

Los Altos Hills- Emergency Communications by Amateur Radio

Training Bulletin

Activation and Response

July 1, 2002

County Activation

Santa Clara County has agreed to a new activation procedure for ARES, so hams can be activated directly by the District Emergency Coordinator, Larry Carr. Larry has four assistants who will share this authority. In any event, the activation announcement will be on 145.27 and 146.115 repeaters and it will include an activation number. Hams can respond to this call by checking into a resource net. Once you receive an assignment, you are activated and covered by insurance. Be careful and do not put yourself in harm's way as you serve your community.

Disaster Service Worker cards (DSW)

These cards are now available from Pat Dowd, City Clerk at Los Altos Hills. All people working on disasters require a card, including hams. Becoming a member of the town communications committee is a separate item and not a requirement for a DSW card. However, a DSW card is required if you are to serve in any capacity as a ham emergency responder. The Emergency Coordinator cannot assign any task to a ham who does not have a DSW card. PLEASE see Pat Dowd for a DSW card if you do not have one now.

Later in 2002, the Emergency Responder Blue card badges will phase out. New ones will likely involve a background check and possibly require a basic level of certification. No action is required now if you have one of these cards.

Self-Activation and Initial Dispatch

There is work in progress on a system in Los Altos Hills to provide for a self-activation process of the hams. Our particular circumstances are that many or all of the town officials may be out of town when a fast-breaking emergency occurs. The activation process will include a call-up tree for hams and a delegation structure for EC to AEC functions.

When the Hills are shaking or smoking, it is a self-activation situation. Turn on the radio and check into 145.27. If nothing heard, start a net call and ask for observations. Do the same on 147.435 (S), the LAH frequency. If you have a confirmed fire, call it in! Be sure you have the details of the location.

At our next meeting, we need to determine who is generally able to respond to the town EOC. Only a couple of people need to do that. The rest can activate and begin observation and reporting work, start the resource net, and be prepared to assign tasks as a larger response may require.

Town EOC Operation

By now everyone should have taken time to go to the EOC and familiarize himself or herself with the turn on procedure, including security procedure for the building. Be sure you found the power controls, radio manuals, and frequency plan. We will add maps. Do you know how to start the generator? If you have not done this personal training, PLEASE take time to do it.

Town Emergency Plan

Our City Manager and the Public Safety Officer are completing the current Emergency Plan. It will contain a command authority delegation at the beginning of the plan. We will review this plan and post portions of it at the EOC. Once this plan is complete, Los Altos Hills will be much closer aligned with current Incident Command System practices at the county, state and federal levels. ARES ham communicators are a critical part of all of these plans.

Outreach

Before the next committee meeting, please give some thought to ways to make yourself more visible to neighbors so they know your capability. I have received inquiries of neighbors concerning how they could use hams, both for alerting/notification, as well as for local coordination and providing information from a neighborhood back to town. Hams communicate and we know much of the path now from the town to the county and authorities and professional resources. Now, FOR WHOM do we communicate? This needs some creative thought. It is part of the task of the EC/AEC to consider this.

-Rick Ellinger, EC, ARES Los Altos Hills