Cochise County
Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES)
Members' Procedural Guide

1 January 2026

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Manual Changes
Modifications and/or updates to the RACES manual will be brought before the Cochise County RACES Officer and Director of Emergency Management for review and approval.

The proposed change may be accepted, rejected, or modified.

I. Overview

The primary mission of Cochise County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) during an emergency and/or disaster is to provide communication services that include the use of Home Stations, Portable Stations (we maintain a cache of five station sets that can be checked out), either as a back up to established communications, or as a fill-in where communications do not normally exist.   RACES is an organization of amateur radio operators who volunteer to provide radio communications for State and local governments in times of emergency. Created in 1952 primarily to serve in civil defense emergencies, RACES provides essential communications and warning links to supplement State and local government assets during emergencies.

RACES is a special part of the amateur service sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). RACES provides emergency communications for civil preparedness purposes only. RACES is conducted by amateurs using their primary station licenses or by existing RACES stations. In the event that the President invokes the War Emergency powers, amateurs officially enrolled in the local civil preparedness group would become limited to certain frequencies, while all other amateur operations would be silenced.

The Cochise County RACES team is the volunteer communications arm of the Cochise County Director of Emergency Management, and the Cochise County Emergency Operations Center. RACES may be activated at the request of any governmental agency in the event of an emergency or disaster after coordination with the Cochise County Director of Emergency Management. An example of a governmental agency may include any City, County or Special District (i.e. Water District, School District, or Community Service Districts) within Cochise County.

RACES also works with and provides, as requested, communications services for non-governmental organizations (NGO), such as the American Red Cross, and other local groups. RACES is available to be of service in various capacities in time of emergency or disaster.

RACES in Cochise County operates in partnership with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). When activated, Cochise County ARES members follow the procedures contained in this document.

II. Authorities

RACES is authorized by the Communications Act of 1934, Section 606, as amended and by Executive Order 12472, Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Telecommunications Functions. RACES is provided for in subpart E of Part 97 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).
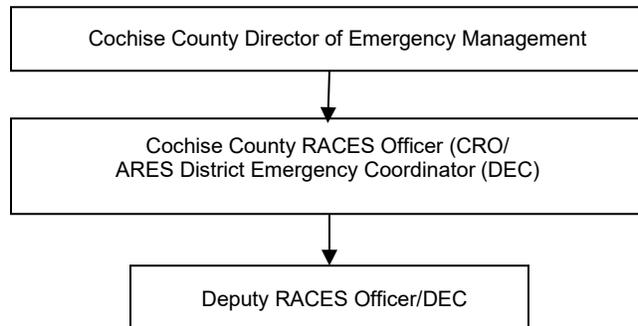
In Cochise County, RACES is the responsibility of the Director of Emergency Management. Emergency Operations Plans for the County of Cochise and/or any of its cities is the authority for operations.

The County RACES Officer is appointed by the County Director of Emergency Management. RACES is a function of government provided for by local, state, and federal guidelines and is the lead organization involving amateur communications support or response.

III. Member Requirements

Cochise County RACES consists of registered volunteers licensed by the FCC in the Amateur Radio Service holding at least a Technician Class license. Only those individuals registered with the County of Cochise, Office of Emergency Management will be considered members of Cochise County RACES. This requirement ensures that volunteers are covered by AZ Worker's Compensation insurance while engaged in mission support. See Appendix 14 for a copy of the membership application. Members must have a valid AZ driver's license to drive any county vehicle in the performance of their duties. Applicants are subject to a basic background and driver's license security check. Applicants that have been convicted of a felony may not be accepted for membership. Membership in local radio clubs (Cochise Amateur Radio Association – CARA, Eastern Arizona Amateur Radio Society – EAARS, Cholla Amateur Remote Base Association - CARBA) is encouraged but not required since they provide the support to the various repeaters that may be used during support of our missions and activities.

IV. Leadership Organizational Chart

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│   Cochise County Director of Emergency Management    │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Cochise County RACES Officer (CRO/           │
│     ARES District Emergency Coordinator (DEC)        │
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│             Deputy RACES Officer/DEC                 │
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V. RACES Activation

Once RACES is activated by a competent authority, the CRO will begin the notification process using any or all of the tools available: the RACES AlertSense; the telephone calling tree; or the amateur radio repeaters within the county. You may be asked to fill an immediate need or be placed on stand-by depending on the immediate need. Be prepared. Information will be passed along as it becomes available. It is important that operators monitor the prearranged county nets when RACES activation is pending. A detailed description of the Alert Process and specific assignments can be found in Appendix 1. The primary RACES VHF repeated frequency in the county is 147.02 on Mule Mountain. We

use 146.56 as a tactical (simplex) frequency (Please see the frequency lists in Appendix 7 for our county and additional net information.)

