



Mission Viejo Emergency RACES - ARES

Serving the City of Mission Viejo, California



Amateur Radio Operator,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding Radio Amateur Civil Services (RACES) and Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES).

The following is information about the RACES and ARES organization and how to apply.

General Information

RACES ("race-ease") and ARES ('air-ease') are a volunteer segment of the amateur radio fraternity which has a interest in public service. Mission Viejo supports a RACES group which is associated with the city's Emergency Services Office. The members of the Mission Viejo RACES group decided they could better serve the community by holding dual membership in RACES and ARES.

As you know, during routine, day-to-day situations, city government, local Police, Sheriff and Fire Departments utilize their own public service communications systems. However, during widespread civil emergencies (such as an earthquake), it is expected that several problems may occur which would hamper these communications:

1. The telephone system, including special circuits, may be disabled by downed or broken lines and disruption at the central offices can be expected.
2. The commercial power system may fail due to downed or broken lines and failures at distribution points.
3. Police, Sheriff and Fire Department communications systems will be over-taxed with requests for assistance and damage reports.
4. Communications to other areas (county and state offices) may be disrupted for many hours.

Experience and test exercises have shown that most local governments can cope with the first two problems, but saturation of public service communications system is difficult to practice. Actually, any communication system will become saturated during a large scale emergency because there would be only a limited number of people available to handle the calls for service.

The practical approach to normal communication systems has been to gear the size of the system to day-to-day needs and available funds. Of course, this means an easily over-taxed system. Most non-military systems have little or no reserve capability. The RACES communications organization primarily provides an alternate method of passing information without requiring extra funding by the municipality. RACES and ARES volunteers donate their time and bring their personal equipment to provide this service.

RACES Requirements

1. Must be a licensed radio amateur operator, no code technician or above, at least 18 years of age.
2. No felony convictions or FCC violations.
3. RACES-ARES personnel must possess (and maintain) a working amateur radio station, capable of operation on the Mission Viejo RACES frequencies (UHF and 2 meter), preferably portable in nature.
4. RACES-ARES personnel are not to miss more than five (5) consecutive, weekly radio training/resource nets, or attend less than two (2) meetings per year, and must participate in at least one (1) activity (drills, emergencies or public service events) in a twelve (12) month period.
5. RACES-ARES personnel MUST complete within the first 6 months of membership, the Department of Homeland Security's training in (NIMS) National Incident Management System and (ICS) Incident Command System. Courses ICS-700, ICS-100, and ICS-200.
6. *Tier-2 "Mutual Aid Training" is optional* but, all personnel are asked to participate as a group in learning the procedures used in mutual aid.

Desirable qualifications: Synthesized radios on UHF (440) and the 2-meter band (144-148). HF capability, 50 MHz stations, and prior or subsequent training in first aid, search and rescue, emergency communications, police/fire sciences and radio traffic handling.

Enthusiasm and a desire to serve the community are highly desirable qualifications for continued participation in Mission Viejo RACES-ARES.

RACES Disqualification

The following will result in automatic and permanent RACES termination:

1. Any subsequent felony convictions or FCC violations.
2. Unprofessional behavior while representing the City of Mission Viejo or any conduct which would bring discredit upon the RACES organization.
3. Use or attempted use of Mission Viejo RACES insignia, badge, decal, plaques, stickers or city issued equipment, any article bearing "Civil Defense," "RACES," "CD," Mission Viejo Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service," or any article, effect or statement giving reference to involvement in Mission Viejo RACES, to influence any city employee, police, sheriff or fire official or to give any special consideration to Mission Viejo RACES personnel during a non-emergency situation without specific approval by the RACES Radio Officer or the Emergency Services Coordinator of the City of Mission Viejo.
4. Failure to attend meetings and failure to respond to radio roll call on a continuing basis. This may be waived by the RACES Radio Officer if unusual or excusable circumstances apply.
5. Equipment incapable of operation on Mission Viejo RACES primary frequencies.
6. Providing false or misleading information on membership applications.
7. Disobedience of a RACES or City official during any event, disaster, or drill except when compliance with orders would be criminal in nature or would endanger any person or property.

Application Procedure

Enclosed is a RACES, ARES, and Disaster Service Worker application. Fill them out completely and return them to the Mission Viejo RACES Radio Officer. Include a copy of your FCC License with these completed forms.

Please be patient while your application is being processed.

Within a few weeks, you will receive a letter, email or phone call confirming or disqualifying your membership to Mission Viejo RACES-ARES.

Sincerely,



Charley Speelman, WA6RUZ
Radio Officer, Mission Viejo RACES