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BEST PRACTICE

Use of Amateur Radio Operators to Augment Emergency Communications: Equipment

PURPOSE

Emergency management agencies (EMAs) could expedite amateur radio responses by pre-positioning some necessary equipment for amateur radio operators at the emergency operations center (EOC).

SUMMARY

Amateur radio operators own their own equipment, which, when they are activated in an emergency, significantly reduces costs to EMAs. However, it can be time-consuming to collect and transport this equipment to an EOC or incident site. By purchasing and pre-positioning vital equipment in agency facilities, EMAs can accelerate amateur radio operators' assistance in emergencies.

DESCRIPTION

While amateur radio emergency organizations such as the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) and Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) are voluntary organizations that do not require outside funding, EMAs can expedite amateur radio emergency communications by meeting certain equipment needs.

Pre-positioning equipment: Pre-positioning equipment in EMA facilities can greatly reduce emergency response times during emergencies. While amateur radio operators can operate out of their own stations, housing additional amateur radio equipment in the EOC allows the EOC to serve as backup radio station during emergencies. Should the EOC be established as an alternate amateur radio station, having pre-positioned radio equipment present allows amateur radio operators to continue communications activities without having to locate additional equipment and transport it to the EOC.

Emergency management agencies can offer funding for such equipment or can request that amateur radio units locate additional equipment independently. Emergency managers should consult the amateur radio point of contact (POC) regarding any equipment needs, and ensure that operators are adequately supplied.

Providing activation-related equipment: EMAs should ensure that amateur radio operators have access to necessary activation-related equipment and supplies (e.g., pagers,

Amateur Radio Equipment

The [Amateur Radio Emergency Services \(ARES\) Field Resources Manual](#) includes a checklist of amateur radio equipment needed for basic deployments and a more detailed list of equipment needed for extended deployments (72 hours or greater).

cell phones). Like any EOC personnel, amateur radio operators should be provided any necessary credentials, uniforms, or activation devices. This additional equipment should be purchased or funded only if the emergency management agency believes it is necessary and useful for effective emergency response.

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