# Gold Country Region

## Region Headquarters Disaster Communications Procedures

### Purpose:

These procedures establish guidelines and procedures for managing amateur radio communications from Gold Country Region headquarters in Sacramento and, when applicable with District Operations Centers.

### References

Published under separate cover:

- ICS205 Region Amateur Radio Repeaters for Disaster Response 03-01-19
- ARC Disaster Message Traffic and flmsg

### Frequency/Channel Planning

To assure radio backup to incident response communications:

1. From the general ICS205 Region Amateur Radio Repeaters for Disaster Response, select the appropriate FM ham repeaters likely to provide the best path between the anticipated service sites and the DOC.
2. Contact the respective selected repeater trustees for permission to use their repeaters in the response.
3. Complete an ICS205 Incident Radio Communications Plan.
4. Forward the completed ICS205 to the ARRL ARES Section Manager and, when known, the ARES Emergency Coordinator(s) responsible for activating ARES support personnel to the disaster response and responsible for ARES in the county affected by the disaster.

### Requesting ARES Assistance

1. At the earliest possible time after a regional response to a disaster, the commuications room will be activated via a call to the amateur radio communications liaison to the American Radio Relay League Amateur Radio Emergency Service for the greater Sacramento County area and northern California.
2. The  Disaster Program Manager in whose territory the disaster has occurred will contact the local Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) leadership with a request to supply properly equipped radio operators to Red Cross shelters and other Red Cross service sites as needed.

3. Similarly, at the earliest possible time after the Red Cross Sacramento Disaster Operations Center is activated, the communications manager will contact a ARES leadership to request operators to report to the DOC communications station.

## "Net" Control Station and Net Management

The Region radio station shall be the controlling/managing station ("net control station") for disaster messages passed over Red Cross radio circuits.

## Control Station

The communications station operator and/or communications manager will be the control operator for handling traffic between the DOC and disaster response services sites.

> **Note:** In all cases radio operator assignment shall be done by the comm manager at the DOC in coordination with the service site manager.
>
> Should an operator be reassigned unilaterally locally and without preauthorization from the Comm Unit Manager by either a Red Cross representative or by an ARES leadership representative, or both, notify the Assistant Director for Operations immediately for instructions and corrective action.
>
> If additional radio operator resources are needed, proceed accordingly as above for requesting ARES assistance.

## Open vs. Closed Net

At the discretion of the Comm Center Manager and as a function of the number of stations on the net, a net can be open or closed. In the event of emergency traffic, out of necessity, the net will be closed until the emergency is cleared.

## Tactical Call Signs

Generally, the service sites will be assigned call signs by the Comm Center Manager according to function. Choose tactical call signs/identifiers using meaningful *short* plain text names. Examples include:

- Oroville Church of the Nazarene shelter as "Naz Shelter"
- Butte County Fairgrounds shelter as "Butte Fairgrounds Shelter"
- Simpson College, Chico shelter as "Simpson Shelter"
- Gold Country Region DOC communications in Sacramento as "Red Cross"
- Chico Multiple Agency Resource Center ("MARC") as "Chico MARC"

## Role Call

At shift change and periodically during a shift, the Comm Center Manager should call the role of all stations on the net.

## Guidelines for Handling Message Traffic

When messages must be conveyed over a ham radio path, their nature will be one of the following:

- ❑ Emergency
- ❑ Urgent
- ❑ Priority
- ❑ Routine

### Emergency Traffic

Due to its urgency, emergency traffic will be handled over a voice circuit. As required by circumstances, the radio operator calling the emergency wil use the best means possible to obtan the emergency service response appropriate to the emergency.

The comm manager at head quarters can declare the emergency over the net and order "silence on the net" to facilitate communications between the station declaring the emergency, any other station *directly* involved in passing the traffic, and HQ. Unless they, too, have an emergency to declare, all other stations shall maintain radio silence until the emergency is concluded.

### Urgent, Priority, and Routine Traffic

Urgent, Priority, and Routine traffic can be handled over a voice circuit if less than 25 words. Longer messages shall be transmitted over a digital circuit.

## Digital Traffic and Winlink

Winlink is the digital messaging client of choice. Messages intended for particular individuals and sent digitally via Winlink should be addressed and sent to the intended recipient's email with a "cc" to kf6arc@winlink.org. If the recipient's email address is unknown, it would be sent to ka6arc@winlink.org with the recipient's position noted in the first line of the message body. If the latter, the message would be sent to the position title e.g., "Mass Care Lead," "Disaster Health Services Lead," etc., especially if the recipient's name is unknown.

### Digital Message Handling Procedure:

1. Originating station advise destination station via a voice circuit of intent to send digital message.

2. Destination station or HQ station as applicable shall advise originating station of the recepient's email address. If unknown, message shall be sent to the destinationradio station's Winlink address.

3. Recepient shall be alerted to incoming email from the Winlink system, else,

4. If email coming sent to destination radio station Winlink email, radio operator shall detach from Winlink, print out, and hand deliver to recepient.

   > **Note:** In all cases of digital traffic, coordination between stations shall be via a voice channel to facilitate prompt traffic handling and movement.

5. All digital message traffic related to the disaster shall be saved to a folder named with the Disaster Response (DR) number and the incident name on the station computer and be printerd out and stored in a folder also named with the DR number and incident name in the form of "DR679-19 Camp Fire."