



CUMBERLAND COUNTY **AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY** **SERVICE/RADIO AMATEUR CIVIL** **EMERGENCY SERVICE**

ROAD OBSERVERS GUIDE

A REFERENCE GUIDE FOR OBSERVING AND REPORTING ROAD CONDITIONS

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Introduction

In our current association with Cumberland County EMA, we have constantly strived to find a niche to fill in the County EMA structure. As time went on, it was found that we, as Amateurs, had the unique ability to look at road conditions and report these back to EMA for information and action. We serve as additional eyes for EMA within the county, reporting additional road conditions that, during an emergency or disaster, normal public service officials may not be able observe.

SAFETY

SAFETY IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE AT ALL TIMES, IN ALL ACTIVITIES!

IF, AT ANY TIME, YOU FEEL THAT YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY IS JEOPARDIZED IN ANY WAY, LEAVE THE AREA, NOTIFY THE NET CONTROL STATION (NCS), ADVISE THEM OF YOUR ACTION AND EXPLAIN THE SITUATION.

BE SAFE IN ALL OF YOUR ACTIONS!

DO NOT TAKE CHANCES. AS A COMMUNICATOR, YOU ARE NOT “PAID” TO TAKE CHANCES!

ALWAYS ADVISE THE NCS OF ANY DANGEROUS SITUATION.

IF NECESSARY, ADVISE THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES OF THE SITUATION.

IF DEPLOYED, ALWAYS EVALUATE THE SITUATION AROUND YOU. ALWAYS HAVE A WAY OUT. DON'T ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE TRAPPED. EVACUATE BEFORE THE SITUATION BECOMES DANGEROUS.

ALWAYS SEEK MEDICAL HELP WHEN YOU ARE INJURED IN ANY WAY. DO NOT ‘SHAKE OFF’ INJURIES.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS NEVER, AT ANY TIME, PUT YOURSELF OR OTHERS IN DANGER!

BE PREPARED!

Dress for the occasion! Have the proper safety equipment!

While on road patrol, always assume that you will be leaving your vehicle at one time or another.

Have clothes with you to fit the conditions (for example rain gear during severe weather, cold weather gear in the winter, etc.)

Have the proper safety equipment with you (for example, hardhat, flashlight, pocket knife, safety vest, etc.)

Always know where you are going. Have a map of the area you are covering.

OBEY THE LAW!

Remember, we are volunteers with no actual public service authority.

- **Obey all applicable traffic laws while on road patrol duty.**
- **Obey all signs and warnings posted by public service agencies.**
- **Obey all instructions of public service authorities.**
 - **If there is a problem between an ARES volunteer and a public service official, obey the public service official and report the incident to the Net Control Station.**
 - **It is a wise idea to carry your Cumberland County EMA identification card, your ARES identification card and a copy of your amateur radio license.**

WHAT TO OBSERVE

- ROAD CONDITIONS

- Is a road open or closed? If closed, to what extent (if known)? If a road is closed and you are unsure to what extent, try to contact a local public service agency for further information.
- If a road is open, what condition is it in?
 - Are there any road washouts? If so, to what extent?
 - Are there potential washouts? If so, what is the condition of the roadbed and to what extent is the roadbed passable?
 - What are the conditions of the shoulder? Are there potential washouts that could affect the road?
 - Is there standing or flowing water on the road? If yes,;
 - What is the approximate depth of the water
 - If flowing, in what direction and speed (fast or slow moving)?
 - Is there a visible drain or culvert blocked?
 - Is there debris on the roadway? If yes,;
 - What type of debris (trees or limbs, utility poles, utility lines, etc.)?
 - Is there potential road debris? If yes,;
 - What type of potential debris (damaged trees or limbs (hanging or cracked), damaged utility poles, low hanging utility lines, etc.)?

- Is there snow on the road? If yes;
 - What is the approximate snow depth?
 - Is the snow standing or drifting?
 - If drifting, to what extent is the drifting happening and what direction is the wind coming from?
 - What are the road conditions in the snow area? Does there seem to be only snow on the road or is there an ice layer?

- **BRIDGE CONDITIONS**

- Is a bridge open or closed?
 - If closed, why?
 - Standing or flowing water?
 - Is the water over the bridge?
 - Is the water endangering the structure (if not over the bridge)?
- Is the bridge officially closed or currently unmarked and impassable?
- In what condition are the approaches to the bridge?

- **BE AWARE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS AROUND YOU**

- During periods of severe weather, conditions can change rapidly. Be sure to observe safety and report any sudden changes in the weather

- **PROPERTY DAMAGE**

- Report property damage, as observed, on a secondary basis

NET PROCEDURES AND REPORTING

- **ALWAYS CHECK INTO A NET BEFORE BEGINNING YOUR ROAD PATROL OR OBSERVATION**
 - Check into the net with your call sign, name and location
 - Advise the Net Control Station (NCS) that you are available for road patrol duty or that you have a road condition report
 - If available for road patrol duty, obtain a tactical call sign from the NCS (if currently being used)
 - Follow the instructions of the NCS
- **KEEP THE NCS UPDATED ON YOUR STATUS**
 - If you must leave the net, advise the NCS as to the time you are leaving and for how long
 - Advise the NCS when you return
 - Respond to roll calls
 - Always advise the NCS if you encounter a dangerous situation
 - **DO NOT HESITATE TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY IF THE SITUATION WARRANTS!**
- **PRIORITIZE YOUR REPORTS**
 - *Emergency*
 - Danger to life or property

- **Rapid and dangerous change in weather conditions**
- *Priority*
 - **Road outages or blockages**
 - **Rapid change in weather conditions**
- *Routine*
 - **Open or clear roads**
 - **No change in weather status**
- **REPORTING PROCEDURES**
 - **Report facts**
 - **Avoid opinions, unless asked for by the NCS or other authority**
 - **Always report your location**
- **SUGGESTED REPORT OUTLINE**
 - **Your call (tactical or FCC) and location**
 - **Precedence of your report (Emergency, Priority or Routine)**
 - **Direction of travel**
 - **Weather condition (if applicable)**

- **Road or property condition**
- **Blockages (if applicable)**
- **Other data, as needed**

CUMBERLAND COUNTY ARES/RACES

