

**A GUIDE FOR
AUXILIARY AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS
RESOURCES AND SUPPORT
(EMCOMM)
FOR ICS PERSONNEL AND EMERGENCY MANAGERS
IN GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
AMATEUR RADIO COMMUNICATIONS TEAM
MNEMONIC: ARCT
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The Incident Command System, or simply "ICS", is about ten years old. The ICS is the child of **FIRESCOPE** which began nearly 25 years ago by national fire agencies. **FIRESCOPE** is a time-tested system for managing large scale fire incidents involving multiple agencies and resources.

While the *implementation* of the ICS varies slightly from state to state, (and some occasionally between agencies within the same state); it is fairly well standardized, and is advocated by FEMA, other federal agencies, and most public (and some private) state and local agencies.

At EMCOMMWEST 2002 (ref. June 2002 QST), during an ICS training workshop lead by Jerry Boyd, KW7J (the then Sacramento Valley Section Manager K6BZ); a question was raised as to how amateur radio emergency communication (EMCOMM) teams might be better activated and utilized in major incidents. Also, how could they be brought into compliance with the ICS structure?

Two schools of thought were expressed. One being, it has been common for a served agency to activate a particular EMCOMM unit, with that unit providing emergency and auxiliary communications primarily (only) for, and at the direction of, the requesting agency.

The second school of thought was that, in incidents involving multiple agencies, an EMCOMM team, whether at an emergency operations center (EOC), an emergency communications center (ECC), a field command post or staging area, a fire camp, or a Red Cross evacuation center, should exist and be available to serve whatever agency involved that needs amateur radio communications support.

The notion of having multiple amateur EMCOMM units, operational at the same location, is redundant and results in poor utilization of the often limited amateur radio resource. If I may digress momentarily, just imagine how it would appear if each agency were to order, and have standing by, its "own" medical unit!

Of course for this second option to be effective, all EMCOMM operators not only need to be skilled in the technical aspects of field communications and tactical and formal message handling; but must also be familiar with the individual needs of all the served agencies involved. They must also be experienced in operating as a team within the larger (ICS) structure.

This only underscores the importance of training, cross-training, and having the members of your team pre-registered with as many of your local agencies as possible.

With FIRESCOPE, and later in ICS, logistics managers use a standardized, four character, mnemonic nomenclature system to order all resources. It may be a fire suppression strike team, a task force, a medical unit, or a communications unit. Heretofore, there has not been a mnemonic in place to order amateur radio EMCOMM.

After EMCOMMWEST 2002, a small committee was formed to develop a system

to expedite ordering of Amateur Radio Communication Teams. ARCTs.

What follows has been reviewed by radio officers and EMCOMM managers in several states. It is applicable to any and all amateur radio communications units. (ARES, RACES, etc.) In some states the term "auxiliary" is preferred over "amateur", since their volunteer EMCOMM resource plan has been expanded to include non-amateur radio communications, but often utilizing amateur radio operators in these other services. (E.g. - Auxiliary Communications Service, an expansion of RACES that includes public service radio and other electronic communication services.) Whether it is ARES, RACES, ACS, or whatever, ARCTS will make it less complicated for ICS managers to "order" amateur EMCOMM services.

ICS personal may not be familiar with all that is involved to establish a field EMCOMM station. ("Field operations" includes indoor locations.) It will take some time and educating on our part before non-radio oriented persons are familiar with the ARCTs nomenclature(s).

Emergency Coordinators (if no active EC, the DEC or SEC) and other EMCOMM Managers must maintain a working relationship with their local and state government officials; as well as, managers in non-government agencies. (E.g.- American Red Cross.)

ICS "purchasing" personnel are historically "budget minded" (and rightly so). They may be hesitant to "order" an ARCT. It is the job of amateur EMCOMM leaders to inform them (in advance if at all possible) that Federal law prohibits any payment or other compensation for amateur radio communications. Our services are free!

While there is no cost to government or other organizations for our communications service; in certain instances, when a radio amateur is working under the direction of an agency, reimbursement for mileage, meals, and other incidental expenses is acceptable. Worker's Compensation and/or liability insurance may be provided by a "served agency". This is at the option of the local or state agency or private organization served.

The guide below should be used by all ARES, RACES, ACS, and/or other bona fide EMCOMM units. Think of it as a menu. ICS/Logistics officials may order one (or more) complete EMCOMM teams. E.g.- "We need one ARCT Type 1 by 0800 tomorrow. Report to the county fairgrounds." Or, "ala carte": e.g. - "We need one ARCT Type 2 and two ARCT Type 4s ASAP. Have them report to the fire camp at Jefferson High School.

