



## Washington County RACES Wants You!

Experience the most exciting and rewarding part of amateur radio. Being a RACES member gives you the opportunity to sharpen your operating skills and technical knowledge while volunteering your services in public-safety communications. Get involved in emergency communications now.

### **Description and Authority**

RACES is an organization of Federal Communication Commission (FCC) licensed amateur radio operators who volunteer to provide radio communications for state and local governments during 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 agencies during emergencies.

RACES is organized to provide emergency communications for civil preparedness purposes only. RACES is a special part of the amateur radio service sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and is conducted by amateur radio operators using their primary station licenses or by existing RACES stations. In the event that the President invokes the War Emergency Powers Act, amateur radio operators enrolled with their local emergency management offices would become limited to certain frequencies, while all other amateur operations would be silenced.

During an emergency, RACES is operated under the direct control of the local emergency management office, as authorized by the FCC and the Director of the New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO).

RACES is authorized by Section 606 of the Communications Act of 1934 as amended by Part 97.407 of the Federal Communications Commission. RACES guidance is also provided by FEMA document CPG1-15 March 1991.

NOTE: FCC rules, Part 97, still apply to all RACES stations and RACES operators participating in RACES operations.

RACES provides a pool of emergency communications personnel that can be called on in time of need. RACES groups across the country prepare themselves for the inevitable day when they will be called upon. When a local, state, or national government agency activates a RACES group, that RACES group will use its resources to meet whatever need that agency has.

Traditional RACES operations involve emergency message handling on Amateur Radio frequencies. These operations typically involve messages between critical locations such as hospitals, emergency services, emergency shelters, and any other locations where communication is needed. These communications are handled in any mode available, with 2 meters FM being the most prevalent.

Other tasks that RACES personnel are involved with may not involve Amateur Radio communications. For example, RACES communicators may become involved in public-safety or other government communications, Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staffing, and emergency equipment repair.

Whatever need arises, trained RACES personnel are ready and prepared to help. RACES groups develop and maintain their communications ability by training throughout the year with special exercises and public-service events. When that fateful day occurs, RACES will be there to meet the challenge.

Local units within RACES operate via local Amateur Radio frequencies and repeaters. The New York State RACES SSB HF Net is operational Sunday mornings at 0900 on the frequency of 3993.5 kHz. LSB.

Washington County RACES recommends that anyone interested in joining RACES should complete IS-100 and/or IS-700 prior to enrollment. This will assist the radio operator to be familiar with some the procedures of major incidents and their local Office of Emergency Services. Registration for these courses can be done on the Internet by going to the following site: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp>.

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