

August 2025



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**Next
OCRACES
Meeting**

**Monday,
August 4 2025,
7:30 p.m.**

Online on Zoom

**OCRACES Members
Only: Task Updates**

Orange County Sheriff's Department
Emergency Management Division



Newsletter of the County of Orange Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

CRO's Nest

by Ken Bourne, W6HK, Chief Radio Officer Emeritus

AI-Enhanced Emergency Radio Communications

Artificial intelligence (AI) is having an impact on virtually all sectors of life. It's already revolutionizing emergency radio communications for faster dispatching and is progressing toward smarter, more resilient systems that adapt in real time to save lives. Those of us in RACES need to be aware of AI developments and be ready to update our systems.

AI Capabilities in Emergency Communications:

- **Call Triage & Prioritization.** Some AI systems analyze incoming calls, detect urgency through voice tone and keywords, and prioritize dispatch accordingly.
- **Real-Time Transcription & Translation:** AI can convert speech to text instantly and translates multiple languages, including American Sign Language, improving accessibility and reducing response time. A current example is the transcription of voice messages left on cell-phone voicemail. Could we someday have emergency or drill traffic on our RACES repeaters transcribed for our net-control operators?
- **Predictive Analytics:** Machine learning models can forecast emergency hotspots based on historical data, enabling proactive resource deployment.
- **Automated Dispatch & Routing:** AI-enhanced Computer-Aided Dispatch

(CAD) systems can select optimal responders and routes, factoring in traffic, weather, and incident type.

Radio Systems Using AI:

- **AI-Powered Radio Monitoring:** Some dispatch centers such as Public-Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) are testing AI tools that monitor radio traffic for keywords, stress indicators, and incident types—flagging critical events for supervisors.
- **Next-Gen Radio with AI Support:** Radios now integrate with LTE networks and AI systems for encrypted, multiband, and push-to-talk capabilities across agencies.
- **Speech Recognition & Noise Reduction:** AI filters background noise and transcribes radio chatter, helping telecommunicators (and RACES operators!) extract vital information faster. ★

Operational Benefits

Feature	Impact
AI Call Triage	Reduces wait times by up to 30%
Real-Time Transcription	Speeds up call processing by 70%
Predictive Deployment	Cuts response time in high-risk zones
AI Radio Monitoring	Improves situational awareness
Automated dispatch	Reduces human error and boosts efficiency

Celebrate National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month, sponsored by FEMA's Ready Campaign. This is a nationwide effort to encourage everyone to take steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, workplaces, schools and communities. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security works with a variety of organizations to highlight the importance of emergency preparedness and to promote individual involvement through events and activities across the nation. September 30 is National Preparedness Day.

Key activities of National Preparedness Month include:

- **Create an Emergency Plan:** Include evacuation routes, communication strategies, and meeting points.
- **Build a Supply Kit:** Stock essentials like food, water, medications, flashlights, and radios
- **Stay Informed:** Sign up for emergency alerts and follow trusted sources like NOAA and Ready.gov.
- **Practice Drill:** Run mock scenarios with your household to reinforce readiness.
- **Community Engagement:** Volunteer with CERT, Red Cross, or local emergency groups (such as RACES, of course!) ★

All OCRACES Monday Nets on 2 Meters Only

Effective Monday, August 4, 2025, the OCRACES Monday night nets will be utilizing *only* the OCRACES 2-meter repeater (146.895 MHz) *every* week. Net operations on multiple bands on the 4th Monday will be discontinued.

All OCRACES VHF and UHF repeaters and simplex frequencies and HF bands will be used regularly during OCRACES and countywide drills. This will help keep the repeaters active and checked, as well as Orange County EmComm operators' skills current. ★

FEMA Conducts Multi-Regional Comm's Drill

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) conducted a Multi-Regional Communications Exercise on July 9, 2025, with ARES and other entities involved. The exercise included participation from RACES-affiliated operators, though not explicitly named in the official documentation. Unlike most exercises, this test did not allow for planning ahead of time. Rather, the exercise provided a realistic timeframe for a sudden earthquake event.

