



Nassau County, NY

C.E.R.T.

Community Emergency Response Team

Communications Plan

4/24/2008

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Introduction

This document serves as an outline for moving information throughout our organization. It is neither complete nor comprehensive. It is however a starting point for both individuals as well as teams to outline the basics in giving and getting information under a wide range of circumstances. Day to day operations, as well as emergency needs, have been addressed. Passing information both up and down the Chain of Command as well as laterally through a team have also been covered.

Activation instructions will descend the chain of command through mass mailings of e-mail. A command staff calling tree is well established and effective in getting team leadership notified. In reverse, membership is supplied with names and numbers of the Command staff, allowing for seamless 2-way communications. This combination of e-mail and phone has become a standard operating procedure.

What is new however is the supplemental communications that would allow for the same seamless 2-way communications to exist under less than desirable circumstances.

For activation instructions to descend the chain of command without the use of e-mail or phone, alternative methods herein are established. Radio Communications into and out of the Nassau County OEM are already well established through the emergency services of the Amateur Radio group ARES. Ham operators throughout the County, both CERT and non CERT, are already linked to this system. All we needed was to establish a local CERT radio network that can communicate with these Ham operators. FRS and GMRS radios are capable of filling this need. Teams can communicate within their neighborhood and also reach out to CERT/HAMS who can act as liaison between the FRS/GMRS local communications and the HAM radio ARES network link to OEM and CERT Command.

Having and using radios has many advantages to the teams in terms of Incident Communications and is outlined here as well.

In addition to Radios, an additional last resort communication link is established using messengers between known locations throughout the County. These locations or Muster Points are established by the individual teams as meeting places for team members and can host information bulletin boards where messages can be posted. To link CERT/OEM to the CERT teams in the field, County resources can be employed by OEM to shuttle messages.

Training involves a familiarization with this plan during the initial training classes. This can be done as a complete module or it can be included throughout the other modules as a core competency. Additionally, members will need to acquire radios that conform to our guidelines and learn to use them in a manner that is consistent with their team use. CERT/HAMS should be utilized for this training.

Chain of Command

During routine, day to day operations, information flows up and down the chain of command and follows the ICS Chart

See Attachment #1 ICS Chart

**OEM Commissioner or assignee
OEM CERT Program Director or assignee
Cert Sector Commanders
CERT Team Coordinators
CERT Deputy Team Coordinators
CERT Team Membership**

Chain of Command

**During emergency operations,
information flows up and down the
chain of command and follows the
ICS structure**

(See ICS-203 Form)

OEM Commissioner or assignee

OEM CERT Program Director or assignee

CERT Team Leaders

(Team Leaders will be selected at the time of activation)

CERT Team Members

(Teams will be selected at the time of activation)

Methods of communications should be used in the following order: **email, phone, radio,** and **messenger.**

- **E-mail** will be used whenever possible to distribute information to CERT membership. Please check your E-mail regularly during an emergency. E-mail allows us to send information out to hundreds of members very quickly. If you do not yet have an E-mail account, please visit your local Library where you can get a free E-mail account and access to the Internet.
- **Phone** contact will be made following the latest available copy of the Nassau County CERT Calling Tree, which is updated regularly and distributed to all Command Staff, Team Coordinators and Deputy Team Coordinators who in turn will utilize the latest available copy of their Team Calling Tree to contact their Team's Membership.
- **Radio** contact between OEM and Team Leadership will be achieved by utilizing a combination of Ham Radio and GMRS/FRS radios. Cert members who are hams can exchange messages with the OEM CERT desk through the Amateur Radio Emergency Service of Nassau County (ARES). Cert Ham operators will in turn relay messages with Team Leaders via GMRS/FRS 2-way Radios. Teams without Hams will need to relay their messages through neighboring teams via GMRS/FRS radios. Local teams will use pre-assigned GMRS/FRS channels for communications within their neighborhood.
- **Messengers** will exchange messages between OEM and Team Leaders at the Team Rally point. Team membership will muster at the team rally point for instructions. Large poster boards will be maintained at the rally point to serve the team in sharing current information and instructions.

No member of CERT may self activate

All CERT activation instructions must originate from the OEM Commissioner or his assignee. No member of CERT may self activate or respond to any emergency representing him/herself officially as a CERT volunteer (wearing the CERT vest or CERT hardhat) without authorization from NC OEM. Once activated, CERT members will be provided with specific instructions on where to go, and/or Guidelines to initiate the response and recovery process. All instructions will be provided by the Director or other approved representative of the Nassau County OEM to designated Team Leaders, following Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). Designated Team Leaders will be selected at the time of activation. CERT Teams should maintain contact with Nassau County OEM throughout any event. Teams may be asked for field observations or may be asked to respond to the needs of neighboring communities.

