

Mich-A-Con RF

Iron Mountain, Michigan

March 2010

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Visit the ARRL's Web Site at <http://www.arrl.org>

FCC Issues Notice of Proposed Rule Making on Government Disaster Drills and Amateur Radio

From:

The ARRL Letter for March 25, 2010

On March 24, the FCC released a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM)* proposing to amend the Commission's Amateur Radio Service rules "with respect to Amateur Radio operations during government-sponsored emergency preparedness and disaster readiness drills and tests." While current rules provide for Amateur Radio use during emergencies, the rules prohibit communications where the station licensee or control operator has a pecuniary interest, including communications on behalf of an employer. In October 2009, the FCC released a Public Notice clarifying the Commission's rules relating to the use of Amateur Radio by licensed amateurs participating in drills and exercises on behalf of their employers. To date, the FCC has granted several dozen waivers under this new policy.

The FCC notes that while there are some exceptions to this prohibition, "there is none that would permit amateur station control operators who are employees of public safety agencies and other entities, such as hospitals, to participate in drills and tests in preparation for such emergency situations and transmit messages on behalf of their employers during such drills and tests." Based on that, the Commission proposes to amend the

rules to provide that, under certain limited conditions, Amateur Radio operators may transmit messages during emergency and disaster preparedness drills, regardless of whether the operators are employees of entities participating in the drill.

Background

Per Part 97.1(a), one of the fundamental principles underlying the Amateur Radio Service is the "[r]ecognition and enhancement of the value of the Amateur Service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications." The rules, in Section 97.403, also state that "[n]o provision of these rules prevents the use by an amateur station of any means of radio communication at its disposal to provide essential communication needs in connection with the immediate safety of human life and immediate protection of property when normal communication systems are not available."

In the *NPRM*, the FCC recognized that Amateur Radio operators provide essential communications links and facilitate relief actions in disaster situations: "While land mobile radio services are the primary means of conducting emergency communications, Amateur Radio plays a unique and critical role when these primary facilities are damaged, overloaded, or destroyed." The FCC gave Amateur Radio operations during 2005's Hurricane Katrina as an example, saying that Amateur Radio operators "volunteered to support many agencies [and]...provided urgently needed wireless communications in many locations where there was no other means of communicating and also provided other technical aid to the communities affected by Hurricane Katrina."

The FCC acknowledged that since Amateur Radio is often an essential element of emergency preparedness and response, many state and local governments and public safety agencies incorporate Amateur Radio operators and the communication capabilities of the Amateur Service into their emergency planning. In this regard, some entities, such as hospitals, emergency operations centers and police, fire, and emergency medical service stations have encouraged the participation of their employees who are Amateur Radio operators in emergency and disaster drills and tests.

The FCC said that its rules "expressly permit operation of amateur stations for public service communications during emergencies, as well as on a voluntary basis during drills and exercises in preparation for such emergencies." But since the Amateur Radio Service is primarily designated for "amateurs, that is, duly authorized persons interested in radio technique solely with a personal aim and without pecuniary interest," and rules expressly prohibit amateur stations from transmitting communications "in which the station licensee or control operator has a pecuniary interest, including communications on behalf of an employer," the FCC has mandated that public safety entities seeking to have employees operate amateur stations during government-sponsored emergency preparedness and disaster drills presently must request a waiver.

Discussion

The FCC is seeking comments on whether to amend the rules to permit Amateur Radio operators to participate in government-sponsored emergency and disaster preparedness drills and tests, regardless of whether the operators are employees of the entities participating in the drill or test. The Commission's rules already recognize the importance of Amateur Radio

in emergencies, and permit participation in such drills and tests by volunteers (defined by the FCC as "non-employees of participating entities").

The FCC recognizes that based on experience, it knows that amateur operations "can and have played an essential role in protecting the safety of life and property during emergency situations and disasters. And as evidenced by recent waiver requests, state and local government public safety agencies and other entities often conduct disaster and emergency preparedness drills to be best-prepared for such eventualities."

