



Virginia RACES, Inc.

Hospital-Medical Programs

Statewide Operations Policy - Standard Operating Procedure Hospital-Disaster Response Teams

Objective

To provide for a comprehensive and uniform statewide system to support Regional Hospital Disaster Planning Committees - enabling each Regional Hospital Disaster Planning Committee to utilize Virginia RACES and amateur radio for their primary backup communications infrastructure.

Definitions:

Virginia RACES, Inc.,	A Not-For-Profit Corporation organized and Chartered under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia
Regional Hospital Disaster Planning Committee..	A group of hospitals within a specific geographic area of the Commonwealth coordinating the expenditure of federal funds, for planning and response to biological, chemical, radiological or other disasters, including mass casualty incidents ("RHDPC")
Virginia RACES Hospital-Medical Programs.....	An intra-specific unit of Virginia RACES, Inc., established to meet the needs of Regional Hospital Disaster Planning Committees, which have a written Memorandum of Understanding with Virginia RACES, Inc.
Equipment.....	Tangible personal property purchased with Federal or State funds by Regional Hospital Disaster Committees
System.....	The amateur and non-amateur radio equipment comprising each regional communications infrastructure
Facility.....	Any Hospital, Medical Facility, or entity that is a part of the various Regional Hospital Disaster Planning Committee organizations within the Commonwealth of Virginia

SERO.....	Virginia RACES, Inc., State Emergency Radio Officer, responsible for day-to-day operations of the corporation
DSERO-HP.....	Deputy State Emergency Radio Officer - Hospital Programs; that person appointed by the SERO to coordinate statewide planning and operations of Virginia RACES Hospital-Medical Programs
DSERO-Digital...	Deputy State Emergency Radio Officer: – Digital Operations; responsible for standardization and operations of all Digital operations
DERO.....	District Emergency Radio Officer: the appointed official responsible for a specific group of cities and/or counties per the records of Virginia RACES, Inc.
HDRT.....	Hospital Disaster Response Teams: A group of Virginia RACES members, assigned by the appropriate VA RACES officials, to facilities to provide emergency communications
Local Coordinating Official.....	(LCO): That person recommended by the SERO-HP or DERO of the RHDPC area of responsibility to coordinate specific facility operations and response, and approved by the SERO
Lead Operator....	(LO): The local member, assigned to a specific facility by the Local Coordinating Official, who shall coordinate scheduling of members, maintain a call-up telephone tree, and be responsible for proper equipment functionality
Committees.....	One or more VARACES members appointed by the SERO to study and recommend actions to be taken by the organization or, to represent the organization at meetings with other entities, and report their findings
FCC Trustee.....	That licensed amateur radio operator authorized by the SERO to serve as FCC Trustee for such club licenses as issued to VA RACES by the FCC

Other agency.... Any governmental agency, *pre-authorized*, to utilize the System who meets minimum system specifications, including a written Memorandum of Understanding with VARACES.

1. **Scope**

- a. The primary purpose of the Virginia RACES Hospital-Medical Programs unit is to provide hospitals and emergency medical facilities within the Commonwealth of Virginia with emergency communications.
 1. There are six (6) Hospital Committees within the Commonwealth of Virginia, representing various geographical areas of the state. Each regional committee allocates funds received from the Federal and State. The Virginia Department of Health has selected the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association to act as the distributing and coordinating agent for all grant monies, and accountability thereof.
 2. Equipment purchased by the local committees becomes the property of the each hospital. At no time does title to any equipment purchased by any committee pass to Virginia RACES, and no committee equipment shall be removed or converted to private use. Likewise, no personal equipment of any Virginia RACES member shall be incorporated into any regional or statewide system.
 3. Virginia RACES members nor officials shall obligate any committee for any expense or liability whatsoever. The coordinating Virginia RACES official shall recommend and document need and necessity of equipment and expenditures to the committee chairperson or committee coordinator, who shall be the sole authorizing and binding official for ordering and purchase of any equipment or service.
- b. So as not to tax the needs of Virginia RACES emergency management clients, the Hospital-Medical Programs unit shall have its own command and control management, volunteers, operational frequencies, and alerting infrastructure. The Hospital-Medical Programs volunteers shall not be subject to call by local Virginia RACES officials while on standby or when activated for Hospital

Programs activations.

