

PROCEDURE FOR UTILIZATION OF SPONTANIOUS HAM VOLUNTEERS
DURING DISASTERS
SANTA CLARA COUNTY ARES/RACES
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During emergencies, amateur radio volunteers who are not part of the present ARES/RACES trained volunteers in Santa Clara County will offer to help. These volunteer communicators will include persons who are in the area on business, vacation, or other reasons, some may be highly trained from other areas and some are not part of any structured ham ARES/RACES organization or training program. This is not to say that these volunteers can not be useful.

There presently is a procedure in place within Santa Clara County that focuses on Spontaneous Volunteers of all types. This procedure is designed to handle volunteers after there has been time to establish volunteer coordination centers, and is not designed to handle response in the first minutes and hours of an event.

Information is critically needed in the early stages of a disaster. There is a need for a procedure that utilizes the inherent capabilities of ham radio operators – the ability to report situation information rapidly and professionally from a wide range of locations early in an event. These operators can report observations to the city and/or county directly using the Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Resource Net operating at level one, information gathering. This net will normally be active immediately upon occurrence of a major event or disaster. The NCO will need to constantly remind everyone on the NET of the information needed and how to be brief. The NCO will be critical in being able to control the NET traffic. These spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers (SUVs) may not be given an assignment until they have been registered and sworn in as DSWs but they can provide information as to what they can see, feel or smell from their location.

Because of the number of SUVs in any major disaster someone should be assigned to monitor the national calling frequency and direct anyone that calls in to monitor the Santa Clara County Resource Net and follow the directions of the NCO.

As the cities activate their RACES radio nets, they will advise Santa Clara County ARES/RACES, noting the frequency in use. At that time, spontaneous volunteer hams located in those cities will be directed to these city nets to report their disaster-related information. Once these volunteers have reported to the cities, they may be directed to monitor the Santa Clara County Resource Net for further instructions. It is very important that the (SUVs) be directed not to respond anywhere until they are specifically directed to do so. They must also be informed that they will not be covered by DSW until they have been registered and sworn in.

Once the Resource Net moves to level three then the SUVs may be directed to report to a location where they will be registered as a DSW and sworn in and if at all possible be given a copy of the Santa Clara County Quick Trainer. If this is not possible the SUVs

will be given as much training as possible due to time and resources available. Once the EVCs become operational all SUVs should be directed to the closest EVC.

When SUVs are given an assignment they should be placed with another trained Amateur Radio Communicator at least for their first operational period. Their assignment should be based on the need, their abilities and equipment.

The ideal situation would be to have them all report to a staging area where they can be registered, and sworn and a DSW and interviewed and provided some level of Santa Clara County ARES/RACES procedures etc. This likely is not possible in the early stages of a major event failing that option then after being registered and sworn either as a city or county DSW they should be assigned a mentor for on the job training.

All SUV's should be evaluated by a supervisor during their assignment to determine their use for any future assignments. Anyone found to unfit for an assignment for any reason should be documented and their name and call sign submitted to the shift supervisor at the Santa Clara Operational Area EOC.