The proposed rule would preclude the need for a waiver in such instances by allowing employees of public safety agencies and other entities to operate amateur stations for testing and drilling of emergency communications preparedness. The FCC "tentatively conclude[s] that employee status should not preclude or prevent participation in government-sponsored emergency and disaster tests and drills. Further, we tentatively conclude that extending authority to operate amateur stations during such drills will enhance emergency preparedness and thus serve the public interest."

In reaching these "tentative conclusions," the Commission asserts that it agrees with the core principle of the Amateur Radio Service as a "voluntary, non-commercial communication service carried out by duly authorized persons interested in radio technique with a personal aim and without pecuniary interest." Per the NPRM, the FCC believes that the public interest will be served by "a narrow exception to the prohibition on transmitting amateur communications in which the station control operator has a pecuniary interest or employment relationship, and that such an exception is consistent with the intent of the Amateur Radio Service rules." As such, the FCC proposes that amateur operations in connection with emergency drills "be limited to the duration and scope of the drill, test or exercise being conducted, and operational testing immediately prior to the drill, test or exercise."

The FCC also proposes that the emergency tests and drills must be sponsored by federal, state, or local governments or agencies "in order to limit the narrow exception to ensure that drills further public safety." The Commission does understand, however, that there may be circumstances where conducting emergency drills for disaster planning purposes, even if not government-sponsored, would serve the public interest. Accordingly, the FCC seeks comment on whether it should permit employee operation of amateur stations during non-government-sponsored emergency drills "if the purpose of the drill is to assess communications capabilities, including Amateur Radio, in order to improve emergency preparedness and response."

According to the FCC, a large number of agencies and organizations at the state and local levels coordinate with their local volunteer Amateur Radio operators to conduct drills and exercises in concert with other modes of communication: "This joint activity is essential to allow for a practiced response on the part of the first responder community. Because some of those drills and exercises include transmission of amateur communications by employees of participating entities, we believe the proposed rule changes would be in the public interest, consistent with ongoing national emergency preparedness and response priorities. We therefore seek comment on the tentative conclusions contained herein."

Proposed Rules

Part 97 of Chapter 1 of Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations is amended as follows:

1. Section 97.113 is amended by revising paragraph (a)(3), adding new paragraphs (a)(3)(i) and (a)(3)(ii), redesignating paragraphs (c) and (d) as new paragraphs (a)(3)(iii) and (a)(3)(iv) respectively, and redesignating paragraphs (e) and (f) as (c) and (d) respectively, to read as follows:

§ 97.113 Prohibited transmissions.

(a) ***

(3) Communications in which the station licensee or control operator has a pecuniary interest, including communications on behalf of an employer, with the following exceptions:

- (i) A control station operator may participate on behalf of an employer in a government-sponsored emergency preparedness or disaster readiness test or drill, limited to the duration and scope of such test or drill, and operational testing immediately prior to such test or drill.
- (ii) An amateur operator may notify other amateur operators of the availability for sale or trade of apparatus normally used in an amateur station, provided that such activity is not conducted on a regular basis.

How to File Comments

Information on how to file comments via e-mail or by other means can be found on pages 4-6 in the [*NPRM. The deadline for comments is 30 days after publication in the Federal Register. The deadline for reply comments is 45 days after publication in the Federal Register.*](#)

Hawaii Mobilized for Potential Tsunami

from:

The ARES E-Letter for March 24, 2010

Ron Hashiro, AH6RH, Hawaii State Civil Defense ARES®/RACES Coordinator, thanked the Amateur Radio community for outstanding support of a state-wide tsunami net convened in the immediate aftermath of the Chilean earthquake. The net was held on the State RACES VHF network, and on HF at 7088 kHz. "We had a combined total of 60 stations on VHF and HF checked into the net," said Hashiro. "Real-time observations from the field were passed, and tactical messages were injected directly into the State Civil Defense's information tracking and reporting systems." Hashiro added: "At the same time, amateurs in three county EOCs were able to receive the same radio reports for informational updates for their EOC operations."

