

Oahu C&C Department of Emergency Management

RACES Vision Paper

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Introduction

This vision paper offers a comprehensive overview of the role and capabilities of the RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services) unit of the Oahu DEM (Department of Emergency Management). It outlines a forward looking view of the capabilities of citizen volunteers in the community equipped to supplement and aid in disaster situations.

Role

Oahu DEM RACES is the volunteer communications arm of the DEM. Active under the direction of the Communications Officer and Director of DEM, RACES provides radio and other communications when normal communications such as the telephone and City & County of Honolulu radio systems have been disrupted or are overwhelmed. DEM RACES support and supplement the DEM District volunteers with timely and reliable communication services.

Under 47 CFR, during times of local, regional or national emergencies, RACES may be directed to establish communications with other entities as specified in Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Part 97.407. In times of war, RACES operations may also be modified by the President of the United States or his designate.

Registered DEM RACES volunteer communicators are uniquely covered by workman's compensation protection when DEM RACES is activated.

Mission

During times of emergency, DEM RACES provides emergency communications for the departments of the City and County of Honolulu. Emergency communications is viewed as essential communication needs in connection with the immediate safety of human life and immediate protection of property when normal communication systems are not available.

DEM RACES maintains reliable communications with

- City & County of Honolulu agencies, including but not limited to Honolulu Police Department, Honolulu Fire Department, Board of Water Supply, Environmental Services
- The American Red Cross, which provides shelter services for Oahu

- Hawaii State Civil Defense, which provides additional resources and support for DEM
- National Weather Service, which provides weather forecasts and observations.
- Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH) and Health Comm, to coordinate medical services and response
- Hawaiian Electric Company (HECO) and Hawaiian TelCom, which provides electricity and telephone service
- The Hawaii Hotel and Visitor Industry Security Association.
- ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service), the Emergency Service arm of the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL).
- The general amateur radio community on Oahu to receive reports that supplements DEM's operational information

Between emergencies, DEM RACES provides education, training and exercise opportunities to ready its members for operations during emergencies. DEM RACES maintains liaison with similar counterparts in the Oahu community, promoting and increasing the readiness to prepare and respond during times of emergencies. DEM RACES also implements, operates and maintains radio equipment that is used during emergency operations.

Organization

DEM RACES is organized into these components to meet its mission.

- A leadership team, including the DEM RACES Coordinator and deputy coordinator, and the heads of the other teams. The leadership team oversees the development of programs within DEM RACES to achieve its mission, and works closely with the DEM Communications Officer. The leadership team is on 7x24 alert, and is ready to respond to unscheduled events. It provides oversight of the recruiting and processing of member applications and renewals.
- An education and training (E&T) team, which provides educational opportunities ranging from entry level emergency communications training through leadership development. The E&T team develops and coordinates exercises with the larger amateur radio community. During non-emergencies, the E&T team also maintains liaison with external amateur radio groups to keep the community current on matters relating to DEM RACES, and to develop a pool of volunteer operators. During emergencies, the E&T team redeploy to assignments within the operations team.

- A technical team, which oversees the readiness of the equipment of DEM RACES. The equipment includes those installed in the EOCs, repeater sites as well as those configured for deployment and use by the RACES “jump teams”. The technical team is also responsible for the correct use of the RACES club station license KH6OCD.
- An operations team, which integrates trained operators with the equipment to accomplish the DEM RACES mission. The operations team is made up of RACES members that respond to the HQ EOC, the District EOCs, jump teams and those working closely with the DEM District Reserve Corp.

Locations

The key locations covered by DEM RACES during emergencies are:

- DEM HQ EOC
- DEM District EOCs
- C&C Department Headquarters: HPD, HFD, Environmental Services, BWS
- Locations covered by the DEM RACES jump team.

Methods

During emergencies, DEM RACES operators use, but are not limited to these communications methods to provide timely and reliable communications.

- Amateur radio techniques, including the use of:
 - VHF/UHF/SHF techniques, such as fixed and portable repeaters, and direct simplex voice communications
 - HF techniques, such as NVIS (Near Vertical Incident Skywave)
 - Digital/data techniques, APRS (Automatic Position Reporting System), AX.25/IP Packet Radio
 - VOIP (Voice over IP) techniques, such as Echolink, IRLP and D-STAR.
- The City and County 800 MHz radio system