

RACES – WHAT IT IS

Formed by the FCC in 1952, the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is a public service that provides amateur radio operators to government agencies in times of extraordinary need. During periods of activation, RACES personnel are called upon to perform many tasks for the government agencies they serve. Although the exact nature of each activation will be different, the common thread is communications.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is responsible for the regulation of RACES operations. RACES is further sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through FEMA Civil Preparedness Guidance, CPG 1-15, March 1991, which provides guidance on developing a RACES group and planning for their use.

Each RACES group is administrated by a state, county, or city emergency services or emergency management organization which is responsible for disaster services. This CPG is available for viewing/downloading at www.fema.gov/library/civilpq.shtm.

RACES in Washington

Within Washington State, RACES was established under FEMA guidelines and implemented through the State Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) Plan promulgated in November 1995.

The State RACES plan is available for viewing/downloading at:

www.emd.wa.gov/6-rr/rr-forms-pubs/com/races/races-plan.pdf

Basically, the plan provides guidance and responsibilities on how amateur radio, through the RACES program and organizations, can be employed to support state and local government (city/county) emergency operations. In Washington, employment of amateur radio through RACES is essential during emergencies or disasters where normal governmental communications systems have sustained damaged or are overwhelmed.

Based on the State RACES Plan and as implemented through each city or county plan, amateur radio can be used to support the following needs:

- Back-up communications between state and city/county Emergency Operations Centers
- Back-up communications for 911 centers, fire and/or police departments
- Emergency communications for Incident Commanders
- Other emergency support as needed

What is the difference between RACES and ARES?

RACES is primarily focused to support government emergency management/services agencies during an emergency or disaster.

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) public service arm for providing support primarily to non-government agencies during an emergency/disaster. A primary user of the ARES is the American Red Cross.

Who Can Participate?

If you are a FCC licensed amateur radio operator, you can participate in the RACES program commensurate with the level of your license.

How Can You Participate?

To participate in the RACES program where you reside, contact the Emergency Services Coordinating Agency office.

Indicate to them that you would like to volunteer your services as an emergency worker for emergency communications support.

You will have to complete an emergency worker registration application and undergo a limited background check.

Upon approval of the application, you will receive an emergency worker ID card that identifies you as a Registered emergency worker within the jurisdiction and the state.

Contact Emergency Services Coordinating Agency for details!

425-776-3722

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RACES operators are indispensable for emergency communications.

FCC-licensed amateur radio operators can help save lives!

Serve your community. Volunteer as an emergency communicator!

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service



Emergency Services Coordinating Agency

Serving: Brier, Edmonds, Kenmore, Lynnwood, Mountlake Terrace, Mill Creek and Woodway

What is RACES and How can you serve?