

BRIEFING

An initial briefing should be short and to the point. There should be no need to drone on for hours about the details of the event.

Personally Prepare – make sure you have a spare battery (or even better, radio), clothing for cold, hot, or wet weather, a pen and paper, an earpiece for noisy events, clear identification in the form of a vest or shirt with “communications” on it and any other gear you think is appropriate. A few dollars for water, food, phone calls or whatever is not a bad idea. At night, remember that a flashlight and reflective vest are a good idea.

Sign in – everyone gets signed in so net control and each operator has an idea of who is there, what their call sign is, and where they are positioned and what their role. Maps and frequency lists should be distributed if not already done.

Role – a review of what amateur radio is supposed to do in the event; the MAIN reason you have been asked to volunteers. An idea of the numbers of public and the area to be covered.

Net Control – Identification of the Net Control Station and its location, who they are in communication with (ie, fire, police, ambulance, first aid, event organizers).

Frequencies – What are the primary, secondary and back-up frequencies.

Medical Emergencies – a review of the most likely/common medical emergencies and the procedures for everyone to follow.

Lost Children – a review of the accepted procedures and where lost children are to be taken.

Traffic/Barriers – a review of safety guidelines and exactly what amateurs are expected to do.

Shadowing – A review of key event personnel with an individual operator assigned to be with them at all times.

Breaks / Food – A review of the break schedule and any food supplied to volunteers.

Parking – Where you should park and whether special arrangements have been made for you to enter closed areas. DO NOT assume your ID will permit illegal parking.

And finally... Remember that the things you say and do in public reflect on your organization and on your own image.

SHADOWING

You may be assigned to a specific individual for the duration of the event. This would be the same in an emergency or a large public event. For example, you might be assigned to the event organizer, the medical supervisor, the VIPs or the police.

Many people assume they don't need you and may not want you around. They have their cell phones and own radios. Keep a low profile!

Many people who don't want you around will demand amateur radio after the first time their cell phones die, they can't get through to another key person or an emergency occurs and their communications are overwhelmed. It happens every time. Stick with it!

You are not god's gift to that individual! Don't spend a lot of time telling them what you can do. Let them find out for themselves.

If they are adamant that they don't need you. Ask them if they would like you to leave and report to Net Control. We don't go where we aren't wanted.

Remember, many large-scale disasters have reported that amateur radio was absolutely critical to key emergency personnel when their radio systems were overwhelmed. Practicing sticking close to an organizer for a public event will make it second nature during a disaster.



INTRODUCTION

WHATEVER YOU DO DAILY, IS WHAT YOU HAVE TRAINED YOURSELF TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

Amateur Radio Operators get most of their “emergency” communications experience during large public events. While these events provide good opportunity to practice communications skills, it is important to remember that during the stress and confusion of an emergency, you fall back to doing whatever you normally do. Following specific rules and procedures during public events will put you in good stead for emergency communications.

This guide is not meant to be the “Be All, End All” of event communications, but to give a brief idea of some of the key points and act as a good summary for event briefings.

In some areas, such as messaging and first aid, there are much better (and longer) courses. These are highly recommended.

Being an amateur radio volunteer doesn't mean you can't be professional in the way you handle event communications. Our reputation as volunteers can be “They were there for the free food and the show.” or “They were GREAT! They really knew what they were doing and really helped us out!” It's up to you!



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EVENT COMMUNICATIONS



**A BRIEF
INTRODUCTION
FOR
VOLUNTEERS**

NET CONTROL

ALL TRAFFIC IS DIRECTED TO ONE NET CONTROL STATION

As in an emergency, a DIRECTED NET handles large public event communications. This means that EVERY message is directed to one person only: the net control. You don't even have to call "Net!" or the operator's call sign because it is assumed that they are always listening and all traffic is going to them.

To get the attention of the net control operator, you simply give your call sign to identify who wants to talk to them. Net Control will tell you to go ahead with your traffic.

Net Control is like 'God'; you talk when they tell you to and do what they tell you to. Net Control is there to direct the communications, to ensure that the role of amateur radio is accomplished, to ensure that emergency traffic is handled immediately, and to support the organizers to ensure the event is a success.

If you identify once and Net Control doesn't respond in a minute or two, give your call sign one more time. If you need urgent response from net control or need to interrupt a conversation because of urgent traffic, call "**BREAK!**" once and wait for the Net Control to acknowledge you.

