

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) is a special part of the amateur operation sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). RACES was primarily created to provide emergency communications for civil defense preparedness agencies and is governed in FCC Rules and Regulations, Part 97, Subpart E, Section 97.407. Today, as in the past, RACES is utilized during a variety of emergency/disaster situations where normal governmental communications systems have sustained damage or when additional communications are required. Situations that RACES can be used include: natural disasters, technological disasters, terrorist incidents, civil disorder, and nuclear/chemical incidents or attack.

RACES is an organization of dedicated licensed amateur radio volunteers who provide radio communications in support of state and local government agencies during times of an emergency/disaster. RACES provides essential communications and warning links to supplement state and local government assets during these emergencies/disasters. The State RACES Officer, the State EOC RACES Station Manager and other volunteers work within the EMD Telecommunications Section during exercises and emergencies. They not only operate the amateur band radio systems in the station, W7EMD, but assist with other radios systems within the EOC and at mobile locations as needed. Regional RACES Officers and other RACES volunteers work at the local government level to provide services as needed.

The Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) is the ARRL's public service arm for providing and supporting emergency communications, where needed, when an emergency/disaster strikes. For purposes within this plan, ARES organizations are identified as primarily providing support for non-government agencies during an emergency or disaster. ARES organizations/operators, during emergencies/disasters may be used if RACES resources are depleted or do not exist. If called upon to support government needs the ARES organization/operators will be considered as operating under RACES and will be registered as an emergency worker in accordance with RCW 38.52 and WAC 118.04.

It should be noted that RACES and ARES licensed operators can hold dual registration in RACES and ARES. Further, it is encouraged by the ARRL that licensed amateur radio operators be registered/certified as both and that cooperative efforts between RACES and ARES organizations be established and maintained.

The State RACES plan can be found at http://emd.wa.gov/plans/documents/races_plan.doc