The location reports, time-stamping, and timeliness with the estimates of water height information demonstrated the professionalism of the Amateur Radio Service to the SCD staff operations and to the Governor. SCD Director Ed Teixeira was extremely pleased and grateful for these reports and extended his thanks to the Amateur Radio community for an outstanding job well done.

Words from the President:

Tom, W8JWN

Letter RE: Amateur Radio for the Rest of Us

Mr. (Name removed by me)

Thank you for including the recent article on amateur radio in SurvivalBlog. I have been an amateur radio operator for about 35 years and have been playing with radios for over 40 years.

I am amazed with the depth of knowledge of the readers on your blog. In many of the topics covered, I know very little. I have one criticism of amateur radio operators concerning "emcon" or emergency communications. Many hams like to participate in the organized drills with their local Emergency Government officials. This is a big mistake in a SHTF scenario. Think of yourselves, your family, and those closest to you first.

While it may be advantageous to be on good terms with law enforcement, they really don't care about us. Public safety agencies pay millions of dollars on high tech, complicated communications systems. If they still fail in a TEOTWAWKI situation, any civilian communications gear can be seized, upon gunpoint, in an emergency. They may also be seized to prevent any civilian communications.

Most police lack user discipline on radios. They really don't understand radios. I consider a good working knowledge of communications as complicated as a working knowledge of firearms. We would use our firearms to protect ourselves and our loved ones first. Think of communications gear the same way. Forget about all of this nonsense about amateur radio as a "public service". Think of radios in terms of communications only. The license is not going to matter in a SHTF situation. Only your knowledge of radios and communications in **general will make the difference. Best Regards, - (Name removed by me).**

Belated WORDS from the President

While following Internet accounts of last weekend's arrest of Hutaree militia members near Adrian, I found

the above on a surv3ivalist web page. There were many articles on the use of ham radio: equipment to

purchase, antennas to be made, power supplies, frequencies, etc. PSK 31 was touted as means of

communication to avoid detection by law enforcement. Thanks to Art's presentation at the last meeting,

many of our members are now ready to join a militia. HI!!!

Also, to my surprise, the U. P. was mentioned as a very nice area to use as a "Retreat". It's isolated, low cost of living, cheap land (I don't know about that!), plenty of firewood, etc. One of the drawbacks was the black flies.

So, it looks like our hobby will continue to grow; however, the ARRL will not have accurate license

statistics to tout this increase. Many of these "new hams" won't bother with getting a license!

Mich-A-Con ARC Activities for April 2010						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1 ARIES	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 ARIES	9	10
11	12	13 MEETING	14	15 ARIES	16	17 BREAKFAST
18	19	20	21	22 ARIES	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 ARIES	30	

Club Activities

ARES Nets are conducted at 6:30 PM Central Time every Thursday on our 2-meter repeater (146.850 MHz.)

Meeting: The Mich-A-Con Club meets the second Tuesday of the month at the Dickinson County Library at 7:00 PM. Visitors and Prospective Members are always welcome.

Our Saturday Morning Breakfast is held on the 3rd Saturday of every month at 9:00 AM at the Holiday Kitchen Restaurant on Stephenson Ave (US-2) in Iron Mountain.

Mich-A-Con Amateur Radio Club
Minutes of the March 9, 2010 Meeting

President Tom Martin, W8JWN, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Secretary Report

The minutes of the February 9 meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer Report

Balances as of March 9, 2010:

Checking - \$341.40

Regular Savings - \$2,862.04, \$1,386.91 of which is in the Trailer Fund.

Repeater Savings - \$912.80

Petty Cash - \$0.00.

Tom Martin received dues of \$20 each from Steve Johnson, Skip Caswell and Adam Hull.

We have 27 paid members as of this meeting.

Repeater Report

Nothing to report.

ARES

The ARES Net has been active.

Pete Schlitt, KC8JRH, said the environmental impact study has been approved by the EPA. The radio equipment for the Dickinson County EOC will be purchased soon.

Old Business

Radio Equipment for Sale -

The club has two 30 foot steel towers for sale.

Scott, KB9AVX, will repair the club's Drake Twins and sell them on eBay.