If you need to speak to another operator, you ID to the net and wait. When they acknowledge you, give them the message you wish to pass. They will then call the other amateur to see if they copied your message. Never talk to the other amateur unless specifically told to by Net Control.

Should a frequency be unusable, it is the responsibility of Net Control to make sure everyone has switched. A role call of EVERY operator should be taken after EVERY frequency switch.

Net Control should inform operators if 9-1-1 has been called and that help is on the way. Net Control should then "walk" the operator through the rest of the medical call procedures to get the information on number of patients, age and sex, an improved location, etc..



TRAFFIC / BARRIERS

YOU HAVE NO AUTHORITY TO STOP OR REDIRECT TRAFFIC

Occasionally, amateur radio is asked to assist at traffic barriers or traffic control points. This is generally not the role of communications volunteers, but we may be asked to assist.

You have NO authority to stop or redirect traffic. Under the laws of British Columbia, that may only be done by a police officer or, if there is construction, by a flagperson.

This means that drivers follow your directions voluntarily and have the right to ignore you or your directions!

If a driver refuses to follow your directions, gently advise them of WHY they should follow your directions, let them do what they want, take down their license number and report to net control.

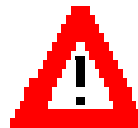
At no time are you to block the vehicle or to attempt to stop it or damage the vehicle in any way.

Traffic is dangerous. People are distracted by the event, the change in traffic patterns and may not recognize what you are indicating they should do.

Be safe! Assume you are in a dangerous situation – you are!

Be clear in ANY directions you give. If you want a driver to do something, point directly at the driver's eyes, looking down your arm at them while doing it, until you get their attention. Then indicate what you want them to do as simply and clearly as possible. Be forceful but polite in your signals.

Do not let your attention waver. If you are going to direct traffic, then direct traffic. You might be able to talk on the radio and direct traffic, but you don't



MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

"EMERGENCY!" THE EMERGENCY - THE LOCATION

In life-threatening situations, there are only two things you have to transmit to net control. If you don't get across to the Net Control station that there is an emergency and EXACTLY where it is, all other information is essentially useless.

Even if you are trained in first aid, your FIRST responsibility is to get assistance on the way. Any first aid you perform before you make the call increases the time it will take for help to arrive.

Using the word "EMERGENCY!" repeated up to three times indicates an urgent and possible life-threatening need for assistance. All other conversation stops and the calling station receives air priority.

"The Emergency - The Location" indicates what type of response is required and where to send it to.

It is YOUR responsibility to ensure Net Control has that information accurately. Nothing else matters.

If Net Control is not able to copy the information, try the following:

- Move a couple of feet to try to get a better path.
- Repeat the information a number of times, slowly, in hopes that Net Control can copy it when repeated.
- Ask any ham to relay the information to net control.
- Make the 9-1-1 call yourself directly, then advise net control at the first possible chance.

Remember, it is better to have the same emergency called in numerous times than to have it not get through at all.

Net Control should assist you with the rest of the call. They should confirm that help is on the way.

At this point, you may be able to provide further valuable information such as:

- Number of patients
- Age of the patient(s)
- Sex of the patient(s)
- Better location information
- Arrival of fire/police/ambulance/first aid.

FURTHER NOTES ON MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Any unconscious person is a medical emergency.

If you aren't sure if a person is unconscious, tap their foot with yours. They might be asleep or deaf.

Make sure YOU are safe as well as the responders and crowd. Move to a safe location if there is ANY danger. You can't advise Net Control of further injuries if you have been injured yourself!

Finding your location at night in a large crowd may be nearly impossible. See if you can provide a better location or send two or three bystanders to help flag down medical assistance.

Even a one day first aid course is highly recommended.

LOST CHILDREN

Children and parents / guardians are often separated during large events and emergencies. This can be quite scary for both of them!

Unfortunately, it may not be a good idea for the public to see you taking a child away from the crowd. Therefore, the following procedure should be used:

Ensure you are clearly identified as a communications volunteer.

Do not take the child away from the crowd. If alone with the child, take them to the nearest public space.

Radio to net control that you have a lost child with you.

Give the child's name, age and general description.

Wait. Net control will send another operator to meet you.

Once the second operator arrives, notify net control and they will direct you from that point.