- c. The State Emergency Radio Officer (“SERO”) shall appoint a statewide Deputy Emergency Radio Officer for Hospital-Medical-Programs (“DSERO-HP”).
- d. The Deputy State Emergency Radio Officer for Hospital-Medical Programs shall recommend to the State Emergency Radio Officer certain appointments¹ of local officials to support the local hospital response officials and teams (“HDRT”). After appointment by the State Emergency Radio Officer, such officials shall be assigned to the local hospitals and medical facilities during Hospital-Medical activations, under the command and control system of the Hospital-Medical Programs DSRO-HP, or his designee.
- e. The DSERO-HP shall coordinate all Hospital-Medical programs statewide. In the absence of a DSERO-HP, the SERO shall act in this capacity.

2. **Operating Agreements; Station Trustee**

- a. Virginia RACES Inc., shall enter into a standard operating agreement with each Regional Planning Committee served. The agreement shall be signed by the SERO, DSERO-HP, the Committee chair-persons so authorized to bind, and the appropriate official of each hospital or medical facility served.
- b. For all matters of licensing, radio system administration, and amateur radio matters of every kind and type, Virginia RACES, Inc., shall be appointed the Attorney-In-Fact for each committee, hospital and medical facility...
- c. The SERO may execute FCC Club call license applications for any DERO requesting same. Generally, the DERO of the RHDPCLocale shall be the FCC Trustee.

3. **Duties & Responsibilities of Hospital Disaster Response Teams Members**

- a. Virginia RACES hospital response team’s members are assigned to specific facilities by the local coordinating official. This will be the

¹Virginia RACES membership shall be **obligatory** prior to the appointment of any Hospital Disaster Response Team member

DERO of the region where the Regional Hospital Disaster Committee sits. It is the responsibility of the local coordinating official to assure that each facility has the necessary number of VA RACES members assigned to each facility to provide, at the minimum, initial response during Hospital System activation.

1. For each facility, the local coordinating official shall appoint a lead operator who shall coordinate, among other things; operator call up tree, system testing, operator assignment and scheduling, and routine maintenance²,

b. **Team Members:** In no instance shall any VA RACES member be appointed to the Hospital Disaster Response teams who shall:

1. Hold any appointment which conflicts with a hospital response³, or
2. Not have independent transportation to respond to an activation, or
3. By virtue of their vocation or job responsibilities not reasonably be able to respond to a Hospital call up, or
4. Not taken the Virginia RACES Basic Emergency Communications Training, or
5. Not taken the Virginia RACES Hospital Disaster Teams specialized training

c. A Hospital Response Teams Member shall be removed from assignment under the following conditions:

1. Failure to respond to two (2) consecutive HDRT activations, except for good cause shown, or
2. Failure to follow directives by the local coordinating official, responsible DERO, DSERO-HP, SERO, facility official, or
3. Failure to follow NET Control Operator directions, or
4. Failure to follow this SOP, or
5. Inability to cooperate with other team members or facility staff, or

²In no instance, shall any member nor any official, remove any equipment from any facility without permission of the coordinating DERO and DSRO-HP; in any instance where equipment must be removed for maintenance, the DERO and DSERO-HP shall first obtain authorization from the responsible Regional Hospital Disaster Planning Committee official or hospital administrator. Receipts shall be required, and provided the facility where the equipment is to be removed. The facility will maintain the receipt signed for by the HDRT member authorized to remove such equipment for servicing.

³ VA RACES members may elect to volunteer for only HDRT activities. Officials shall not place such members electing *only* HDRT participation on the rolls for other than HDRT activations and activities

6. Removal from membership as VA RACES member, or
7. Upon recommendation by any facility, or
8. Infraction of FCC Rules, or
9. Failure to take Hospital Programs Update training

d. **System Administrators:** Those members authorized to receive control codes and exercise total system control of all features of the regional system. A very limited number of members should be in this position, and such members must have advanced knowledge of amateur and computer operations. System Operators shall not permit obscene, profane, derogatory, offensive, nor political communications over any system within the scope of the HDRT. There shall be one (1) Lead System Administrator in each region who shall coordinate all activities of the Systems Administrators and also coordinate between other region System Administrators.

e. **Control Operators:** Those members who shall monitor and exercise routine control functions of voice repeaters, and be responsible for the proper amateur etiquette and lawful operations of those amateurs utilizing such repeaters on a routine basis. Control operators shall be selected for their maturity and knowledge of the FCC rules. Control Operators shall not permit obscene, profane, derogatory, offensive nor political communications over any system within the scope of the HDRT.