A. Local Activation
If the CRO or his/her deputy perceives the need for a possible RACES activation, the CRO will either place members on alert or initiate an actual activation. See Appendix 5 for Incident Number Request procedure. When activated to support Search and Rescue (SAR) missions, the Sheriff's Office SAR coordinator takes care of getting the state assigned incident number.

B. Formal Activation
The CRO, or his/her deputy, will be notified by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), or Southeastern Arizona Communications (SEACOM) Dispatch Center to place members on alert or initiate activation. The CRO will receive the incident and request numbers at the time of contact and proceed as requested.

C. Served Agencies
RACES primary served agency is the Cochise County Office of Emergency Management. RACES is available to support all governmental agencies including the County SAR team, as well as non-governmental agencies, such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army. RACES is not available to support commercial endeavors, except in the event of a declared emergency or disaster, and then only in a disaster support role.

The served agency may request RACES support through the Office of Emergency Management, SEACOM, or the CRO. If another RACES member receives the request, he/she must notify the City Officer or CRO to contact the Office of Emergency Management Duty Officer and request the Incident Number (See Appendix 5 for incident Number Request procedure).

D. Mutual Aid Service
Any Federal Agency (e.g. US Forestry Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM)) or any jurisdiction/agency outside of Cochise County may request RACES activation. However, this call is considered a mutual aid request and therefore must be processed through Cochise County OEM. If you receive such a call, it is imperative that you ensure the individual makes the request through Cochise County OEM. Any member responding to or acting on a request for service without prior OEM notification and approval does so without coverage from the Arizona Workers Compensation program.

VI. Planned Events

The OEM must first approve the RACES participation in any Planned Event requiring use of county resources such as the County Mobile communications Unit (MCU). Follow Appendix 5 for Incident Number Request procedure. Planned public service events (i.e. Bisbee City Coaster Races, Bicycle Rides, etc.) can be supported under the auspices of ARES and do not require approval of the OES unless specific county resources such as the MCU are being requested.

VII. Operations

A. Typical Activities - RACES support activities have included but are not limited to:
- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Exercises
- Cochise County Fire Chiefs Association Exercises
- Search and Rescue Missions
- Health and welfare evacuations (during Fire/FloodSeason)
- Damage Assessment communications
- Public service events (Air Show, Coaster Races, Bike Races)
- National Weather Service (NWS) Spotter Program
- County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activations

These activities have been direct requests for service, either as a mutual aid resource or as normal operations within County Boundaries. We have also supported a number of missions through county mutual aid agreements and adjacent counties of Graham, Greenlee, Hidalgo (NM), Pima, and Santa Cruz.

B. Typical Operation Assignments may include but are not limited to:
- Fixed station operation (Hospitals/Police Departments)
- Mobile or portable operation (Incident Scene/Staging Areas, SAR Missions)
- Relay in the event of no repeater coverage
- Ride-along mobile operations or function as a shadow to an Emergency Services Responder
- Home Unit Activation
- 911 telephone support

C. Net Operation Protocol
Each net operation in support of a mission will be under the supervision and control of an experienced RACES member. Operational RACES nets are directed nets and traffic will be limited to the mission requirements.

No RACES operators will participate in a net, on a frequency band, or in a type of operation outside the class of his/her license unless under the direct supervision of a licensed control operator of the appropriate class of operation being conducted.

RACES operators may be assigned to work on designated County Public Service Band frequencies using provided equipment in the MCU or other FCC type accepted radios. The MCU carries several type-accepted walkie-talkies programmed for specific public service frequencies for use on the scene of an incident. At those times, you are operating under the auspices and the authority of the Cochise County Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Public Service License, not your amateur license. Members may be assigned to operate as a "shadow" on the scene using one of these radios. Also review Appendix 1 for specific pre-assignments and an explanation of the RACES Blue Eagle program.

RACES members operating in the MCU or with one of the public service band radios, will be operating in a directed net and follow their protocols. Although we do not use the ten codes on the amateur bands, members are expected to learn and understand the Cochise County common Ten-Codes so that they are able to understand dispatch instructions while operating on one of the sheriff's frequencies. Although the Sheriff's Office uses common language in accordance with the Incident Command System, the Sheriff's Office still uses many Ten-Codes and Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) phonetic alphabet are found in Appendix 14.