In addition to SHARES Winlink, which provided agency-to-agency communications, Winlink over amateur radio showed that situational awareness "ground truths" can be readily obtained within an approximate 1,000-mile radius of the earthquake epicenter in Tennessee. Such information is critical to those who must prioritize response and recovery resources. Radio amateurs—many of whom are certified under RACES protocols—filled out Winlink-provided Field Situational Awareness Report forms from the Winlink Express Template library, and sent them via telnet or amateur radio. The protocols and operational standards used align with RACES practices:

- Licensed amateurs activated by local emergency management
- Use of Winlink for emergency messaging
- Coordination with SHARES and FEMA systems

This was a Multi-Regional FEMA Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) driven exercise, which covered many communications systems including the Winlink Hybrid Radio Email Network System for both CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) SHARES (Shared Resources HF Radio Program) and amateur radio. In this exercise, the assignment was to provide a situational awareness report based on the information contained in the scenario, which depended on location.

In addition to the Winlink portion of this exercise other systems were tested:

- The FEMA National Radio System (FNARS), a nationwide HF radio network used by the agency for backup communications during emergencies.
- Starlink, MSAT, G2 SatComm, Iridium SatPhone (involved states).
- Linking of statewide P-25 public-safety trunking systems between involved states.
- The National Warning System (NAWAS), an automated telephone system used to convey warnings for federal, state, and local governments, for military and civilian population.

★

Next OCRACES Meeting: August 4 at 7:30 p.m.

The next County of Orange RACES meeting will be for members only, on Monday, August 4, 2025, at 7:30 p.m., on Zoom (The next online

Zoom meeting open to everyone will be on October 6th.)

The Zoom link will be emailed to members on the OCRACES

Groups.io list. The OCRACES members-only drill of Saturday, July 26th, will be reviewed at the August 4th meeting. ★

Radio Amateurs Serve During Texas Floods

Radio amateurs were embedded with local served agencies in the areas of central Texas affected by devastating floods in July. ARES volunteers stepped up to the dynamic needs of their communities. The trained hams were activated starting on Friday, July 4, 2025, to provide communications capabilities to agencies whose primary systems were damaged in the flooding event or where they suffer poor connectivity due to the terrain.

ARES members helped the American Red Cross with setup of a reunification shelter in response to the floods.

Ten hams were assigned to search-and-rescue teams.

Dozens of health and welfare messages were passed by ham radio operators who provided a critical link when phone lines were overloaded, preventing folks from making direct contact with family members in the area.

During the flooding event and subsequent search and recovery missions, ARES members were deployed to serve many different counties, including hard-hit Kerr and Kendall Counties. Mutual aid was offered between several surrounding ARRL sections. ★

ARRL Files Comments to Protect 70-cm Band

ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio® has filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to oppose part of an application that would impact the 70-centimeter amateur band for telemetry, tracking, and command (TT&C) of satellites. The application, from AST & Science, LLC (AST), requests “unprecedented authorization to 430-440 MHz for a constellation totaling 248 satellites to communicate with five ground stations using up to five channels with up to 256 kHz bandwidth.”

[READ ARRL'S FULL COMMENTS \[PDF\]](#)

The formal opposition, filed by ARRL's Washington Counsel, asserts that the permission AST seeks to use the 430-440 MHz band “should be denied because AST does not demonstrate need for TT&C spectrum beyond that available within existing allocations.”

The filing goes on to highlight just how unprecedented the request is:

The Requested Spectrum Is Not Allocated for the Requested Purpose

The 430-440 MHz band is not allocated domestically or internationally for the requested space-to-Earth and Earth-to-space satellite TT&C operations. As others already have noted in this proceeding, signals in this band from AST's current 5-satellite constellation have been observed throughout the world, including in the United States, notwithstanding that the satellites are authorized to communicate only with five ground stations well outside

the United States. From the operations by the current five satellites, it appears that the satellites at times have transmitted continuously in the 430-440 MHz band throughout their orbit, not just when in communication with one of the authorized ground stations. This activity defeats the purpose of preventing interference in the United States by limiting operations in this band to ground stations distant from the United States. Authorizing an additional 243 satellites to use this band, which would result in multiple satellites over the U.S. at all times, would effectively usurp this band's allocated use.

