



Jefferson County - City of Port Townsend
COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN



Part 3: Emergency Operations Guide

EOG 3.2.03 - Attachment B USE OF AMATEUR RADIO RESOURCES IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

Revised November 2, 2009

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

- The public is the principle beneficiary
- Central coordination assures the best use of scarce resources
- Participation is voluntary
- Amateur radio resources will only be supplemental

BACKGROUND - Amateur Radio (Ham) licensed operators, and their related equipment and facilities, are an essential part of community disaster relief. The resilient communications capability provided by ham radio is essential to our overall public safety mission, and complements operations at many levels. These resources are particularly valuable when the normal communications systems are damaged, destroyed, or overwhelmed by the scope of the emergency.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE - This guide identifies how Amateur Radio Service (ARS) resources can be mobilized to support local operations when normal systems are not available, shows how resources are prioritized, establishes a RACES Plan in accordance with the rules, and recognizes Amateur Radio operators working under the color of this guide as Emergency Workers (reference WAC 118-04).

FCC RULES APPLY IN ALL CASES – LAWFUL USE NOT LIMITED - The rules and regulations established by the Federal Communications Commission for the Amateur Radio Service will apply in all cases in the operational use of Amateur Radio resources in Jefferson County.

No part of these procedures prevents the use by any amateur radio station any means of radio communication in connection with the immediate safety of human life when normal communications methods are unavailable (reference FCC Rules and Regulations, Part 97.403).

Nothing in this plan is intended to limit the use of ARS resources for their lawful purposes except to restrict use of the primary operations network for emergency or training. Such limits will be consistent with the FCC provisions for ARS net control.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS – For the purpose of this plan, “emergency communications” (disaster relief communications) means *essential communication in connection with the immediate safety of human life and immediate protection of property when normal communications systems are not available*. We believe this to include the period of direct preparation for, response to, and recovery from an emergency or disaster as defined by RCW 38.52.

SUPPLEMENTAL TO EXISTING SYSTEMS – For purpose of this plan, “supplemental communications” means temporary (back up) communications, not on a regular basis, that meet the “emergency communications” criterion stated in this plan, and that cannot be furnished

alternatively through other radio services due to terrain or distance limitations, equipment damage, air time overload or other unexpected conditions.

JEFFERSON COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IS THE SERVED AGENCY - Jefferson County Department of Emergency Management is designated as the primary *Served Agency* for this area. Limited local ARS resources may require prioritization by the served agency as agreed by the voluntary participants. The designation of a single served agency supports the need for coordination of the limited ARS resources in this community.

COORDINATION OF LIMITED (SHARED) RESOURCES – Because amateur resources are limited in this area, central coordination by the Department of Emergency Management (the primary served agency) is recognized. The served agency will determine operational priorities, deploy scarce resources where needed most according to the overall strategy, and assure the best use of all amateur radio resources to the better good. Centralized coordination assures strategic continuity.

OTHER USE OF AMATEUR RADIO RESOURCES – Trained and capable radio operators selected from the amateur radio community may be occasionally requested to assist with the communications of served public safety agencies using their licensed public safety frequencies.

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY NOT REQUIRED FOR USE OF AMATEUR RADIO RESOURCES – Amateur radio resources may be requested by the served agency to supplement emergency communications systems whenever such temporary use meets the objectives of the applicable FCC rules regardless of the existence of a local, state, or federal declaration of emergency or disaster.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RADIO OFFICER – A Department of Emergency Management Radio Officer (DEMRO) will be appointed by the Program Manager of the Department of Emergency Management to coordinate Amateur Radio resources. The DEMRO will be a volunteer (non-paid) licensed Amateur Radio operator. The DEMRO is a member of the EOC Incident Management Team. Amateur Radio resources will be applied to the incident according to the Incident Command System.

COORDINATION – The DEMRO (or designee) will act as overall supplemental communications coordinator according to the Emergency Management Plan. Operational ARS networks will be established by the DEMRO to meet emergency communications needs. Communications resources will be made available to appropriate local government agencies and non-government relief organizations according to an overall coordination plan established by the Emergency Operations Center Incident Management Team.

THE DEMRO IS ALSO THE RACES OFFICER – RACES ORGANIZATION – The appointed Radio Officer will act as the Jefferson County RACES Officer. Licensed Amateur Radio operators may register as RACES participants under the state RACES plan. When called upon to support government needs ARES operators will be considered as operating under RACES. Other licensed Amateur Radio operators may volunteer to participate on a case by case basis to augment RACES resources provided they meet the minimum requirements for a temporary emergency worker under WAC 118-04.

NET CONTROL STATION - The primary net control station during a disaster relief scenario will be located at the Emergency Operations Center unless conditions require an alternate. Private ARS equipment (portable, mobile and fixed sites) may be called upon to support emergency operations under this plan. Provisions are in place to assure suitable indemnification for the volunteer station operators and their equipment when registered according to WAC 118-04.

CONCEPT OF OPERATION - The Emergency Operations Center will be activated according to standing orders. The EOC Incident Commander will, in consultation with the DEM Radio Officer

(RACES Officer) determine the need for ARS resource deployment. A State Mission Number will be obtained and the DEMRO will activate the callout procedures according to internal AREA/RACES protocols.

Upon receipt of notification of activation, available operators will check in by voice on the primary net. A roster of available resources will be developed. The DEMRO will make the necessary assignments to cover the locations of highest priority identified by the EOC Incident Commander.

A communications plan will be established within the EOC Incident Action Plan to assure coverage of critical communications needs. This should include a staffing plan, frequency use plan (with alternatives), relief and rehabilitation plan, and other details necessary for support of the assigned communications mission.

When local ARS resources are depleted, mutual aid may be requested from Homeland Security Region 2 jurisdictions. If none are available, resources may be requested through the State RACES Officer in accordance with the State RACES Plan.

LIMITATIONS AND EXCEPTIONS - Unforeseen emergency conditions or multiple simultaneous priorities may prevent execution of this plan. The first priority is public safety, and changes to this plan may be necessary under emergency conditions to meet unanticipated needs.

USE OF HAM RADIO RESOURCES FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE – The served agency may request amateur radio assistance for field operations to support emergency operations such as active search and rescue cases. Search and rescue falls within the disaster relief duties of the Emergency Management agency (RCW 38.52.400).

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STAFF PARTICIPATION IN DRILLS – Amateur licensed staff members on the payroll of the Department of Emergency Management (full time or part time) will not participate in drills and exercises, except when such drill or exercise has been granted a waiver from the FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau for each individual event. This does not prohibit use of ARS resources in an emergency according to the rules.

IMPORTANT REFERENCES –

- Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services Plan, State of Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division, August 19, 2003.
- Title 47 CFR 97 – Amateur Radio Services.
- Title 47 CFR 95 – Personal Radio Services.
- FEMA Civil Preparedness Guide (CPG) 1-15, Guidance for Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, March 1991
- FCC Public Notice DA 09-2259 (October 20, 2009)