D. Tactical Callsigns
There are many times during mission operations that it is appropriate to assign a "tactical" callsign to the location you are serving. This is generally done to make it clear what assignment members are supporting when they are passing traffic on the air. For example, if we have activated the Blue Eagle network (see Appendix 1) and a member is assigned to work at the Bisbee Copper Queen Hospital, the tactical callsign might be "Copper Queen". This does not eliminate the FCC Part 97.119 Station Identification rule that says: "Each amateur station must transmit its assigned call sign on its transmitting channel at the end of each communication, and at least every 10 minutes during a communication, for the purpose of clearly making the source of the transmissions from the station known to those receiving the transmissions. No station may transmit unidentified communications or signals, or transmit as the station call sign, any call sign not authorized to the station."

For example: "Bisbee EOC, this is Copper Queen, over." "Copper Queen, this is County EOC, go ahead, over." Continue the conversation until you are either finished with the exchange of information or ten minutes has gone by (whichever is shorter) and then identify yourself as "This is Copper Queen, KC7WKT, over." or "Copper Queen, this is County EOC, WB7VNF, Out." One final example is the Bisbee Coaster Race where you have tactical callsigns allocated by position on the down hill races course. Examples might include "Start, Finish, Checkpoint 5, Checkpoint 6, or Checkpoint 10, etc."

E. Net Frequencies
The primary RACES VHF frequency used in Cochise County is 147.02 (PL 162.2). Other net operation frequencies are found in Appendix 7 to this manual.

VIII. Uniform Guidance

Cochise County RACES members are encouraged to meet the following uniform guidance for all events - planned events or incident for which a Cochise County incident number has been obtained. All uniform apparel should be clean and present a neat and professional appearance. When wearing the uniform, members are identifying themselves with the Cochise County RACES team, so wearing these items for general casual wear is discouraged. Casual attire may be worn for training events and meetings.

A. RACES ID Card

The RACES Photo ID Card is to be attached by a suitable clip to the front of the shirt, preferably to the right breast shirt pocket or attached by chain/cord around the neck. In all cases, it should be worn so that it is easily visible. It has become increasingly important during the global war on terrorism to be clearly identifiable to the emergency responder team and law enforcement as to who belongs on the scene and who does not. If a member is not easily identified as one of the responders, they may be asked to leave the scene. If challenged, the members should explain who they are, their role in the response effort, and how they were requested to respond to provide communications or other support. If still asked to leave, the members should identify the person making the decision and leave. There may be appropriate safety or security reasons for the decision and becoming argumentative or combative will not endear RACES to the response community. The member should then report the incident to the County RACES Officer to work out the problem later. It is important not to become offended during situations like this and become part of the problem as opposed to being part of the solution.

B. Uniform Shirt/Vest and Appropriate Patches
RACES uniform shirts should be tan/khaki or gold with appropriate identifying patches/logos. The shirt should have the RACES logo embroidered or silk-screened on the back and on the left front breast. In lieu of the silk-screen printed or sewn logo, a 3" RACES Eagle patch may be sewn in the same location. No other patches/emblems except for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service patch (ARRL Diamond – sewn above the left pocket) may be worn. In lieu of a RACES shirt, a vest in bright orange or lime green with the RACES logo on the left breast may be worn. This is required when assigned to a traffic detail where high visibility is needed. For night operations and general safety, it is also recommended that reflective tape be attached to your vest. A RACES polo shirt may be worn in lieu of the Uniform shirt during club or public service events. SAR Team members who are RACES team members may also wear the Cochise County SAR insignia on the left breast of the shirt. See Appendix15 (Equipment) for a list of vendors where patches, vests or hats may be purchased.

C. Trousers
Trousers should be full length and be of a solid, dark blue, black, or tan/khaki color. For field operations a utility fabric such as "denim" is also recommended. We operate in many brushy locations so shorts or cutoffs are discouraged for field operations.

D. Protective Outer Garment – Weather
Outer garments (jackets/sweatshirt/rain gear) should be of a solid gold/yellow or khaki /tan color. The RACES patch should be sewn on the left shoulder or left breast. No other patches/emblems except for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service patch (ARRL Diamond sewn above the right pocket) may be worn. The vest may also be worn over other outer garments as needed for identification if you do not have other suitable gear.