The 70-centimeter band is also used in emergency communications. As recently as early July 2025, ARRL volunteers serving in the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) made headlines for providing critical communications in flood-ravaged areas of the Texas Hill Country. Allowing the 70-centimeter band to become overrun with TT&C operations could impact the ability for the Amateur Radio Service to be used in future disasters. “TT&C operations in the 430-440 MHz band are capable of causing harmful interference to radio amateur communications, including to amateur satellites operating in the 435-438 MHz sub band,” the comments state.

The comments go on to outline why the application would be non-compliant with the ITU Radio Regulations Treaty.

Reply comments to the application are due by August 5, 2025. ★

RACES PSRs May Respond to Mutual Aid

by Eric Bowen, W6RTR

The PSR program is part of the Orange County Sheriff's Department Mutual Aid Bureau. When I am out working at events, I almost always get asked by people, "What is mutual aid?" after they see it on our canopy. To paraphrase the OCSD website, the Mutual Aid Bureau provides law-enforcement resources to Orange County law-enforcement agencies during an emergency, when they are needed. What does that mean? If a city within Orange County that is not contracted with OCSD for law-enforcement purposes has an emergency, such as flooding, fires, earthquakes, or civil disorder, and the emergency will require more resources than that city can provide, the OCSD Mutual Aid Bureau can provide those resources. They not only provide mutual aid within Orange County but can also provide those resources throughout the state and beyond.

The most recent emergency that the Mutual Aid Bureau has responded to was the recent civil unrest in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Our Sheriff's Response Team (SRT) was activated and sent to the City of Los Angeles to help with the civil unrest. They were also activated and sent to Santa Ana and other parts of Orange County to also assist with the civil unrest. During this time, the OCSD was placed on a Level 3 Tactical Alert, which was then upgraded to a Level 2 (Modified) Tactical Alert. When this happens, the entire Mutual Aid Bureau office is activated to help lead the response.

The Reserve Bureau, which includes the sworn Reserve Deputies and the non-sworn PSRs, Explorers, and Chaplains, also falls under the Mutual Aid Bureau (MAB). As part of the MAB, there are a number of Reserve Units that we can be a part of. Some of these Reserve Units can be activated for mutual aid, while others do not. This doesn't mean that if you are a member of one of the Reserve Units that do not get activated for mutual aid that as a PSR you wouldn't be asked to assist in the event of a mutual-aid activation. We are PSRs first and foremost. In the event of a large-scale emergency and if safe, all PSRs could be asked to assist, independent of any unit that you may be a part of.

One of the Reserve Units that is very active, the Search and Rescue Reserve Unit (SRRU), receives the greatest number of mutual-



Crescenta Valley mutual-aid search.



Hemet mutual-aid search.

aid requests to assist outside agencies. Some of the more recent requests have been to assist in searches for evidence used in a homicide, a high altitude (9,000-foot) rescue in -15 degree F temps of two hikers that fell more than 800 feet down a mountain trail in Riverside, searching the fire-destroyed neighborhoods of Pasadena (Eaton Fire) looking for residents that might not have made it out, searching for a man in Hemet that went missing for three days, and searching for several days (out of eight) for a missing hiker in the Mt. Waterman area in Los Angeles County. The last two searches mentioned had over 100 searchers on each of the days that we were there. Search and Rescue teams from all over CA respond to these incidents. I saw teams from San Diego County to as far north as San Mateo County. The search on Mt. Waterman also made it to the Federal level and had U.S. Army Blackhawks providing logistical support, as well as the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Air Rescue 5 dropping off and picking up searchers.

