

# ABCs of Emergency Communication

de W6WTI for Elmer Night 3/19/09

**OK, I'm interested in EmComm, have a license and radio ... am I ready?**

## Before the Event

- 1. Be prepared at home** - If you aren't comfortable leaving home, you won't do a good job as an emergency communicator. CERT or other preparedness class.
- 2. Register with ACS** - In Sonoma County, go to <http://sonoma-county-acs.org/> click on participate. Fill out the forms and submit them. WHY ACS? How about ARES ? What's in Mendocino County?
- 3. Know your ACS Leadership** - these are the folks who will make assignments.  
UL - W6WTI  
AULs - WA6M, KD6MUE, KI6HHA
- 4. Participate in weekly nets** - don't just wait to be called ... follow along, keep a list of check ins. In an emergency, all net participants need to be ready to step in as NCS, in case something happens. Learn who regularly checks in, recognize their voices, know their callsigns so you could acknowledge partial calls without needing to repeat.
- 5. Learn to be a good NCS** - look at the tips for being NCS. In an event you won't have a script to follow. What do you need to track? Availability, assignments, traffic to/from, client requests, coordination with the UL/AULs.
- 6. Participate in Exercises and Drills** - Practicing with clients is valuable. Get to know them. **LEARN to use tactical callsigns.**
- 7. Traffic - Learn how to send and receive** - Learn to use ARRL and ACS forms.
- 8. Take Incident Command Classes** - FEMA on-line: IC-100, IC-200, IC700 (NIMS).
- 9. Learn to use your equipment** - Carrying the manual is a help, knowing how to run your radio is crucial. Don't leave it gathering dust between weekly nets ... use it. Program the likely repeater and simplex channels (the card !). What repeaters can you work from home, which ones when you're on the road? Don't just kerchunk (you can kerchunk repeaters that you can't use for communication), talk to people. Don't just ask for signal reports, learn names, locations, and interests. When you upgrade to General or Extra ... use that HF radio to find out what it can do ... propagation isn't all in 'the book' ... your experience will be the key to success.
- 10. Be able to connect your radio(s) to external sources of 12 VDC. (Anderson powerpoles)**
- 11. Have and be able to use portable antennas.** Don't forget pieces of coax with PL-259s on the ends, barrel connectors, and adapters.

12. **Learn who our ACS clients are** - know what to expect their needs to be.
13. **Ready Kit** - be ready to go to your assignment - radio stuff - personal items. Good list of items in The Instant Trainer. (See below)

### **IT HAPPENED - now what ?**

1. **Are your family, property and pets OK?**
2. **Turn on Your Radio and Monitor** - If a net has started, listen and check in as appropriate. Is ACS activated? Are you ready to be deployed?
3. **Report your availability to the NCS/UL/AUL on the net.** Be patient, which clients need assistance may not be known for awhile. Needs change as THEY receive information from clients. Don't be disappointed if you aren't assigned immediately. In scheduling our response, we need to consider 24/7 operating positions. You may be asked to stand by, or even assigned for a shift starting in 8 hours or even 16 hours from now.
4. **When you are assigned by the UL/AUL or by NCS relaying official assignments** - report for duty. Put the equipment on the air (yours or the ones at the location), check in on the net, verify that you have adequate communication, report to the Client that you are operational and what is available.
5. **Start a Station Log** - time, event, traffic sent/received, operator schedule, Client Contact information
6. **When the Client says 'STAND DOWN'** ... we stand down. **And share information about what happened so we can learn from the experience.**

### **RESOURCES**

1. **ACS web site:** <http://sonoma-county-accs.org/>  
**ACS Organization and Standard Operating Procedures manual**  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SonomaOpAreaACS/>
2. **Instant Trainer** - a handy reference in the field.  
<http://www.abarc.net/files/ACSTrainer-draftNovember2008.pdf>  
**Elmer Night hand outs** - posted to web site and to W6ABR Yahoo Group:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/w6abr/>
3. **ARRL:**  
**Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Course Level I, II, III**  
**ARES Field Manual**

**Regular forums in QST, World Radio, ARRL Eletter, EmComm West, Pacificon, etc.**  
**Books by Jerry Boyd.**