Clackamas Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Standing Operational Order

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INTRODUCTION

The Clackamas Amateur Radio Emergency Service's (CARES) primary mission is to support Clackamas County Disaster Management (CCDM) providing communications support at their request during exercises, training, and events. CCDM and CARES operate under a memorandum of understanding which outlines both groups' commitments and major goals. In addition to CCDM, CARES provides support to several municipalities and special service districts (e.g, Lake Oswego Fire Department) who have asked for assistance.

CARES strives to provide licensed and trained amateur radio operators and communicators to assist with communication needs ranging from local to regional communications, real-time information sharing, and processing formal message traffic and communications. CARES' training includes amateur radio and Winlink (a global radio-mail service), as well as having members with experience in network-based communications (TCP/IP) such as the Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network (AREDN) and Starlink.

PROCESS OF ACTIVATION

In the event of an activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or a planned exercise, the Emergency Coordinator (EC) or their designee will be contacted by CCDM. This initial call will outline the anticipated time frame and the task(s) that CARES will be asked to perform. The EC will then move to activate CARES.

Activation of the CARES membership will be activated following the PACE plan outlined in the MOU:
> **P**rimary: Email
> **A**lternative: Telephone
> **C**ontingency: CLAC 1 (1st), CLAC 7 (2nd), CLAC11 (3rd)
> **E**mergency: CLAC3 Simplex

If an event appears to have happened and CARES has not been activated by CCDM, any CARES member can start an informal net on one of the three primary repeaters listed above in the PACE plan. Informal nets until full activation will primarily consist of check ins, and welfare traffic. All CARES members should prevent the spread of rumors best they can during this period – please do not speculate but just report facts and actual observed events.

CARES STANDARDS

Date/Time:
- CARES utilizes the ISO 8601 date standard (yyyymmdd).
- Time is recorded using a 24-hour clock format using four digits (example: 1234).
- All times reported are local time.
- Date and Time together are reported thusly: yyymmddTxxxx (example: 20260218T1650 translates to February 18th, 2026, at 4:50pm local time)

Phonetics (Spelling Alphabet):
- For similar sounding words, words which have multiple spellings, uncommon words, or words where proper spelling is of a critical nature (i.e., medication names), the CARES standard is to use the ITU spelling alphabet (also known as the NATO spelling alphabet).
- Proper pronunciation, with slow and steady delivery, is critical to clear communication.
- When working with and for other agencies which use a different spelling alphabet (law enforcement, for example), CARES members will do their best to adapt to the served agency's spelling alphabet. Our task is to assist that agency with their communication, not to force them to learn a new way of doing things.
- See Appendix A for the NATO and Law Enforcement spelling alphabets.

Dress code and PPE:
- CARES members will present themselves in a professional manner.
- During events and exercises, CARES members will wear closed-toed shoes – boots are recommended for working in the field.
- CARES members will be prepared with appropriate personal protective equipment:
  - Safety vest (safety green)
  - Hard hat (white)
  - Work gloves
  - Safety glasses / goggles
  - Dust mask (recommended)

Paperwork:
> CARES members should each keep the following ICS forms on hand:
> - ICS 205 – Blank copies of the Communications Plan (5-10)
> - ICS 213 – General Message blanks (50)
> - ICS 214A – Individual Activity Report (10-15 of page 1, 30-50 of page 2)
> - ICS 217A – Current copy of the CARES frequency plan (currently GREEN)
> - ICS 309 – Communications Log
>
> AEC's, Station Managers and other key personnel should also have the following forms on hand:
> - ICS 202 – Incident Objectives (5-10)
> - ICS 204 – Assignment List (20-30)
> - ICS 208 – Safety Message / Plan (5-10)
> - ICS 214 – Activity Report (10-15 of page 1 – page 2 is the same as the ICS 214A)

ICS / NIMS:
> CARES operates using the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). For each event all CARES members will:
> - Be accountable to and report to one person[1]
> - Use plain, common language in our communication
> - Maintain proper paperwork
> - Check in and out with your direct supervisor during the incident

Check In / Check Out:
- During an event CARES members will check in and out with their team leader.
- Team leaders will check in and out with overall net control.