Mutual aid plays a big role in California's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). SEMS incorporates mutual aid, along with the Operational concept, Multi-agency incorporation, and the Incident Command System (ICS). Local governments throughout California are required to use SEMS to get reimbursed for personnel costs related to a disaster response. To find out more about mutual aid in California, check out the [Cal OES Blue Book: Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan](#). ★



Two PSRs being hoisted into LA Sheriff Air Rescue.

Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) Orange County EMS



Contact (714) 834-3285 or ccossey@ochca.com for more information.

Please join us for a great and informative course!
RSVP is on a first come first serve basis and all
materials will be available at the time of the course.

All Coalition members are welcome regardless of the
sector they serve.

Course Description: The Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) is a standardized, hospital-based framework for managing incidents, both emergencies and non-emergencies. It builds upon the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS) and aims to improve hospital emergency preparedness and response capabilities. HICS provides hospitals with the tools to ensure the safety of patients, personnel, and facilities, while also facilitating business continuity and financial recovery.



August 7, 2025



8:00 AM - 12:00 PM



Venue:

Training Room 103-b
8300 Marine Way, Suite
200, Irvine, CA 92618



OC Health Care Agency

Countywide RACES/EmComm News

“RACES/EmComm News” provides an opportunity to share information from all City & County RACES/ACS units and EmComm organizations and supportive amateur radio clubs in and near Orange County, as well as from Cal OES and federal agencies.

Please send your news to NetControl Editor Ken Bourne, W6HK, at:

kbourne.ocsd@earthlink.net



Orange County Health Care Agency

The Orange County Health Care Agency has scheduled a Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) course for members of the Health Care Coalition of Orange County, which includes OCHEART. Although based on ICS, there are key provisions of HICS particular to the healthcare sector that hospital emergency communicators should be aware of. In most emergency operations plans hospitals are first in line for emergency communications support, so operators in any EmComm group may be deployed to a healthcare facility.

During Hurricanes Helene and Milton, ARES and RACES units were called upon to provide operators for hospitals (see <https://www.wired.com/story/hurricane-helene-milton-north-carolina-florida-amateur-radio/>). Familiarity with HICS will help prepare you for hospital duty should you be activated during a disaster when public communications infrastructure is impaired.

The session is August 7, 2025 at 8:00 a.m. (see flyer on page 5).

RSVP to Chad Cossey, ccossey@ochca.com (with a copy to hel-lo@OCHEART.net).

Orange County Amateur Radio Club (OCARC)

The next meeting of the Orange County Amateur Radio Club will feature a presentation by Mary Woll, N6VI. Marty was part of a team that operated the C5Z DXpedition from The Gambia during the 2003 WW DX Contest (CW). The operation was fraught with challenges that they successfully overcame. The meeting will be on Friday, August 15, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., at the American Red Cross (George M. Chitty Building), 600 Parkcenter Drive, Santa Ana)

Calaveras County

Amateur radio had a crucial role in locating a mother and her 9-year son lost in California's Stanislaus National Forest. On Friday, July 11, 2025, the pair was reported overdue from a day trip to Camp Wolfeboro, a popular scout camp in the Sierra Nevada

Mountains, according to a news release.

On Saturday July 12, the Calaveras County Volunteer Search and Rescue Team (SAR) was conducting its monthly training exercise along the Stanislaus River when members received notification that Tami and son Stirling had been reported missing since Friday afternoon and were not answering their cell phones.

The SAR team set up a command post at Black Springs Off-Highway Vehicle riding (OHV) Recreational Area and quickly began initiating a road-based search using four-wheel-drive vehicles and air support from the California Highway Patrol.

Joining the search was a Deputy and a Forest Service Law Enforcement Ranger who responded to 911 texts from campers in the area that a vehicle possibly matching the description of the pair's missing car had been found. The SAR team began to find handwritten notes posted near a remote Forest Service road and then another about a mile away that included a telephone number and the names of the missing individuals. Just before 6:00 p.m., the car and the lost mother and son were found. But the rescue was not over.

