

RACES/CORE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Introduction

The Oakland Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) consists of an organized group of volunteer amateur radio operators who are registered with the City of Oakland (the “City”) as Disaster Service Workers “communications class.” The mission of RACES is to assist in municipal efforts to mitigate and respond to earthquakes, fires, hazardous materials incidents, civil disturbances and other emergencies pursuant to a Letter of Understanding between the City and RACES (LOU).

CORE (Citizens of Oakland Respond to Emergencies) is a public safety program provided for Oakland residents by the City’s Fire Services Agency Office of Emergency Services. The goal of the CORE program is to give individuals and groups the skills necessary to take care of themselves during the first two or three days after a disaster. Individuals who have completed the program also are registered with the City as Disaster Service Workers.

As in the case of any major disaster or large scale emergency, there may not be enough professional *first responders* to answer all of the calls for assistance and the City’s communications infrastructure may be damaged, overloaded or destroyed. Therefore, varying demands may be placed upon RACES and CORE volunteers. The purpose of this Plan is to provide a structure and protocols for RACES communications support of the CORE teams consistent with the RACES Disaster Plan and the responsibilities of the City’s Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) upon the failure of normal modes of communication.

Identification of Volunteers

Oakland ARES/RACES volunteers are registered with RACES and the City as Disaster Service Workers and must hold a valid amateur radio license issued by the FCC. Registration can be accomplished at the monthly ARES/RACES meetings or, if necessary, at the time of the incident under the direction of the RACES Radio Officer or their designee.

Registered RACES volunteers will be identified by identification cards provided by the City. In accordance with the LOU, identification cards will identify the volunteer as a Disaster Service Worker, will remain property of the City and shall be carried at all times during an incident.

CORE volunteers also are registered with the City as Disaster Service Workers after completing their CORE training and are identified by unique green vests, hardhats or jackets. Although all licensed amateur radio operators in the City are encouraged to join ARES/RACES, at a minimum, they are encouraged to participate in the CORE program and join their neighborhood CORE Team as they may become a vital communications resource in an emergency.

Activation of RACES

The LOU provides, in pertinent part, that “[u]pon notification or determination of an emergency condition or situation posing an extraordinary threat to life and/or property, an authorized representative of the City shall activate the volunteer communications resources of the R.A.C.E.S. by notifying the A.R.E.S. of the emergency condition and requesting that A.R.E.S. provide the radio communications services covered by this Letter... In the event of a major disaster such as an earthquake or large wild-land fire which, by its very nature, may disrupt lines of communications, notification by the City shall be deemed to have been provided and available A.R.E.S./R.A.C.E.S Members shall respond without waiting for notification.”

RACES volunteers are expected to respond to the City’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) until such time as adequate personnel have arrived to staff the EOC. Thereafter, communications will be established as provided in the Oakland RACES Operations Manual to direct responding RACES volunteers to other locations as designated by the RACES Radio Officer, the Oakland Emergency Coordinator (EC) or their designees.

RACES Response to CORE

ARES/RACES Members will provide for the communications needs of the City upon activation by an authorized representative in accordance with directions from the City and establish radio stations at locations identified in the ARES/RACES Disaster Plan.

Resource Net

A RACES station will be assigned to act as net control for a resource net. The net control station will establish a directed net on the WB6NDJ two (2) meter repeater, i.e. 146.88 MHz output, standard negative offset, or by simplex on the repeater output. The net control station will coordinate the assignment of volunteers and use the tactical identification of “Resource Net Control” (“RNC”).

Tactical Nets

During an activation RACES will establish one or more controlled tactical nets for communications needs and assign tactical call signs to Net Control Stations (“NCS”). Such NCS shall operate from such locations and on such frequencies as are established by the RACES Radio Officer and the EC or their designee.

Secondary Stations

RACES Members will be assigned to duty as Secondary Stations at various locations including, among others, fire stations, police stations, staging areas and/or

shelter sites as directed by the authorized representatives of the City. In addition, RACES volunteers may be assigned to act as “shadows” for officials or function in a mobile capacity for disaster assessment purposes.

AT ALL TIMES DURING AN ACTIVATION, RACES WILL CONTROL FREQUENCY AND STATION COORDINATION WITH THE CITY FOR RACES COMMUNICATIONS AND TRAFFIC.

CORE Communications Needs and Response

In the event of an activation of CORE Teams, CORE Teams will implement their communications plans to contact the EOC. All non-amateur radio communications will be handled by established protocols. Otherwise, communications with the EOC via RACES communications resources will be structured as follows:

Amateur Radio Stations within CORE Teams

Amateur Radio Operators (ARO) who are members of a CORE Team and registered as Disaster Service Workers may contact the RNC; identify themselves, their capabilities and status; and await instructions from net control. The RNC will give the AROs a choice of volunteering for a RACES assignment or remaining in their neighborhood.

If the ARO elects to remain in their neighborhood, they are to await instructions from the RNC for possible assignment to a Tactical Net for handling communications and traffic with RACES. Such AROs, however, should be aware that it is very likely that there will not be sufficient RACES resources available to communicate directly with CORE Teams.

CORE Teams Communication with RACES

CORE Teams will establish communications with their local fire stations through the use of runners, CB radio, the family radio service or other available communication resources. (RACES recommends that CORE Teams use FRS or GMRS radios and emulate Amateur Radio net type control of their channels for internal and external communications.)

All communications and/or traffic for the EOC will be delivered to the RACES operator of the Secondary Station who will prioritize and transmit all such messages through the appropriate net(s). The RACES operator will be considered the originator of all such traffic for message handling purposes.

In the event that a CORE Team is without a communication resource and RACES volunteers are available, RACES may dispatch, if feasible, mobile and/or portable stations and operators to CORE Teams to establish communications.

Deactivation

Upon notification by an authorized representative of the City to terminate RACES activities, the RACES Radio Officer or their designee shall direct all NCS to stand down and secure their Nets returning all occupied radio frequencies to their normal use.