1. **Non-Compliant Users:** Any user of the system violating the standards of the system shall first be warned by the System Administrator and/or Control Operator of their non-compliance. If, after warning, the non-compliant user continues to operate in violation, the Control Operator or System Administrator shall advise the non-compliant user that he or she is to cease using the system and is barred from further use. All such cases where a user is barred shall be timely reported to the SERO with the reasons for such barring.

2. **Appeal of Barred User:** Any licensed amateur radio operator barred from use of any system may appeal such action to the SERO by providing a written appeal, stating all facts and circumstances surrounding the barring of use. The SERO shall investigate the appeal within sixty (60) days and provide a response thereto.

4. **System Operations**

- a. At all times (except any quiet time imposed which shall normally be from 00:00L to 06:00L) when not in emergency or net operations, all facets of the System may be available for normal amateur use to assure system integrity.
- b. During emergency operations, only authorized users shall be permitted to utilize the system. Authorized users shall be defined as follows:
 1. Hospitals and member emergency medical facilities of each RHDPC
 2. Such other agencies and/or organizations that have been approved, in advance, and meeting system requirements.
 - a. Users other than hospitals and emergency medical facilities may be limited to certain modes and terms of use.
 - b. During emergency and net operations, formal net procedures shall be utilized and Net Control operator's directions shall be strictly adhered to. Net Control operators shall keep strict order during emergency operations and Nets.
- c. All Digital operations within the System requires the user be registered and approved by the DSERO-Digital and each user so authorized shall use only VA RACES Digital Packet software for the sending and receiving of all data. The DSERO-Digital shall provide bulletins as he deems advisable, from time to time. Only bulletins approved by the DSERO-Digital shall be transmitted through the System.

1. During emergency and net operations, all non-hospital and non-emergency medical facilities shall cease operations.
- d. Adjustments to equipment shall be made by only by those assigned to do so by the SERO, DSERO-HS, or DERO. Those assigned shall be proficient in the servicing of the particular equipment to be serviced. No equipment under warranty shall be serviced, but returned to the warranty vendor for repairs or replacement.
- e. System Administrator control codes shall be kept confidential and stored in a secure location at all times. At no time shall any System Administrator publish nor release any control code to unauthorized persons.
- f. Control Operator control codes are to be kept confidential and stored in a secure location. At no time shall any Control Operator publish nor release any control code to unauthorized persons.
- g. Emergency Activations of the System shall be made by any of the following Officers/Officials based on objective evidence that such a action is warranted: (i) SERO, (ii) DSERO-HP, (iii) DSERO-Digital, (iv) DERO, (v) LCO, or (vi) any RHDPC official or facility Administrator.
- h. Net Operations shall be made by Net Control Operators assigned to such duties.
- i. Skywarn operations shall be under the control of the appropriate Skywarn Coordinator appointed by the regional NOAA Warning Coordinator Meteorologist. The Skywarn Coordinator shall be provided the necessary Skywarn Net control codes to activate the System for such operations.
- j. To maintain the highest degree of interoperability between systems and regions, from and after the date of this SOP, no new Equipment shall be purchased nor used in any HDRT System throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia other than that approved and fully compatible with the Central Virginia Hospital Disaster Planning Committee System.

- k. Assignment of HDRT members to facilities shall be first by the proximity of the member to the facility to be served. However, Officials must also take into consideration that some members may elect to serve certain facilities, not necessarily close to their residence or to the members work. Consequently, Officials shall take all factors into consideration, including the number of members needed to staff a facility, and not over-staff any facility to the exclusion of others.
- l. All MOU's shall contain a provision for the sheltering of members' immediate family during an activation. Officials, when planning assignment of members to facilities shall take into consideration the size of the members' immediate family and keep such information with the member profile and telephone call tree. Immediate family shall be defined as; the members wife, and minor children. Some facilities may provide facilities for pets, but this is *strictly the facilities option*. Members shall not bring pets to facilities unless the facility accepts them. Do not assume all facilities accept pets. The fact that the facility accepts or does not accept pets shall be established well in advance of any activation through the LCO or LO.
- m. At all times, communications with any facility shall be by and through the LCO or LO.

5. Work in Progress

This document is a work in progress, and shall be from time-to-time modified and enlarged as warranted to meet the need and necessity of the Statewide HDRT program.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

/s/ KR4UQ
State Emergency Radio Officer
Virginia RACES, Inc.