Resources for general information:

Nassau County Office of Emergency Management website:

[HTTP://www.nassaucountyny.gov/](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/)

Look for emergency updates at:

[HTTP://www.news12.com/LI](http://www.news12.com/LI)

or [HTTP://www.newsday.com/](http://www.newsday.com/)

Radio/Television advisories:

Listen for emergency updates and CERT activation

National Weather Service Forecast Office New York City/ Upton, NY

<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/okx/>

National Weather Service National Hurricane Center

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/index.shtml>

Skywarn

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/index.shtml>

Resources for emergency information:

Telephone or E-Mail

Nassau County
Office of Emergency Management
CERT Desk (516) 573-0636
E-mail oemcert@nassaucountyny.gov

2-Way Radio

FRS/GMRS radios
Amateur Radio

Messenger

Where to leave messages: Team Muster Points
County Personnel under the direction of OEM can relay **EMERGENCY MESSAGES**
and **ACTIVATION INSTRUCTIONS**

FRS/GMRS* Personal 2-Way Radios

Teams	Frequency	Channel
Resource Net (controlled)	462.5625 MHz	1
Operations Net (controlled)	462.5875 MHz	2
Freeport, Glen Cove, Seaford, Westbury	462.6125 MHz	3
Hicksville, Malverne, Sunrise Detachment	462.6375 MHz	4
Five Towns, New Hyde Park, Wantagh	462.6625 MHz	5
East Meadow, Floral Park, Lynbrook, Massapequa	462.6875 MHz	6
Great Neck/Lake Success, Locust Valley, Merrick, Oceanside, Valley Stream	462.7125 MHz	7

These channel assignments reflect the ICS Plan developed by the Communications Group. They allow each team unrestricted use of their channel for normal operations and drills. Please use the assigned channel for all team activities, including weekly nets. During an emergency your team members would check into the team channel and assign a liaison to check into the Resource Net for instructions.

*GMRS radios require an FCC license

Channel assignments showing neighboring teams



HAM RADIO:

In addition to monitoring the GMRS channels all CERT Hams can relay messages to the Nassau County CERT Desk at the OEM through Nassau County ARES net control:

Primary: 443.525 MHz (+) offset PL 114.8

Secondary: 146.805 MHz (-) offset PL 136.5

Tertiary: 447.025 MHz (-) offset PL 107.2

THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE (ARRL)

<http://www.emergency-radio.org/>

**Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)
of Nassau County, New York**

<http://www.qsl.net/ares/index.html>

Team Muster Points

Poster sized information boards can be left at the following Team Rally Points:

Team	Muster Point
East Meadow	
Five Towns	
Floral Park	
Freeport	
Glen Cove	
Great Neck / Lake Success	
Hicksville	
Locust Valley	
Lynbrook	
Malverne	
Massapequa	
Merrick	

New Hyde Park	
Oceanside	
Seaford	
Sunrise Detachment	
Valley Stream	
Wantagh	
Westbury	

Training:

All teams must train and practice good communications skills. Update calling trees regularly with current phone #s and E-mail addresses. These tend to change from time to time so keep them updated. Test the calling tree every 3 months.

An introduction to radio communications is currently part of the Basic CERT Training Class #7.

Follow up your basic training in teams by hosting a radio training meeting. Check with your TC, DTC or a CERT Ham to set one up.

GMRS/FRS radios are vital in an emergency. Buy the best you can afford. The best will have Weather Alert, they will have extended range of 20 miles or more, they will take AA or AAA batteries and they will be weather resistant. Ask a Ham Radio operator or your TC for more info or read the flyer "[What Radio Should I Buy?](#)"

Practice your radio skills by meeting weekly as a team on your assigned channel. Checking in this way will introduce you to the realities of radio communications. Weaker radios will only go so far and their users will need someone to relay their info to them. Familiarize yourself with your radios buttons and set your radio to the proper channel for your team.

In an emergency use your team's [assigned channel](#) to talk with your team. Use channel #1 only during an emergency to check in or to get instructions at the scene. Use Channel #2 only when necessary during emergencies. This channel is for operations during real emergencies. If you are asked to operate on this channel be sure to follow all instructions carefully.