E. Footgear
Shoes or boots appropriate for your assignment and weather.

F. Headgear

A tan, gold or dark blue ball cap with a RACES logo or other amateur radio cap displaying your call sign on the front will be sufficient for most missions or activities. Hard hats may be required for some incident scenes. That determination will be made by the incident commander to meet OSHA safety regulations applicable to the incident scene.

G. Planned Sanctioned RACES "non-incident" Events
The RACES uniform (i.e. clothing with patches) should be worn at all planned events, special events, and meetings sanctioned by RACES. Your RACES ID Card may suffice for casual meetings where a RACES presence is appropriate. If you request an incident number and are representing RACES at a mission or incident site, you must wear the ID card and should be wearing the uniform as described above. It is recognized that you may not always have your uniform or hat with you, but you will be expected to have your ID card.

IX. Suggested Equipment

You will find a list of equipment that should serve the RACES operator in a variety of assignments in Appendix 15. This appendix identifies personal, radio and administrative supplies.

X. General Guidelines

A. Procedures
Before responding to any emergency callout, members must ensure that they and their families are safe and cared for. Check in to the primary repeater or simplex frequency. If the repeater is down or out of service, use the output frequency of the repeater as the simplex frequency of choice. Whichever member is first on the air will become the initial net control and gather the names, locations, and call signs of stations that check in.

In some cases, members may be asked to stand by on the frequency, as operators may not be needed immediately. Members should continue to monitor the frequency until the net is shut down, or it is determined that there will be no further need for operators.

B. Demeanor
When called to serve, members must present themselves in an organized, professional manner. This includes being dressed appropriately; clothing should be clean and neat.

C. Expectations of All RACES Operators
- Be willing to commit time at inconvenient hours and occasions.
- Participate in the twice-monthly Training Nets and periodic training drills. This will aid in the development of needed skills and knowledge.
- Available to attend and participate in at least two events / meetings a year and attempt to attend all training classes offered. Check into local nets on a regular basis. Participate in drills, public service events, and actual incidents
- Demonstrate the ability to perform with a high standard of customer service, professional conduct and civil responsibility.
- Listen more than you speak. Become familiar with how served agencies operate.
- Check to see if your radio traffic is interfering with nearby conversation. Always use headphones unless you are in an area by yourself.
- Remember that you are required to think on your feet, but you are not a maker of policy. Our Motto "Semper Gumby" – Always Flexible
- Be prepared to facilitate communication, whether it is on a cell-phone, fax machine, public service or amateur radio. Remain proficient in operating their equipment and keep it in good order.
- Present yourself as a positive, capable resource. Prepare to be a leader.

D. Discipline
It is the intent of this policy to clearly explain the procedures regarding the organization's position on disciplinary action. It is important for all RACES members to know and abide by the policies and procedures stated in this manual. Failure to follow these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

E. Improper Conduct

If it is determined that a member is involved in improper conduct or behavior, discipline may be appropriate. Examples of "improper conduct or behavior" include, but is not limited to:

Criminal conduct
- Inappropriate use of RACES Identification Cards or misstatement of official position.
- False statements
- Stealing

Inappropriate Conduct
- Insubordination
- Inappropriate or abusive language on the radio or in person.
- Self-Dispatching to incidents without proper notification or request.
- Actual or perceived conflict of interest. When in doubt, ask.
- Any other violation of policies/procedures set forth by this procedural manual.

F. Complaints

If a RACES member receives a complaint about a member or the organization, it is important for that individual to forward the allegation to his/her acting supervisor. The supervisor will then contact the County RACES Officer (CRO). This may be achieved in writing/email/telephonically. The CRO will investigate the circumstances related to the allegation. This investigation may include interviews, written statements, and review of all reports and documents. The CRO will thoroughly examine the facts in consultation with the designated County OEM Representative. If a determination is made that the allegation is factually true, it will be the responsibility of the RACES Officer, in consultation with the County OEM Representative to determine what disciplinary action or procedural change is necessary.

Disciplinary options may include:
- Remedial training
- Verbal Counseling
- Written Warning
- Suspension
- Dismissal

G. Appeals

Any RACES member facing a disciplinary action will be provided with an opportunity to explain his or her side of the story. Any RACES member who has been notified that they will be suspended or dismissed may, within 10 (ten) days of written notification of the disciplinary action, file an appeal with the RACES executive staff. The appeal must be in writing and clearly state the reasons for the appeal and/or mitigating circumstances. The appeal will be referred to the Director of Emergency Management in cases where dismissal from the program is being considered. The Director may uphold or modify the discipline as deemed appropriate. The decision of the Director is final.