Public/Media Relations during an incident:
- As a rule, CARES members do NOT share information with members of the public or with the media.
- The CARES PIO (public information officer) or their designee will work with the Incident PIO to share information regarding the role of amateur radio as a part of the incident but will NOT share information about the incident.
- Do not spread rumors
- During an incident you may be privy to sensitive communications including names, locations, and details of the incident which are not available to the press or the public. Maintain the trust we have built by not sharing this information.
- When approached by someone looking for information, refer them to the PIO – their job is to keep the public and media informed and they have a higher-level view of the incident than any of us can have working in the trenches.

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[1] This is the principle of Unity of Command. During an incident you will report to one supervisor only. Each person only has one direct person to which they report.

OPERATIONAL SAFETY & SITUATIONAL AWARENESS
General Safety:
- Dress for the conditions you are in
- Wear your PPE when the situation requires it
- Keep yourself hydrated
- When working in areas that require it or when erecting antennas, hard hats must be worn
- Rope off or flag areas that are trip hazards
- Follow and respect lock out / tag out (LOTO) procedures

Electrical / RF Safety:
- Maintain an appropriate clear area around your antenna while transmitting
- If you are operating in an uncontrolled environment, make sure that the area around any high-powered transmitting antenna (>20W) is clear.
- When antennas are being worked on, do not transmit
- Utilize only fused power connections
- Ensure appropriate grounding of equipment

Situational Awareness:
- Check in and out with your supervisor
- Know who is on your team and where they are located
- Before entering a potentially hazardous area, take a moment to survey it. Do not enter unsafe areas.
- Maintain awareness of how the incident is shifting, be prepared, if necessary to move rapidly from your location
- Be on the lookout for people or things that do not belong or look out of place. Bring people and objects that appear out of place to the attention of your supervisor or site security

TACTICAL CALLSIGNS / TACTICAL ADDRESSES
- During an incident areas will be assigned tactical callsigns possibly with a corresponding tactical address in Winlink.
- Tactical callsigns and addresses allow incident leadership to reach specific teams or locations without having to know individual names off the top of their head.
- Use your assigned tactical callsign for voice communications – remember to identify with your FCC callsign every 10 minutes or at the end of a conversation.
- With tactical addresses in Winlink, make sure to deactivate the tactical address at the end of your shift – the next shift will activate the tactical address at the beginning of their shift.

TEAM ASSIGNMENTS
- Team assignments will be made by the leadership based on need, availability, and skill base.
- Based on need or your skill set, you may or may not be working with other CARES members

INCIDENT ACTION PLAN / BRIEFING
- The Emergency Coordinator or their designee will distribute an ICS 202 outlining the specifics of the operation
- Team leaders are responsible for briefing their teams for their station and shift.
- At the beginning of the incident or shift, a briefing should occur that outlines the purpose, scope and goals for the period.
- During a shift change, there should be some overlapping time so outgoing staff can get oncoming staff up to speed with the current situation and provide a smooth transition between the shifts.

CLOSE DOWN PROCEDURES

At the end of your shift:

- Close out of any tactical addresses in Winlink
- Pass down information to the oncoming shift – answer any questions that they may have
- Complete and file any paperwork that you have open (eg, ICS 214).
- Check out with your team leader or supervisor – verify what time or if you need to return

At the end of an incident:

- Help close down your station and return the area to the way it was before the incident
- Log out of any computers that do not belong to you.
- Complete and turn in any paperwork you have that is still outstanding
- Participate in any After Action Review / "Hot Wash" activities

For CARES centered or run events, send copies of your ICS 214A, 309, and After-Action Review reports to CLACKAMAS-EOC at Winlink.

Appendix A: Spelling / Phonetic Alphabets

	NATO / ITU	LAW ENFORCEMENT
A	ALPHA	ADAM
B	BRAVO	BOY
C	CHARLIE	CHARLES
D	DELTA	DAVID
E	ECHO	EDWARD
F	FOXTROT	FRANK
G	GOLF	GEORGE
H	HOTEL	HENRY
I	INDIA	IDA
J	JULIET	JOHN
K	KILO	KING
L	LIMA	LINCOLN
M	MIKE	MARY
N	NOVEMBER	NORA
O	OSCAR	OCEAN
P	PAPA	PAUL
Q	QUEBEC	QUEEN
R	ROMEO	ROBERT
S	SIERRIA	SAM
T	TANGO	TOM
U	UNIFORM	UNION
V	VICTOR	VICTOR
W	WHISKEY	WILLIAM
X	XRAY	X-RAY
Y	YANKEE	YELLOW
Z	ZULU	ZEBRA