Team Activation Plan

(for TCs and DTCs)

Protect Yourself

Protect Your Family

Contact OEM

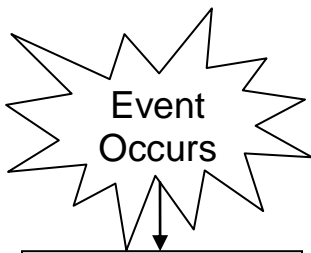
OEM CERT Program Director:
Work (516) 573-0636
oemcert@nassaucountyny.gov
Amateur Radio Operator:

GMRS Radio:
Team Chan #*
Emer Chan #1 (462.5625 Mhz)
Meeting Place:
Enter meeting location here

Receive Activation Instructions

Activate Calling Tree

Team calling tree
Insert current calling tree



CERT Personal Event Plan

Protect Yourself

Protect Your Family

Contact your TC or DTC for activation

Take Your CERT Bag and Your Go Bag

Shut off Utilities

Mobilize

Family Communications Plan

Contact Name: _____
 Telephone: _____

Out of State Contact Name: _____
 Telephone: _____

Neighborhood Meeting Place: _____
 Meeting Place Telephone: _____

DIAL 911 for EMERGENCIES

Where to Get Info:

TC: Name All Phone Numbers E-mail
DTC: Name All Phone Numbers E-mail
 OEM CERT Program Director: Work (516) 573-0636
 oemcert@nassaucountyny.gov
 TV/Cable _____
 AM/FM _____
 Weather Alert _____
Walkie Talkie: Team Chan # ___ or EMER Chan #1
 Scanner _____
 Ham Radio _____
Team Meeting Place: Fill in location here

Where to go, what to bring:

ORGANIZATION ASSIGNMENT LIST ICS203			
1. Incident Name		9. Operations Section	
		Chief	
2. Date	3. Time	Deputy	
		a. Branch I - Division/Groups	
4. Operational Period		Branch Director	
		Deputy	
Position	Name	Division/Group	
5. Incident Commander and Staff		Division/Group	
Incident Commander		Division/Group	
Deputy		Division/Group	
Safety Officer		Division/Group	
Information Officer		b. Branch II - Division/Groups	
Liaison Officer		Branch Director	
6. Agency Representative		Deputy	
Agency	Name	Division/Group	
		Division/Group	
		Division/Group	
		Division/Group	
		Division/Group	
		c. Branch III - Division/Groups	
7. Planning Section		Branch Director	
Chief		Deputy	
Deputy		Division/Group	
Resources Unit		Division/Group	
Situation Unit		Division/Group	
Documentation Unit		Division/Group	
Demobilization Unit		Division/Group	
Technical Specialists		d. Air Operations Branch	
Human Resources		Air Operations Branch Director	
Training		Air Attack Supervisor	
		Air Support Supervisor	
		Helicopter Coordinator	
		Air Tanker Coordinator	
		10. Finance Section	
8. Logistics Section		Chief	
Chief		Deputy	
Deputy		Time Unit	
Supply Unit		Procurement Unit	
Facilities Unit		Compensation/Claims Unit	
Ground Support Unit		Cost Unit	
Communications Unit		Prepared by (Resource Unit Leader)	
Medical Unit			
Security Unit			
Food Unit			

Which Radio Should I Buy?

One of the most important tools to help you communicate with your team during any activity is a 2-way radio. We are recommending the use of [FRS/GMRS 22 Channel Combo Radios](#). These radios are readily available at all electronics retailers and generally are \$10 to \$30 a piece and the best models can go even higher (they are often sold in pairs so



For those of you who are interested in making a radio purchase, here are some guidelines:

- The radio must be either FRS or GMRS radios and can be a combo FRS/GMRS (the most popular)
- All of these radios will have at least the 7 channels we use. (Ch1 to 7)
- The only significant difference is; the output power of the radios, some are very weak and will claim 2 miles range and some will claim more like 10 Miles, 20 Miles and even higher. The mileage will actually be much less in real life but the ratings help identify the better radios.
- For our use, at events, drills and training, the weakest ones are useable but not great.
- For emergency use, the extra power means reaching others in your neighborhood and beyond. This is where the Ham operators are and, in an emergency, the CERT Hams will have contact with the CERT desk at OEM. (Remember, you can not respond as a CERT unless you have Activation orders that came from the Commissioners office at OEM.)
- GMRS use requires an FCC license. www.fcc.gov but FRS does not. The license is \$85, covers your immediate family and lasts 5 years.
- The better radios also have Weather band reception. Keep track of incoming storms and other hazards.
- Make sure you can use regular batteries(usually AAA, but some are AA and last longer.)

CAUTION: All of these radios will have a feature to block out unwanted noise. This feature goes by many different names like: **Quiet Codes**, **CTCSS**, **Privacy Channels**, etc... However, **THIS FEATURE IS NOT USED IN EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**. We do not want to block out anything on the frequency, we want to hear everyone on the channel, even the weakest stations. (When you use these radios on a family vacation to Disney you can turn the feature back on to block out all the other families who are using these radios also.)

Until you are licensed you **MUST TRANSMIT ON LOW POWER** for them to be used legally. Anyone can get a license to operate GMRS frequencies. (Go to www.fcc.gov for more info) We are recommending these FRS/GMRS combo radios so that all members (licensed or unlicensed) can communicate together.