VEC Testing -

Exams are scheduled to be given on the first Saturday of February, May, August and November. Additional exams can be scheduled by calling Mike, N9NBN.

Club Trailer -

Paul reported that the trailer that was advertised for sale, was already sold. He will continue to check out other trailer deals.

Field Day 2010 -

Contact Terry to sign up.

Tom will not be available on Sunday. Someone will have to remove the equipment brought by him at the conclusion of Field Day.

Club Programs Scheduled -

April - Bob, WA8FXQ, Repeater Phone Patch Procedures

May - Tom, W8JWN, Traffic Handling

June or July - Gary, K4FMX, AM, FM, SSB.

New Business

Bob, WA8FXQ, reported that the Copper Country Radio Club needs help with the upcoming dog sled and ski races.

Barry, KC9NFT, donated a ground rod to the Trailer Fund. Paul, KD8KUF, paid \$20 for it.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

For the Good of the Order

Attendees reported on their radio related activities.

Club Program

Art, KD8GLO, made a presentation on PSK

Submitted by Mike Bray

Attendees

Mike Bray, K8DDB---Secretary
Bob Meyers, WA8FXQ
Adam Hull, KD8LQK
Art Costa, KD8GLO
Joe Komblevicz, KB8ETK
Skip Caswell, KE9L
Jim Rye, W8IFI
Scott Baker, KB9AVX
Beth Baker, KC9KVP
Steve Johnson, KC9RY Y
Fred Broschart
Barry Perron, KC9NFT
Tom Martin, W8JWN---President
Paul Schultz, KD8KUF
Pete Schlitt, KC8JRH
Tom Heyboer, KC8LKO
Michael Byers

Links

ARRL WEB PAGE: <http://www.arrl.org>

ARRL MICHIGAN: <http://www.arrl-mi.org/>

US REPEATERS: <http://www.usrepeaters.com>

MICH-A-CON : <http://www.qsl.net/ka1ddb>

Tropospheric Ducting Forecasts:
<http://www.dxinfocentre.com/tropo.html>

FCC Universal Licensing System: <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>

QTH.COM: <http://www.qth.com/>

QRZ.COM: <http://www.qrz.com/>

Ehamnet.com: <http://www.eham.net/>

U.P. Skywarn: <http://kcra-mi.net/skywarn/>

V.E. TESTING:

04/10 **Houghton**: 8:30am eastern time, V.E. Exams at Michigan Tech. University in Houghton, MI will be held in the ballroom of DHH (Douglass Houghton Hall at Michigan Tech). Free Parking in Lot #14, front of DHH, across from Wadsworth Residence Hall. Use door #9 on the South-East side of DHH. Contact Glenn Ekdahl, WA8QNF at (906) 482-7743 if you have questions.

4/10 **Gladstone**: Sponsor: Delta County Amateur Radio Society Time:10:00 AM (Walk-ins welcome) Contact: Howard St. John (906) 428-9476 email: hsj99@charter.net
Vec: ARRL/VECLocation: Gladstone City Hall Main Meeting Room 1100 Delta Ave Gladstone, Mi. 49837.

05/01**Iron Mountain**: 9:00am central time, (arrive by 8:30am) Dickinson County Library(conference room), contact Mark J. Lewis N8UKD, (906) 776-1553. 412 Fairmount St. Kingsford, Mi 49802.

06/12 **Marquette**: 8:30am eastern time, (arrive by 8:00am) Marquette County Health Dept. Bldg,U.S. 41 just east of the Michigan State Police Post. Contact Rich Schwenke, N8GBA at 906 249-3837or e-mail: n8gba@chartermi.net.

Please arrive one-half hour early for test sessions to give time to process applications.

Testing applicants should bring the following items with them:
Two pieces of I.D. one being a photo I.D., Original license and one clear copy of their license if applicable,
Completed form 605 (one will be provided if you don't have one), pencils, calculator and the test fee of \$15.00.

Please have the correct fee as examiners do not carry change. Please contact the individual(s) listed to confirm date(s), location(s), etc.

Note: If you have been assigned a FRN from the FCC you must use it on all forms rather than your SSN.