When an order is received by an EC, DEC, SEC, RACES Officer, etc., it is important that they not promise delivery unless they know for sure that they can "deliver the goods" by the time specified. If the time frame is unrealistic, let the person placing the order know. If you as an EC, need to check on the availability of mutual assistance personnel and equipment, before you commit, tell the person when you will "get back to them".

If you can only fill a part of the requested resource, let them know; and ask if that will suffice until you can activate mutual assistance.

The guide itself is just that...a guide. It is intended to have a degree of flexibility. For example: A "Type I" ARCT calls for a staff of 12 operators including 2 "supervisors" (one day shift/one night shift). The remaining 10 might be split into 5 day/5 night; or, 7 day/3 night, etc. at the discretion of the team leader(s).

In another example: Let's say that an ordering agency needs a Type 1 ARCT, but only sees a need for two mobile units.

By ordering: "one ARCT Type 2" and: "two ARCTs Type 4"; he/she has ordered only what they wish. Later, more resources can be ordered, or some can be "demob'd" (demobilized).

Incident command personnel are not particularly interested as to how an ARCT goes about fulfill its mission. The bottom lines is can a third party message, whether tactical or formal be delivered accurately, efficiently, and in a timely manner.

EMERGENCY AND AUXILIARY LICENSED AMATEUR RADIO COMMUNICATIONS ORDERING RESOURCE GUIDE

In order to bring amateur radio emergency and auxiliary communication (EMCOMM) resources into compliance with Incident Command System practice and procedures, the follow nomenclatures should be used when amateur radio EMCOMM services are "ordered" during a ICS event. Each "TYPE" team is designed to provide 24/7 coverage, and will be dispatched with its own supervisor who will also serve as the liaison to the incident Communications Coordinator (COMC).

It is proposed that this will be included in the NICC Resource Ordering manual and be used by ICS Logistics personnel for all major (including non-fire) events.

ARCTs

ARCT Type 1 - (Full field station and 4 mobile/portable units)

- Complete amateur radio emergency/auxiliary communications team for single or multiple agency communications.
 - Capability: Short range (VHF/UHF) and long range (HF) voice and digital communications for tactical, logistics, health/welfare, administrative, and other radio traffic. Is not dependant upon any outside power source or infrastructure.
 - 12 persons including one supervisor and one assistant supervisor.
- Consists of one ARCT (Type 2 or 3) base station; and four Type 4 units (mobile, portable, or "rovers" .

ARCT Type 2 - (Field/base station)

- Capability: Short range (VHF/UHF) and long range (HF) voice and digital communications for tactical, logistics, health/welfare, administrative, and other radio traffic. Is not dependant upon any outside power source or infrastructure.
- 4 (or more) licensed and registered AROs with one or two vehicles.
- 2 must be General class (or higher).
- May be assigned to a specific agency, or for AUX/EMCOMM.
at a staging area, CP, EOC, etc. for multiple agency service.

ARCT Type 3 - (Field/base station / no digital)

- Same as ARCT TYPE 2 but without digital capability (VHF packet and/or HF pactor).

ARCT Type 4 (Mobile/portable field units)

- 2 licensed and registered AROs with one or two vehicles.
- Technician class or higher (At least 1 General or higher if available.)
- VHF FM (minimum) equipped, HF mobile/portable desired.
- May be assigned to a specific agency or to supplement/relieve an existing multi-agency ARCT.

- ARCT Type 5 - (Mobile/portable field additional support unit)
- 1 individual licensed and registered ARO with vehicle.
 - Technician class or higher.
 - VHF FM (minimum) equipped.
 - Rarely (if ever) ordered singly.
 - May be assigned to a specific agency or to supplement/relieve an existing ARCT.

ICS Logistics Officers and/or Communications Unit Leaders should be provided with a current list of persons to notify to activate an ARCT.

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ICS uses 4 character mnemonics (give examples)

ARCTs may be pre-existing units, but more than likely they will be assembled from existing registered EMCOMM operators at the time of the incident. Prudent EMCOMM managers will foresee the need when incidents and potential incidents occur and will begin to assemble the ARCT resource before an actual call is received.

A team may be short a member or two...notify the ICS person who is placing the order...

ICS structure also works within the ARCT.

1. ARCT Coordinator
2. ARCT Assistant Coordinator
3. ARCT Plans and Training Coordinator
4. ARCT Operations (Nets, etc.)
5. ARCT Logistics (supplies, equipment (e.g.- generators, batteries, transportation, etc. but only as applies to the ARCT
6. ARCT Records and Reports