

## Emergency Call Outs

### How Will I Know?

As a *REACT* Team member, you will normally be notified by a designated individual within your Team. Each Team sets up its own notification system based on the needs of the Team and the resources available. This system may include a “telephone tree” but should include methods that will work even if telephone service or electrical power are out due to the emergency. Part of this system should include a designated radio frequency for members to monitor in the event of any actual or expected emergency.

Your Team leaders should be registered with the local emergency management agency or the primary served agency. *You* should also be registered with your local emergency management agency and/or your primary served agency. This may be accomplished through the Team or individually depending on the system implemented by your local EM agency and local organizations.

If you are a licensed amateur radio operator, you should also register with the amateurs associated with RACES and ARES and make arrangements to be available for alert and activation.

Once the activation notice has been sent, operators are expected to activate and respond according to the established response plan. It is important to have an established response plan because this plan determines what each individual will do in the event of an emergency activation. Depending on local circumstances, this may involve establishing a radio net on a designated frequency, reporting to a central location, or reporting directly to prearranged job assignments.

### Setup and Initial Operation in an Emergency

When you arrive at any assigned location, report to the person in charge and introduce yourself as the emergency communications operator assigned to the location. For prearranged assignments at prepared locations this should be a very quick and simple process, but it is important to always make sure that the person in charge at the site knows you are there and what you are doing there.

If you are responding to a new location, as you get on site, ask for the person in charge and introduce yourself as the emergency communicator assigned to serve that location. The person in charge will be busy, so spend only a moment explaining that you would like to set up a communications station for that location, and to ask where he/she would like the station located. Be prepared to suggest an appropriate location: one that can serve as an operating table and message desk; has feedline access to the window, outdoors, or roof; has access to power and telephone, and is away from the command center to avoid commotion from disturbing either the command or communications center.

Move your equipment, battery, and power cords into position. You should arrive as a team of two or more, so that one person can start setting up while the other person is ferrying some of the equipment in. The priority would be to set up the primary station to establish essential contact with the net. If you have your radio, microphone, and power cord pre-wired and stored in a small duffel bag along with a magnetic mount antenna, lift it out, set it on the table, screw in the antenna and power (AC power supply or 12 volt battery), and begin operations. Test the equipment for proper SWR, then check into the net. Use the lowest power setting that produces reliable contact. Since you're operating in an unfamiliar environment, resist the temptation to run high power, which could possibly damage your radio due to high VSWR or cause local interference into nearby equipment.

If there are supposed to be more operators at your location, you may also use the radio to check on the progress of others responding to your location. Many Teams use a selected FRS channel for internal on-site communications.

Once the primary radio is operational, proceed to set up any additional equipment, such as a scanner, HF, packet, and other stations. As more of your communications setup becomes operational you can check into other nets and begin compiling a list of stations that are reachable directly or via a relay station.

**Paperwork Required at the Site** - These are some of the things you should have with you when you operate in the field:

- Outgoing message forms or sheets to compose messages. (ICS form 213 is recommended unless the agency you serve has its own form)
- Incoming message forms or sheets to copy and log messages. Often, you'll copy the message onto scratch paper, then transcribe it cleanly onto an incoming message form. (ICS form 213 is recommended unless the agency you serve has its own form)
- Log sheets to log incoming and outgoing messages. (*REACT* form 133 is preferred unless your agency asks you to use ICS form 214 or has adopted its own log form). Plain lined paper will do if forms are not available. Every station should maintain a complete log during any emergency assignment.
- Notepad for writing notes.
- 3M Post-its for annotating items.

### **Long-Term Operation**

If you expect to operate from the location for a period of time, establish a message filing system so that you can retrieve the messages as needed. Many office supply stores have a "portable office" consisting of a case that can hold several hanging folders and has a tray on top for pencils and other supplies. A mini-stapler, scissors and tape would also be very useful to organize and file the messages.

You should also look for and establish a break area, rest room facilities, and a sleeping area.

## Shutdown

**Notification of Shutdown** - The notification for shutting down operations may be given over the air by the NCS or bulletin station. The shutdown usually is preceded by notices giving a “heads-up” stating that shutdown of operations is coming. Notifications can be supplemented via telephone tree networks or other methods.

**Shutdown and Cleanup** - Upon receiving notice of a shutdown, the station should begin securing the messages, the message desk, equipment, and other materials.

## Debriefing

Notes should be jotted down during the event and at the debriefing, especially those noting at what time critical events occurred. It is useful in the analysis to determine timeframes for activation, setup, transit, etc.

- Note what happened.
- Note who was around. In case there are questions, you will know whom to contact for further information.
- Note the hours of operation.
- Note what was accomplished. Often, the list of accomplishments needs to be related to those who weren't there at the scene/operating location.
- Note what's pending. If there were unfinished items, note them so that someone else can follow-up.
- Note what was good. Jot down the things that went well. Often, in the heat of the moment, we forget that there were things that worked in our favor.
- Note what needed improvement. This is fairly easy to note, as we remember easily the items we struggled with the most.

Thank those who turned out and were involved. Even a simple verbal thank you goes a long way, compared to hearing not a single word. Make sure you make it a point to thank those around you and your family for letting you get the job done.

## Demobilization

For any major incident there will almost always be a formal demobilization process and usually a checklist to ensure that each individual who was mobilized for the incident completes the process. The formal demobilization process is *not* just for the professional responders and *not* just for responders brought in from outside the area. When a formal demobilization process is implemented, *everyone* must complete the process.