SAR team members were unable to communicate with their command post using conventional frequencies and cell phones from their deep woods location. So they used amateur radio to report their emergency traffic. The call was immediately answered by a retired El Dorado County communications supervisor, who is also an amateur radio operator, monitoring from his home. He contacted the El Dorado 911 center, which provided the information to Calaveras County Dispatch. The SAR command post was notified, and the mother and her son were transported to waiting family members.

Young Stirling also had a hand with the rescue. He used his scout whistle to blow the Morse code SOS distress signal to give searchers a better chance of locating their position.

Thanks to *ARRL News* (July 25, 2025) for this article.

August 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
3	4 Weekly 2 m ACS Net & OCRACES Meeting	5	6	7 San Bernardino Microwave Society Mtg	8	9 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
10	11 Weekly 2 m ACS Net	12	13	14	15 Orange County Amateur Radio Club Meeting	16 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
17	18 Weekly 2 m ACS Net	19	20	21	22	23 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
24	25 Weekly ACS Net on 3 Bands	26	27	28	29	30 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
31						

Upcoming Events:

- **August 4, 1930-2130 hours:** OCRACES Meeting on Zoom (members only)
- **August 7, 1900 hours:** San Bernardino Microwave Society Meeting, American Legion Post #216, 1024 S. Main Street, Suite B, in Corona
- **August 15, 1900 hours:** Orange County Amateur Radio Club meeting, American Red Cross (George M. Chitty Building), 600 Parkcenter Drive, Santa Ana

Mission Statement

- To provide emergency communication services for the County of Orange under the guidance of the Orange County Emergency Manager and Emergency Management Division Personnel



- These services include, but are not limited to:

- Support to the County of Orange Emergency Management Division with auxiliary communications capabilities from County Emergency Operations Center radio room and field locations to and from:
 - The general population,
 - Orange County city RACES, EmComm, and Public Service organizations,
 - Adjacent counties, and
 - State and Federal Government organizations
- Provide voice and digital communication services in the event of the loss of existing communications infrastructure including public service radio services, cellphone service, internet service, conventional power, and any combination of these services

County of Orange RACES Frequencies

60 m: 5371.5 kHz USB (dial) (Channel 4) (OC ACS Net—Saturdays, 1000 hours)
 6 m: 52.620 MHz output, 52.120 MHz input, 103.5 Hz PL
 2 m: 146.895 MHz output, 146.295 MHz input, 136.5 Hz PL*
 2 m: 146.595 MHz simplex
 1.25 m: 223.760 MHz output, 222.160 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL
 70 cm: 446.000 MHz simplex
 70 cm: 448.320 MHz output, 443.320 MHz input, 141.3 Hz PL (private)
 70 cm: 449.100 MHz output, 444.100 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL (private)
 70 cm: 449.180 MHz output, 444.180 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL (private)
 70 cm: 449.680 MHz output, 444.680 MHz input, 131.8 Hz PL (private) (down)
 *Primary Net—Mondays, 1900 hours

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Visit Our Web Site
<https://ocraces.org>
It's Where It's @!

Questions or Comments?
Contact *NetControl* Editor Ken Bourne, W6HK
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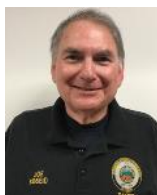
**"W6ACS ...
Serving
Orange County"**

Meet Your County of Orange RACES Members!

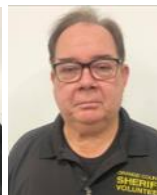
Officers ➡



Scott MacGillivray
KM6RTE



Joe Selikov
KB6EID



Scott Byington
KC6MMF



Randy Benicky
N6PRL

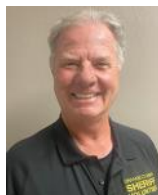
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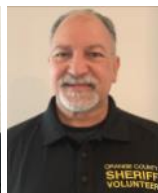
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