTS liaison SOP. They should be accomplished at liaison operation. It should be noted that in the event of wide area emergency, liaison stations might be needed to go to 20 meters. Liaison stations should have good 80, 40 and 20-meter capabilities.

**10. Net discipline** – The Virginia Emergency Nets are directed nets and shall always be operated as such. Therefore, the NCS must maintain strict control of his or her net. This is of primary importance in time of emergency. Informal chatter and comments should be allowed only when allowed by NCS and there is NO other traffic pending or expected.

**11. Procedure** --- Most emergencies require a "fly by the seat of your pants" approach. However, there are some general procedures that should always be followed. Common sense and standard procedure used in normal NTS nets are of the utmost importance.

**11.1 Net call up** – Identify the net and NCS. A brief explanation of why the net is in session should be given. Long call-ups should be avoided. Explain that the net is directed and only formal traffic and net business will be handled unless otherwise requested. Identify key receive stations (i.e., Richmond and those in affected areas) and liaison stations. If liaison stations have not been designated, do so at this time (this is an NCS responsibility) don't wait until you need liaison functions to call for them. That will only cause confusion.

**11.2 Traffic** – Call for emergency or priority traffic first. All traffic should be handled in that order. Pay particular attention to traffic going into and out of Virginia EOC. This traffic, if equal priority, should be handled first. Accept routine traffic only after clearing all higher precedence traffic possible.

**11.3 Routing** – In times of high traffic loads it will not be possible to pass all traffic at one time. As soon as traffic can be handled, begin calling for outlets and get things moving. Then go back and continue listing. The use of side frequencies is very important during high traffic loads. Use them wisely. NCS should by no means send more than 2 transmit stations off to the same frequency at the same time. Traffic may be handled on net frequency only when it is light.

**11.4 Use of relays and alternate net frequencies** – There will undoubtedly be times when band conditions will make operations on 80 meters difficult. When this happens, NCS has 3 alternatives. The use of relays, sending stations to alternate frequencies or move the entire net to the alternate frequency. The first choice is the use of relays. Second, move the stations

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passing traffic to the alternate frequency. And last, move the entire net. Moving the net should only be done as a last resort, since it will usually cause confusion and some stations are bound to get lost in the shuffle. If the net is moved, a directing station should be monitoring the former frequency to direct those who have not received the word of the move.

**11.5 Check-ins** – First priority is always the served “customers”, the county/city EOC’s or the stations that they assign to be their representative. General check-ins are used ONLY when there is a need for specific information of a location, or bulk information such as weather, local conditions, etc. In this case the NCS should request all stations, when checking in, to provide the necessary information. Please remember, the purpose of these nets is to provide emergency communications, not to fill up rosters.

**11.6 Closure** – The Virginia Emergency Nets shall remain in operation until instructions for closure are received from or approved by either the SEC or SM. This will usually be done by means of QNC traffic.

**11.7 Reporting** – All net controls are responsible for reporting net statistics to the proper NM. The NMs should in turn compile all statistics and report them to the SEC with a copy to the STM.

**11.8 Interference** – Stations interfering with Emergency Operations should be identified and their call sign provided to the SM or SEC. The SM and SEC have direct contact numbers for the FCC and where a friendly request to the disrupting station falls on deaf ears, and the interfering station is causing disruption of declared emergency traffic, immediate FCC intervention will be requested. Remember, most stations will gladly give emergency stations sufficient room to operate without interference, if you make them aware of the situation in a friendly manner!

**11.9 Declaration of Communications Emergency** – The SM and SEC make all requests for declaration.

**11.10 Conclusion** – In any net, one of the most important functions is that of the NCS. This is why most of this SOP is aimed at NCS functions. The NCS who maintains control of his or her net insures that it will run efficiently and makes his / her own job much easier. The purpose of this SOP is to aid the efficient operations of the Virginia Emergency Nets. It is not intended to circumvent the SOP for NTS nets. To the contrary, they overlap quite a bit. It should be perfectly clear that the NTS SOP should always be followed except for the few differences given above, or, when due to extreme urgency for the protection of life and property, when time is of the essence.

ISSUE: 3/19/2003

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## Virginia Emergency Net Listing

Net Name	Frequency	Primary Purpose	Net Manager
VEN/A	3947 kHz (7240 kHz Alt)	Traffic into and out of the Virginia EOC and local EOCs	ODEN NM <sup>1</sup>
VEN/B	3943 kHz (7248 kHz alt)	Hospital Voice network, and as available: Health and Welfare, Routine Traffic. Overflow from VEN/A	VSN NM <sup>2</sup>
VEN/C	3680 kHz (7050 kHz alt)	CW net, backup for VEN/A and VEN/B	VN(E) NM <sup>3</sup>
VEN/D	3620 kHz (7105 & 14103.3 kHz alt)	Packet, Pactor; Digital Operations - <b>NON-RACES OPS</b>	ASM/ASEC/D <sup>4</sup>
VEN/D RACES <sup>5</sup>	3543 kHz (7105 & 14103.3 kHz alt)	Packet, Pactor, Digital Operations - <b>ONLY REAL RACES OPS</b>	
Packet Operations			
	145.590 MHz	ARES / RACES Traffic	ASM/ASEC/D <sup>4</sup>
	145.570 MHz	Intra County 1200 baud packet	
	145.550 MHz	ARES / RACES Traffic	
	145.530 MHz	Intra County 1200 baud packet	
	446.050 MHz	FM 1200 baud packet	
	446.075 MHz	FM 1200 baud packet backbone for ARES/RACES	
	446.100 MHz	FM 9600 baud packet backbone for ARES/RACES	
	446.150 MHz	FM 38400 baud packet backbone for ARES/RACES	
	446.500 MHz	FM high speed packet links/backbones	

<sup>1</sup> Old Dominion Emergency Net – Net Manager

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Sideband Net – Net Manager

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Net (Early) – Net Manager

<sup>4</sup> Assistant Section Manager/Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator for Digital Operations

<sup>5</sup> These frequencies will be used on VEN/D if the emergency is designated as a RACES operation.