

Dallas RACES Training
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Good evening everyone! Tonight's topic is public service event communications.

We'll look at the following five topics:

1. What is public service communications?
2. Why is public service communications a training ground for RACES emergency communications?
3. Public Service Event Structure
4. Public Service Event Communications Procedures
5. Good operating habits.

Our first topic is "What is public service communications?"

- Amateur radio provides public service through communications support to charitable or community events.
- Radio operators effectively manage the flow of important and emergency information.
- Enables communications with agencies that can't communicate with each other such as police and ambulance.
- Radio operators work in one of three areas:
 - Shadow Operators
 - SAG or Mobile Stations
 - Fixed Station

Second...Why is public service communications a training ground for RACES emergency communications?

- Public service events operate on a controlled radio net structure similar to RACES nets.
 - Controls or instructions exist for types of traffic sent and accepted.
 - Radio protocols are similar.
 - Temporary or field communications equipment is utilized.
 - The net is not pre-structured from the aspect that traffic is not predetermined.
 - It is real and dynamic, what you report is what happens, as it happens.

- Like life, it is unscripted and unrehearsed. It could be as mundane as reporting a lead participant passing your rest stop to as urgent as coordinating communications for EMS response to an injured participant.
- You get the opportunity to hone in your operating skills.
 - As a hobby, we become radio operators to talk, “ragchew” if you will.
 - As an emergency communicator, we have to do the opposite:
 - Listen, listen listen!
 - Make our communications as brief and concise as possible.
 - Only talk on the air to pass official communications.

Third...we'll look at the public service event structure.

- The Communications Coordinator oversees the communications support to an event. He or she reports to the Race or Event Director.
 - The Communications Coordinator ICS (Incident Command System) equivalent is the Communications Manager.
 - The Race/Event Director ICS equivalent is the Incident Commander.
- The resource types used are the same as RACES nets:
 - Type B-Base. These stations include net control, rest stops, aid stations, check points, or the volunteer tent.
 - Type M-Mobile. These stations include SAG vehicles, police cars, lead and tail cars, ambulances, or rovers.
 - Type S-Shadow. These stations include various event leadership personnel.
- Details on the resource types have been discussed previously in much detail. For more information on resource types, go to www.qsl.net/n5tim and click on the communicator information link.

Fourth...we'll look at the public service event communications structure.

- Public service events are controlled nets. All communications goes through and is directed by net control.
 - There are three net states:
 - Routine...net control accepts routine, priority and emergency traffic.
 - Priority...net control accepts priority and emergency traffic only.
 - Emergency...net control accepts emergency traffic only.

- Routine traffic includes event administrative traffic, logistics traffic, reports of tired participants, etc.
 - Priority traffic includes reports of injured participants (not life threatening) or critical event information that needs immediate transmission (such as safety issues).
 - Emergency traffic includes immediate threats to life, property and safety, and injury or illness where the participant's condition is not yet known.
- Net traffic restrictions:
 - In case of heavy traffic volume, NCS might restrict traffic to certain types:
 - NCS might inform stations of traffic types not to report (such as rider location status, etc.)
 - Traffic might be restricted to one specific topic/issue for a short period of time.
 - NCS will announce minimum reporting criteria.
 - In case of a priority or emergency situation, NCS might restrict traffic.
 - NCS will answer your call with "say your priority (or emergency) traffic."
 - If you entered the minimized net by mistake, clear off of the frequency.
- How to interrupt a QSO:
 - Routine traffic...say your tactical call sign.
 - Priority traffic...say "Break".
 - Emergency traffic...say "Break Break".
 - NCS will acknowledge and ask you to say your priority or emergency traffic.
- Tired/Injured/Ill participant reports.
 - NEVER give participant names over the air.
 - Inform NCS of:
 - Participant number.
 - Location.
 - Nature of call (description of what happened).
 - Resources needed.

- When reporting a situation:
 - We don't expect you do be a doctor or trained medical person.
 - Report what you see and know in layperson's terms.
 - Do not diagnose. Use terms such as "appears to", "complains of", or "possible".

Last...we'll look at good operator habits.

- Use your tactical call sign.
 - It reduces confusion on who is calling in, and what post that they are working.
 - Conclude your transmission with your FCC call sign.
- To call NCS, only say your tactical call sign.
 - In a controlled net, all calls are going to NCS.
 - You do not have to say "this is (your tactical call sign).
 - When NCS calls your station, all they will say is your tactical call sign.
 - Keep it legal. End your QSO with your FCC call sign.
- When reporting information, 'paint a picture" of what's happening for NCS.
 - Remember, you are there. You know and can see what's happening. NCS can't.
 - Make your transmission clear and concise so that NCS sees and knows what you see and know.
 - Avoid any complex or complicated transmissions.
 - Keep it simple and clear.
 - Would you have understood what you said if you were on the receiving end?
 - Keep a "pulse on what's happening on the net.
 - Know what's happening on the net.
 - Know what's happening around you at your post.
- Know your assignment.
 - Read the communications plan before the event.
 - Know the event protocols and procedures for your post.
 - Know the event route.

- Know what equipment you'll need.
 - Take notes at the operator briefing (at the staging area).
- Know your equipment.
 - Know how to operate your equipment.
 - Check your equipment before the event to make sure it works and your batteries are charged.
 - Take spare equipment to make necessary field repairs such as fuse replacements, etc.
 - Carry a spare HT battery.
 - Remember...if your radio quits, and you don't have a back-up, you are out of business.
- Be self-sufficient.
 - Take water, snacks, sunscreen, etc.
 - Don't assume the event will supply these items for you, or if they are available, that they won't run out.
 - Take other equipment that you might need for your assignment such as lawn chairs, an umbrella or canopy for shade, etc.

Commitment.

- If you say you'll show...go!
- Don't no show!
- If you are unable to attend, contact the Communications Coordinator and tell him so!
- Not showing up puts an unfair burden on your fellow amateur radio operators.
 - Some positions may not be filled if many people "no show".
 - Often relief operators have to be scheduled to fill vacant positions. They may have to work without breaks or longer shifts.
- It presents a poor reflection on the club if we are unable to honor our commitment to the community event.
- It's okay if other commitments come up that change your availability...just let us know as soon as possible.
- Advance notice allows the communicators coordinator to recruit additional volunteers or modify our commitment with the served event.
- Don't just show up without applying for the event.
 - Radio operator posts are based upon the served event's needs.

- There might not be any available positions for you if you show up unexpectedly.
- It creates an unfair burden on the communications coordinator to deal with the beginning of a public service event as well as trying to find positions and brief unexpected operators.

Professionalism.

- Be a professional amateur...radio operator.
- Represent the hobby and yourself well both in appearance and conduct.
- Be proud...wear your club nametag.
- Here's the public service equation:
 - Help Others + Have Fun = Satisfying Experience
- Want to learn more?
- For detailed information about DFW area public service, operating procedures, resource types, event schedules, or to sign up for an event, go to:
 - www.w5fc.org and click on the public service link or
 - www.qsl.net/n5tim

Thank you for your support of amateur radio public service.

Any fills or questions?