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Amateur Radio Activation

What Happens When Amateur Radio is Activated

Activation Methods

- The first rule is that there are no rules.....
- There is no one activation method that works for all organizations
- Organizational size and complexity makes all the difference when selecting a system
- Generally speaking, keeping things as simple as possible is better.
- What works today may not be effective tomorrow
- See rule one

Activation Methods

- Telephone

- Pros

- Everyone has one or more telephones

- Cons

- Cell numbers change often
 - A given individual may have different numbers that need to be called in order to make contact
 - Time consuming process

Activation Methods

- Pagers
 - Pros
 - Effective means of communication
 - Cons
 - Expensive – Recurring expense
 - Can be time consuming to contact multiple individuals
 - Coverage can be spotty in rural areas

Activation Methods

- Codespear or other similar technologies
 - Pros
 - Some jurisdictions may have such capability
 - Can be quite effective
 - Cons
 - Costs

Activation Methods

- Text Messages

- Pros

- No additional costs
 - Individuals buy their own equipment
 - Effective free programs exist

- Cons

- Can be time consuming
 - Depends on individuals having phone turned on and readily available.

Activation Methods

- Email

- Pros

- Can work.....if you have the time
 - Email works for the details *after* the alert
 - It may be slow, but it sure is ugly

- Cons

- See above

Activation Methods

- Radio

- Pros

- Some jurisdictions assign 800 MHz radios to ARES/RACES personnel

- Cons

- Radios can work well, when they are listened to (which is not always the case)
 - 800MHz radios are *EXPENSIVE*



Activation Sources

- Emergency Management Coordinators
 - Primary activation route
 - Amateur radio EC may be part of EOC staff
 - Activation may be delegated to 911
 - Most EOC's have amateur radio capability
 - Needs may be unusual, often depending on location.

Activation Sources

- Amateur Radio District Emergency Coordinators (DEC) – Not to be confused with MSP District Coordinators
 - DEC may be advised by SEOC (SEC is paged for all SEOC activations)
 - County EC may be contacted directly if DEC is not available

Activation Sources

- District EC's (cont'd)
 - DEC may receive requests from other jurisdictions.
 - The DEC contacts county EC's to request manpower

Activation Sources

- National Weather Service (NWS)
 - All NWS offices in MI have a DEC assigned as liaison. Northern Indiana (IWX) does not as it covers only 5 counties in MI – IWX has strong relationship with their MI Counties
 - Some EC's are paged directly by NWS to alert them of severe WX watches (primarily southern portions of state – high population centers)

Activation Sources

- NWS (cont'd)
 - NWS may specifically make request for spotters or to make specific measurements and observations
 - NWS often provide online webinars well in advance of potential severe WX events

Activation Sources

- Other Agencies
 - Red Cross, Salvation Army, Civil Air Patrol, etc
 - May request assistance as required
 - Communication may be needed more in remote areas

Activation Sources

- Self Activation
 - Very rare for major events
 - Self activation brings its own set of problems
 - Self activation and deployment for severe weather spotting activity is not uncommon.
 - Lessons learned - early convective WX positioning is important

Resources



- www.texcom.com
 - This is an excellent **FREE** utility that works very well for smaller organizations
 - Text message and email based utility
 - Canned messages can be quickly pasted into the program

Resources



- Very responsive program
 - Text messages go out immediately
 - Often received literally within seconds of pressing the enter key
 - And the price is right!

Activation Sources

- Contact Information regarding Amateur Radio in Michigan:
- John McDonough, WB8RCR
 - Michigan Section Emergency Coordinator
 - wb8rcr@arrrl.net
- Larry Camp, WB8R
 - Michigan ARRL Section Manager
 - wb8r@arrrl.org