



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

2000 MAIN STREET

CALIFORNIA 92648

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY (714) 374-1565

Dear Amateur Radio Operator,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES). Following is information about the RACES organization and how to apply.

General Information

RACES ("race-ease") is a volunteer segment of the amateur radio fraternity which has an interest in public service. Huntington Beach supports a RACES group which is associated with the city's Emergency Services Office.

As you know, during routine, day-to-day situations, the local Police and Fire Departments utilize their own public service communications systems. However, during widespread civil emergencies (such as an earthquake), it is expected that several problems may occur which would hamper these communications:

1. The telephone system, including special circuits, may be disabled by downed or broken lines and disruption at central offices can be expected.
2. The commercial power system may fail due to downed or broken lines and failures at distribution points.
3. Police and Fire Department communications systems will be over-taxed with requests for assistance and damage reports.
4. Communications to other areas (county and state offices) may be disrupted for several hours.

Experience and test exercises have shown that most local governments can cope with the first two problems, but saturation of the public service communications system is difficult to practice. Actually, any communication system will become saturated during a large scale emergency because there would be only a limited number of people available to handle the calls for service.

The practical approach to normal communications systems has been to gear the size of the system to day-to-day needs and available funds. Of course, this means an easily over-taxed system. Most non-military systems have little or no reserve capability. The RACES communications organization primarily provides an alternate method of passing information without requiring extra funding by the municipality. RACES volunteers donate their time and bring their personal equipment to provide this service.

RACES Requirements

1. Must be a licensed radio amateur operator, no code tech or above, and at least 18 years of age.
2. No felony convictions or FCC violations.
3. Prospective personnel must possess (and maintain) a working amateur radio station, capable of operation on the Huntington Beach RACES frequencies (2-meter and UHF), preferably portable in nature or a radio capable of operation on the 220 MHz band.
4. Personnel are not to miss more than five(5) consecutive, weekly radio roll calls, or attend less than two(2) meetings per year, and must participate in at least five(5) activities (drills, emergencies, or public service events) in a twelve(12) month period.

Desirable qualifications – synthesized radios on the 2-meter band (144-148) and UHF (440), HF capability, 50 MHz/220 MHz stations, and prior or subsequent training in first aid, search and rescue, emergency communications, police/fire sciences, and radio traffic handling.

In reviewing applicants for Huntington Beach RACES, those personnel with a background outlined above will be considered over those with lesser or unrelated knowledge or experience. Enthusiasm and a desire to serve the community are highly desirable qualifications for continued participation in Huntington Beach RACES.



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Races Disqualification

The following will result in automatic and permanent RACES termination:

1. Any subsequent felony convictions or FCC violations.
2. Unprofessional behavior while representing the City of Huntington Beach or any conduct which would bring discredit upon the RACES organization.
3. Use or attempted use of Huntington Beach RACES insignia, badge, decal, plaques, stickers or city issued equipment, any article bearing "Civil Defense," "RACES," "CD," "Huntington Beach Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service," or any article, effect, or statement giving reference to involvement in Huntington Beach RACES, to influence any city employee, police or fire official, or to give any special consideration to Huntington Beach RACES personnel during a non-emergency situation without specific approval by the Emergency Services Coordinator of the City of Huntington Beach.
4. Failure to attend meetings and failure to respond to radio roll call on a continuing basis. This may be waived by the RACES officer if unusual or excusable circumstances apply.
5. Equipment incapable of operation on Huntington Beach RACES primary frequencies.
6. Providing false or misleading information on a RACES application.
7. Disobedience of a RACES or city official during any event, disaster, or drill except when compliance with orders would be criminal in nature or would endanger any person or property.

Application Procedure

Enclosed is a RACES application. Fill it out completely and return it to the Emergency Services Office. Please be patient while your application is being processed.

Within a few weeks, you will receive a letter or phone call inviting you to a RACES interview. Interviews are normally held in the Emergency Operating Center (EOC) at Huntington Beach City Hall on weekday evenings. If for any reason you cannot attend the interview, please contact this office so that an alternate date or time can be arranged.

In the meantime, it is highly recommended that you check-in to the Huntington Beach RACES Net as a visitor. Check-ins are held at 7:15pm on Monday nights on 145.140 MHz with minus (-) offset, PL 127.3 (private repeater).

If you are not contacted by the Emergency Services Office within the next six weeks, please call us at (714) 374-1591.

Sincerely,

Peter Barbour
RACES Officer

Gloria Morrison
Emergency Management & Homeland Security