ARRL Continuing Education Course Registration

from

The ARRL Letter for March 25, 2010



Registration remains open through **Sunday, April 25, 2010**, for these online course sessions beginning on Friday May 7th, 2010:

- Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Level 1;
- Antenna Modeling; Radio Frequency Interference;
- Antenna Design and Construction; Propagation;
- Analog Electronics, and
- Digital Electronics.

To learn more, visit the CEP Course Listing Page (<http://www.arrl.org/cep/student/>)
or contact the Continuing Education Program Coordinator (cce@arrl.org).

Wanted:

YOUR ARTICLES, IDEAS AND INPUT! SEND THEM IN NOW TO:
kd8ccp@arrl.net

Please remit dues to :

Burt Armbrust WB8EBS
693 Cliff St.
Quinnesec, Mi. 49876

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Call Sign: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____

ARRL Member? Yes ___ No ___

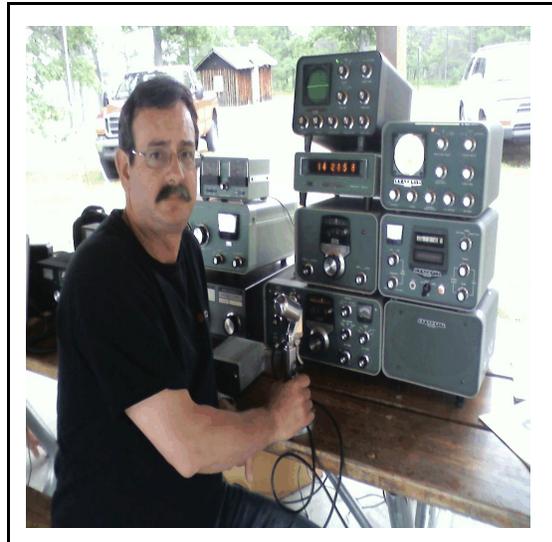
Annual dues are due in January.

Please make check payable to Mich-A-Con
ARC

Annual dues for Full Membership - Single \$20 ___ * Family \$30 ___ Repeater Only \$10
**

If family membership, please list additional names and call
signs: _____

* The dues for NEW members are prorated - you only pay for the remainder of the
year! Please remit \$1.67 per month for a Single membership or \$2.50 per month for a
Family membership.



Field Day is Coming!!!

Club Patches are available from:

Burt Armbrust WB8EBS
693 Cliff St.
Quinnesec, Mi. 49876

The patches are 3 inches in diameter and
sell for \$3 ea.

If ordering by mail please include a SASE along with
your payment.



Club Meetings:

The Mich-A-Con Amateur Radio Club meets on the second Tuesday of the month in the Dickinson County Library at 7:00 PM. Visitors and prospective members are always welcome!

The URL for the Mich-A-Con ARC web site is:
<http://www.qsl.net/ka1ddb/>

Previous editions of Mich-A-Con RF can be accessed by a link on the news page.

The ARRL DX Bulletin on the Upcoming Activities page is updated each Thursday and the contests section is updated on a monthly basis.

Club Officers:

President:
Tom Martin, W8JWN
(906) 774-5463
tmartin@chartermi.net

Vice President:
Scott Jarmusch KA8TFF
s_jarmusch@yahoo.com

Secretary:
Mike Bray, K8DDB
(906) 563-7020
mikebray@chartermi.net

Treasurer:
Burt Armbrust WB8EBS
(906) 774-8383
wb8ebs@yahoo.com

Reminders:

Club dues for the year 2010 were payable on January 1st. Please use the Membership Application - Renewal form when paying your dues. Checks should be made payable to : Mich-A-Con Arc and sent to our Treasurer, Burt Armbrust WB8EBS at the address listed on the form. Thank-you for supporting your club!

The March Mich-A-Con Meeting will be held on Tue April 13th 2010. It will be held in the Dickinson County Library at 7 PM

MICH-A-CON RF

Mich-A-Con ARC
c/o Stephen Skauge
213 South Angeline
Ishpeming, Mi 49849

