

Annex 11: Lewis County Emergency Communicators Group

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Lewis County Emergency Communicators Group /RACES

Section I- Purpose

1. The Lewis County Office of Emergency Management (LCOEM) and other public service agencies may require communications assistance when, due to man-made or natural disaster, equipment failure, or other reason, existing county and/or related public service or commercial communications systems are inoperable or degraded or have insufficient capacity.
2. The Amateur Radio Service is a proven resource that can assist in such situations.
3. The Lewis County Emergency Communicators Group (LCECG) consists of volunteer licensed Amateur Radio operators interested in providing assistance.

Section II- Mission

The LCECG will, on a volunteer basis, provide back up and supplemental communications to County agencies, volunteer fire departments, EMS and similar groups as needed; within the county or between the county and locations outside the affected area; to facilitate emergency services, disaster response and other essential public safety functions.

Section III- Activation

1. Lewis County designates and supports the LCECG as the official volunteer communications auxiliary and RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) / ARES (Amateur Radio Civil Emergency Service) organization for the county.
2. Operation as RACES will be in accordance with FCC regulations Part 97.407 and the New York State RACES SOP (available at www.dhSES.ny.gov/oem/state-ops/documents/RACES-SOP11-2011.pdf).
3. Operation as ARES will be in accordance with procedures defined in the ARES Manual (available at www.arrl.org/ares).
4. The primary difference between RACES and ARES is that in general RACES must be authorized and activated by the emergency management office and can only be active in an emergency situation (or limited training periods), whereas ARES can self-activate and may be utilized in non-emergency situations.
5. When communications support is needed, county authorities will notify volunteer emergency communicators by telephone or whatever means available.
6. If volunteer communicators become aware of any situation that could potentially require communications support, they will monitor designated frequencies and announce the situation and their availability on the air. It is recommended that the first operator on frequency will start a net and act as net control.
7. Volunteers may activate an emergency radio net without prior approval, but will use discretion when self-deploying to any disaster or emergency location. In general, volunteers may offer assistance but will not physically deploy to such locations without approval of the appropriate emergency response organization.
8. Volunteers will primarily be licensed Amateur Radio operators and will use personal and/or county-owned equipment to effect emergency radio communications. Operation will take place using any appropriate Amateur Radio band, frequency and mode for which equipment and licensed operators are available. Other radio services and technologies will be used where appropriate and

available. Depending on the situation, volunteers may operate from home, mobile/deployed, or from county or other public facilities such as fire stations, schools or medical facilities.

9. During non-emergency periods, periodic training events will be conducted which may or may not involve the County or other outside agencies. Volunteer members of the LCECG are expected to participate in training. A minimum participation requirement may be established for continued active membership.
10. Other reasonable training and qualification requirements may be established; for example FEMA and NIMS qualifications such as ICS-100, etc.

Section IV- Support

1. Lewis County currently provides space and power for the Black River Valley Amateur Radio Club VHF (2 meter) repeater at the Crystaldale site.
2. The County currently has HF and VHF/UHF Amateur Radio equipment installed at the EOC. Lewis County General Hospital currently has VHF Amateur Radio equipment installed.
3. Additional facilities and/or equipment will be made available by the County as resources allow. This includes new purchased equipment and surplus communications and related equipment which is no longer useable by the County but which could be adapted to Amateur Radio service.
4. The long-term goal is to have complete working Amateur Radio stations capable of operating on multiple bands and modes in all critical locations such as County offices, fire departments and shelter locations; as well as field-deployable equipment.
5. The County will work with the LCECG to recruit, train, and qualify new volunteer Amateur Radio operators and to maintain and upgrade skills of existing volunteers.
6. The County designates the LCECG as the official RACES and ARES organizations for the County.
7. The County will provide appropriate credentialing.
8. It is expected (but not required) that volunteer operators will have some personal radio communications equipment.

Section V- Command and Signal

A. Command

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

1. The County authorizes the LCECG as the official RACES organization for the county.
2. Operation as RACES during an emergency can only take place when RACES is activated by the Lewis County Office of Emergency Management.
3. Operation as RACES at other times shall be only for limited drills and training, as prescribed in FCC regulations and the NYS RACES SOP.
4. The county shall appoint a volunteer RACES Radio Officer (RO) who will be a licensed Amateur Radio Operator.
5. The RACES RO may appoint an assistant RO, training officer, and other positions as necessary.
6. The county has final approval on membership in RACES.

Amateur Radio Civil Emergency Service

1. Operation as ARES may take place whenever the group perceives a need or is asked to provide communications for any emergency or non-emergency event.
2. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) Northern New York Section Manager and NNY Section Emergency Coordinator appoint the county ARES Emergency Coordinator (EC). In practice, the selection of ARES EC is done locally and is approved by the ARRL section officials. The ARES EC will be the same person as the RACES RO and coordinator of the LCECG.
3. The ARES EC may appoint an assistant EC, training officer, and other positions as necessary.

General

1. The Lewis County RACES RO, appointed by the County Emergency Manager, will be the Coordinator of the LCECG. This person will normally also hold the position of ARES EC.
2. The Coordinator will work with the Lewis County Office of Emergency Management and other agencies to recruit, organize, train and utilize volunteer emergency communicators.
3. Since the primary purpose of the LCECG is to provide communications assistance to Lewis County, any person unacceptable to the County for participation in RACES may be denied membership in the Emergency Communicators Group.

Relationship between the Black River Valley Amateur Radio Club (BRVARC) and LCECG:

1. The BRVARC is a general interest club. Emergency and public service communications is one aspect of BRVARC activity. However members of BRVARC are not required to be members of LCECG or to participate in emergency communications. Conversely, members of LCECG are not required to be BRVARC members.
2. Since BRVARC and LCECG are closely interrelated, recommendations from the BRVARC officers and membership, as well as from LCECG membership, will be taken in to consideration in the selection of LCECG Coordinator.

B. Signal

All available Amateur Radio bands and modes will be used as appropriate. Other radio services (FRS, GMRS, CB, etc.) or communications modes (Internet, cell phone, etc.) may also be used if deemed necessary and effective.

Frequencies:

Black River Valley Amateur Radio Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 meter FM Repeater W2RHM 146.955 (-) no pl• If repeater inoperable, switch to 146.955 simplex.• If interference on 146.955, switch to 146.520 simplex
Boonville Amateur Radio Club	2 meter FM Repeater KC2NBU 146.655 (-) no pl
Black River Valley Amateur Radio Club	70 cm Repeater (TBD)
Northern New York Hospital Emergency Net	Whiteface Repeater 145.11 (-) pl 123
Northern New York HF designated frequency	(75 meters): 3.958
New York State RACES emergency frequency	(75 meters): 3.9935

Any HF, VHF, UHF or other Amateur Radio frequency may be used as needed and/or designated for any particular incident, pursuant to FCC regulations and within limits of operator license.

Refer to the web sites nnyara.net and brvarc.org for other area repeaters, frequencies, and scheduled nets.

NOTE: Reliance on repeaters and other infrastructure should be minimized. The goal is to provide point to point radio communications independent of any other system.